



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
**SAN ANTONIO**

**College of Education and Human Development**  
**Department of Counseling, Health & Kinesiology**  
EDCG 5341 Guided Advanced Topics: Social Justice in Counseling  
Fall 2024

**Instructor:** Isanely Guerrero Kurz, PhD, LPC  
**Class time & Location:** Thursdays 5:30-6:45 pm CH 219  
**E-mail & Phone:** [ikurz@tamusa.edu](mailto:ikurz@tamusa.edu)  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:20-5:20 PM  
**Office Location:** Classroom Hall 214G

**Required Readings:**

Course documents/readings posted on Blackboard

**Recommended Textbooks:**

N/A

**Course Description:**

This course addresses the counselor's roles in cultivating self-awareness and promoting social justice, advocacy, and conflict resolution/transformation to support the flourishing and dignity of all persons. Legal and ethical issues, as well as cultural and diversity issues related to counselor identity, will be reviewed in relation to counseling services in support of social justice.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Student will:

- a) Understand the role and process of the professional counselor advocating on behalf of the profession
- b) Identify advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity and success for clients
- c) Verbalize the impact of systemic oppression and social justice implications
- d) Understand the effects of power and privilege of counselors and clients
- e) Identify strategies for identifying and eliminating barriers, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination
- f) Identify strategies to advocate for persons with mental health issues

**CACREP standards are addressed in the course:**

2.F.2.h	strategies for identifying and eliminating barriers, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination
2.F.5.b	a systems approach to conceptualizing clients
2.F.5.n	processes for aiding students in developing a personal model of counseling
2.F.1.i	ethical standards of professional counseling organizations and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling
2.F.1.d	the role and process of the professional counselor advocating on behalf of the profession
2.F.1.e	advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients
2.F.2.e.	the effects of power and privilege for counselors and clients
5.C.3.e	strategies to advocate for persons with mental health issues

**TEA School Counseling Standards:**

**Domain II – Planning and Implementing the Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program**

**Competency 006 – Counseling**

The school counselor understands how to provide effective counseling services to individuals and small groups.

**IMPORTANT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html> or email us at [dss@tamusa.edu](mailto:dss@tamusa.edu). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

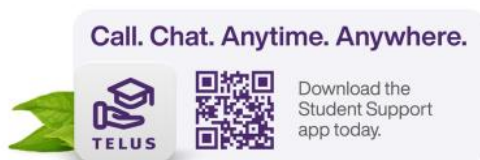
Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing [tutoring@tamusa.edu](mailto:tutoring@tamusa.edu), calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information on SCC services visit [tamusa.edu/studentcounseling](http://tamusa.edu/studentcounseling)

*Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2').*

Additionally, the TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in the moment distress, an anonymous peer to peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/emergency-management/>.

Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated

and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/>.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a CARE referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/file-a-report.html>) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots’ Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at [military.va@tamusa.edu](mailto:military.va@tamusa.edu) or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student’s GPA.

However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as “F” grades and will impact the student’s GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio’s Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university’s Title IX Coordinator ([titleix@tamusa.edu](mailto:titleix@tamusa.edu), 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student’s studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student’s major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student’s unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe

distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status ([titleix@tamusa.edu](mailto:titleix@tamusa.edu); 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

#### *Students' Rights*

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

#### *Students' Responsibilities*

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, [Student Code of Conduct](#), on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.



4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity.html>).

Use of Generative AI: We recognize that there are a variety of AI programs available to assist writers. AI programs are not a replacement for human creativity, originality, and critical thinking. Writing is a craft that you must develop over time to develop your own individual voice as a writer. However, within limited circumstances, and with proper attribution, AI programs may be used as a tool.

### **Class Attendance**

Students are expected to attend each class and complete all reading assignments for class and Blackboard postings. Classroom participation is a vital part of this course. Students will contribute to class discussions and engage in all the activities to foster a comprehensive understanding of the counseling profession. Excessive absences (more than 2) will result in a grade letter deduction from your final grade for each absence. Two tardies (entering 15 minutes or later after class begins or leaving 15 minutes or earlier before class ends) will count as one unexcused absence. If there is a scheduling conflict that interferes with attendance during any portion of the class, students should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to discuss continuing in the class or taking the course during another semester.

### **Research on Human Subjects**

Any research that involves human subjects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at A&M-San Antonio prior to any data collection. Specific forms, instructions, and additional information are provided online: <http://www.tamusa.edu/graduatestudiesandresearch/irb/irbforms.html>.

### **Message for pregnant and parenting students:**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”), 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq., protects students in all of the academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, and other programs or activities of universities. This includes prohibiting discrimination against pregnant and parenting students. A student who is pregnant or parenting is entitled to special services. Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to implementing all provisions of Title IX. For availing of special services available to students whose curricular and co-curricular work is impacted by pregnancy and parenting related issues contact Dr. Jo Anna Benavidez-Franke, Associate Vice President for Student Engagement and Success.

