

SOCW 4310: Social Work with Children and Families

Fall 2026



UTTyler™ **SOCIAL
WORK**

Instructor Information

Instructor:

Ericka Freeman, LCSW
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In-Person Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and 2 - 3 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

Section Information:

SOCW 4310-001 (Hybrid)

Time and Place of Class Meetings: Tuesdays 8 – 9:20 a.m. in scheduled classroom; *On Thursdays 8- 9:20 a.m., students may use this time outside of our classroom for service learning and other assigned online course components.*

On Campus Component: Tuesdays are in-person class meetings, 8 – 9:20 a.m. in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), room 210.

Off Campus Components:

Service-Learning participation with your community partner will be scheduled based on the student and agency's availabilities. Thursdays from 8 – 9:20 a.m. is protected time students may use for a variety of coursework purposes.

Online course material which compliments the Service-Learning component may be accessed at any time and should be completed according to the due dates listed in this syllabus.

Service-Learning Component Description: This section of 4310 is organized as a Service-Learning course. This Service-Learning course helps prepares undergraduate social work students for professional helping roles with children, families, and their varied circumstances and community contexts.

This semester, students will partner with either SocialWorx Advocacy Group or East Texas Human Needs Network. Students in the course should expect to both serve at and learn in the agency. In addition, reflection of the service-learning experience will occur through journal writing.

Examples of service may include but are certainly not limited to: assessing the unmet needs of the agency, participating in a needs drive, organizing child resource rooms, assisting with agency fundraiser, helping staff at community events.

Examples of learning may include but are certainly not limited to: touring the facility, attending a board meeting, attending court, attending agency trainings, attending continuing education training, assisting in needs assessments and advocacy drives, community awareness outreach, and shadowing agency employees.

Service learning combines field visits, reading assignments, journal responses/reflections, in-class discussions, and projects (e.g., acts of service) benefitting their community partner to explore the importance of competent, generalist social work intervention with families who have pre-adult children.

Description of Course Content: A critical examination of social policies, research, and practices impacting children and families experiencing significant challenges in child welfare, child mental health, and school settings. Emphasis is placed on the role of the social work practitioner in enhancing the well-being of children and families in contemporary society. Pre-requisite: SOCW 2361.

Course Overview: The purpose of this course is to provide social work students with an overview of the history, goals, policies and associated interventions of working with children and families.

Student Learning Outcomes for SOCW 4310:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following beginning generalist knowledge and skills for social work with children and families consistent with professional ethics, evidence-informed practice, applicable laws, the NASW Code of Ethics, and the person-in-environment perspective:

1. Describe the history, philosophy, policies and professional roles associated with social work practice with children and families.
2. Apply the person-in-environment perspective when examining the strengths, needs, and circumstances of children, families, and their support systems.
3. Analyze how family relationships, community resources, public policy, health, education, and environmental factors influence child and family well-being.
4. Apply ethical decision-making, professional communication, and the NASW Code of Ethics to practice situations involving children and families.
5. Collaborate effectively with the local community, including social service agencies, individuals and other professionals, to support positive outcomes for children and their caregivers.

Required Textbook and Other Course Material:

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.

Course Reading Expectation:

Dive into those reading 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 help the instructor to gauge if you're flipping through those pages outside of class or just winging it!

Descriptions of Assignments:

Serving-Learning Component #1 “Service” (25% Final Grade) Students will participate in outreach efforts that assist the community partner in achieving its mission and goals. The effort should include all elements of the 4-stage planned changed process: engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation. Efforts will be approved in advance by the community partner and instructor. Each student will provide the instructor with a time sheet detailing the activities and time spent serving the agency. Assignment specifics, including due date(s), are found under the “Assignments” link in Canvas and will be presented during class.

Service-Learning Component #2 “Learning” (25 % Final Grade) Students will attend agency-related activities that foster learning about the agency's role in advocating for and strengthening relationships with children and families. These activities could include: touring the agency's campus, attending a board meeting, attending court, attending volunteer training, attend continuing education training, and shadowing employees. Each student will provide the instructor with an evaluation of the service-learning process, critically examining the components and giving advice and suggestions for the next class of students who will be working with the community partner. Assignment specifics, including due date(s), are found under the “Assignments” link in Canvas and will be presented during class.

Service-Learning Component #3 “Reflecting” (25% Final Grade) Students will write three (3) clear and concise one-page, two-paragraph journal entries demonstrating reflection of the assignment. Journal entries will correspond with the progression of the Service-Learning experience. Each journal will pose the questions: “What? So what? Now what?” within the context of a critical incident as identified by the instructor. Assignment specifics, including due date(s), are found under the “Assignments” link in Canvas and will be presented during class.

