



College of Public Affairs and Health Services | Department of Social Work

## **SOWK 4325 — Intersection of Trauma and Substance Use**

*Summer 2026 | Online (Asynchronous) | May 18 – June 19, 2026 (5 weeks)*

Welcome to SOWK 4325! I look forward to working with all of you this semester as we explore trauma-informed practice at the intersection of psychological trauma and substance use. If you have any questions along the way, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

### **Instructor Information**

**Dr. Dhru Mukherjee, Ph.D., LCSW-S**

Associate Professor, Department of Social Work

College of Health and Public Service, University of North Texas (UNT)

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Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom or in person

**About the professor:**

Dr. Mukherjee's research focuses on community mental health, the intersection of trauma and substance use, clinical skill development, Internal Family Systems (IFS) therapy, and exploring worldview in the social work profession.

### **Course Description**

This course examines the co-occurrence of psychological trauma and substance use disorder (SUD), a significant challenge for behavioral health professionals in integrated healthcare settings. Students will explore how trauma and substance misuse intersect, leading to complex clinical outcomes. The course provides: (a) a detailed understanding of trauma and addiction and their interactions; (b) an overview of substance categories and their physiological effects; (c) an examination of differential impacts across

demographic groups; and (d) a review of evidence-based assessment and treatment protocols. The curriculum addresses micro-, mezzo-, and macro-level interventions and integrates systemic, legal, and spiritual considerations into treatment.

## Course Structure

This course is delivered 100% online with no face-to-face meetings. Weekly learning modules are released on Mondays at 12:00 a.m. Central Time (CT) and include readings, discussions, assignments, and quizzes. Standard weekly assignments are due Sundays at 11:59 p.m. CT. Because the course concludes on Friday (June 19), final-week items are due Friday, June 19, at 11:59 p.m. CT instead of Sunday. The course is 5 weeks long.

## Required Materials

### Required Textbook:

Doweiko, H. E. (2024). *Concepts of Chemical Dependency* (11th ed.). Cengage. ISBN: 9780357764534.

Additional readings, articles, videos, and resources are posted weekly in Canvas.

### Technology Requirements:

- Reliable internet connection and a computer capable of running Canvas, Zoom, and Microsoft Office.
- Word processing software (Microsoft Word recommended; UNT students receive Office 365 free).
- Webcam and microphone for any Zoom meetings.
- Canvas/tech support: UNT Student Help Desk, 940-565-2324, [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu), or <http://it.unt.edu/helpdesk>.

## Course Objectives & CSWE Competency Mapping

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

### 1. Identify different types of traumatic stress and substance use disorders and their mutual co-occurrences and cultural influences.

- CSWE Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- CSWE Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
- CSWE Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

### 2. Critically engage with theoretical models of substance use disorders from pharmacological, cognitive, trauma-responsive, behavioral, and psychodynamic approaches.

- CSWE Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- CSWE Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
- CSWE Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

**3. Distinguish effective assessment and screening protocols involving trauma and substance use in integrated healthcare settings.**

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

**4. Apply basic intervention protocols involving trauma and substance use across micro, mezzo, and macro levels.**

- CSWE Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- CSWE Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- CSWE Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

**5. Evaluate best practices and emerging evidence involving trauma and substance use.**

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

**6. Analyze how structural inequities, stigma, and policy shape trauma and substance use outcomes, and locate local, state, and federal policies that address them.**

- CSWE Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- CSWE Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

## Content Advisory and Student Wellbeing

This course addresses psychological trauma, adverse childhood experiences, substance use, and related topics that may be activating or distressing for some students, particularly those with personal or family experience of these issues. Please approach the material at your own pace, take breaks as needed, and use trauma-informed self-care strategies.

If at any point the material is overwhelming, you are welcome to step away, contact me privately, or reach out to one of the resources below. Engaging with this content does not require disclosing personal trauma in any course assignment or discussion; de-identified, composite, or hypothetical examples are encouraged.

**Support Resources:**

- UNT Counseling and Testing Services: 940-565-2741 (24/7 crisis line available); [studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services](http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services).
- UNT Care Team (concerns about a student): [studentaffairs.unt.edu/care](http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care).
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988.
- SAMHSA National Helpline (mental health and substance use): 1-800-662-HELP (4357), free, confidential, 24/7.
- Crisis Text Line: text HOME to 741741.

