A. Description of Course Content

The focus of this course is on current advances in knowledge of the neurobiological underpinnings of human behavior and development, the interaction between those underpinnings and the social context and environment, the relevance to social work practice with individuals, families, groups, programs/organizations, and communities, and related assessment and intervention practice behaviors across several practice domains. The domains include human development, genetics, mental health and substance abuse, cognition, stress and trauma, and violence and aggression. The implications of neurobiological and environmental influences (including public health issues and health disparities) will be examined in terms of social justice, social work values, knowledge, and skills, as well as in terms of the structural and systematic arrangement and delivery of social welfare services at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Co-requisite: SOCW 5311.

B. Student Learning Outcomes

The Council on Social Work Education requires that accredited social work programs follow the CSWE Educational Policy and Standards that comprises nine competencies as follows:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
4. Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

This course addresses competencies 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8.

Specifically, while the course addresses all competencies, 1 through 9, it mainly focuses on Competencies 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior</th>
<th>Aging</th>
<th>Children &amp; Families</th>
<th>Mental Health &amp; Substance Abuse</th>
<th>Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate awareness of aging-related personal and professional values through self-reflection and self-regulation.</td>
<td>Practice active self-reflection and continue to address personal bias and stereotypes to build knowledge and dispel myths regarding diverse family structures, families with compels family dynamics and families with multiple challenges and issues.</td>
<td>Practice active self-reflection and continue to address personal bias and affective responses to stereotypes to build knowledge, critical thinking skills and dispel myths regarding diverse mental health/substance abuse issues.</td>
<td>Strategically apply models for ethical decision-making, the NASW Code of Ethics, and relevant laws and regulations to critically recognize, analyze, and address ethical dilemmas in health care practices affecting individuals, organizations, and communities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Select and incorporate ethical decision-making frameworks that integrate social work values.</td>
<td>Implement an effective decision-making strategy for deciphering ethical dilemmas specific to the multiple and diverse needs of families and children.</td>
<td>Develop an action plan for continued growth including use of continuing education, supervision, and consultation.</td>
<td>Exercise personal reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values, maintain professional demeanor in behavior and appearance, and oral, written, and electronic communication in direct and indirect connection to the delivery of services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice in a culturally competent manner that demonstrates recognition of and ability to utilize the principles included in the NASW Code of Ethics, evidence-based knowledge, and relevant legal and policy-related information.</td>
<td>Recognize structural social inequities, advocate within the health and social service communities and as members of interprofessional teams on behalf of older adults and their families.</td>
<td>Implement an effective decision making strategy using cognitive and affective processes and judgment for deciphering ethical dilemmas in mental health/substance abuse treatment.</td>
<td>Recognize the role of other health professions when engaging in inter-professional teams from a systems perspective in health care service delivery.</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice</th>
<th>Aging</th>
<th>Children &amp; Families</th>
<th>Mental Health &amp; Substance Abuse</th>
<th>Health</th>
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2
Appraise their own values related to diversity in aging.

Analyze how diversity and oppression impact older adults and families.

Address the cultural and spiritual histories, values, and beliefs of older adults and their families.

Defend the impact of structural inequalities and the value of diversity among older adults as part of their roles on interprofessional teams and in organizations and communities.

Understand and can apply the relevant cultural, class, gender, race, age, disability, and other diversity issues to enhance the well-being of children and families from a strengths perspective.

Can analyze, using cognitive processes, the relevant cultural, class, gender, race, age, disability, and other diversity issues that influence the prognosis and treatment of populations treated by mental health/substance abuse social workers.

Practice self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influences of personal bias and values, including, but not limited to, age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, gender identity, religion, and immigration status, in working with diverse populations in connection with the delivery of health care services. Recognize and respect different values related to health and health care beliefs. Promote diversity and equity in health and health care service delivery, particularly amongst diverse populations, persons who are vulnerable, oppressed, or living in poverty.