### **Incompletes**

The spirit of the “Incomplete” is to give a student an opportunity to complete a course after the end of the semester. An Incomplete will only be considered under specific circumstances: 1. 70% of the class has been completed and student is passing with a “C” or better 2. The circumstance for which the “I” is requested is supported with documentation 3. Student has been attending class on a regular basis Incompletes are not to be used to remedy excessive absences. Unforeseen circumstances precipitating the request for an “I”, should occur near the end of the semester. Students who are experiencing difficulties at the beginning or midway through the course should contact their professor immediately to discuss options. When a professor agrees to grant an “I”, a contract between the student and professor that outlines a specific timeline for completion of the course will be generated. Topics such as highest possible grade will also be outlined. If the contract is not fulfilled, the professor will submit a change of grade form with earned letter grade. All “I”s will automatically revert to an “F” after one year.

### **Dropping a Course**

Each student is responsible for knowing the drop date for any given semester. Professors are not responsible, under any circumstances, for “dropping” a student from a course. Please be aware that if you do not formally drop a course and fail to fulfill the academic requirements, the professor will submit the earned grade.

### **Late Work**

Due dates are non-negotiable unless an extension is provided to the entire class. All written assignments are due before class on the day they are due. All late assignments will be subject to a deduction of 10% from the total points available for the assignment for each day assignment has been turned in late (including weekends).

### **Grading Policy**

A = 90+ total points

B = 80-89 total points



C = 70-79 total points  
 D = 60-69 total points  
 F = 59 total points and below

Grading will be based primarily upon the significance, thoroughness, accuracy, relatedness, logic and degree to which points made are effectively supported. Papers receiving an “A” grade will be outstanding in each area. Grammar and style will be considered when they detract from the presentation or understanding of the professional arguments made. As noted above points/grade will be deducted from assignments that do not follow APA guidelines and/or exceed the page limit.

### Course Requirements

Assignments	Due Date	Points/Percentage
Attendance and Participation	ongoing	15
Social Justice Advocacy Project		
a. SJ Identity Development Quilt	9/26	20 points
b. Historical review of SJ issue	10/18	20 points
c. Advocacy Brief	11/1	15 points
d. Presentation	11/21	30 points
Total Points		<b>100</b>

Social Justice Advocacy Project (No more than two students can select the same SJ issue)

#### 1. Social Justice Identity Quilt 20 pts.

“The quilt is used symbolically for the feelings about race and ethnicity that cover us while we sleep, comfort us against the cold, and are folded and neatly put away during various seasons of the year. They may be pieced together using one small scrap at a time, sometimes cut into beautiful designs from fancy materials, at other times cut into old shapes from plain, ordinary, well-worn fabric, and stitched by a machine instead of by hand. Regardless of any or all of these origins, they are bound with small stitches, bordered, have padded insulation, and are backed with substantial material. We think of them as so necessary to survival that we give them to babies, and often pack them when going on lone and desolate journeys. Some are tattered and torn from overused others are carted out for display, company, or special occasions; but we each own one” (Milo, 1995).

For this project, students will use everyday objects (e.g., magazine cut-outs, photos) to create a “social justice quilt” that represents the most salient aspects of their identity

and history of personal advocacy that shape how they view social justice theory, the nature of human challenges and resilience, and the reasons they have entered the counseling profession. Reflect on events and life experiences that have shaped your cultural being and how these experiences have shaped your thinking, values, and behaviors. You should also interpret the cultural meaning of these experiences (cultural socialization) and the impact on your current functioning. Reflect on how your experiences have led you to choose your social justice issue. Students will have 5 minutes to present the quilt to the class.

**2. Historical review of Social Justice issue 20 pts.**

Complete a 4-6-page research paper exploring the historical context of your chosen social justice issue. You should use 6-10 sources, and the paper should be APA 7th edition formatted.

**3. Advocacy Brief 15 pts.**

Write a one-page advocacy brief for lawmakers summarizing the importance of your advocacy issue, why an act/bill or law should be voted on or repeal, relevant research related to mental health and a personal story to highlight the issue (optional). advocacy statement on your social justice issue. To prepare this brief explore the connection between your issue and mental health, to include any mental health implications. Review relevant policies (e.g. bills, laws, executive orders) at the international, national, or state level.