## Communication and Online Learning Expectations

I respond to email and Canvas messages within 24 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends and holidays. For time-sensitive issues (e.g., an extension request), please include “SOWK 4325” in your subject line. For technical issues with Canvas, contact the UNT Help Desk first, then notify me so I can document the issue.

Because this is an asynchronous online course, your engagement with weekly modules is the equivalent of class attendance. Plan to log in to Canvas multiple times each week, review all materials, and submit work by posted deadlines.

## Assignments and Grading

Assignment	Points	Due
<b>4 Quizzes (100 pts each)</b>	400	Sundays @ 11:59 p.m. CT; Quiz 4 due Friday, June 19
<b>5 Discussions (50 pts each)</b>	250	Sundays @ 11:59 p.m. CT; Discussion 5 due Friday, June 19
<b>Final Paper Outline</b>	100	Sunday, June 7 @ 11:59 p.m. CT (Week 3)
<b>Final Paper</b>	250	Friday, June 19 @ 11:59 p.m. CT (Week 5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>	

## Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Points / Percentage
<b>A</b>	900 – 1000 (90 – 100%)
<b>B</b>	800 – 899 (80 – 89%)
<b>C</b>	700 – 799 (70 – 79%)
<b>D</b>	600 – 699 (60 – 69%)
<b>F</b>	Below 600 (Below 60%)

## Quizzes (4 total, 100 pts each)

Each weekly quiz covers material from the corresponding module: assigned readings, additional resources, and key concepts. Quizzes are administered in Canvas and have the following format:

- 20 multiple-choice and short-answer questions per quiz.

- 60-minute time limit once started.
- Open-book and open-notes, but must be completed individually without AI-generated answers.
- One attempt per quiz; please prepare before starting.
- Quizzes are given in Weeks 1, 2, 3, and 5. Week 4 contains pharmacology content that is assessed within the Final Paper, so no quiz is administered that week.

### **Discussions (5 total, 50 pts each)**

Weekly discussions are a space to practice integrating the intersection of trauma and SUD using course concepts, evidence, and professional communication. Each discussion is scored on the following criteria (full instructions appear in the next section):

- Initial post (25 pts): on prompt, integrates BOTH trauma and SUD, uses at least one assigned source with APA citation.
- Two peer replies (15 pts; 7.5 pts each): substantive, advance the conversation, use trauma-informed and person-first language.
- Professional communication, APA mechanics, and timeliness (10 pts).

### **Final Paper Outline (100 pts) — due Sun., June 7**

A 2-3 page outline previewing the structure and key sources of your Final Paper. The outline must include: (1) your chosen topic and rationale for clinical or policy relevance; (2) a working thesis; (3) major section headings and 2–3 bullet points of intended content under each; (4) a preliminary reference list of at least 6 scholarly sources in APA 7 format (at minimum 3 peer-reviewed articles published within the last 10 years).

### **Final Paper (250 pts) — due Fri., June 19**

An 8–10-page paper (double-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman or 11-pt Calibri, 1-inch margins, excluding the title page and references) that integrates course material to analyze the intersection of trauma and substance use in a specific population, clinical setting, or policy context of your choice. Approved topic categories include: (a) a population-focused analysis (e.g., veterans, youth aging out of foster care, LGBTQ+ communities, unhoused individuals, women in the perinatal period); (b) a substance-focused analysis (e.g., opioids, alcohol, stimulants, polysubstance use); (c) a treatment-modality analysis (e.g., Seeking Safety, EMDR for co-occurring PTSD/SUD, medication-assisted treatment integrated with trauma therapy); or (d) a policy-focused analysis (e.g., parity, harm reduction, criminal-legal system involvement).

#### **Required sections:**

- Title page (APA 7) and abstract (150–200 words).
- Introduction with clear thesis and clinical/policy relevance.
- Background on trauma and SUD as they relate to your topic.
- Assessment considerations (screening tools, integrated assessment).
- Intervention/treatment considerations across micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
- Diversity, equity, and ethical considerations (CSWE Competencies 2 and 3).

- Conclusion with practice implications.
- APA 7 reference list of at least 10 scholarly sources (at least 6 peer-reviewed).

