

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course/Unique Number: SW327/64050
Semester: Spring 2014
Meeting Time: MW 11:00 AM
Meeting Place: SSW 2.132

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Office Hours: by appointment

Human Behavior and the Social Environment

(W- Fulfills the writing flag requirement; Required BSW Course)

I. Standardized Course Description

This course explores the biopsychosocial and cultural functioning of human beings across the life span using an ecological-systems lens and major developmental theories as a framework to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation. Using the generalist social work lens, this course integrates content from other human behavior courses. The students will gain an understanding of what physical, mental, social and economic justice hazards can adversely impact an individual's growth and development during their lifetime. Frameworks incorporating an eco-systems/developmental perspective, including systems/ecological and psychosocial (life span development) frameworks, are used to conceptualize stages of human growth and development, with a primary focus on adolescence, early adulthood, the middle years, and the aged adult within an intergenerational family context. The impact of the family, social groups, organizations, communities, and society on individuals during these stages of the life span are also discussed. This course emphasizes empirically based research reflecting a risk and resilience perspective in making client assessments and recommending appropriate interventions. This contributes to a social worker's ability to understand and critically analyze the interactions among individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Students will be able to understand how personal values are reflected in socio-cultural contexts, such as culture, race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, class, and religion, and how they can influence human behavior. Increasing access to resources, reducing risks, and considering ethical dilemmas involved in dealing with human behavior are also considered.

Course prerequisites include Social Work 310, 312, and either Psychology 304 (Child Psychology) or Child Development 313 (Child Development). Social Work 325

(Foundations of Social Justice) is also required as part of this curriculum area and is taken concurrently with SW327.

This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

II. Standardized Course Objectives

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

- 1) Explain the unique perspective that social work has in viewing the relationship between the individual person and environment in comparison to other helping professions (**PB24**);
- 2) Explain and apply basic principles of learning theories and the system/ecological and psychosocial frameworks and analyze individual, family, group, organizational, community, and societal dynamics from each of these perspectives (**PB24**);
- 3) Describe biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual aspect of adolescent, early adult middle adult, and older adult developmental states within the context of the broader environment (**PB24**);
- 4) Describe the dynamics of social groups, organizations, communities, and societies, and the ways that they can impact individual development and behavior (**PB24**);
- 5) Explain ways that ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, and other factors contribute to human development and their implications for social work practice in assessment, intervention, and evaluation (**PB23**);
- 6) Describe relevant research and identify and conceptualize additional research needs relating to human behavior and the social environment;
- 7) Apply information and theories related to human behavior and the social environment to life situations in a manner consistent with social work values and the promotion of social and economic justice (**PB24**);
- 8) Use critical thinking skills in writing an academic literature review on a human development question of interest;
- 9) Explain and apply basic principles of learning theories and the systems/ecological and psychosocial frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, interventions, and evaluation (**PB23**);
- 10) Apply information and theories related to human behavior and the social environment to life situations in order to determine the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being (**PB24**);

The School of Social Work has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work

Education (CSWE) since 1952. In order to maintain our accreditation status, we engage in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Several required courses in our curriculum are part of this ongoing assessment, including this course. Below is a list of the specific Educational Policies (EP) and Practice Behaviors (PB) that are assessed in this course. The complete EPAS can be optioned from your Student Handbook.

E.P. 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

PB23 Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

Objectives 5, 9

Assignment: Case analysis and presentation

PB24 Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment

Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10

Assignment: Case analysis and presentation and film review

III. Teaching Methods

This course is designed to provide the student with a meaningful learning environment to acquire skills and knowledge in the area of human behavior in the social environment. The instructor believes in an active learning approach, an approach asserting that the learning process is one in which reciprocity between students and between the instructor and students is a necessity. Teaching methods include a combination of lecture, group discussion, small group critique, case study analysis and readings. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class period. Class instruction is designed to encourage student participation.

IV. Required Readings

Hutchison, E.D. (2011). *Dimensions of human behavior: Person and environment* (4th ed.). Sage Publication, Inc., CA.

Additional readings from other books and journal articles may be assigned. Any additional readings will be available on UT Blackboard.

V. Course Requirements

1. **Case analysis and presentation** (PB 23 & 24): Students will be assigned to 2 cases for presentation and writing. Each student will write a case analysis, and a team of students will lead class presentation and discussion on their assigned case. The writing piece should be double spaced, 12pt font, 4-6 pages in length and must adhere to APA 6th edition style.

The first draft will be due on the date that the case will be presented. Students will submit two hard copies (one to the instructor and the other to the assigned peer evaluator). The draft should be revised and resubmitted on the final submission date indicated in the syllabus. Along with the revised paper, students will turn in their original paper with instructor comments and the peer review checklist from the fellow student. Students will also provide

a brief description which indicates how each suggestion was addressed.