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<tr>
<th>Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice</th>
<th>Aging</th>
<th>Children &amp; Families</th>
<th>Mental Health &amp; Substance Abuse</th>
<th>Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand and build knowledge central to maximizing the well-being of older adults and their caregivers.</td>
<td>Use advanced strategies to search, appraise, and select for application the most up to date evidence and evolving practice guidelines in the assessment and interventions with children and families.</td>
<td>Use advanced cognitive and affective processes to search, appraise, select for application the most up to date evidence and evolving practice guidelines in the assessment and interventions with mental health/substance abuse clients.</td>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the role of evidence-based practice and practice-informed research in promoting health equity and reducing health disparities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adopt, modify, and translate evidence-informed practices that are most appropriate to particular aging-focused practice settings and populations</td>
<td>Develop effective models, programs, policies, and interventions and assess their effectiveness using valid and reliable assessments for identifying family problems, risks and protective factors, vulnerability and resilience factors and consequences for different family groups and family members.</td>
<td>Develop effective models, programs, policies and interventions and assess their effectiveness.</td>
<td>Engage in critical analysis and apply it appropriately in health related settings to assess and intervene with individuals and families in health care settings. Have an understanding that their own personal beliefs or biases may influence interpretation of or translation of research.</td>
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| Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aging | Children & Families | Mental Health & Substance Abuse | Health |
| | | | |

3
Conduct assessments that incorporate a strengths-based perspective, person/family-centered focus, and resilience while recognizing aging-related risk.

Develop, select, and adapt assessment methods and tools that optimize practice with older adults, their families, caregivers, and communities.

Use and integrate multiple domains and sources of assessment information and communicate with other professionals to inform a comprehensive plan for intervention.

Use multidimensional bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment tools.

Assess the quality of interactions between family members within their social environment.

Compare and assess the various etiology and interventions relevant to children and families.

Describe the structure of the DSM-5 and conduct an assessment informed by cognitive and affective processes using the DSM-5 criteria and structure.

Understand theories of human behavior in the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies in health settings.

Uphold legal and ethical guidelines in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, and value inter-professional collaboration.

Use multidimensional bio-psycho-social-spiritual tools to conduct assessment of individuals, families, and groups in health practice settings, and utilize assessment data to inform appropriate intervention goals and strategies.

<p>| Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities |
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Aging</strong></th>
<th><strong>Children &amp; Families</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mental Health &amp; Substance Abuse</strong></th>
<th><strong>Health</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


Promote older adults’ social support systems and engagement in families, groups, and communities.

Provide person-centered and family-directed interventions that take account of life course disparities and are targeted to diverse populations, groups, organizations, and communities.

Assess for quality and access a range of services, supports, and care options, including groups and technology, for older adults and families to assure optimal interdependence.

Monitor and modify interventions as needed to respond to individual, family, and environmental challenges.

Describe empirically validated and theoretical causes, advanced assessment methods, and the most effective interventions for a variety of problems that affect children and families.

Develop intervention plans to accomplish systemic change that is sustainable.

Describe empirically validated and theoretical causes, advanced assessment methods, and the most effective interventions treatments informed by cognitive and affective processes for a variety of disorders: mood, anxiety, cognitive, substance abuse, sexual, eating, psychotic.

Understand theories of human behavior and the social environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies in health settings.

Deliver appropriate culturally relevant health specialty services, using inter-professional collaboration, through interaction of cultural systems between the identity of the social worker, client systems, setting, and immediate community, and practice competently with individuals, families and small groups.

### Quality Matters Course Objectives

In addition to the learning outcomes above, students will:

1. Explain relationships between the brain and addiction, motivation, emotions, movement, sensations and perceptions, sleep, pain, memory, attention, learning, consciousness, psychological disorders, and social behaviors.
2. Describe the interaction between brain-behavior relationships, the social context and environment, and relevance to social work practice.
3. Describe brain geography (neuroanatomy) in terms of organization and parts and their functions (neurophysiology).
4. Identify the connection between the brain, nervous system, and muscles.
5. Outline how the brain and neurobiology change across the lifespan.
6. Identify the uses and misuses of neuroscience findings and neuroimaging techniques.
7. Discuss recent peer-reviewed literature on the neurobiology of a social problem or condition in a vulnerable population, considering how socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, sex and gender, and aging contribute to individual differences in neural development.
8. Discuss an evidence-based, neuroscience-informed assessment protocol, intervention, policy, or program that expands a social work perspective or model to include concepts from neuroethics, cultural neuroscience, and the neuroscience of social justice, diversity, and inclusion.