**Rubric (250 pts total):**

- Content depth and accuracy on trauma–SUD intersection — 75 pts.
- Integration of evidence and assigned course concepts — 50 pts.
- Application to micro/mezzo/macro practice — 50 pts.
- Diversity, equity, and ethical analysis — 30 pts.
- Organization, clarity, professional writing — 25 pts.
- APA 7 mechanics and reference quality — 20 pts.

**Late Work Policy**

Because this is an accelerated 5-week course, deadlines matter. Late submissions are accepted as follows: a 10% per-day deduction applies for up to 3 calendar days after the deadline; submissions more than 72 hours late will not be accepted and will receive a zero. Discussion boards close at the deadline and cannot be reopened (so plan to post early in the week). Quizzes cannot be reopened once the deadline passes. Documented emergencies, religious holy days, university-sponsored absences, military duties, and disability-related accommodations are exceptions; please contact me as early as possible to arrange an alternative time.

**Discussion Instructions (Applies to All Weekly Discussions)**

**Purpose:**

Weekly discussions are a space to practice integrating the intersection of trauma and substance use (SUD) using course concepts, evidence, and professional communication.

**Initial Post:**

Respond directly to the week’s prompt and explicitly connect BOTH trauma and SUD (not “trauma only” or “SUD only”). Aim for 250–400 words.

**Peer Replies:**

Reply to at least two classmates. Each reply must add trauma + SUD integration (e.g., extend an idea with a concept from readings, add a practice implication, or ask a clinically relevant question). Aim for 100–150 words per reply.

**Deadlines:**

Weekly modules open on Mondays. Initial posts are due on Wednesdays at 11:59 p.m. CT; peer replies are due on Sundays at 11:59 p.m. CT (final-week items are due on Friday, June 19). Posting early helps sustain a richer discussion.

**Evidence and APA:**

Use at least one assigned reading/resource each week to support your claims and include APA 7 in-text citations (and references when applicable).

**Respectful Engagement:**

Maintain a professional tone; disagree with ideas, not people; and use person-first, non-stigmatizing language (e.g., “person with a substance use disorder” rather than “addict”).

**Privacy and Trauma-Informed Participation:**

Do not share personal trauma details or identifying information about yourself or others; use de-identified/composite/fictional examples; avoid graphic descriptions and add a brief content note if needed.

**Academic Integrity and AI:**

Your writing must be your own. See the AI policy below for details. Basic spelling/grammar tools are permitted for polishing your original writing.

## Weekly Discussion Prompts (Overview)

Prompts are posted in Canvas each week. The following list is provided so you can plan ahead.

**Week 1**

Choose one population (e.g., youth, veterans, unhoused individuals, LGBTQ+ communities) and explain one way trauma exposure can increase risk for substance use AND one way substance use can increase vulnerability to traumatic experiences. Cite at least one course source.

**Week 2**

Pick one substance class (e.g., alcohol, opioids, stimulants) and explain how its pharmacological effects can interact with trauma-related hyperarousal/numbing to shape tolerance, withdrawal, craving, and relapse risk.

**Week 3**

Select one priority population (e.g., people with disabilities, children, adolescents, older adults, marginalized groups) and explain how structural inequities, trauma exposure, and recovery capital interact. Then propose one micro practice strategy and one macro/policy strategy to support sustained recovery.

**Week 4**

Choose a client goal (abstinence, reduced use, safer use) and justify an integrated plan that combines harm reduction, recovery supports, and (when appropriate) medications. Explicitly address trauma triggers and emotional regulation.

**Week 5**

Analyze how stigma operates as a trauma-like force across micro/mezzo/macro levels in SUD treatment, and propose one change at each level that would improve engagement and outcomes.

## Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology

This course adopts a limited-use AI policy that protects your development as a critical thinker and writer while acknowledging that AI tools exist in professional practice.

**What is NOT permitted:**

- Generating any text—paragraphs, posts, replies, sections of papers, or outlines—using ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot, or any other generative AI tool, and submitting that text as your own work.
- Submitting AI-generated discussion posts or peer replies.
- Using AI to summarize assigned readings in lieu of reading them.

**What IS permitted:**

- Spelling and grammar tools (e.g., Word Spell Check, Grammarly) to polish writing you have already drafted.
- Using AI as a brainstorming partner BEFORE you draft (e.g., asking it to suggest possible angles on a topic), provided you write the actual submission yourself and cite the AI tool in your reference list.
- Using AI to explain an unfamiliar concept from a reading, similar to how you might use Wikipedia—understanding that AI outputs must be verified against scholarly sources.

