



Course Syllabus: Mental Health in Social Work

College of Health Sciences and Human Services

SOWK 3343 Section x10

Fall 2026

Contact Information

Instructor: Jaisy Garcia, LMSW, MBA

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Course Description

Students learn practice skills, theory, and knowledge about mental health practice in the social work field. A study of knowledge, skills, values, and ethics required for working with individuals that have a mental health diagnosis. Research, theory, practice skills, and experiential learning provides an integrative learning experience.

This course is designed to provide a knowledge base of the DSM-5-TR of mental health disorders. Students will develop skills and techniques to complete competency-based assessments using an ecological approach, strengths perspective, and systems theory.

A study of the biological, neurological, psychological, social, environmental, and cultural aspect of a person's life as part of the mental health diagnostic process. Students will develop skills in establishing rapport, biopsychosocial assessment, cultural competency, and intervention

This course will be taught through group discussions, audiovisual presentations, discussion homework, and lectures. Students are expected to attend classes and to actively participate in discussions. The expectation is that students will have read the assigned reading to facilitate class dialogue and interaction.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply the Code of Ethics and other relevant laws, regulations, and models for ethical decision-making with individuals that struggle with mental health disorders (Knowledge, Values, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processes)
 2. Identify and assess policies that impact well-being, service delivery and access to social services. (Knowledge, Value, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processes)
 3. Apply empathy, personal reflection, interpersonal, and communication skills with individuals that exhibit mental health symptoms. (Knowledge, Values, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processes)
 4. Ability to critically assess the biological, psychological, cognitive, and social systems variables. (Knowledge, Values, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processes)
 5. Ability to select appropriate intervention strategies based on the biopsychosocial assessment and develop mutually agreed-on goals and objectives based on individual strengths, needs, and challenges. (Knowledge, Values, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processes)
 6. Recognize the beneficial outcomes of interdisciplinary and interprofessional collaboration. (Knowledge, Values, Skills)
 7. Demonstrate knowledge of DSM-5-TR mental health disorders. (Knowledge)
- Demonstrate knowledge and ability to utilize screening tools. (Knowledge, Skills)

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Susan W. Gray (2025). Psychopathology: A competency-based assessment model for social workers. (5th ed.) Cengage Learning. List Price 250.95 (prices may vary depending on the vendor)

Recommended:

American Psychiatric Association. (2022). The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: Fifth Edition. Text Revision: American Psychiatric Association: Washington, D.C.

Tutoring Assistance

Begin drafting papers as early as possible and take advantage of the [Tutoring & Academic Support Programs](#), located off 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

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's 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.

Grading

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
Discussions	20%
Attendance/Participation	10%
Quizzes	10%
Assignment 1	20%
Assignment 2	20%
Final Exam	20%
Total Points	100%

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

Social Work Program Grade Policy

A course grade of below a C or an average of below 70% will be considered a failing grade.

Discussion Board Homework

The discussion board is a mandatory component of this course. The instructor will post question(s) on the discussion board related to the assigned chapters from the textbook or from assigned movie options. Discussion posts will be available Sundays at 8:00am and due Saturdays by 11:30pm. Students are expected to write formally (no shorthand or text messaging abbreviations) and use APA format and referencing where appropriate. Lack of thoughtful content, or using poor writing skills may negatively impact the points received for each discussion.

* The discussion board is a formal assignment and 20% of your overall grade.

Quizzes

Quizzes will be open each Monday at 12:00 am and are to be completed each Sunday by 11:59pm. Quizzes will be open book but there will be a limited time to complete them. No requests for late access will be considered unless the student has submitted documentation through the Dean of Student's office proving incapacitation for the period the quiz was available.

Anything presented via assigned readings or in class may be included in quizzes.

* Quizzes are worth 10% of your overall grade.

Final Exam

The final exam will consist of multiple-choice questions to be taken in person in the classroom on your own device and using Respondus lockdown browser. Since class instruction will be based on the text as well as materials from other sources, what is presented in class may be included on the final exam. * The Final Exam is worth 20% of your overall grade

Assignment 1-Biopsychosocial Assessment

APA style formatting is required for all written work in this course. Be sure to use appropriate APA-Style citations for any information you take from the textbook, handouts, lectures, reference materials, websites, or other outside sources while completing written assignments. Assignment should be submitted in the appropriate drop box folder in D2L.

Assignment: Competency-Based Assessment-Due 11/29

Identify reason for referral and contributing conditions and components of the problem (history, duration, frequency, magnitude, antecedents, consequences)
List the client's competence

Intrapersonal issues (cognitive functioning, emotional functioning, behavioral functioning, physiologic functioning, mental status, client roles and role performance and developmental considerations)

Interpersonal family issues (clients marital/partner status, family structure)

Interpersonal work or school issues

Interpersonal issues with peers

Environmental characteristic that influences coping and adaptive pattern of the client

Ethnic/cultural considerations for the client

Identify at least one problem of the portrayed character and write a treatment plan with one goal and 2 objectives to meet the goal.

Identify and list at least one resource option in our community that might benefit the portrayed character.

* Assignment is worth 20% of the overall grade

Assignment 2-

For this assignment, you will select a mental health diagnosis and develop a PowerPoint presentation that demonstrates your understanding of the disorder, including its clinical presentation, contributing factors, assessment, treatment and impact on the individual. The goal of this assignment is to help you develop the ability to recognize characteristics of mental health disorders and understand appropriate evidence-based approaches to assessment and treatment.

Select a diagnosis that we reviewed during the semester. Create a PowerPoint presentation containing 10-15 content slides, not including the title slide or reference slide.

