

SOCW 4331: Individual Practice I

Spring 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor:

Ericka Freeman, LCSW-S
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Office:

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In-Person Office Hours:

Thursdays 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.; 5-6 p.m..

Mondays 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Other hours available by appointment only.

Virtual Office Hours via Zoom: By appointment only. Please email me directly and we can schedule a time that works best for you (unless I am teaching a class or attending a faculty meeting)!

Course Information

We meet **9:30 – 10:50 a.m. each Thursday in person, in the Ratliff Building North, Rm # 3041.** Another 1.5 hours of class will be spent asynchronously. This means students may access the online portion of the course at any time and can complete the online portion of the course according to the due dates.

Course Description and Overview:

Social Work Individual Practice I introduces students to both theory and methods for social work practice with individuals and families. It emphasizes a generalist perspective, engagement and rapport building, beginning interviewing and relationship skills, and problem identification. Special attention is given to the common roles assumed by social workers (e.g. facilitator, broker, advocate). Prerequisites: SOCW 2361, SOCW 2362, SOCW 2371, SOCW 3303.

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to critical evaluation of the value base of the social work profession and basic practice concepts including engagement, interviewing, communication, problem-solving skills, theories and methodologies of generalist social work with individuals, dyads, and families. The course content will reflect the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) requirements for accreditation.

Student Learning Outcomes for SOCW 4331:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following outcomes as progression in the noted areas of the nine Core Competencies established by the Council on Social Work Education (EPAS 2022):

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

1. Demonstrate ethical decision-making capacity by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, and course related material additional to identify and address possible dilemmas and professionalism in simulated practice situations. Competency 1.

2. Use reflection and self-regulation to identify and manage personal values, biases and aspects of one's social environment in preparation for engagement with client populations. Competencies 1, 2 and 6.

3. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage, assess, and intervene with clients. Competencies 2, 4, 6-8

4. Collect and organize data and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients to form initial and ongoing platforms for the dynamic and interactive process of social work assessment. Competencies 4 and 7.

5. Demonstrate understanding of current and historical policies that affect human rights and social justice in the context of generalist social work with individuals and families. Competencies 3 and 5

6. Demonstrate use of empathy, reflection, and relationship-building skills to effectively engage clients in a simulated practice assignment. Competencies 6 and 7.

10. Demonstrate understanding of the importance of ethically negotiating, mediating, and advocating with and on behalf of diverse clients in efforts to manage barriers to change. Competencies 1-3, 7, 8.

Course Reading Assignments and Expectation

No need to lug around a heavy and expensive textbook for this course! All your brain food will be served upon Canvas via Open Education Resources (OER), UT Tyler Library E-Books, or through a delightful mix of podcasts, articles, and videos whipped up by the instructor.

Dive into those FREE and RIVOTING reading, listening and viewing assignments before class—they're your ticket to lively discussions! Feel free to bring all your burning questions and quirky comments to the lecture. Your curiosity and insights are the secret recipe for the instructor to gauge if you're flipping through those pages outside of class.

Descriptions of Major Assignments:

Quizzes and Knowledge Checks

Throughout the semester students will take 5 quizzes or "knowledge checks." These are designed as check points so that both the instructor can gauge progress of learning (or need to revisit) and students to demonstrate knowledge gleaned in small chunks. Several are comprised of multiple choice and true/false questions while a few are short answer and demonstrative in nature. The due date for each is listed in the course schedule.

Workbook Lessons



Students will engage in assigned interviewing workbook activities such as reading vignettes or watching client simulations, and then demonstrate learned knowledge and skills through three (3) separate lessons dispersed throughout the semester. The workbook is provided to students on Canvas. Each lesson corresponds to what we are learning in class. Additional information, instruction and rubric for this assignment will be posted in Canvas. The due date for each lesson is listed in the course schedule.

Client Simulations and Observations

Students will participate in simulated client interviews. Clients are portrayed by social work students. Each student is assigned a partner; partners will take turns being the social worker and client. Every student will participate each class, although only two students at a time will interview. Remaining students will provide feedback and practice note taking (also a graded component of the assignment.) During some classes, students will also be given in-class homework that compliments the interview and allows further practice of oral presentation skills. Additional information, instruction and rubric for this assignment will be posted in Canvas. The due date for completed notes is listed in the course schedule.

Ethical Dilemma

In this assignment, students, in two to three groups, are responsible for determining an ethical course of action for handling a dilemma in an assigned scenario. Students should utilize resource materials in class lecture, course readings, and the NASW Code of Ethics. Students will review a scenario (assigned by the instructor) and discuss what ethical principles, core values and practice principles are at play, arriving at a suggested solution. Students will share their dilemma and subsequent course of action to the class, using a visual depiction (e.g., infographic, Canva, Power Point, brief video) and oral presentation. Additional information, instruction and rubric for this assignment will be posted in Canvas. The due date for this assignment is listed in the course schedule.

