SOWK 5332: Social Work Theory and Practice with Families
CRN: 23326
TERM: SPRING 2024
MEETING TIMES: Mondays 6:00-8:50 PM HSN Building Room 216

Professor: Yahell G. Zuniga, LCSW-S
Email: yzuniga@utep.edu
Phone: N/A
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Information: What this class is about and what we will do

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course continues to build on the series of theory and practice courses to advance knowledge and skills in family social work practice. A focus on specific interventions in the assessment and treatment of family problems within a border context will overlay an examination, from an evidence-based practice lens, of family therapy, theory, and family social work practice. Mandatory student participation in simulated family session and case analysis from the students’ field placement will provide a practice context to refine critical thinking, assessment, and intervention skills.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

At UTEP, we embrace and celebrate diversity as a cornerstone of our institution’s identity. As the United States’ leading Hispanic-serving institution situated along the U.S.-Mexico border, we recognize the richness and value of diversity in our community’s backgrounds, perspectives, and life experiences. The Department of Social Work at UTEP is committed to creating brave and inclusive spaces where students, faculty, and staff feel comfortable expressing themselves authentically knowing they will be respected and accepted as they are. The department encourages open dialogue, critical thinking, and respectful engagement across differences with the understanding that such dialogue is essential for personal and professional growth. Through our commitment to diversity, we aim to prepare social work students with the skills and knowledge to navigate and contribute to an increasingly diverse and interconnected society through an enriching and inclusive curriculum.

COURSE GOALS

At the end of this course, students will increase their knowledge and practice skills in family therapy and family social work practice and expand their competency to work with diverse family systems.
COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students, at the end of the semester, will:

- Increase students’ knowledge base relating to family assessment and intervention through critical examination of family therapy and family social work practice theories and models.
- Increase students’ capacity to formulate a hypothesis in assessing family problems using theoretical frameworks to inform the clinical decision-making process.
- Increase students’ knowledge about family centered interventions and their applicability to a broad range of problems facing families. A special emphasis will be placed on the contextual, economic, bi-national/cultural, and sociopolitical implications of family and social work in a border region.
- Demonstrate the ability to apply family development and the life cycle to family assessment and interventions.
- Demonstrate skills in initial engagement, rapport building, and goal development with family systems.
- Demonstrate beginning intervention skills: confrontation, reframing, restructuring and use of metaphor.
- Demonstrate the ability to conduct a family assessment including a hypothesis, intervention plan founded on relevant theoretical frameworks.
- Develop a beginning capacity to critically analyze the impact of their own family on their practice with families.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Assignment(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior</td>
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<td>2: Advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice</td>
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<td>3: Engage anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) in practice</td>
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<td>4: Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed Practice</td>
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<td>5: Engage in policy practice</td>
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<td>6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities</td>
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<td>7: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities</td>
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<td>8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities</td>
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<td>9: Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups and organizations and communities</td>
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REQUIRED MATERIALS

Required Text: Students will need access to the following book/e-book.

https://www.pearson.com/store/p/family-therapy-concepts-and-methods/P100002679701
Supplemental Texts and Articles:

Students will be required to read and critically evaluate articles from the professional literature related to the course theory and practice. Detailed instructions will be provided for preparing evidence-based practice assignments based on this critical reading.


Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) OWL (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/) provides writing resources for free. The homepage links to other resources, including APA style guides. If you are not familiar with APA style writing, please visit this website and learn how to write in APA academic writing style.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Grades are the outcome of student efforts and demonstration of competency. They are “earned” not “given.” Grades for the course will be assigned based on the total number of points earned out of a total of 1000 points available. Points correspond to the following course assignments:

1) Case Analysis Assignment (30%) or 300 points – Case Analysis Paper 200 pts & Presentation 100 pts
The assignment will be a written case analysis requiring critical application of theory and fundamental concepts of family therapy to a case scenario. Students will analyze a case scenario provided to them and apply a compatible family therapy model and intervention based on their assessment.

2) Quizzes (20%) or 200 pts
Each student will complete quizzes available on blackboard by due date/time listed in the Course Outline. The quizzes are based on the assigned readings each week. This will support your learning and understanding of class materials. Because quizzes are designed to contribute to your learning each week, they cannot be made up after their due date has passed. If you experience technical issues while you are completing a quiz, it is your
responsibility to send the proof (e.g., screenshot of error messages) to the instructor for consideration within 24hrs.

