



SOCW 4360:

Forensic Social Work
Summer 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor: Kristin Mycke, LCSW
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Office Hours: Fall/Spring Semester: Mon: 12-2 PM; Thurs: 10-12 PM
Summer Term (Available for zoom conferences only)
(Other appointment times available by appointment or via video conferencing)

Course Information

Credit Hours: 3 Credit Hours

Course Format: Online

Time and place of Class Meetings: TBD

Description of Course Content:

Prerequisites: None

Corequisite: None

Course Overview: This course provides an introduction to forensic social work through an interdisciplinary lens that bridges social work practice, legal systems, and public policy. Using Handbook of Forensic Social Work: Theory, Policy, and Fields of Practice as the foundational text, students will explore social work roles within the criminal, civil, family, and juvenile justice systems. Topics include trauma-informed care, policy advocacy, ethical dilemmas, court testimony, forensic assessments, and systemic inequities impacting victims and offenders.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Below are the Nine CSWE Core Competencies established by the Council on Social Work Education. Each of the competencies is included as an objective to understand and be met as appropriate for each course learning objective.

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Competency 3: Engage in Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in practice

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

The Nine CSWE Core Competencies are the basis for the Learning Outcomes that follow

Student Learning Outcomes for SOCW 4360:

Students that participate in this course will be able to:

1. Articulate and apply relevant theoretical frameworks and approaches to client populations impacted by legal issues.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the structure and processes of the legal system in the United States and how it impacts social work practice with diverse populations and settings throughout the life course.
3. Critically analyze ethical issues and legal issues related to social work and the law.
4. Develop familiarity with the adversarial nature of the legal process and with the civil and criminal issues and laws that impact client populations.
5. Identify social and legal issues and their relationship to social human rights, social justice, and social welfare.
6. Demonstrate how to work and advocate on behalf of their clients and learn how social workers interface with the law, lawyers, & the courts.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) & CSWE Competency Alignment

- **SLO 1: Describe the historical and theoretical foundations of forensic social work (CSWE Competency 4).**
- **SLO 2: Analyze structural inequalities and their impacts on justice-involved populations (Competencies 2, 3).**
- **SLO 3: Interpret and evaluate legal policy and procedures (Competency 5).**
- **SLO 4: Demonstrate professional and ethical behavior in forensic social work roles (Competency 1).**
- **SLO 5: Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate services for clients involved in forensic systems (Competencies 6, 7, 8, 9).**

Required Textbook and readings: (Free electronic version)

Roberts, A. R., & Springer, D. W. (Eds.). (2017). *Handbook of Forensic Social Work: Theory, Policy, and Fields of Practice* (2nd ed.). Springer Publishing Company.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uttyler/detail.action?docID=7373808>

Description of Assignments:

10% of grade

1. Participation: Students are expected to participate regularly in the virtual learning environment and log-on to the canvas platform weekly.

25% of grade

2. Weekly discussions: Students will participate in a weekly online discussion with other students based on a discussion topic provided by the instructor. Requirements: Posting own response and responding to at least 1 other students will be required.

25% of grade

3. Weekly Reflections: Students will submit a short weekly reflection assignments that correlate with the weekly reading. This will demonstrate that you are reading and thinking about course material especially as it relates to Social Work Practice.

20% of grade

4. Program evaluation: Research and evaluate a current prison or re-entry program especially highlighting how it is in line with/or contradicts social work practice and values. This analysis will consist of 4-5 pages. Outline provided by Professor.

20% of grade

5. Court room Observation and Reflection: Each student will observe a courtroom proceeding. This can be a family court, criminal, or other trial setting. Professor will provide information on available days and times. After observing at least 2-4 hours in a courtroom, students will write a reflection paper talking about the experience and what they learned. Reflection paper is at least 2 pages in length.

Total Points Available for Course=1000

Letter Grade

1000-900 Points = A (100%-90%)
899 - 800 Points = B (89%- 80%)
799 - 700 Points = C (79%-70%)
699 - 600 Points = D (69%-60%)
599 or less = F (59% or less)

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.**

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

Make-Up Assignments:

Late assignments (including quizzes) are strongly discouraged. There will be 10 points (total) deducted for each late assignment or quiz*. No assignment or quiz 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 6 hours per week of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing for quizzes, etc.

Attendance:

This is an online asynchronous class and students will be expected to log-in at least 1x weekly to watch course videos and engage in class discussions. Students will complete course modules and assignments at their desired schedule. Participation grade and attendance will be based on weekly log-ins and engaging other students in discussion assignments.

The Census Date for the semester is. This is the last day students may withdraw from the course without penalty.

Course Schedule

Week	Chapters to Read	Major Topics
Week 1 Theory Foundations	Ch. 1–10	- Foundations of forensic social work - Historical development and professional identity - Core theories (systems, ecological, trauma-informed, criminological) - Ethics, dual loyalty, confidentiality - Cultural competence and bias - Trauma and behavioral health - Human behavior in legal environments - Power, authority, and social control - Communication, documentation, boundaries, and safety
Week 2 Law & Policy	Ch. 11–18	- U.S. legal systems (criminal, civil, juvenile, family) - Criminal justice policy and sentencing - Juvenile justice and adolescent development - Child welfare law and mandated reporting - Family law, custody, and domestic violence - Civil law roles (disability, immigration, personal injury) - Inequality, disparities, and justice outcomes - Policy advocacy and reform

Week	Chapters to Read	Major Topics
Week 3 Assessment & Intervention	Ch. 19–24	- Forensic assessment principles - Risk assessment tools and structured decision-making - Competency and capacity evaluations - Substance use and co-occurring disorders - Evidence-based interventions (CBT, DBT, MI, trauma-informed care) - Documentation and legally defensible report writing
Week 4 Criminal Justice Practice	Ch. 25–29	- Social work in jails and prisons - Probation, parole, and community supervision - Reentry and reintegration planning - Working with violent offenders - Special populations (women, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with serious mental illness) - Child welfare forensics and dependency court practice
Week 5 Civil, Family, & Community Forensics	Ch. 30–33	- Family court, custody evaluations, and domestic violence - Elder abuse, APS, and capacity issues - Civil forensic practice (immigration, disability, personal injury) - Interdisciplinary collaboration

UT Tyler Policy on Artificial Intelligence Use

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 (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

For this course, SOCW 4360, AI is not permitted. The work submitted by students in this course will be generated by themselves. This includes all process work, drafts, brainstorming artifacts, editing, and final products. This extends to group assignments where students must collaboratively create the project. Any instance of the following constitutes a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code: a student has another person/entity do any portion of a graded assignment, which includes purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, using a previously submitted assignment and/or using AI tools (such as ChatGPT).

Institutional Information

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over 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>

UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors.

Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products.

There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's

Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a “W” grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waiver through Financial Aid State-Mandated
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Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

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 you have 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 Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor)

must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

- i. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:
 - copying from another student's test paper;
 - using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
 - failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
 - possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
 - using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
 - collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
 - discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
 - divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
 - substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
 - paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
 - falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
 - taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
 - misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

- ii. “Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit.
- iii. “Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.
- iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- [UT Tyler Writing Center](#) (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- [UT Tyler Tutoring Center](#) (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- [UT Tyler Counseling Center](#) (903.566.72