

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT-W
W = Contains a Substantial Writing Component)
(Required Course - BSW Program)

Course Number:	SW 327	Instructor's Name:	Jemel Aguilar, Ph.D., MSW.
Unique Number:	62430	Office Number:	3.106F
Meeting Time:	9:30 - 11:00 pm	E-Mail:	jaguilar@austin.utexas.edu
Meeting Place:	SSW 2.130	Office Hours:	Wednesdays 11:30-1pm

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. 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 his or her 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.

This course is the second course in the HBSE curriculum area. 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.

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 systems/ 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 aspects 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. Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development.

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

Assignment: Case study analysis and group observation

PB24 Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

Assignment: Case study analysis

Teaching Methods

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 to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Hutchinson, E. D. (2008). *Dimensions of Human Behavior: Person and Environment 3rd Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing Company

Scales, T. L. & Wolfer, T. A. (2006). *Decision Cases for Generalist Social Work Practice*. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Brooks Cole.

Selected Readings: Additional readings from other books and journal articles may be assigned, and will be available on UT Blackboard

COURSE POLICIES

Students are expected to attend all classes and to participate in an interactive framework between collegiate students and the professor. Students are expected to complete the readings PRIOR to class, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments. Failure to attend the class and demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the final grade. Students will be allowed one (1) absence. Role will be taken each class period. In cases where a student misses more than one class, the professor will lower that student's final grade by one grade level for each class missed beyond one absence. Students are responsible for any material missed due to absences. Any student missing more than 4 classes (excused or unexcused) is in jeopardy of failing this course.

University Electronic Mail Notification Policy

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

In this course e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class work and announcements. Note: if you are an employee of the University, your e-mail address in Blackboard is your employee address.

Persons with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259- voice or 471-4641 - TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course *at the beginning of*

the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. Five business days before an exam the student should remind the instructor of any testing accommodations that will be needed.

See website below for more information:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/providing.php>

Note to the Students about Feedback

Feedback is an important part of any kind of learning. Without feedback on how well you understand the material, it is more difficult for you to make significant progress. During this course I will be asking to give me feedback on your learning in some informal and formal ways, such as assignments, orally as well as on exams. I also ask that you let me know when something we discuss is not clear. This kind of information communication will enable me to provide additional information when needed or to explain a concept in different terms.

In addition to feedback on your learning, I will be asking for feedback from you about how my teaching strategies are helping or hindering your learning. This kind of feedback is very important to me as I continually strive to be the best teacher I can be. Some of this feedback will be gathered from online anonymous surveys. I encourage you to respond to these surveys so that together we can create an effective teaching and learning environment.

Religious Holidays

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors *at least fourteen days prior* to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day.

Requirements for all Written Assignments

All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and formatted in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Thus, papers should be written on 8 1/2 x 11 in white paper, in black ink, 12-pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and 1 inch margins. A complete description for formatting your papers is available on beginning on page 283 of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.)

The instructor will evaluate your writing on the basis of content, format, and writing style (organization, clarity, grammar, punctuation, etc.). If the student includes in-text citations for a reference list and more than 5 of these citations/references are incorrect, then paper will be automatically reduced by 15 points.

All students are expected to conform to the rules of scholastic honesty as outlined in the General Bulletin of the University of Texas at Austin. Scholastic misconduct will result in *automatic failure* of the course.

Statement on achievement

Student achievement in meeting course objectives will be evaluated on the following written, oral, and in-class experiential assignments, regular and punctual class attendance, and informed class participation based upon class readings/assignments.

Student feedback is welcome. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback during office hours, by phone, by e-mail, and by appointment if they desire.

If students are concerned about their class performance, the professor is more than willing to work with students to help them improve their course grades prior to the end of the semester.

Part of professional accountability includes treating others with respect and courtesy. Within this class, this means you will be expected to listen to the opinions and concerns of others with openness, to offer suggestions and ideas in a positive and respectful manner, and to be willing to promote group cohesiveness in order to create a safe learning environment.

The instructor reserves the prerogative to change class assignments as needed to meet the course objectives. The changes will be shared with the students in class or by email.

CLASSROOM POLICIES AND PRACTICES

1. As students enter the UT School of Social Work, they are simultaneously entering into a profession that puts forth a set of ethical responsibilities and values that all social workers must follow. As such, students are held to the NASW ethical mandates and Standards for Social Work Education as outlined in the Student Handbook
2. Grades are assigned based on the following criteria: The grade of "A" is given for outstanding work that engages course materials with original thought and creativity or a mastery of technical skills. The grade of "B" is given for doing all of the work well. The grade of "C" is given for meeting all course requirements. To obtain a high grade, students must find the time to complete assignments in a way that **integrates and extends** readings, lectures, classroom discussions, and your own critical perspective on the topic.
3. Students are expected to share perspectives and opinions as part of skill development for social work practitioners. Students are expected to behave respectfully toward others who may (and most likely will) view similar situations from a different vantage point. These differences in perspectives do not make one right and the other wrong. Students are expected to critically examine all perspectives and before determining which best fits the situations discussed in class.
4. Phone calls, pagers, and other **communication devices are restricted** from being on or placed in 'silent' mode while in class. 'Ear buds' are also not allowed. The use of computer is not allowed in class unless you have a professional letter explaining your need. This letter needs to be presented to the professor within the first 2 weeks of the course. Cell phones need to be turned off during class time. In addition, students who inappropriately use cell phones, computers or any other technological device during class will have one point deducted from their participation grade each time the behavior occurs. If all participation points are deducted from a student's class participation grade and continued absences and/or class disruptions occur, additional points will be deducted from the student's final grade in the same manner in which they were deducted from the class participation grade.
5. Assignments are to be handed in within the **first fifteen minutes of class** and on the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted.

