



Course Syllabus: INTRODUCTION TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE (Online)
College of Health Sciences and Human Services
SOWK 4323x10
Fall 2025

Contact Information

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Course Description

This course is intended for the distance education learner. An overview of drug use in society and as a social problem is provided. Preventing and treating substance abuse will be addressed. Laws regulating drugs will be reviewed. The way various drugs work in the body, affect mood, thought, and behavior will be covered. Specific drugs addressed in detail will be stimulants, depressants, and inhalants, medications for mental disorders, alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, over-the-counter drugs, opioids, hallucinogens, marijuana, and performance-enhancing drugs.

Program Objectives:

Students demonstrate the ability to:

Objective 1: Apply critical thinking skills and empirical knowledge of a generalist social work practice in the initial assessment through goal setting, implementation, evaluation, and termination. (SW Competency 4)

Objective 2: Practice with the values, ethics, and principles of the social work profession. (SW Competency 1)

Course Goals and Objectives

1. Recognize the difference between addiction, abuse, and other key concepts in substance abuse.
2. Understand the pharmacology, tolerance, and effects of legal and illegal substances.
3. Respect cultural differences in attitudes toward and use of substances.
4. Familiarity with substance abuse treatment and prevention.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the effects of drugs on behavior and how behaviors are influenced by psychological, social, and cultural variables.
2. Identify drug policies and regulations and their effects on social problems.
3. How drugs interact with the brain and nervous system to produce effects on behavior, thoughts, and emotions.
4. Identify the difference between stimulants, depressants, and inhalants, and how these compare to drugs used in treating mental disorders.
5. Discuss alcohol, how it affects the body and brain, and its influence on an individual's relationships with others, and its impact on society.
6. Identify the psychological effects of over-the-counter drugs, tobacco, and caffeine.
7. Describe restricted drugs, such as opioids, psychedelics, marijuana, and performance-enhancing drugs.
8. Utilize resources in relation to prevention and harm reduction, and discuss various policies and strategies implemented to prevent substance abuse.
9. Recognize the difference between addiction, abuse, and other key concepts in substance abuse.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Required:

Hart & Kasir. (2022). *Drugs, Society & Human Behavior* (18th Ed). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Tutoring and Academic Support Programs / Writing Assistance

Begin drafting papers as early as possible and take advantage of the [Tutoring & Academic Support Programs](#), located on the first floor of the Moffett Library. The MSU TASP Learning Center offers drop-in tutoring support for most general subject areas, including but not limited to Writing, Math, Science, Business, and Foreign Languages. Students check in to work one-on-one with a tutor, typically for an hour, regarding specific concepts.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

[The MSU Student Handbook](#) covers Academic Honesty under University Policies and Procedures. Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating, collusion, and plagiarism.

- Cheating is (1) the use of any unauthorized assistance, (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the Instructor, or (3) acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material.
- Plagiarism is the use of another person's published or unpublished work without full and clear acknowledgment.
- Collusion is collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit if the faculty member in charge does not authorize that collaboration.

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make an application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#) website.

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support students' studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

College Policies

Obligation to Report Sex Discrimination under State and Federal Law
Midwestern State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. State and federal law require University employees to report sex discrimination and sexual misconduct to the University's Office of Title IX. As a faculty member, I am required to report to the Title IX Coordinator any allegations, personally observed behavior, or other direct or indirect knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking, involving a student or employee. After a report is made, the office of Title IX will reach out to the affected student or employee in an effort to connect such person(s) with resources and options in addressing the allegations made in the report. You are also encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Title IX. You may do so by contacting:

Laura Hetrick, Title IX Coordinator
Sunwatcher Village Clubhouse
940-397-4213
laura.hetrick@msutexas.edu

You may also file an online report 24/7 at

https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MSUTexas&layout_id=6

Should you wish to visit with someone about your experience in confidence, you may contact the MSU Counseling Center at 940-397-4618. For more information on the University's policy on Title IX or sexual misconduct, please visit

<https://msutexas.edu/titleix/>

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, refer to [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [Safety / Emergency Procedures](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "Run. Hide. Fight." which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits using tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only outside designated smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place that prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Pregnant and Parenting Students

To support the academic success of pregnant and parenting students and students with pregnancy-related conditions, the University offers reasonable modifications based on the student's particular needs. Any student who is pregnant or parenting a child up to age 18 or has conditions related to pregnancy may contact MSU's designated [Pregnancy and Parenting](#) Liaison to discuss support available through the University.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ***Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered a reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.***

Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. **Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world that is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations; however, they can help you get connected to our online services. For help, log in to [D2L](#).

