**University of Texas at Arlington**

**School of Social Work**

**Personal Relationships SOCW 6320-003**

**Course ID # 28171**

**Instructor:**  Bruce L. Bower, MSW, LCSW

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**Office hours:** Tuesdays from 1400h. to 1700h; Wednesdays from 0900h. to 1200h. Other times by appointment.

**Time and Place of Class Meetings:**

Wednesdays from 1600h to 1850h., Social Work Complex, Building A, Room 316.

**I. Requirements to be in the course:**

Completion of first year courses or in the final semester of the first year and have completed field and the field seminar.

This course focuses on the interactions among and individuals in personal relationships. It addresses relationship initiation, maintenance and termination. It begins with the state of aloneness and moves through the stages of connecting in friendships and romances. Factors that predict breakups are presented as well as factors that foster staying together.

In addition, this course addresses EPAS 4.0 Values and Ethics

Social work education programs integrate content about values and principles of ethical decision making as presented in the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. The educational experience provides students with the opportunity to be aware of personal values; develop, demonstrate, and promote the values of the profession; and analyze ethical dilemmas and the ways in which these affect practice, services and clients.

**UTA-School of Social Work: Definition of Evidence-Informed Practice:**

Evidence-informed practice (EIP) is a guiding principal for the UTA-SSW. This approach is guided by the philosophy espoused by Gambrill (2006) and others who discuss evidence-based practice (EBP). Though many definitions of EIP/EBP saturate the literature, we offer two definitions that most closely define our understanding of the concept and serve to explicate our vision of EIP for the UTA-SSW: The use of the best available scientific knowledge derived from randomized, controlled outcome studies, and meta-analyses of existing outcome studies, as one basis for guiding professional interventions and effective therapies, combined with professional ethical standards, clinical judgment, and practice wisdom (Barker, 2003, p. 149). …..the integration of the best research evidence with our clinical expertise and our patient’s unique values and circumstances (Strauss, et al., 2005).

The University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work vision statement states that the “School’s vision is to promote social and economic justice in a diverse environment.”  Empowerment connects with the vision statement because, as Rees (1991) has pointed out, the very objective of empowerment is social justice.  Empowerment is a seminal vehicle by which social justice can be realized.  It could well be argued that true social justice cannot be realized without empowerment. Empowerment, anchored with a generalist base, directs social workers to address root causes at all levels and in all contexts, not simply “symptoms”.  This is not a static process but an ongoing, dynamic process, a process leading to a greater degree of social justice and equality.

**University of Texas at Arlington-School of Social Work: Definition of Empowerment**

Empowerment is defined by Barker (2003, p.142) as follows: In social work practice, the process of helping individuals, families, groups, and communities increase their personal, interpersonal, socioeconomic, and political strength and develop influence toward improving their circumstances.

**Catalogue Description:**

SOCW 6320 PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS (3-0) Explores theoretical and empirical material on linkup initiation, maintenance, and termination; identifies areas for intervention. Prerequisites: SOCW 5301 and 5317

**II. Educational Objectives Addressed:**

SOCW 6320 (A Human Behavior in the Social Environment [HBSE] elective) addresses the following MSSW Direct Practice Educational Objectives, relative to concentrations:

**Direct Practice in Social Work-Children and Families: Concentration**

1. Complete multidimensional, bio-psychosocial assessments with client systems and groups, taking into account clients strengths, diversity and social justice.

2. Critically analyze theoretical models of micro practice to challenge societal oppression and discrimination, as well as for decision-making in practice.

3. Demonstrate an understanding of race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, culture, and other client characteristics, in conducting culturally sensitive, competent, and ethical social work practice.

4. Plan for life-long learning and activities to update and improve professional knowledge and skills.

**Direct Practice in Social Work-Mental Health: Concentration**

1. Demonstrate knowledge and skill in direct practice with mental health services.

2. Develop and apply appropriate, evidence-informed, empowerment-based intervention plans with mental health clients.

3. Demonstrate ability to integrate micro and macro practice into the delivery of services to mental health clients to enhance client well-being through knowledge of policy, generalist macro practice, and research.

**III. Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will examine and describe the theories, concepts, and empirically-based knowledge presented in the course.

