



SOCW 3409: Diversity and the Rural Environment Spring 2025



UT Tyler SOCIAL
WORK

Instructor Information

Instructor:

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Associate Professor in Practice

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

(Other hours available by appointment in person or via Zoom)

Course Information

Method, Time and Place of Class Meetings:

This class involves lectures, student-initiated discussions, and active learning, such as interviews and information gathering in the community and student experiential learning.

In-Person Component: Tuesdays are in-person class meetings, 9:30 – 10:50 a.m., in the BEP Building #215.

Asynchronistic Online and Community Components: Students may access the online portion of the course at any time. In addition, students should utilize Thursdays (days we do not meet in person) to work on their community experiential learnings.

Description of Course Content: Examines issues of diversity in social work practice such as age, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion and disabilities and the relationship between the differences within the impact of social justice. Rural context considerations affecting poverty, isolation, transportation and housing will be explored.

Prerequisites: SOCW 2361, SOCW 2362, SOCW 2371, SOCW 3303

Social Work Course Educational Course Objectives (Competencies)

The Council on Social Work Education requires that accredited social work programs follow the CSWE Educational Policy and Standards (EPAS) comprised of nine core competencies as follows:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
3. Engage in Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
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

Specifically, while this course addresses competencies 1-9, it mainly focuses on 2, 3, 7, and 8:

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, because of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers:

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experience; and
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of

living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably, and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Social workers:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;

- use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials

Koppelman, K. & Goodhart, L. (2020). Understanding Human Differences: Multicultural Education for a Diverse America, 6th Edition*

*5th edition also acceptable.

Additional readings and videos will be posted on Canvas.

Course Reading Expectation:

Reading assignments should be completed prior to class and will provide the basis for discussion. Students are encouraged to ask questions and make comments during lectures. Students' questions and comments provide the instructor an important assessment tool for whether readings are being completed outside of class.

Descriptions of major assignments and examinations:

Discover and Demonstrate (20% Final Grade).

To assist with discovering, developing and demonstrating knowledge and skills utilized in future social work practice with diverse populations, students will participate in brief assignments throughout the semester. Examples include posting resources on class Padlet, analyzing a case study, and simulations of social justice using social media.

There are 5 Discover and Demonstrate Assignments. Each will correspond with course material presented in the applicable module. Directions for each assignment will be posted in Canvas, and due dates will be listed in the course schedule.

This assignment meets competencies 3 and 9.

Out of Comfort Zone Paper (20% of Final Grade). One of the goals of this course is to push students out of their own comfort zones. Therefore, students will write a short paper (4-6 pages) based on their visit to a place that is out of their comfort zone. Students will choose a place to visit where they will not feel entirely comfortable, and after they visit, will write a paper describing the experience. Some example choices include: a mosque; a temple (Jewish, Buddhist, etc.); white, black, or Hispanic meeting; an LGBTQ gathering; spending all day without speaking (to experience a disability firsthand); or going through the intake process at a homeless shelter, among others. Additional information and instruction on this assignment is posted in Canvas.

This assignment meets competencies 2, 3, and 9.

Activities and Attendance (10% Final Grade).

In most modules, students are to engage in the described activity(ies). Each activity is relative to its corresponding module’s material and helps students further digest and explore a topic or resource. Some activities will be completed during class time and other activities may be completed outside of class.

PLEASE NOTE: Each student is allowed up to one (1) absence without grade reduction penalty. Each absence after the first absence will result in a 10-point reduction in attendance grade per absence. (e.g. absence #2 = 90, absence #3=80, etc.) In addition, it is important for students to come to class prepared to take part in class. Grades will reflect accordingly. *This assignment meets competencies 2, 3, 7 and 8.*

Students who miss more than 50% of the scheduled in-person class dates will not pass the class.

Quizzes (20% of Final Grade) Low-stakes quizzes are given during most modules to help students keep up with readings and to scaffold for Exams. Quizzes are delivered on Canvas. Additional information and instruction on quizzes is posted in Canvas. Due dates for each quiz are listed in the course schedule. *This assignment meets competencies 2, 3, 8 and 9.*

Exams (30% of Final Grade). Two examinations will be given during this course. Each exam is worth 15% of your final grade. Exam I will cover the first half of the course material and Exam II will cover the second half of the material. (Exam II is NOT comprehensive). Reviews for each exam will be posted on Canvas. *This assignment meets competencies 2, 3, 8 and 9.*

Grading Information

Grading:

Assignment	Final Grade %
Discover and demonstrate	20
Out of Comfort Zone Paper	20
Activities and Attendance	10
Quizzes	20
Exam I	15
Exam II	15
Total:	100%

Late Assignments:

Late assignments are strongly discouraged. There will be a 10 percent (total) deduction for each late assignment. No assignment will be accepted after 5 days following the due date.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that work is completed on time and submitted correctly.