Course Grading	
A = 90 – 100	
B = 80 – 89.9	
C = 70 – 79.9	
D = 60 – 69.9	
F = Below 60	

Grading Weight of Each Assignment

Assignment	%
Quizzes/Knowledge Checks	20
Workbook Lessons	30
Client Simulations and Observations	30
Ethical Dilemma	20
Total	100

Expectations for Grading

All written assignments must be grammatically correct using APA style. Assignments with many grammatical errors, misspellings, and/or evidence of plagiarism will not receive a satisfactory grade. All written assignments will be due on the date listed on the course schedule.

Ten points will be deducted for late assignments*.

No assignment will be accepted after five days late.

*Weekly Role Plays, Evaluations and Observations are difficult for late submission as most occur during regularly scheduled class times; however, make-up assignments may be offered on a case by case basis by speaking directly with Professor Freeman within 5 days of absence.

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

Academic Integrity

All work in this course is expected to be your own, completed by you for this class. If you receive help from an article, book, website, another person, etc., you must indicate that on the assignment. This is

called citing your sources. When you take credit for someone else's work, it is plagiarism. If you are ever unsure about whether you have correctly given credit to a source, please ask, and I will help you.

AI Usage in SOCW 4331

We are going to promote the responsible use of AI as a learning tool for social work students and future practitioners, while keeping academic and professional integrity intact. Think of it as trying to ride a unicycle on a tightrope!

For each assignment, I'll clearly outline the level of AI involvement allowed, which could range from "no AI at all" to "bring your AI to school day." When you do use AI, make sure to give it a shout-out, provide links to all the AI shenanigans, and include your original work.

You'll need to stick to these guidelines and be ready to chat about how AI contributed. This policy is here to boost your proficiency in critical thinking and hone those vital social work skills. Remember, the ultimate aim is for everyone to learn and level up their skills, without accidentally creating an AI that takes over the world! For more information, see UT Tyler's AI Statement in the "University Policies and Information" link at bottom of this syllabus.

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.

That is, while attendance is not "taken" officially, Professor Freeman is most cognizant of your engagement and participation each class. Participate actively in class discussions by asking questions and responding to questions. Encourage your classmates to engage, as well, by practicing social work empathic and active listening skills. We sometimes learn best vicariously.

Stay off your cell phones or other electronic devices unless instructed to do so as part of an in-class assignment. As much as we want to believe we can "multi task" our attention is compromised when we do more than one brain activity at a time!

Any student missing more than 50% of the in-person class dates OR coming to class and not engaging will not receive a passing grade.

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.

This course is organized by modules. Each module begins on a Sunday, at 12 a.m., and ends on the following Sunday, at 11:59 p.m. Any assignment due in a module must be submitted by the corresponding Sunday.

Module	In-Person Class Dates	Topics	Required Readings/ Activities	Assignments Given and Due
Getting Started	January 15	Course Overview	Getting Started Module	“Getting Started Module,” which includes Quiz 1 due Jan 18
1	January 22 January 29	Read: “Ethical Issues in Social Work”, “Integrating Values into Social Work Practice”, NASW Social Work Code of Ethics Workbook Lesson 1 “Ethics”		Skills Workbook Lesson 1 due Feb 1
2	February 5 February 12	Watch or Listen: Podcast or YouTube Video “Absorbing Emotions.”		Ethical Dilemma Presentations in Class Feb 5 Quiz/Knowledge Check 2 due Feb 15
3	February 19 February 26	Read: “Developing the Relationship”		Client Simulations/Observations in class February 26
4	March 5 March 12 Spring Break!	Read: “Best Guide on Social Work Case Notes” Case Documentations		Quiz/Knowledge Check 3 due March 8
5	March 19 March 26	Read: Keys to Communication Ch 3, 4 Workbook Lesson 2 “Body Language and Non Verbal Communication”		Workbook Lesson 2 due March 29 Client Simulation/Observations in class March 26
6	April 2 April 9	Read: Keys to Communication Ch 5		Quiz/Knowledge Check 4 due April 12 Client Simulations/Observations in class April 9

7	April 16 April 23	Read: Keys to Communication Ch 6,7 Workbook Lesson 3 "Reflecting and Summarizing"		Workbook Lesson 3 due April 26 Client Simulations/Observations in class April 23
8	Final Exam Week			Quiz/Knowledge Check 5 due May 3 (in lieu of Final Exam) Client Simulation/Observation Final Note due May 3.

University Policies and Information

For all updated UT Tyler student policies and information for the 2025-2026 Academic Year, please visit:

<https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/52073/pages/university-policies-and-information-4>