2. Students will translate course knowledge into applications to interactions in relationships.

3. Students will explain similarities and differences in interactions in heterosexual, Caucasian, ethnic minority and lesbian and gay relationships. These can be interactions in friendships and/or romances.

4. Students will distinguish among the NASW Code of Ethics statements of values and ethics that directly address how one relates to others. They will assess how they use these ethics and values in their personal, professional, and client relationships.

5. Students will plan for further knowledge development about friendships and romances.

**IV. Required Textbooks**

Knapp, M.L., & Vangelisti, A.L. (2009). *Interpersonal communication and human relationships (6th Ed.)*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

**V. Course Schedule:**

**Date Topic Readings**

January 15 Introductions

-The instructor

-Students

-The course None

January 22 The components of a healthy relationship None

Intimacy TBA

-Defined

-Levels of intimacy

-Why we fear intimacy

January 29 Communication in developing relationships Knapp & Vangelisti, ch.1

-Assumptions/misconceptions

-Dimensions

-Perceptions

February 05 **[Ethics Paper Due – Assignment #1]**

Coming together and coming apart Knapp & Vangelisti, ch.2

-Types of relationships

-interactions in relationships

-Movement in relationships

February 12 Factors affecting communication Knapp & Vangelisti, ch.3

-Interpersonal needs

-Stages of development

-Gender

February 19 Effects of environment on communication Knapp & Vangelisti. ch.4

-Messages

-Attitudes

-Culture

-Relationship/attachment styles

-Perception

February 26 Coming together in relationships Knapp & Vangelisti, ch.5

-Impulses

-Conditions affecting coming together

-Attraction

March 05 Interaction rituals Knapp & Vangelisti, ch.6

-Rules

-Rhetoric

-Addressing/opening

-Small talk

March 12 **\*\*\*SPRING BREAK\*\*\***

March 19 Intimate dialogue Knapp & Vangelisti, ch.7

-Types of love

-Intimacy revisited

-Self-fulfillment *vs.* self-giving

March 26 **[Comparison Paper Due – Assignment #2]**

Relationship maintenance Knapp & Vangelisti, ch.8

-Self-disclosure and trust

-Lying

-Conflict

April 02 Commitment Knapp & Vangelisti, ch.9

-Personal idioms

-Persuasion

-Intimacy again

April 09 Coming apart Knapp & Vangelisti, ch.10

-Terminating relationships

-Distancing

-disassociation

April 16 Destructive patterns of communication Knapp & Vangelisti, ch.11

-Helpful-critical

-Active-passive

-Aggressive-evasive

-Dominating-submissive

-Certain-provisional

April 23 **[Case Study Paper Due – Assignment #3]**

Effective communication Knapp & Vangelisti, ch.12

-Evaluating

-Becoming

Application/Wrap-up

April 30 [**Personal Plan Paper Due – Assignment #4]**

Application to professional relationships No readings

**VI. Major Assignments:**

**1. A paper on the specific aspects of the NASW Code of Ethics and your views of them as they relate to and operate within your personal, professional (peer-to-peer), and worker-client relationships. (Assesses outcome #4.)** Length is to be no more than five (5) pages.

**2. Paper in which you explain relationship similarities and differences of couples from differing backgrounds. This could be a comparison of gay/lesbian couples, and/or couples from different parts of the world. (Assesses outcome #3).** Use outside resources: journal articles or book chapters that are *not* your text. The length is to be five (5) pages.

**3. Write a case study on an interaction you have with someone outside of this class. (Assesses outcomes #1, 2 and 3).** The case study should use applications of the concepts and theories from the text. Give examples of how the interaction demonstrates the concepts and theories. Use the following outline for organizing your paper and use this to develop subtitles for each section of the paper. The length should be between 15 and 20 pages.