Suggestions for the breakdown include:

Introduction

Definition and Classification

Epidemiology

Risk Factors/Causes

Signs and Symptoms

Diagnostic Criteria and Assessment

Treatment

Safety Considerations

Patient and/or Family Education

Community Resources

Presentation Requirements

- Contain 10-15 slides, excluding the title and reference slide
- Include a title slide with your name, course, instructor and date
- Include a reference slide
- Use professional and appropriate language
- Use readable fonts and appropriate formatting

- Include visuals, charts, diagrams or other appropriate graphics when helpful
- Cite information directly on slide when appropriate
- Use at least 3 credible sources
- At least one source must be a scholarly, peer-reviewed source
- References should be current and relevant to the selected diagnosis

Final Exam

Final exam will consist of multiple choice questions taken on your own device and using Respondus Lockdown browser.

Late Work

All assignments must be submitted on time. Students who need additional time to complete assignments must contact the the instructor at least prior to the assignment due date to discuss the accommodations that need to be made. It is the student's responsibility to request this meeting.

Late work will be penalized ½ letter grade per 24-hour time. Failure to submit any assignment within 7 calendar days of the due date will result in a failing grade for the assignment. You should get with the instructor as soon as possible if an emergency occurs interfering with your ability to meet a due date.

Make Up Work/Tests

Make-up work will only be considered in cases of university excused absences or verifiable emergencies. Students will not be allowed to take make up exams after the original exam has been given. If you cannot take the exam on the required day and time, you must plan in advance to take it PRIOR to the scheduled administration of the exam.

Important Dates

- Last day for term schedule changes: **August 24-27**
- Deadline to file for graduation: **September 21**
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" **November 23**
- Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

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 expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. Although in general students are graded on intellectual effort and performance rather than attendance, absences may lower the student's grade where class attendance and class participation are deemed essential by the faculty member. In those classes where attendance is considered as part of the grade, the instructor should so inform students of the specifics in writing at the beginning of the semester in a syllabus or separate attendance policy statement. An instructor who has an attendance policy must keep records on a daily basis. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to being dropped from the class. Instructor's records will stand as evidence of absences. A student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor. Any individual faculty member or college has the authority to establish an attendance policy, providing the policy is in accordance with the General University Policies.

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 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 which 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 are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Recording Classes

****Recording classes is generally prohibited without the professor's explicit permission.*** Such recordings, when permitted, are for personal use only and may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published without the professor's prior consent. Some faculty may not permit recordings of their classes. When it is feasible and appropriate, students may record classes to accommodate disabilities under the Americans With Disabilities

Act, with prior approval of Disability Support Services. Such recordings may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published.

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 course requires that work submitted for a grade by students – all discussions, process work, drafts, brainstorming artifacts, final works, etc. – will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups as directed by class assignment instructions. 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 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 use TurnItIn as an initial way to detect and measure AI use and plagiarism and may use additional detection tools if academic dishonesty is indicated or suspected. I have a **zero-tolerance policy for academic dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism, or collusion** and violations will result in substantial penalties including a failing grade (zero) on the assignment with no make-up opportunity and/or a referral to the Dean of Students.

Repeated **accidental or willful cheating, plagiarism, or collusion 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. In this regard, it is expected that students will not hold side conversations, use cell phones, or engage in other types of unprofessional behaviors once class has begun or in relation to the class. Students should prepare appropriately for discussions and refrain from causing disruptions to the class and course discussions.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

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 application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Emergency Aid Resources for Basic Needs

Unexpected life circumstances can affect anyone. If you are experiencing challenges meeting basic needs—such as housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, technology, textbooks or other life necessities, resources may be available to help. Visit the [Student Emergency Support and Resources webpage](#) to learn more, and explore emergency support opportunities through MSU and how to access them. For additional information, please contact the Office of Student Affairs: Clark Student Center #108, (940) 397-7500, student.affairs@mstuexas.edu.

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.

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/>

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the 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 which prohibits 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.

Campus Carry

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 has 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, visit [Campus Carry](#).

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 MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). 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."](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 8/24 to 8/31	Competency Based Assessment Model Chapter 1 Introduction Discussion Discussion & Quiz 1	8/31/26
Week 2 9/1 to 9/6	Neurodevelopment Disorders Chapter 2 Discussion & Quiz 2	9/6/26
Week 3 9/7 to 9/13	Schizophrenia Spectrum & Other Psychotic Disorders Chapter 3 Discussion & Quiz 3	9/13/26
Week 4 9/14 to 9/20	Bipolar and Related Disorders Chapter 4 Discussion & Quiz 4	9/20/26

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 5 9/21 to 9/27	Depressive Disorders Chapter 5 Discussion & Quiz 5 Assignment 1	9/27/26
Week 6 9/28 to 10/4	Anxiety Disorders Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders Chapter 6 & 7 Discussion & Quiz 6	10/4/26
Week 7 10/5 to 10/11	Trauma & Stressor Related Disorder Chapter 8 Discussion & Quiz 7	10/11/26
Week 8 10/12 to 10/18	Dissociative Disorders Chapter 9 Discussion & Quiz 8	10/18/26
Week 9 10/19 to 10/25	Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders Feeding and Eating Disorders Chapter 10 & 11 Discussion & Quiz 9	10/25/26
Week 10 10/26 to 11/1	Elimination Disorders Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders Chapter 12 & 13 Discussion & Quiz 10	11/1/26
Week 11 11/2 to 11/8	Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders Chapter 14 Discussion & Quiz 11	11/8/26
Week 12 11/9 to 11/15	Neurocognitive Disorders Chapter 15 Discussion & Quiz 12	11/15/26
Week 13 11/16 to 11/22	Personality Disorders Chapter 16 Discussion & Quiz 13 Assignment 2	11/22/26
Week 14 11/23 to 11/29	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Week 15 11/30 to 12/4	Final Exam	12/4/26