### C. Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials


Canvas Required
All assignments need to be submitted through Canvas. See Canvas Student Guide to learn Canvas.

Microsoft Teams
If you are new to Teams, here is a link for more information. (https://uta.service-now.com/navpage.do)

D. Additional Recommended Textbooks and Other Course Materials
Additional recommended readings will be assigned from professional journal sources and book chapters. This supplementary course material will be posted to the course’s online site.

E. Descriptions of Major Assignments and Examinations

Assignment Choice 1 (A or B): Students will choose between submitting Paper #1 or taking the Midterm exam. Students may elect to do both and take the higher grade. (10% of total grade.) Assignment Choice 2 (A or B): Students will choose between submitting Paper #2 or taking the Final exam in finals week. Students may elect to do both and take the higher grade. (10% of total grade.)

Assignment Choice 1A: Paper #1
The first writing assignment will be an opportunity to apply up-to-date knowledge of neurobiological underpinnings associated with human brain development/change related to a specific environmental factor that is occurring during a particular stage of life or trajectory. Paper #1 will provide a critical synthesis of the most updated, peer-reviewed literature on the neurobiology of a specific social problem or condition, experienced by a vulnerable population, during a particular developmental stage. Some recommended theoretical framework/models include: biopsychosocial, person-in-environment, bioecological systems, life model, resilience model, intersectionality theory. A good example of a paper topic would be: “A Biopsychosocial Perspective (framework) on the Neurobiology of COVID-19 (condition) in Older Adult (stage) Nursing Home Residents (population).” For this assignment, students will search for and critically analyze recent peer-reviewed neuroscientific research. The number of sources will vary by topic. Students will synthesize what they have learned about the neurobiological underpinnings of the social problem or condition, with implications for social work practice and policy, and suggestions for future social work research. The paper should be 9-12 pages (APA style with headings) including title page, abstract, and reference page. A minimum of 8-10 peer-reviewed references are required, with no more than four (4) references published more than five (5) years ago. Additional assignment details and the rubric will be posted in Canvas. Addresses competencies 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8. Addresses course specific learning objectives: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8.

Assignment Choice 1B: Mid-Term Exam
Exams allow students to demonstrate their understanding of brain-behavior relationships and social work research and practice. Exams will be made up of a variety of objective questions from reading assignments and course materials, lectures, and exercises. The Midterm exam will not be timed and will be available for a one-week period. It will be open during Module 8 and will cover Modules 1-7. Addresses competencies 1, 2, 4, 7 and 8. Addresses course-specific learning objectives: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8.

Assignment Choice 2A: Paper #2
Building on the critical synthesis of the literature for a chosen social problem or condition in a specific vulnerable population, the second major writing assignment will be an opportunity to select an appropriate neuroscience-informed, evidence-based assessment protocol, intervention, program, or policy for a chosen population, social problem/condition, and developmental stage. Alternatively, Paper #2 may critique and modify an existing assessment protocol, intervention, program, or policy (described in the social work
literature) that is not currently neuroscience-informed. This paper should be 9-12 pages (APA style with headings) including title page, abstract, and references, with a minimum of 8-10 peer-reviewed references (no more than four (4) references published over five (5) years ago). Additional assignment details and the rubric will be posted in Canvas. *Addresses competencies 1, 2, 4, 7 and 8. Addresses specific learning objectives: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8.*