Discover and Demonstrate (30% Final Grade). To assist with discovering, developing and demonstrating skill-based resources to utilize in future practice with children and families, students will participate in brief assignments throughout the semester. 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.

Attendance:

Engaged and timely participation and presence in all assignments and classes constitutes "attendance" for purposes of this course. As students cannot engage and participate without being physically present for class, attendance will be taken each class meeting unless otherwise announced by the instructor.

Each student is allowed up to two (2) absences without grade reduction penalty. Each absence after the second (2nd) absence will result in a 5-point reduction in final grade per absence. (e.g. absence #3 = 95, absence #4=90, etc.) In addition, it is important for students to come to class prepared to take part in class. Grades will reflect accordingly.

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

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 “multitask” our attention is compromised when we do more than one brain activity at a time!

Grading Information

Grading Distribution

Assignment	%
Service Learning Parts 1, 2 and 3	75
Discover and Demonstrate (5 @ 5% each)	25
Total	100

Grading Scale

90 and Above =A
80 - 89.9 = B
70 –79.9 = C
60 - 69.9 = D
Below 60 = F

A grade of incomplete will not be given for this class.

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.

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.

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

AI Usage in SOCW 4310:

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 or in class activity, the instructor will clearly outline the level of AI involvement allowed, which could range from "no AI at all" to "bring our AI to school day." When you do use AI, make sure to give it a shout-out, provide links to all the AI references 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 aim is for everyone to learn and level up their skills. 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.

Late Assignments:

Late assignments are strongly discouraged. There will be a 10 point (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.

Course Schedule

Please see the course schedule below for due date reminders of each specific assignment. Assignments are due on a Sunday at 11:59 p.m., following the end of a module.



There is NO class and NO assigned material November 23 -27, 2026 as this is Thanksgiving Break!

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.

Module	In-Person Class Date(s)	Topics	Required Readings/ Activities	Assignments Due/Da
Getting Started	8/25	Course Overview, Introductions, Choosing a student-led subject	Syllabus, Getting Started Module	Start Here Module "What I Want to Learn" Due: Sunday, 8/30/26
Service Learning	9/1	Service-Learning and Community Partners	Meeting our Community Partners, Video "What is Service Learning?" Blog "What is Service Learning?"	Service-Learning Modul Journal #1 Due: Sunday, 9/6/26
1	9/8	The Focus of Working with Children and Families	OER readings: Contemporary Families and Child Family and Community assigned chapters Assigned Videos	Discover and Demonstrate #1 Due: Sunday, 9/13/26
2	9/15	Societal Structures that Affect Families and Children	OER readings: Contemporary Families assigned chapters Article: "The Federalization of Family Law"	

			Assigned online resources	
3	9/22 and 9/29	How Health and Wellness Affect Children and Families	OER reading: Contemporary Families, ch 4 Article: "Trends in ACEs in the United States" Assigned Videos	Journal Reflection #2 Due: Sunday, 10/4/26
4	10/6	Building Collaborative Relationships With Families	Embedded textbook: Social Work Practice with Children, ch 3 Article: "Principals to Improve Outcomes for children and families" Assigned Video	
5	10/13	Tools for Assessing Children and Families	Embedded textbook: Social Work Practice with Children, ch 4 Assigned Videos	Discover and Demonstrate #2 Due: Sunday, 10/18/26
6	10/20	Contracting and Planning with Families	Embedded textbook: Social Work Practice with Children, ch 5 Assigned community resources	Discover and Demonstrate #3 Due: Sunday, 10/25/26
7	10/27	The Broken System of Child Welfare Foster Care, and Adoption	OER reading: Parenting and Family, pp 158-166 Guest Speaker Assigned online resources Assigned Video	Discover and Demonstrate #4 Due: Sunday, 11/1/26
8	11/3	There is no Substitute for Good Parenting	OER readings: Parenting and Family; Child Family and Community assigned chapters	Discover and Demonstrate #5

			Assigned Videos	
9	11/10	Child Development and Family Relationships	OER reading: Child Family and Community, ch 4 Article: "Healthy . . .Development and the Young Child" Assigned Video Assigned Online Resource	Due: Sunday, 11/8/26 Journal reflection #3 Due: Sunday, 11/15/26
10	11/17	Special Topic Chosen by Student	TBD	
11	12/1	Semester Wrap-Up	In-class discussion of Service-Learning experience as it relates to social work. Students are encouraged to share!	Service Learning Components #1, 2 (Lab Book and Evaluation) Due: Sunday, 12/6/26

University Policies and Information

For all updated UT Tyler student policies and information for the 2026 - 2027 Academic Year, please visit:

<https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/36804/pages/university-policies-and-information>