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 9 hours per week of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing for quizzes, etc.

Attendance:

Engaged and timely participation in all assignments constitutes "attendance" for purposes of this course. The Census Date for the semester is January 27, 2025. This is the last day students may withdraw from the course without penalty.

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. Any changes will be communicated in a timely manner through UT Tyler email and announcement(s) in Canvas.

We will meet each Tuesday, face-to-face. **Unless otherwise indicated, assignments are due on Sundays, end of day, 11:59 p.m. (Stroke before midnight).**

Module	Date	Topics	Required Reading	Assignments Due
Getting Started	January 14	Course Overview	Syllabus, Assignments	Syllabus Quiz
1	January 21	Understanding Ourselves and Others - Paradigms	Chapter 1	In-class activity Discussion Quiz
2	January 28	Prejudice, Racism and Discrimination	Chapter 2	In-class activity Discussion NO QUIZ Out of Comfort Zone Plan #1
3	Feb 4	Cross Cultural Communication	Chapter 3	In-class activity Discussion Quiz
4	Feb 11	Privilege	Chapter 8	In-class activity Discussion NO QUIZ Out of Comfort Zone Plan #2
5	Feb 18	Immigration and Refugees	Chapter 4	In-class activity Discussion Quiz
6	Feb 25	Sexism and Gender Diversity	Chapter 10	In-class activity Discussion Quiz
7	Mar 4	Heterosexism	Chapter 11	In-class activity Discussion Quiz

8	Mar 11	Rural Social Work	Canvas Posted Readings	In-class activity Exam 1 Out of Comfort Zone Plan #3
	Mar 18	Spring Break		Enjoy your Spring Break!
9	Mar 25	Ableism	Chapter 12	In-class activity Discussion Quiz
10	April 1	Ageism	Canvas Posted Readings	In-class activity Discussion NO QUIZ Out of Comfort Zone Paper
11	April 8	Classism	Chapter 9	In-class activity Discussion Quiz
12	April 15	Religious Intolerance	Chapter 6 Canvas Posted Readings	In-class activity Discussion Quiz
13	April 22	Cultural Pluralism	Chapter 13 Canvas Posted Readings	In-class activity Discussion Quiz
14	April 29	Exam II		Exam II

University Policies and Information

Withdrawing from Class

Students may withdraw (drop) from this course using the Withdrawal Portal. Withdrawing (dropping) this course can impact your Financial Aid, Scholarships, Veteran Benefits, Exemptions, Waivers, International Student Status, housing, and degree progress. Please speak with your instructors, consider your options, speak with your advisor, and visit the One-Stop Service Center (STE 230) or email enroll@uttyler.edu to get a complete review of your student account and the possible impacts to withdrawing. We want you to make an informed decision. UT Tyler faculty and staff are here for you and often can provide additional support options or assistance. Make sure to carefully read the implications for withdrawing from a course and the instructions on using the Withdrawal portal.

Texas law prohibits students from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career*. The six courses dropped includes those from other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Consider the impact withdrawing from this class has on your academic progress and other areas, such as financial implications. We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and Enrollment Services for additional guidance.

*CAUTION #1: Withdrawing before census day does not mean you get a full refund. Please see the Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule. CAUTION #2: All international students must check with the Office of International Programs before withdrawing. All international students are required to enroll full-time for fall and spring terms. CAUTION #3: All UT Tyler Athletes must check with the Athletic Academic Coordinator before withdrawing from a course. CAUTION #4: All veterans or military-affiliated students should consult with the Military and Veterans Success Center. * Students who began college for the first time before 2007 are exempt from this law.*

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Statement

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy

AI For this course, SOCW 3309:

AI is permitted for the following course material/assignments only when adhering to all guidelines outlined by Professor Freeman:

- Discussions
- Brainstorming for Out of Comfort Zone assignment
- In-Class Activities

AI is NOT permitted for the Out of Comfort Zone written portion of the assignment. Using AI for this will result in a failing grade for the assignment.