**Required citation when AI is used:**

If you use an AI tool in any permitted way, disclose it. Example APA 7 citation: OpenAI. (2026). ChatGPT (May 2026 version) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com>. Add a one-sentence note to the assignment describing how the tool was used.

Submissions will be screened for AI-generated content. Suspected violations follow the Academic Integrity process below. If you are ever uncertain whether a particular use is allowed, ask me first.

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity emanates from a culture that embraces the core values of trust and honesty necessary for full learning to occur. As a student-centered public research university, UNT promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing high academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic environment and undermines all scholarship. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, submitting a paper multiple times to complete course requirements, forging the signature of the instructor or of another student, fabrication, and/or facilitating or sabotaging the academic dishonesty of other students.

**Forms of Plagiarism:**

- Cheating: exchanging answers on tests or presenting others' work as your own.
- Non-attribution: copying quotes or text without giving proper credit; quotation marks, block indentations, and citations are required.
- Patchwriting: using quotes or the structure of someone else's writing as your own; summarize in your own words and keep quotations to a minimum per APA guidelines.

Students who are unsure whether a particular act constitutes plagiarism should consult the instructor. The course may use Turnitin in Canvas. See UNT Policy 18.1.16 (Student Standards of Academic Integrity) for full details and the right to appeal.

## Consequences of Academic Dishonesty

Students identified as potentially committing academic dishonesty will be reported to the Undergraduate Program Director and Chair of the Social Work Program and to appropriate University officials, including the Dean of Students. University policy supersedes department policy.

Faculty will contact students about a potential violation, hear an explanation, and—if the incident can be resolved at the course level—may apply one of the following sanctions:

- Admonition (verbal or written reprimand).
- Additional educational coursework not required of other students.
- Reduced or no credit for the assignment or assessment in question.
- Withdrawal from the course.
- Failure of the course.

Academic dishonesty is also grounds for termination from the Social Work Program or denial of admission.

## University Policies and Required Statements

### **ADA / Disability Access Accommodations:**

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. Contact ODA at 940-565-4323, [applications.unt.edu/oda](mailto:applications.unt.edu/oda), or visit Sage Hall, Suite 167. Please present your written Accommodation Letter to me early in the semester so accommodations can be implemented as soon as possible.

### **Title IX — Sex- and Gender-Based Discrimination:**

UNT is committed to providing an environment free from sex- and gender-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a “responsible employee” and required to report disclosures of these incidents to the UNT Title IX Coordinator. Confidential resources include UNT Counseling and Testing Services (940-565-2741), the Survivor Advocate ([deanofstudents@unt.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@unt.edu)), and the Denton County Friends of the Family Crisis Line (940-382-7273).

### **Religious Holy Days:**

Students may, by personal religious belief, be excused from class on certain holy days. Please notify me in writing within the first 15 days of the term to arrange alternate deadlines without penalty.

### **Pregnancy and Parenting:**

Pursuant to Title IX, UNT prohibits discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions. Students may request reasonable modifications through the Dean of Students. Contact [deanofstudents@unt.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@unt.edu) for assistance.

### **Student Evaluation of Teaching (SETE):**

SETE is an opportunity for students to share their experiences and opinions about the course. Your feedback is important and will be available near the end of the term.

**Veterans and Military-Connected Students:**

UNT supports student veterans and military-connected students. If your duties affect your ability to participate, please contact me. The Student Veteran Services office is at [studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-veteran-services](http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-veteran-services).

**Course Drop Information and Academic Calendar:**

Refer to the UNT Registrar ([registrar.unt.edu](http://registrar.unt.edu)) for the official academic calendar, drop deadlines, and refund schedule for the Spring 2026 term.

## Weekly Schedule

Full reading lists and additional resources are posted in Canvas. Chapter references are to the required textbook: Doweiko, H. E. (2018). *Concepts of Chemical Dependency* (10th ed.). Cengage.