**4. Presentation 30 pts.**

During the presentation you will present your issue to your peers via poster or ppt slide

**Social Justice Advocacy Project Rubric**

Criteria	%	Exceeds Standards 4	Meets Standards 3	Approaching Standards 2	Below Standards 1
1. Social Justice Identity Development Quilt 2.F.2.e	15	Excellent and clear reflection of experiences that shape their worldview, heritage and identity. Included the effects of power and privilege on their SJ identity development	Good and clear reflection of experiences that shape their worldview, heritage and identity. Adequately included the effects of power and privilege on their SJ identity development	Inadequate reflection of experiences that shape their worldview, heritage and identity. Minimally included the effects of power and privilege on their SJ identity development	Poor reflection of experiences Did not include the effects of power and privilege on their SJ identity development
2. Historical Review 2.F.2.e	20	Excellent and clear comprehensive understanding of the historical	Good and clear comprehensive understanding of the historical	Inadequate and minimal thoughts of the historical concepts/ideas and provides an overview of	Poor historical concepts/ideas and missing

		concepts/ideas and provides an overview of systematic and related sociopolitical considerations	concepts/ideas and provides an overview of systematic and related sociopolitical considerations	systematic and related sociopolitical considerations	overview of systematic and sociopolitical considerations
3. Advocacy Brief 2.F.2.h	15	The advocacy brief is excellent. The brief is well researched incorporating all required components	The advocacy brief is good and clear. The brief includes some research and the majority of required components	The brief is missing significant research and required components are missing	Inadequate, poor or no examples provided that apply concepts to social justice counseling
4.Presentation	10	Presentation is a 5-10 minute presentation that is informative, clear and comprehensive, and included an action step	Presentation is a 5-10 minute presentation that is moderately informative, clear and comprehensive	Presentation of less than 5 minutes or more than 10 minutes. Too many/too few details to establish clarity	Presentation is less than 5 minutes, limited or no enthusiasm
5.Writing style, grammar, page limit including APA Style  Overall points deducted for APA errors	10	Adheres to APA style and is clear, understandable, exceptionally well organized, and grammatically correct. No APA errors. Language is appropriate for the type of paper. Adheres to paper requirements for page limit and headers/sub-headers	Adheres to APA style with only a few errors; is clear, well organized, understandable, and grammatically correct with only a few errors. Language is mostly appropriate for the type of paper. Adheres to paper requirements for page limit and headers/sub-headers with only a few errors	Has errors in APA style lacks clarity, not well organized, and has grammatical errors. Language is somewhat appropriate for the type of paper. Adheres to some of paper requirements for page limit and headers/sub-headers	Does not follow APA style, is unclear, is poorly organized, and has many grammatical errors. Language is generally not appropriate for the type of paper. Adheres to few or none of the paper requirements

**Table 1 Schedule of Course Activities**

<b>Date</b>	<b>CACREP STANDARDS</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Reading (Prior to class meeting) &amp; Assignments Due</b>
8/29	2.F.2.h, 2.F.5.b, 2.F.1.i, 2.F.1.e	Introduction & Syllabus What is Social Justice & Advocacy	Read syllabus & come with any questions ACA's MCSJCC ACA's Advocacy Domains Social Justice as the Fifth Force
9/5	2.F.2.h, 2.F.5.b, 2.F.5.n, 2.F.1.e	Social Justice Identity Development Cycle of Liberation	Harro's Cycle of Liberation See Additional Readings in BB
9/12	2.F.2.h, 2.F.5.b, 2.F.1.e	Historical Perspective of Social Justice Social Justice Issues: National & Global	See Readings in BB

9/19		No Class	Work on SJ Quilt Due Next Class
9/26		SJ Quilt Presentations	<b>SJ Quilt Due 9/26</b>
10/3		SJ Quilt Presentations	
10/10	2.F.2.h, 2.F.5.b, 2.F.5.n, 2.F.1.e	Social Movements/Abolitionism	
10/17	2.F.2.h, 2.F.5.b, 2.F.5.n, 2.F.1.i, 2.F.1.e	Allyship/Co-Conspirator	Aspiring Social Justice Ally Identity Development Model <b>Historical Review Due 10/18</b>
10/24	2.F.2.h, 2.F.5.b, 2.F.5.n, 2.F.1.i, 2.F.1.e	Decolonizing Counseling Practice	See Readings in BB
10/31	2.F.5.b, 2.F.5.n	Happy Halloween! No class Self-Advocacy	See Readings in BB <b>Advocacy Brief Due 11/1</b>
11/7	2.F.2.h, 2.F.5.b, 2.F.5.n, 2.F.1.e	Social Justice in Practice	
11/14	2.F.2.h, 2.F.5.b, 2.F.5.n	Advocacy Project Presentations	
11/21	2.F.2.h, 2.F.5.b, 2.F.5.n	Advocacy Project Presentations	<b>Advocacy Presentation Due 11/21</b>
11/28		Thanksgiving Holiday No class	
12/5	2.F.2.h, 2.F.5.b, 2.F.5.n	Advocacy Project Presentations	