3) Evidence-Based Practice Assignment (30%) or 300 points – EBP Report 200 pts & Presentation 100 pts

This assignment offers students the opportunity to experience evidence-based practice in the field of family practice, learn more about the current state of the literature in particular areas of interest in practice with family, and develop a practice plan for the family with specific issues. Students will have an opportunity to demonstrate comprehension, analysis, and thoughtful critique of professional literature (evidence) and develop a practice plan based on their critical evaluation of evidence.

Students will 1) decide to work individually or form a group (up to 3 people); 2) select a specific topic pertaining to issues family experiences; 3) go to the professional literature and assess prevalence and impact of issues; 4) identify family therapies/theories/interventions/programs that have been applied to address this topic; 5) summarize findings; 6) critically analyze the therapies/theories/interventions as well as research literature; and 7) develop a practice plan for the family with this specific issue. A detailed assignment description will be made available.

4) Family Therapy/Theory Peer-Teaching (10%) or 100 pts

Each student/group will lead an activity that will teach fellow students content from an assigned chapter. Activities can include leading group discussions, presenting a video followed with group discussion, an experiential activity, etc. Also, each student/group requires to introduce two recent research articles related to the selected theory in their peer-teaching.

5) In class Exercises & Participation (10%) or 100 pts

Each class will require students’ experiential engagement of theoretical material as well as application of clinical skills. Students will be expected to participate in various class activities to practice and demonstrate their emerging social work practice skills and knowledge on family practice. Attendance, punctuality, active participation, helpful feedback, and thoughtful contributions are essential to a meaningful learning experience with deeper comprehension of the material. Your class attendance and active participation is vital not only to your learning, but to your classmates’ learning as well. Therefore, you are expected to contribute consistently and conscientiously to the class and/or group discussions. Students will earn the points each class period based on the quality and quantity of their engagement and participation in, but are not limited to, classroom discussion, in-class activities/exercises, and role plays.

Grading

A (Exceptional, Superior mastery) = 100 - 90 %
B (Adequate mastery) = 89.9 - 80 %
C (Limited mastery) = 79.9 - 70 %
D (Deficient mastery) = 69.9 - 60 % F = 59 %
TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Course content is delivered via internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure that your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop, scanner, a webcam, and a microphone. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have a word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and more) for free via UTEP’s Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about MicrosoftOffice365 and follow the instructions.

IMPORTANT: If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP Help Desk as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped to assist you than I might be in several cases! I will work hard to assist you in times that I am able to!

Course Communication: How we will stay in contact with each other

There are several ways we can keep the lines of communication open this semester:

- **Office Hours:** VIRTUAL by appointment
- **Email:** UTEP email is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your email within 24-48 hours upon receiving your email. When e-mailing me, be sure to email from your UTEP student account.
- **Phone** N/A
- **Announcements:** Check the Blackboard announcements frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages.

NETIQUETTE

As we know, sometimes communication online can be challenging. It’s possible to miscommunicate what we mean or to misunderstand what our classmates mean given the lack of body language and immediate feedback. Therefore, please keep these netiquette (network etiquette) guidelines in mind. Failure to observe them may result in disciplinary action.

- Always consider your audience. This is a college-level course; therefore, all communication should reflect polite consideration of other’s ideas.
- Respect and courtesy must always be displayed to classmates and the instructor. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- When responding to someone else’s message, address, and respectfully challenge the ideas, never the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.
Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. In line with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, treat all information shared with the same level of confidentiality as you would a client. Whatever is posted in this online space is intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

Tips for Online Participation/Discussion

- **Language:** Given the absence of face-to-face clues, written text can easily be misinterpreted. Avoid the use of strong or offensive language and the excessive use of exclamation points. If you feel particularly strongly about a point, it may be best to write it first as a draft and then to review it, before posting it, in order to remove any strong language.

- **Be Forgiving:** If someone states something that you find offensive, mention this directly to the instructor. Remember that the person contributing to the discussion is also new to this form of communication. What you find offensive may quite possibly have been unintended and can best be cleared up by the instructor.

- **This is Permanent:** Think carefully about the content of your message before contributing it. Once sent to the group, there is no taking it back. Also, although the grammar and spelling of a message typically are not graded, they do reflect on you, and your audience might not be able to decode misspelled words or poorly constructed sentences. It is a good practice to compose and check your comments in a word-processor before posting them.

- **Test For Clarity:** Messages may often appear perfectly clear to you as you compose them, but turn out to be perfectly obtuse to your reader. One way to test for clarity is to read your message aloud to see if it flows smoothly. If you can read it to another person before posting it, even better.