**Assignment Choice 2B: Final Exam**

The Final exam will not be timed and will be available online and open for a 1-week period. The Final exam will be available in Module 15, and will cover Modules 9-14. *Addresses competencies 1, 2, 4, 7 and 8. Addresses course specific learning objectives: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8.*

**Participation:** All participation assignments will be graded on a 100-point scale that will make up 80% of the total grade for the course. The participation grade for this online course will be based on 13 weekly discussion boards that include peer interaction (40%) 13 weekly quizzes (32.5%), and 14 activities (35%). For discussion boards, students will be required to post a thoughtful substantive reaction response to the main posts of at least two (2) peers and cite sources in APA 7th ed. format. *Original posts must be made by Friday at 11:59 pm of the assigned week and responses must be posted by Sunday at 11:59 pm.* The length of each primary discussion post will be specified in each assignment. For full credit, response posts must be at least three sentences, reflect elements of critical thinking, and introduce additional scholarly research that advances the discussion. For credit, posts must also respectfully express opinions based on reason and adhere to the ethical standards and guidelines of the social work profession (i.e., Section 2.1: Ethical responsibilities to colleagues: Respect), and its values (i.e., dignity and worth of all persons and importance of relationships). Quizzes will be administered over the material in each module. Additional details for participation assignments will be posted in Canvas modules. *Addresses competencies 1, 2, 4, 7 and 8. Addresses specific learning objectives 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8.*

**Extra credit assignments:** At the discretion of the Instructor, extra credit assignments may or may not be provided to the entire class. Individual or small group assignments for extra credit will not be provided.

**Technical Problems**

Because technology is vulnerable to experiencing difficulties you should not wait until the last minute to submit an assignment (class activity or discussion board). If you experience technical difficulties contact Canvas Support to help resolve the issue. They are open 24 hours a day. All technical issues must be resolved prior to an assignment due date and time.

**F. Attendance**

At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or engagement online via Canvas. This data is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

Information specific to modality and meeting times for this course are provided in the section below.

**All classes and tests are online - asynchronous.**
Completion of Discussion Boards with response posts and all assigned activities constitute attendance in this online class. Because this class is online and students have one week to turn in all assignments and complete quizzes and examinations (see make-up policy for quizzes and examinations below), absences will only be considered excused due to extenuating circumstances that persist for one week or more (e.g., personal illness, death or illness in the family). In the event students cannot complete assignments due to extenuating circumstances that are expected to last a week or more, and that meet criteria for an excused absence using university criteria, students must notify the instructor as soon as possible and request an extension. Students may be asked to provide verification, in accordance with university policies.

G. Grading

Grades will be posted to the Canvas gradebook. You can access your grades and feedback by entering the Canvas course and selecting “Grades” from the course menu.

Students may contact the instructor via university email to schedule a 1:1 online conference to discuss performance and potential strategies for improvement. For information on late work, please also see the Attendance policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
<th>90-100 = A</th>
<th>80-89 = B</th>
<th>70-79 = C</th>
<th>60-69 = D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment Choice 1 (A or B): Paper #1 OR Exam #1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment Choice 2 (A or B): Paper #2 OR Exam #2</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (13 Quizzes, 13 Discussion Boards, and 14 GRADED activities—2 pts each)</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100 points</td>
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Students are expected to keep track of their performance throughout the semester and seek guidance from available sources (including the instructor) if their performance drops below satisfactory levels; see "Student Support Services," below.

H. Make-Up Exams

Late Assignment Policy: If the assignment is received after the deadline or it is received but unable to be viewed by the Instructor, the assignment will be considered late until the problem is corrected and points will be deducted according to the late assignment policy. Please ensure appropriate submission of all assignments on Canvas.

For quality learning experience, class participation needs to be timely; thus, Discussion Posts will not be accepted after the due date. Exams will not be accepted after the due date.

Point Reductions: Papers, quizzes, and graded activities will be assigned (.25) point penalty for each day late and will only be accepted up to three (3) days after the scheduled due date unless the absence would normally meet university criteria to be considered “excused.” Requests to submit assignments beyond the three days after the due date may require appropriate supporting documentation (e.g., physician’s note).

