

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

COURSE/UNIQUE NUMBER: SW 327/62890

SEMESTER: SPRING 2011

MEETING TIME: M, W 11-12:30

MEETING PLACE: SSW 2.132

TA: AL THOMPkins

INSTRUCTOR: ROBERTA GREENE

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HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

(W- CONTAINS A SUBSTANTIAL WRITING COMPONENT; 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 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.

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.

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 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

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 Study "Big Mama"

PB24 Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

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

Assignment: Case study "Big Mama"

III. Teaching Methods

This class is conducted using a variety of teaching methods such as lectures, videos, guest speakers, experiential activities and group discussions. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class period. Class instruction is designed to encourage student participation and input.

IV. Required Readings

Textbooks:

Hutchison, E. D. (2008). *Dimensions of human behavior: Person and environment* (3rd Ed.) Sage Publication, Inc., CA.

Selected Readings: Additional readings from other books and journal articles are assigned, and are available on UT Blackboard. They include:

WEEK 6-7

Greene, R. R. (2008). Ecological perspective: An eclectic theoretical framework for social work practice. In R. R. Greene (Ed.), *Human behavior theory and social work practice* (pp. 199-236). New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction Press.

Greene, R. R. (2008). General systems theory. In R. R. Greene (Ed.), *Human behavior theory and social work practice* (pp. 165-198). New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction Press.

Greene, R. R. (2008). Reflections on Hurricane Katrina by Older Adults: Three Case Studies in Resiliency and Survivorship. *Journal of Human Behavior and the Social Environment*, 16(4), 57-74.

Greene, R.R. (2008). Resilience. In T. Mizrahi & L.E. Davis (Editors-in-Chief), *Encyclopedia of social work* (pp. 526-531, Vol. 3, 20th edition). Washington, DC: NASW Press & Oxford University Press.

V. 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.

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|-----------------------|--------|
| A. Writing assignment | 45 pts |
| B. Writing revision | 10 pts |
| C. Mid term exam | 20 pts |

D. Final Exam	20 pts
E. Class participation (<i>Only 2 unexcused absences are allowed, any more will be deducted from the allotted points</i>)	<u>5 pts</u>

TOTAL 100 pts

VI. Grading Scale

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

1. **Writing assignment (to assess PB 23 and 24).** Students are required to turn in a writing assignment at the end of the semester. It is worth 45 points. It will be rewritten as part of the Writing Flag requirement. This revision is worth 10 points.

You will complete **eight parts of the Big Mama case assessment throughout the semester on Wednesdays**. Writing assignments are due on the date assigned in the syllabus at the end of class. You are responsible to get the assignment to the professor or TA on the day it is assigned. If you are having computer problems, it is still expected to be turned in on the day it is due. If you email your paper to the professor or TA, be sure they get a hard copy too.

2. **Writing Analyses (Final Paper)**

The writing assignment should be double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, and must adhere to APA 6th edition. Each paper should be supported with a minimum of 5 references (either book or journal article published between 2005-2010 unless you are citing the original author of a theory or an important historic citation).

Writing Analysis Elements for the Case study “Big Mama”

Introduction (1 page or less): Briefly identify major elements (i.e., people, setting) of the situation.

Problem Statement (a paragraph or less): Give a specific and concisely written formulation of the problem to guide the analysis and problem-solving. Include peer reviewed literature to support your formulation of the problem.

Context Analysis (2-3 pages): Summarize the various micro, meso, and macro contextual factors (describe the contexts that apply to the case: individual, family, school/employment/environment, peer, community) that created and/or sustain the problem. Also describe how these contexts are influenced by additional factors (i.e. cultural, economic, legal, organizational policy). Provide a description of how your contextual analysis is linked to the problem statement. Use peer-reviewed articles to support your connection of the contextual analysis to the problem statement.

Theoretical Selection (1-2 pages): Choose a theoretical orientation (ecological, risk & resilience theory, or general systems theory) that will guide your analysis of the case. Tell why you have chosen this orientation and how it best fits the case. Be sure to use and define theory terms.

Alternative Strategies (2-3 pages): Using peer-reviewed literature on the problem or area of human behavior in the social environment, identify three or more possible solutions to the problem. These solutions should be plausible, distinct, and non-contingent (i.e., not interdependent). Briefly note advantages and disadvantages of each possible solution.

Recommendation (1 page): Of the 3 alternative strategies, choose 1 that would be your recommendation and support it with peer-reviewed literature. Justify your preferred strategy, explaining why you selected that particular strategy and how it best resolves the problem. Describe in detail how the selected strategy will influence human behavior in the social environment. Additionally, briefly explore possible unintended effects of intervening into the problem.

3. Case Study Revision (10 points total)

As required by the Writing Flag component of this course, students must submit a revised paper. Once the first case analysis has been turned in, the instructor will heavily review and critique the analysis.

4. **Exams (to assess PB 23 and 24).** There will be a mid-term exam and final exam covering the readings and class lectures. If videos and guest lecturers are part of the class, then these will also be covered on exams. Exams are not cumulative. If you are unable to take an exam on the assigned date for any reason other than an emergency, you must notify the instructor at least one week in advance of the test date. If you do not, then it may result in not taking the exam.

On exam days, arrive in class on time. If you arrive late, extra time will not be given for the exam. If you do not take the exams, you may be in jeopardy of not passing the course.

5. **Class participation.** Students will receive 5% of their grade for class attendance, class participation and professional conduct. Attendance will be taken every class period. A student may miss two classes without penalty. For each additional class missed, one point will be deducted from the class participation grade.

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.