Professor Freeman expects all work students submit for this course to be their own. She has carefully designed all assignments and class activities to support your learning. Doing your own work, with optional and appropriate use of artificial intelligence assistance as allowed on specific assignments, is best for your efforts in mastering course learning objectives. For this course, Professor Freeman expressly allows using ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for only certain portions of the course work process. Deviations from these guidelines will be considered a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code and academic honesty values.

Final Exam Policy

Final examinations are administered as scheduled. If unusual circumstances require that special arrangements be made for an individual student or class, the Dean of the appropriate college, after consultation with the faculty member involved, may authorize an exception to the schedule. Faculty members must maintain student final examination papers for a minimum of three months following the examination date.

Incomplete Grade Policy

If a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all of the requirements for a course by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course. The "I" may be assigned in place of a grade only when all of the following conditions are met: (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all coursework or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor, and (c) the student presents these reasons before the time that the final grade roster is due. The semester credit hours for an Incomplete will not be used to calculate the grade point average. The student and the instructor must submit an Incomplete Form detailing the work required and the time by which the work must be completed to their respective department chair or college dean for approval. The time limit established must not exceed one year. Should the student fail to meet all of the work for the course within the time limit, then the instructor may assign zeros to the unfinished work, compute the course average for the student, and assign the appropriate grade. If a grade has yet to be assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F, or NC. If the course was initially taken under the CR/NC grading basis, this may adversely affect the student's academic standing.

Grade Appeal Policy

Disputes regarding grades must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade by filing a Grade Appeal Form with the instructor who assigned the grade. A grade appeal should be used when the student thinks the final course grade awarded does not reflect the grades earned on assessments or follow the grading scale as documented in the syllabus. The student should provide the rationale for the grade appeal and attach supporting document about the grades earned. The form should be sent via email to the faculty member who assigned the grade. The faculty member reviews the 08/2024 rationale and supporting documentation and completes the instruction section of the form. The instructor should return the form to the student, even if a grade change is made at this level. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the department from which the grade was issued. In situations where there is an allegation of capricious grading, discrimination, or unlawful actions, appeals may go beyond the Chairperson to the Dean or the Dean's designee of the college from which the grade was issued, with that decision being final. The Grade Appeal form is found in the [Registrar's Form Library](#).

NOTE: The Grade Appeal Form is different from the Application for Appeal form submitted to the Student Appeals Committee, which does not rule on grade disputes as described in this policy.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical, and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler/> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with the Assistant Director Student Accessibility and Resources/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <https://www.uttyler.edu/disability-services>, the SAR office located in the Robert Muntz Library, LIB 460, email saroffice@uttyler.edu, or call 903.566.7079."

Military Affiliated Students

UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military-affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with your faculty member if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make your faculty member aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. Your faculty member is willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. The Military and Veterans Success Center (MVSC) has campus resources for military-affiliated students. The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttyler.edu or via phone at 903.565.5972.

Students on an F-1 Visa To remain in compliance with Federal Regulations requirements you must do the following:

- Traditional face-to-face classes: Attend classes on the regular meeting days/times.
- Hybrid Classes: Attend all face-to-face classes convened by the instructor according to the schedule set for your specific course.
- Online course: Only one online course can count toward your full-time enrollment. Students are expected to be fully engaged and meet all requirements for the online course.

Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct

The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that "Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do." Therefore, we enforce the Student Conduct and Discipline policy in the Student Manual Of Operating Procedures (Section 8).

FERPA

UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in University Policy 5.2.3. The course instructor will follow all requirements to protect your confidential information.

Absence for Official University Events or Activities

This course follows the practices related to Excused Absences for University Events or Activities as noted in the Catalog.

Absence for Religious Holidays

This course follows the practices related to Excused Absences for Religious Holy Days as noted in the Catalog.

Absence for Pregnant Students

This course follows the requirements of Texas Laws SB 412, SB 459, SB 597/HB 1361 to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Part of the supports afforded pregnant students includes excused absences. Faculty who are informed by a student of needing this support should make a referral to the Parenting Student Liaison. NOTE: Students must work with the Parenting Student Liaison in order to receive these supports. Students should reach out to the Parenting Student Liaison at parents@uttyler.edu and also complete the [Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form](#)

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>.

Student Resources

For a complete listing of all student resources available at UT Tyler, please visit this link in our course's Canvas:

<https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/36804/pages/student-resources>