- **Remember Your Place:** A Web-based classroom is still a classroom, and comments that would be inappropriate in a regular classroom are likely to be inappropriate in a Web-based course as well. Treat your instructor and your fellow students with respect.

- **Follow the Parameters/ Stick To The Point:** Follow the posting requirements and parameters set up by your professor. Contributions to a discussion should have a clear subject header, and you need to stick to the subject. Don't waste others' time by going off on irrelevant tangents.

- **Read First, Write Later:** Don't add your comments to a discussion before reading the comments of other students unless the assignment specifically asks you to. Doing so is tantamount to ignoring your fellow students and is rude. Comments related to the content of previous messages should be posted under them to keep related topics organized, and you should specify the person and the particular point you are following up on.

**Course Policies:** What do you need to do to be successful in the course

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

Attendance in the course is determined by participation in the learning activities and course discussions. Your participation in the course is important not only for your learning and success but also to create a community of learners. Participation is determined by completion of the following activities:
o Reading/Viewing all course materials to ensure understanding of assignment requirements
o Participation in engaging discussion with your peers on the discussion boards and during course meetings
o Other activities as indicated on Blackboard

Because these activities are designed to contribute to your learning each week, they cannot be made up after their due date has passed.

EXCUSED ABSENCES AND/OR COURSE DROP POLICY

According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, “When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his/her/their status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of ‘W’ before the course drop deadline and with a grade of ‘F’ after the deadline.”

Students who miss more than TWO class meetings will be dropped from the class. Extenuating circumstances may be taken into consideration at the instructor’s discretion. **Documentation should be offered and provided if requested for the absence to be considered excused (e.g., doctor’s note, letter from your employer, etc.) within a reasonable time frame.**

Deadline for this semester is **February 19, 2024.** See academic regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for a list of excusable absences. Therefore, if I find that, due to nonperformance in the course, you are at risk of failing, I will drop you from the course. I will provide 24 hours advance notice via email.

OR

I will not drop you from the course. However, if you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the **Registrar’s Office** to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an ‘F’ for the course.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN CLASS

Students are expected to act like professionals in class. This means arriving at class room on time, being prepared to participate in the class discussion, paying attention during class activities and discussions, not holding side conversations nor monopolizing conversations, or engaging in any activities that disturb other members of the class (e.g., texting, emailing, dominating discussions, disrespectful behavior) and showing respect for one another’s opinions. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment students will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, you will be expected to engage one another with respect and professionalism.

CLASSROOM CIVILITY

A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. Social Work deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable,
and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. Students are responsible for treating others with courtesy and respect and should promote group cohesion in an effort to create a safe learning environment. Students are expected to listen to the concerns and opinions of others with openness and provide suggestions.

**DEADLINES, LATE WORK, AND ABSENCE POLICY**

Any assignment that is not turned in by the due dates/times specified in the course syllabus (See Course Outline) will be considered late. While extenuating circumstances may be taken into consideration, late assignments will be lowered by 10% of point value for each day the assignment is late. Assignments past due three days are not accepted. **No late assignments are allowed for in-class exercises and participation and quizzes because these activities are designed to contribute to your learning each week and they cannot be made up after their due date has passed.**

**MAKE-UP WORK**

Make-up work will be given only in the case of a documented emergency. Note that make-up work may be in a different format than the original work, may require more intensive preparation, and may be graded with penalty points. If you miss an assignment and the reason is not considered excusable, you will receive a zero. It is therefore important to reach out to me—in advance if possible—and explain with proper documentation why you missed a given course requirement. Once a deadline has been established for make-up work, no further extensions or exceptions will be granted.

**ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF SUBMITTING WORK IN CASE OF TECHNICAL ISSUES**

I strongly suggest that you submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. I also suggest you save all your work (answers to discussion posts, quizzes, activities, and other work) in a separate Word document as a back-up. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through Blackboard, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. You can e-mail me your back-up document as a last resort.

**‘INCOMPLETE’ GRADE POLICY**

Incomplete grades may be requested only under exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Communicate with me immediately if you believe an incomplete is needed. I highly suggest keeping the lines of the communication open with me during the semester to avoid getting to this point! However, if granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information shared in class about agencies and clients is considered to be covered by the NASW Code of Ethics regarding the sharing of information for supervisory purposes. Agencies are aware that information is shared in class for this purpose. However, discussion outside of class with individuals not in this class or with other class members in settings where you cannot
assure that no one else may overhear the conversation is considered a breach of confidentiality and will result in recommendation against remaining in the social work program.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT FOR COURSE MATERIALS

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.

ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services, and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-7475148, or email them cass@utep.edu or apply for accommodation online via CASS portal

ILLNESS PRECAUTIONS

Please stay home if you have symptoms of a communicable illness. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations.

TITLE IX STATEMENT

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities operated by recipients of Federal financial assistance. Sexual harassment of students, which includes acts of sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX. Sexual violence refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person’s will or where a person is incapable of giving consent due to the victim's use of drugs or alcohol. An individual also may be unable to give consent due to an intellectual or other disability. A number of different acts fall into the category of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual coercion, stalking, and relationship violence. All such acts of sexual violence are forms of sexual harassment covered under Title IX.

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, UTEP does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the operation of its educational programs and activities. This commitment to non-discrimination applies to both employment in and admission to such programs and activities. [Link to full text at http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=68750]

Inquiries regarding Title IX should be referred to the University's Title IX Coordinator(s) in the following link: https://www.utep.edu/titleix/Title-IX-Coordinators.html
SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operation Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline.

GUIDANCE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

All assignments should be fully prepared by the student.
Developing strong competencies in the skills associated with this course, from student-based brainstorming to project development, will prepare you for success in your degree pathway and, ultimately, a competitive career. Therefore, the use of generative AI tools to complete any aspect of assignments for this course is not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism. If you have questions about what constitutes a violation of this statement, please contact me. Students must cite any borrowed content sources (APA) to comply with all applicable citation guidelines, copyright law, and avoid plagiarism.Instances that violate these guidelines will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

PLAGIARISM DETECTING SOFTWARE

Some of your course work and assessments may submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

This syllabus serves as our guiding contract agreement for the term. You are responsible for reading it thoroughly prior to our second class session. You are also responsible for reading assignment instructions/grading rubrics and self-monitoring assignment due dates.

Course Resources: Where you can go for assistance

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support:
Technology Resources
- Help Desk: Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.
• **[https://www.utep.edu/library/UTEP Library](https://www.utep.edu/library/UTEP Library):** Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.

• **University Writing Center (UWC):** Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.

• **RefWorks:** A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.

**Individual Resources**

• **Military Student Success Center:** Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.

• **Center for Accommodations and Support Services:** Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.

• **Counseling and Psychological Services:** Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.

• **Center Against Sexual and Family Violence (CASFV):** 915-593-7300 or 1-800-727-0511

• **UTEP Food Pantry:** Provides food and support for students and staff who are experiencing food insecurity.

• **Foster Homeless Adopted Resources:** Connects foster, homeless, and adopted individuals through education and advocacy with resources that will assist holistically with UTEP experience.

• For crimes, contact the El Paso Police Department or UTEP Police Department (915-747-5611)

• For suspected abuse of children or older persons, Child/Adult Protective Services 1-800-252-5400

• National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).

• Respect Is (Dating Abuse Prevention) at [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org)

• Mental Health Crisis Line 915-779-1800

• National Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-8255

• Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255

• NAMI of El Paso (National Alliance Against Mental Illness) hosts free weekly support groups for people with mental illness and their families. [elpaso.nami@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:elpaso.nami@dshs.state.tx.us) or 915-534-5478
## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

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<td>- EBP Project Discussion</td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td>Nichols Ch. 4</td>
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<td>February 5</td>
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<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
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<td>March 18</td>
<td>Nichols Ch. 12 &amp; 13</td>
<td><strong>Family Therapy/Theory Peer-Teaching</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Case Analysis Activity &amp; Role Play&lt;br&gt;• Assignments Due by Noon on 3/18/2024&lt;br&gt;• Assigned ACTIVITIES&lt;br&gt;• QUIZZES on assigned readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>Nichols Ch. 14</td>
<td><strong>Assignments Due by Noon on 3/25/2024</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Assigned ACTIVITIES&lt;br&gt;• QUIZZES on assigned readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Nichols Ch. 15</td>
<td><strong>Case Analysis Assignment Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>April 8</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Case Analysis &amp; EBP Project Presentation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>April 15</td>
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<td><strong>Case Analysis &amp; EBP Project Presentation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>April 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>April 29</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Case Analysis &amp; EBP Project Presentation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>EBP Project Submission</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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**SYLLABUS & SCHEDULING SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT INSTRUCTOR’S DISCRETION**

ANY CHANGES WILL BE COMMUNICATED WITH STUDENTS