VI. Class Policies

- 1. Class Attendance.** Class attendance is required every class period for the entire class period. Attendance will be taken each class. It is the student's sole responsibility to sign the attendance sheet each class. Students may not sign in for each other because that would be forgery and violating UT's expectations for academic integrity. This behavior may result in academic dismissal from UT or from the SSW.
- 2.** Students are allowed to drop two absences due to unforeseen circumstances. Any class material missed due to class absence is the student's sole responsibility.
- 3. Class preparation.** 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 demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the class participation grade.
- 4. General assignment requirements.** All assignments must be typed in double spaced and have one inch margins, typed in Times New Roman 12 point font. . References/sources used in papers must be in APA format and be credible (NO Wikipedia). If questions about the credibility of a reference arise, consult with the instructor. The instructor is available by email to answer questions about assignments. Students should submit questions or requests for clarifications at least 24 hours before an assignment is due. If an assignment is due in less than 24 hours, the instructor cannot guarantee a timely response.
- 5. Assignment due dates.** Students will be penalized 3 points for each calendar day that an assignment is late. UT does not allow Incompletes (grade of X) to provide additional time to complete assignment. Students will be informed of any changes in assignments, due dates, and other class content. Make sure your assignment when emailed to the professor included your attachment and it successfully reached the professor on time. If not, it may result in not receiving credit for the assignment if you did not check your computer and the professor never got the assignment. If late, there will be 3 points deducted for every day starting from the day it was due.
- 6. The 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.
- 7. Professional Conduct in Class.** The professor expects students to act like professionals in

class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism. Professional conduct also includes timely arrival to class and respectful behavior during class and appropriate use of technology, if permission was received from the professor. No computers (unless with permission), cell phone use, iPod or other devices are permitted during class. Failure to display professional conduct may result in a deduction from attendance points or a UT SSW Level One Review.

- 8. Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty.** Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>).
- 9. Documented Disability Statement.** Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the 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 the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.
- 10. Religious Holidays.** By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least 14 days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.
- 11. Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students.** Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.
- 12. Safety.** As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

13. Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL). If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their 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>.

14. 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:

- a. 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.
- b. If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- c. In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
- d. 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.

VIII. Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Dates	Readings	Due
1	Class Introduction	W 1/19	Syllabus	
2	Generalist defined Social work & HBSE Diversity Help-Seeking	M 1/24	Hutchison Ch. 1	
		W 1/26 Guest lecture	Hutchison Ch. 3	Define bio- psycho- social- spiritual
3	Biological/ psychological person	M 1/31 Guest lecture	Hutchison Ch. 4 Movie "Big Mama"	
	Psychosocial person	W 2/2 Guest Lecture	Hutchison Ch. 5	
	Spiritual person		Hutchison Ch. 6	
4	What is a theory? How do we critique a theory?	M 2/7	Hutchison Ch. 2	

		W 2/9		I. Conduct a biopsychosocial & spiritual of "Big Mama" & Walter.
5	Multi-dimensional perspectives on human behavior	M 2/14	.	
		W 2/16		
6	Theories & tools for social work practice: Developmental, ecological, systems, and risk and resilience	M 2/21	Required extra readings on Blackboard.	
		W 2/23		Glossary review
7	Continue Theories for Practice: ecological, systems, and risk and resilience	M 2/28	Required extra readings on Blackboard See list above	Three case studies in resilience and survivorship
		W 3/2		II. Apply risk and resilience theory to Big Mama & Walter.
8		M 3/7	Review	
		W 3/9		MID-TERM
	SPRING BREAK	M 3/14 W 3/16	NO CLASS	
9	The physical environment	M 3/21 W 3/23	Hutchison Ch.7	III. Describe the physical environment in which Big Mama & Walter live.
10	Culture	M 3/28	Hutchison Ch. 8	

		W 3/30		IV. Describe how Walter & Big Mama experience the dual perspective.
11	Social Institutions	M 4/4	Hutchison Ch. 9	
		W 4/6		V. What is the role of the child welfare system and rehabilitation agencies in Walter's life?
12	Families	M 4/11	Hutchison Ch. 10	
		W 4/13		VI. Describe the "Flow of Stress & Resilience" in Big Mama & Walter's family.
13	Small groups	M 4/18	Hutchison Ch. 11	FINAL PAPER DUE
	What is group work?	W 4/20		VII. Describe how Big Mama's church group contributes to a sense of community?
14	Formal organizations & communities Family-friendly workplaces Multi-systemic workplace issues	M 4/25	Hutchison Ch. 12 & 13	FINAL PAPER RETURNED FOR RE-WRITE

	Types of communities Elder-friendly communities	W 4/27		VIII. Describe how an elder-friendly community would help Big Mama & Walter?
15	Final week	M 5/2 W 5/4	Review	FINAL EXAM TURN IN FINAL PAPER RE-WRITE

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

(May be helpful in getting your analyses started; not to replace your own literature searches.)

Adams, K. B., Sanders, S., & Auth, E. (2004). Risk and resilience factors of loneliness and depression in residents of independent living retirement communities. *Aging and Mental Health*, 8(6), 465-475.

Begun, A. L. (1993). Human behavior and the social environment: the vulnerability, risk and resilience model. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 29, 26-35.

Karls, J., & Wandrei, K. (1994). *Person-in-environment system: The PIE classification system for social functioning problems*. Washington, DC: NASW.

Scharlach, A., Damron-Rodriguez, J., Robinson, B., & Feldman, R. (2000). Educating Social Workers for an Aging Society: A Vision for the 21st Century. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36(3), 521-538.