Since Canvas will show the date and time of all assignment submissions, there will be no discrepancies as to when an assignment or post has been submitted.

Requests to reschedule a quiz or exam must be communicated to Instructor's UTA email address prior to due date. Because exams will be open for a one-week period, they can only be rescheduled in the event a student meets university criteria for an "excused" absence that is expected to persist for at least one week.
or more. Requests to reschedule a quiz or exam may require appropriate supporting documentation (e.g., physician’s note).

I. Course Schedule

As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course.

*Only MAJOR assignments and primary readings are listed on Syllabus. Videos, lecture notes, web links and activities on Canvas; additional recommended readings for topics in each Module on Canvas under “Deepen.”

With the exception of the initial posts for Discussion Boards, which are due on Fridays by 11:59 pm, unless specified, all activities will be due on Sundays by 11:59 pm.

- Check online regularly for announcements, assignments, and due dates.
- Be respectful on discussion boards, social media, and any video recordings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Required Readings &amp; Assignments*</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting Started Module 1/19 - 1/24</td>
<td>Course Introductions</td>
<td>Canvas - &quot;Getting Started&quot; Module, includes Syllabus, Course Expectations, Pre-Test Quiz.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module 5</td>
<td>2/22 - 2/28</td>
<td>Neurodevelopment, Neuroplasticity, and Aging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td>3/15 - 3/21</td>
<td>No New Readings</td>
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Module 14
4/26 - 5/2

Social Neuroscience, Social Justice and Fairness
Interaction of neural mechanisms and environment in social behavior; Neurobiology of attachment and exclusion; neuroscience of fairness and social justice

Gaskin e-Book, CH 15: Social neuroscience, pp. 419-443

Draft Paper #2 (Choice, Optional) due Sunday at 11:59 pm; Paper 2 (Choice), Module 14; Discussion, Quiz, and all activities* due by Sunday at 11:59 PM

Module 15
5/3 - 5/9

Exam 2
Exam Review: Readings, videos, and course materials for Modules 9-14

Final Exam (Choice) opens on Canvas on at 12:01 AM on start of Exam week and is due by Sunday at 11:59 PM

As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course.

J. Expectations for Out-of-Class Study

Beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional three hours (for each hour of class or lecture per week) of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing for assignments and exams, and reviewing online content, etc.

K. Librarian to Contact

The Social Sciences/Social Work Resource Librarian is Brooke Troutman. Her office is in the campus Central Library. She may also be contacted via E-mail: brooke.troutman@uta.edu or by phone: (817)272-5352.

The following is a list of commonly used library resources:

- Library Home Page
- Library Services
- Subject Guides
- Subject Librarians
- Course Reserves
- Library Tutorials
- Connecting from Off-Campus
- Ask a Librarian

L. Grade Grievances

For more information on the grade grievance process please see the BSW Program Manual or the MSW Program Manual. Grade grievance can be submitted through the BSW Grade Grievance form or the MSW Grade Grievance form located on the Forms and Resources website.
M. Institutional Policies

UTA students are encouraged to review these institutional policies and informational sections and reach out to the specific office with any questions. The following policies can be found on the UTA Syllabus Institutional Policies page:

- Drop Policy
- Observance of Religious Holy Days
- Disability Accommodations
- Non-Discrimination Policy
- Title IX Policy
- Academic Integrity
- Electronic Communication
- Campus Carry
- Final Review Week
- Student Feedback Survey
- Active Shooter
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Student Support Services

N. Mandatory Face Covering Policy

All students and instructional staff are required to wear facial coverings while they are on campus, inside buildings, and in classrooms. Students that fail to comply with the facial covering requirement will be asked to leave the class session. If students need masks, they may obtain them at the Central Library, the E.H. Hereford University Center's front desk, or in their department. Students who refuse to wear a facial covering in class will be asked to leave the session by the instructor, and, if the student refuses to leave, they may be reported to UTA's Office of Student Conduct.