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Students are responsible for checking emails and logging onto D2L regularly to ensure that messages from the instructor and fellow students are received in a timely manner.

Grading

Table 1: The student's achievement will be evaluated based on the discussion board assignments, a research paper, and quizzes/exams.

Assignments	Due	Percentage
Discussion board assignments & discussion thread participation	Weekly as assigned	30%
Quizzes	Weekly as assigned	30%
Drug Research Paper	Nov. 14	20%
Final Exam	Nov. 21-Dec. 5	20%

Table 2: The weighted average will be used to calculate the final grade.

Grade	Percentages
A	90-100
B	80 to 89
C	70 to 79
D	60 to 69
F	Less than 60

Social Work Program Grade Policy

A course grade of below a C or an average of below 70% will be considered a failing grade. ***Students must repeat social work courses in which they received a grade of D or F.***

Discussion Thread/Board Participation:

As indicated in the course schedule, the instructor will post question(s) on D2L for the class. There are **two** parts to each discussion. Everyone should post an initial response to the question(s) and should also respond to at least two peers' posts by Friday @ 11:59 pm. The discussion board is a mandatory component. Students are expected to read all discussion board instructions and to participate actively throughout the semester. Students are expected to write formally (no shorthand or text messaging abbreviations) and use APA format and referencing where appropriate. There will be general questions relating to the chapter(s), case vignettes, current events, and/or watching a video and posting your response. Thoughtful responses, constructive critique of fellow students, and meaningful participation are expected. Please keep in mind that the discussion board is a formal assignment and part of your grade.

I will review your posts and responses and give individual feedback when grading posts. I may respond in the discussion thread to a select few posts and/or responses or respond collectively to the class. This does not mean only the posts and/or responses of those to whom I respond are good, and other

posts and/or responses are not good.

NOTE: In addition to posting your discussion response in the thread, you will also upload it to the corresponding assignment dropbox. You must do this to earn full points. All student discussion posts will be checked for plagiarism and AI usage.

Discussion Rubric

Points	Responses	Expectations
4	Reply to Instructor's Questions and cited source	Discussion posts are a minimum of 2 paragraphs long and show deep understanding and original, profound thought. In addition to the text, at least one reliable (preferably peer-reviewed) source is cited and referenced in the original post.
2	Response to peer #1	Consistently responsive to classmates, including answering questions. Reply is to a chapter you have not already discussed*, is a minimum of 1 paragraph long, and develops questions related to objectives to facilitate discussion. Reply generates or stimulates group discussion and presents creative approaches to the topic.
2	Response to peer #2	Same as above.
2	Grammar Quality / Academic Integrity	Written responses are free of grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. The style of writing facilitates communication. Sources are properly cited and referenced using APA style. In addition to posting your discussion response in the thread, you will also upload it to the <u>corresponding assignment dropbox</u>. You must do this to earn full points. All student discussion posts will be checked for plagiarism and AI usage.

Quizzes

Students will complete weekly quizzes by **11:59 pm on Fridays** based on the required book chapters and unit notes as indicated in the class schedule. The quizzes are open book and notes, but there will be only 30 minutes to complete them. **Quizzes cannot be made up if missed, and a grade of zero (0) will be recorded.**

Drug Research Paper

Due Nov. 14th: Students will complete a research paper on a drug, particularly one that is discussed in the text or is problematic in this area. The paper must be double-spaced, written in the format of the American Psychological Association (APA), and be no more than 3 pages in length (excluding title and reference pages).

The paper should address, at a minimum, the following:

- What is the history of the drug?
- Why is the drug a problem for society?
- What are the problems or issues that surround the drug?
- How does the drug work? What are the adverse health effects of taking the drug?
- What are the psychological and physiological effects of the drug?
- What is being done to combat the adverse health effects associated with the drug?
- Are there any current treatments for addiction to the drug? How effective are they?

Papers must reference at least one other reference other than the textbook. Grading will be based on the quality of the writing, the quality of the information presented, and adherence to APA formatting. Papers will be posted for your classmates to view. This paper will be 20% of the final course grade.