Week / Dates	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
<b>Week 1</b> May 18 – 24	Scope of the SUD problem in the U.S. + course intersection roadmap	Chapters 1, 2, 24, 26, 27 + Canvas readings	Quiz 1, Discussion 1 (Sun., May 24)
<b>Week 2</b> May 25 – 31	Trauma-Informed Care in SUD Settings	Chapters 3, 4, 25 + Canvas readings	Quiz 2, Discussion 2 (Sun., May 31)
<b>Week 3</b> June 1 – 7	Etiology of SUD + Trauma pathways to use (ACEs and developmental adversity)	Chapters 17 – 23 + Canvas readings	Quiz 3, Discussion 3, Final Paper Outline (Sun., June 7)
<b>Week 4</b> June 8 – 14	Pharmacology of addiction + stress/trauma neurobiology (plain-language)	Chapters 28 – 33 + Canvas readings	Discussion 4 (Sun., June 14) — no quiz this week
<b>Week 5</b> June 15 – 19	Attachment, developmental trauma, and substance use	Chapters 34, 35, 37, 38 + Canvas readings	Quiz 4, Discussion 5, Final Paper (Fri., June 19 @ 11:59 p.m.)

## Suggested Reading List (Optional, Beyond Required Materials)

These resources offer additional depth on trauma, substance use, and their intersection. All citations are in APA 7 format.

### **Books — Trauma and Its Treatment**

- van der Kolk, B. A. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Viking.
- Herman, J. L. (2015). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence—from domestic abuse to political terror* (Rev. ed.). Basic Books.
- Levine, P. A. (2010). *In an unspoken voice: How the body releases trauma and restores goodness*. North Atlantic Books.
- Briere, J., & Scott, C. (2014). *Principles of trauma therapy: A guide to symptoms, evaluation, and treatment* (2nd ed., DSM-5 update). SAGE.

### **Books — Substance Use and the Trauma–Addiction Link**

- Maté, G. (2010). *In the realm of hungry ghosts: Close encounters with addiction*. North Atlantic Books.
- Najavits, L. M. (2002). *Seeking Safety: A treatment manual for PTSD and substance abuse*. Guilford Press.
- Miller, W. R., & Rollnick, S. (2023). *Motivational interviewing: Helping people change and grow* (4th ed.). Guilford Press.
- Schwartz, R. C. (2021). *No bad parts: Healing trauma and restoring wholeness with the Internal Family Systems model*. Sounds True.

### **Key Articles**

- Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., Koss, M. P., & Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4), 245–258.
- Khantzian, E. J. (1997). The self-medication hypothesis of substance use disorders: A reconsideration and recent applications. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, 4(5), 231–244.
- Brady, K. T., Back, S. E., & Coffey, S. F. (2004). Substance abuse and posttraumatic stress disorder. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13(5), 206–209.
- McCauley, J. L., Killeen, T., Gros, D. F., Brady, K. T., & Back, S. E. (2012). Posttraumatic stress disorder and co-occurring substance use disorders: Advances in assessment and treatment. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 19(3), 283–304.

### **Government and Practice Resources**

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *SAMHSA’s concept of trauma and guidance for a trauma-informed approach* (HHS Publication No. SMA 14-4884). <https://store.samhsa.gov>.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *Trauma-informed care in behavioral health services* (Treatment Improvement Protocol [TIP] Series 57; HHS Publication No. SMA 14-4816). <https://store.samhsa.gov>.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2019). *Enhancing motivation for change in substance use disorder treatment* (TIP 35; HHS Publication No. PEP19-02-01-003). <https://store.samhsa.gov>.

- National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2020). Principles of drug addiction treatment: A research-based guide (3rd ed.). <https://nida.nih.gov>.

#### **Films and Multimedia (Useful Supplements)**

- Redford, J. (Director). (2016). Resilience: The biology of stress & the science of hope [Documentary]. KPJR Films.
- Harris, N. B. (2014, September). How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime [Video]. TED. [https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine\\_burke\\_harris\\_how\\_childhood\\_trauma\\_affects\\_health\\_across\\_a\\_lifetime](https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime).
- Maté, G. (2012, October). The power of addiction and the addiction of power [Video]. TEDxRio+20. <https://www.youtube.com/>.

## **A Note from the Instructor**

This syllabus is a working document. If something here is unclear, contradictory, or produces an unintended barrier to learning, please bring it to my attention so we can address it together. I am committed to a trauma-informed learning environment and welcome your feedback throughout the term.