**Please use the following outline:**

**(1). Using the interaction stages presented in the text, describe the development of the relationship.**

**a. What specific interaction sequences exemplify the processes of each stage you went through.**

**(2). After your first meeting, what were your impressions of the other person?**

**a. What characteristics about the setting, individual, and conversations helped you form these impressions?**

**b. How did these impressions influence the next few meetings?**

**c. How did these impressions change through the semester? Why?**

**(3). What specific interaction sequences provided evidence that you and the other person developed a larger and more diverse repertoire of communication behaviors as the relationship progressed?**

**a. Provide examples for at least 4 communicative dimensions that changed.**

**b. Under what circumstances did you and the other person not manifest higher levels on some dimensions? Why?**

**(4). What communication norms developed in your relationship? Use at least 2 theories as a framework for explaining how and why these norms developed (e.g. social exchange theory, dialectic theory, social comparison theory, Schultz’s theory of interpersonal needs).**

**(5). Describe 3 situations that were most difficult for you and the other person to deal with.**

**a. What specific communication strategies did you and the other person use in trying to solve these problems?**

**b. Which of the strategies were successful? Why?**

**c. Which of the strategies were unsuccessful? Why?**

**(6). What needs are being met in the relationship that make it worthwhile?**

**(7). In what ways is the dialogue intimate? Did self-disclosure move in a systematic way?**

**(8). Was there conflict in the relationship? What specific communication patterns lead to conflict or could lead to conflict? How can you deal with conflict effectively?**

**4. Write your plan for developing further knowledge development about friendships and romances. (Assesses outcome #5).** Minimum of 1 page, and no more than three.

***All Assignments must be submitted as hard copy. Students are to respond completely, not cursorily to these assignments. Clarity, organization, and substance of response will be assessed. \*\*PLEASE NOTE\*\*: All assignments are due by the end of the class for the dates given. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. Papers submitted after the published due date will be given a grade of zero for that paper, extenuating circumstances excepted.***

***NOTE: All papers are to be double-spaced, with 1” (one inch) margins on all sides, and in font sizes no larger than 12-point. Double-sided hard copy is acceptable. Deviation from this requirement will result in a reduced grade.***

**VII. Grading Policy**

***Ethics Paper/Assignment #1***

**Preliminary Assessment**

Matches assignment: Yes\_\_ No\_\_.

First page is comprehensible: Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_.

**Rest of Assessment:**

**Clear:** Content is expressed with clarity and coherence (10-5-0 points)

**Applications**: Elaborated, detailed, substantive applications from required text (20-10-0) points.

**Depth:** Answers to questions, or applications are intricate; reflect depth versus superficiality; reflect comprehensiveness or pervasive detail. (20-10-0 points).

**Above will be assessed as follows:**

**Rarely or not evident (NO points)**

**Moderately (midrange points)**

**Extensively (maximum points)**

**Comparison Paper/Assignment #2 AND Case Study/Assignment #3**

**Preliminary assessment:**

Matches assignment: Yes\_\_ No\_\_\_.

First page is comprehensible: Yes\_\_ No\_\_.

**Rest of assessment:**

**Clear:** Content is expressed with clarity and coherence (10-5-0 points) **Applications:** Elaborated, detailed, substantive applications from required text. (20-10-0 points)

**Depth:** Answers to questions, or applications are intricate; reflect depth versus superficiality; reflect comprehensiveness or pervasive detail. (20-10-0 points for Comparison; 60-25-0 points for Case Study)

**Above will be assessed as follows: Rarely or not evident (NO points)**

**Moderately (Midrange points)**

**Extensively (Maximum points)**

**Lifelong Learning Paper/Assignment #4**

Must be clearly written and contain a plan for lifelong learning.

High substance (3 points), Moderate substance (2 points), Low substance (1). No substance (0).

**Final Grade Calculation:**

1. **Ethics paper: 50 points**

3. **Comparison paper: 50 points**

4. **Case Study: max=105 points**

5. **Life-Long learning: 10 points**

**Total maximum points: 215**

**A=193 - 215**

**B=172 - 192**

**C=150 - 171**

**D=129 - 170**

**F= less than 128**

***NO INCOMPLETE GRADES WILL BE GIVEN IN THIS CLASS.***

**VIII. Late Papers**

***As noted above, late papers will NOT be accepted, except in extreme circumstances and these will be judged by the instructor on a case-by-case basis. Late papers will be given an automatic grade of zero (0) for that assignment.***

**IX. Attendance policy**

I expect that you attend class and participate in class discussions. Each class missed is a significant loss of instruction. Three absences will not be penalized; however, each class beyond the three will result in a 5% drop in your final grade for each class missed. No extra credit is given for being in class.