Final Exam

Due Dec. 5th: The cumulative final exam will be posted in D2L. The final will be 20% of the final course grade.

Late Work

Students who fail to post required assignments on time will receive a lower grade, and those who do not complete the assignments will receive a grade of zero (0). Please review the time submission criteria on the rubrics for each assignment. If anyone fails to post an original post or reply to 3 or more assignments, they will be dropped from the course or will be given a failing grade. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Makeup Work/Tests

Missed assignments & exams cannot be made up if missed. A grade of zero (0) will be recorded.

Instructor Class Policies

All students registered for courses in the Social Work Department are expected to adhere to the responsibilities and behavior as articulated in both the [Student Handbook](#) and the NASW (National Association of Social Workers) [Code of Ethics](#). An essential feature of these codes is a commitment to maintaining intellectual integrity and academic honesty. This means that the following constitute violations of academic honesty: *a student has another person/entity do the work of any portion of a graded assignment for them, which includes using the work of another student in this course as a template, purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, and/or using generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, QuillBot, or any generative AI assistance such as GrammarlyGO, Grammarly Premium, etc.).* I have a **zero-tolerance policy for cheating or plagiarism**, and violations will result in substantial penalties, including a failing grade on the assignment with no make-up opportunity and/or a referral to the Dean of Students.

Repeated accidental or willful cheating or use of someone else's words, ideas, or evidence without attribution, will be met with a failing grade in the course and a referral to the Dean of Students, regardless of whether the first occurrence was in this course. If you have any doubts or questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Students are expected to display professional decorum at all times. This includes but is not limited to, respecting classmates and the instructor.

Course Schedule

Online delivery with asynchronous interactions between students and students and teachers, interactive discussions, and assignments.

D2L will be used throughout the semester. The course materials (syllabus, discussion board, and other course items) will be posted on D2L. Power points will consist of materials from the textbook and other sources.

The instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus schedule as needed.

Intro to Substance Abuse Course Schedule

Due Fridays @ 11:59pm	Chapters	Assignments
Week 1 due Aug. 29	Ch. 1: Drug Use: An Overview Ch. 2: Drug Use as a Social Problem	-Discussion 1 (includes Introductions; no citations needed)

Week 2 due Sept.5	Ch. 3: A History of Drug Policy in the United States	- Quiz 1
Week 3 due Sept. 12	Ch. 4: The Nervous System Ch. 5: The Actions of Drugs	- Discussion 2: Ch. 3-5 - Quiz 2
Week 4 due Sept. 19	Ch. 6: Stimulants Ch. 7: Depressants and Inhalants	- Quiz 3
Week 5 due Sept. 26	Ch. 8: Medication for Mental Disorders	- Discussion 3: Ch. 6-8 - Quiz 4
Week 6 due Oct. 3	Ch. 9: Alcohol	- Quiz 5
Week 7 due Oct. 10	Ch. 10: Tobacco Ch. 11: Caffeine	- Discussion 4: Ch. 9-11 - Quiz 6
Week 8 due Oct. 17	Ch. 12: Dietary Supplements and Over-the-Counter Drugs	- Quiz 7
Week 9 due Oct. 24	Ch. 13: Opioids Ch. 14: Psychedelics	- Discussion 5: Ch. 12-14 - Quiz 8
Week 10 due Oct. 31	Ch. 15: Cannabis	- Quiz 9
Week 11 due Nov. 7	Ch. 16: Performance-Enhancing Drugs	- Quiz 10
Week 12 due Nov. 14	Ch. 17: Preventing Substance Abuse	- Drug Research Paper Due -Discussion 6: Post paper - Quiz 11
Week 13 due Nov. 21	Ch. 18: Treating Substance Use Disorders and Drug Policy Alternatives	- Discussion 7: Ch. 15-18 - Quiz 12
Week 14	<i>Thanksgiving Holiday - no assignment</i>	
Week 15 due Dec.5	Final exam will be posted from November 21 to December 5	

In a Nutshell:

-Read **assigned chapters** weekly

-**Quizzes**: submit by due date

-**Discussion posts**:

- follow prompt instructions
- must respond to two peer posts
- must have at least one citation
- submit by the due date
- post on the discussion board
- upload in the assignment dropbox submission folder for AI/Plagiarism check