2. **Peer review:** For each case analysis, a fellow student will be assigned to review. Students will complete the peer review checklist for each writing assignment. Students are required to return their peer reviews to the author within a week. The peer review process is designed to allow students to review content of other's work and participate in helping fellow students improve their writing and critical thinking.
3. **Exams** (PB 23 & 24): There will be two exams covering the readings, class lectures, guest speakers, and videos.
4. **Film review** (PB 23 & 24): Each student will be expected to write a 4-6 page film review. The film will be viewed in class. More detailed guideline will be provided.
5. **Class Attendance:** Attendance will be checked for **five randomly chosen** classes throughout the semester. A total of 5 points is assigned for your class attendance. Each absence will result in 1 point reduction.

VI. Grading

Case analysis and presentation (2 cases, 15 points each)	30
Peer review (2 cases, 2.5 points each)	5
Exam #1	20
Exam #2	20
Film review	20
Attendance	5
TOTAL	100 points

Undergraduate Grading Scale

94 - 100 = A	74 - 76 = C
90 - 93 = A-	70 - 73 = C-
87 - 89 = B+	67 - 69 = D+
84 - 86 = B	64 - 66 = D
80 - 83 = B-	60 - 63 = D-
77 - 79 = C+	59 and below =F

VII. Class Policies

1. Class attendance. Students are expected to attend every class period for the entire period. Any class materials missed due to absence is the student's sole responsibility. The instructor recognizes that occasionally circumstances prevent class attendance. Students are requested to inform the instructor if they are aware that they will miss a class and/or communicate with the instructor by email after missing a class.
2. Class participation. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to class. Multiple and various opportunities for participation will be available for students. These opportunities include graded assignments and ungraded classroom discussions and experiential learning. As we learn about human behavior, it is important for future social

workers to be both self-aware and conscious of group dynamics. Appropriate participation and contribution to the classroom learning environment may mean for some to learn to speak up, comment and/or voice questions, while for others it may mean allowing space for others to contribute.

3. General assignment requirements. All assignments must be typed, double spaced with one inch margins in APA style. References/sources must be cited from credible sources (No Wikipedia, etc.) If questions about the credibility of a reference arise please consult with the instructor before using it. Specific instructions will be provided for each assignment. If students are unclear about how to complete an assignment please consult with the instructor prior to the due date. Hard copies of all assignments are preferred but if you will not be in class on the day that an assignment is due you may email the assignment prior to the beginning of class.
4. Assignment due dates. Except under extremely unusual circumstances, assignments must be completed and turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments will receive deductions to the total grade for each day the assignment is late of 5 percentage points per day.

Required University Notices and Policies

5. University of Texas Honor Code
The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.
6. Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students
Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.
7. Documented Disability Statement
If you require special accommodations, you must obtain a letter that documents your disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to me at the beginning of the semester so we can discuss the accommodations you need. No later than five business days before an exam, you should remind me of any testing accommodations you will need. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.
8. Religious Holidays

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

9. Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

10. Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building.

Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.

If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.

In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

Schedule of Classes

Class	Date	Topic	Readings & Activities	Due
1	01/13	Introduction	Case assignment	
2	01/15	Aspects of human behavior 1	Hutchison Ch. 1	
3	01/20	MLK Jr. Day (no class)		
4	01/22	Aspects of human behavior 2	Case analysis #1	
5	01/27	Theoretical perspectives 1	Hutchison Ch. 2	
6	01/29	Theoretical perspectives 2	Case analysis #2	
7	02/03	The biological person 1	Hutchison Ch. 3	
8	02/05	The biological person 2	Case analysis #3.1 – 3.6	
9	02/10	The psychological person 1	Hutchison Ch. 4	
10	02/12	The psychological person 2	Case analysis #4	
11	02/17	The psychosocial person 1	Hutchison Ch. 5	
12	02/19	The psychosocial person 2	Case analysis #5	
13	02/24	The spiritual person 1	Hutchison Ch. 6	
14	02/16	The spiritual person 2	Case analysis #6.1 – 6.6	
15	03/03	Review Session		
16	03/05	Exam 1		
17	03/10	Spring Break (no class)		
18	03/12	Spring Break (no class)		
19	03/17	Film Part 1		Case analysis 1 revision due
20	03/19	Film Part 2		
21	03/24	The physical environment 1	Hutchison Ch. 7	
22	03/26	The physical environment 2	Case analysis #7	
23	03/31	Culture 1	Hutchison Ch. 8	
24	04/02	Culture 2	Case analysis #8	Film review due
25	04/07	Social structure & institutions 1	Hutchison Ch. 9	

26	04/09	Social structure & institutions 2	Case analysis #9	
27	04/14	Families 1	Hutchison Ch. 10	
28	04/16	Families 2	Case analysis #10	
29	04/21	Small groups	Hutchison Ch. 11 Case analysis #11	
30	04/23	Formal organizations	Hutchison Ch. 12 Case analysis #12	
31	04/28	Review Session		
32	04/30	Exam 2		Case analysis 2 revision due

Note: This schedule is subject to change.