**X. Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located right around the corner from this classroom. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals

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**XI. UTA Policies**

**Withdrawal:**

To avoid receiving a failing grade due to absences, it is the student's responsibility to drop the class according to university guidelines and time frames.

**Adding and Dropping Courses:**

Graduate students who wish to change a schedule by either dropping or adding a course must first consult with their Graduate Advisor. Regulations pertaining to adding or dropping courses are described below. The last day to drop a course taught in regular semesters is at the end of the 12th week of class. The last day to drop a course in the other, non-traditional semesters corresponds to 75 percent of the duration of the course. The last day to drop a course is listed in the Academic Calendar.

1. A student may not add a course after the end of late registration.

2. A student dropping a graduate course after the Census Date but on or before the end of the 12th week of class may with the agreement of the instructor, receive a grade of W but only if passing the course with a C or better average. A grade of W will not be given if the student does not have at least a C average. In such instances, the student will receive a grade of F if he or she withdraws from the class. 3. A student desiring to drop all courses in which he or she is enrolled is reminded that such action constitutes withdrawal (resignation) from the University. The student must indicate intention to withdraw and drop all courses by filing a resignation form in the Office of the Registrar or by Web at www.uta.edu/registrar. 4. In most cases, a student may not drop a graduate course or withdraw (resign) from the University after the 12th week of class. Under extreme circumstances, the Dean of Graduate Studies may consider a petition to withdraw (resign) from the University after the 12th week of class, but in no case may a graduate student selectively drop a course after the 12th week and remain enrolled in any other course. Students should use the special Petition to Withdraw for this purpose. See the section titled Withdrawal (Resignation) From the University for additional information concerning withdrawal.

**Americans With Disabilities Act:**

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of federal legislation entitled *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels.  Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.   Also, you may visit the Office for Students with Disabilities in room 102 of University Hall or call them at (817) 272-3364, or visit the office online at: [**www.uta.edu/disability**](http://www.uta.edu/disability).

*“If you require an accommodation based on disability, I would like to meet with you in the privacy of my office, during the first week of the semester, to make sure you are appropriately accommodated.”*I would also like to encourage you to contact Penny Acrey, LMSW [**pacrey@uta.edu**](mailto:pacrey@uta.edu), Director of OSD, as needed to help explain the intricacies of the ADA and the resources available to you.

**Academic Integrity:**

It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is 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." (Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2)

**Student Support Services Available:**

The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-7232 for more information and appropriate referrals. For writing assistance, contact Chris Kilgore at [ChrisKilgore@uta.edu](mailto:ChrisKilgore@uta.edu)

**Librarian to Contact:**

The Social Sciences / Social Work Resource Librarian is John Dillard. His office is in the Social Work Electronic Library (SWEL) located in Building A: Suite 111 of the UTA Social Work Complex at 211 South Cooper Street, Arlington, Texas. He may also be contacted via E-mail: [dillard@uta.edu](mailto:dillard@uta.edu) or by Cell phone: **(817) 675-8962, or through the** **SWEL** phone: (817) 272-7518. His **SWEL office hours are usually**: 10:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Thursday. The SWEL web page is linked to the School of Social Work Main Page and through the Central Library web page. The SWEL library contains a number of computer work stations and printing facilities, and resource guides for conducting research.

**E-Culture Policy:**

The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University email address as an official means of communication with students. Through the use of email, UT-Arlington is able to provide students with relevant and timely information, designed to facilitate student success. In particular, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation may be sent to students through email.

All students are assigned an email account and information about activating and using it is available at www.uta.edu/email. New students (first semester at UTA) are able to activate their email account 24 hours after registering for courses. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, and it remains active as long as a student is enrolled at UT-Arlington. Students are responsible for checking their email regularly.

**Although I do understand our heavy reliance on computers, use of electronic equipment in this class is not allowed (except audio/video recording devices). This includes laptop and tablet computers, and cell phones (smart or otherwise). It is distracting and disrespectful to me and to others in the class. If you have a *bon fide* emergency, please leave the classroom and take the call elsewhere. On the other hand if you are seen using your electronic devices you will be asked to leave for that class and that will be counted as an absence.**

**Selected Bibliography**

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Mikulincer, M. and Shaver, P.R. (2007). *Attachment in adulthood: structure, dynamics, and change.* New York: Guilford.

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