6. The professor is available to students during office hours. Emails and telephone calls will only be returned at that time as well.
7. Disrespect toward others or the professor is not tolerated and will be handled directly and in the context in which it occurs. Disrespectful behavior includes overt acts, such as talking over others or making derogatory comments based on another person's race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religious preference, and/or ability/disability. Moreover, covert acts of disrespect, such as sneers and other derogatory facial expressions, excluding class members from classroom tasks, etc. are also unacceptable.
8. Students are permitted one excused absence. A student is considered absent if they arrive more than 10 minutes late to class, leave early, or are unable to come to class. Any other absences will result in a reduction by one letter grade.
9. Students have the opportunity to evaluate the professor and are expected to critique the course in time for the professor to make changes that will benefit them. If students think the professor has failed to live up to the principles or philosophies listed, they are expected to communicate their concerns directly to the professor and in a constructive manner.

COURSE CONTENT

H = Hutchinson; S = Scales and Wolfer

Week	Topic	Dates	Readings due Mondays	Assignment due Wednesday
1	Introduction	Syllabus		
2	Human Behavior	Week of Jan 24	H - Chapter 1	S - Chapter 1,2
3	Case Analysis	Week of Jan 31		S - Case 12
4	Perspectives	Week of Feb 7	H - Chapter 2	Case 3
5	Biological	Week of Feb 14	H - Chapter 3, 4	Case 9
6	Psychosocial	Week of Feb 21	H - Chapter 5	Case 4
7	Spiritual	Week of Feb 28	H - Chapter 6	Case 6
8	Midterm	Week of Mar 7	<i>Review Day</i>	Mid-term
9	Spring Break	No Class		
10	Physical	Week of Mar 21	H - Chapter 7	Case 10
11	Culture	Week of Mar 28	H - Chapter 8	Case 2
12	Institutions	Week of Apr 4	H - Chapter 9	Case 5
13	Families	Week of Apr 11	H - Chapter 10	Case 1
14	Small Groups	Week of Apr 18	H - Chapter 11	Case 7
15	Organizations	Week of Apr 25	H - Chapter 12	Case 11
16	Finals	Final Exam		

Course Requirements

In order to receive a passing grade for the course ALL assignments need to be completed or you may be in jeopardy of failing the course.

Grade	Description	Points
EXCELLENT (A):	Significantly <u>exceeds</u> expectations (more than is required) & demonstrates in-depth critical thinking/analysis (e.g., coherent integration of ideas).	585 or above
GOOD (B):	Meets all the requirements & demonstrates in-depth critical thinking/analysis	520 – 584
AVERAGE (C):	Meets the requirements or has minor gaps but fails to demonstrate in-depth critical thinking /analysis.	455 – 519
BELOW AVERAGE (\leq D):	Has important gaps in knowledge and has limited knowledge of the course of study	390 – 454
Failed (F)	Fails to demonstrate in-depth critical thinking/analysis and does not meet requirements for course of study	389 or below

- A. Case studies (3 cases) 100 each
- B. One case revision 50 points
- C. Mid term exam 100 points
- D. Final Exam 100 Points
- E. Group observation 100 points

Brief descriptions of assignments

This section provides students with a brief description of the assignments that are a part of this class. Further instructions and guidance will be available to students via blackboard beginning the second week of class.

Case analysis

Students are required to complete 3 case analyses. The first case analysis a student writes will be rewritten as part of the Writing Flag requirement. This revision case is worth 50 points. Each case analysis is due on the Wednesday assigned in the syllabus and within the first 15 minutes of class. **Case analysis will not be excepted electronically or by proxy. You are responsible to get the case assignment to the professor within the first fifteen minutes of class.** If you are having computer problems, it is still expected to be turned in on the day it is due.

Group observation of human behavior in a public environment

Students will be assigned to groups of 3 or more and must select a public environment in which to observe people for at least one hour in their native environment.

Exams

Students will participate in a midterm and final exam that covers the Hutchinson readings. Exams are cumulative so the instructor strongly advises students to keep up with the readings. Class is canceled the Monday before class so that students can study for the exams in groups during class time. The classroom will be available for students to use to study in groups. On exam days, arrive in class on time. If you arrive late, extra time will not be given for the exam. There are no make-up exams.