

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

COURSE/UNIQUE NUMBER: SW 381R
SEMESTER: SPRING 2011
MEETING TIME: WED 5:30-8:30 PM
MEETING PLACE: SSW 2.116
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**THEORIES AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES
OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

I. Course Description

This graduate-level course will focus on empirically based theories and conceptual approaches that undergird social work practice and research with individuals and families in social systems. Ecological-systems theory and a lifespan developmental framework will serve as conceptual guideposts for understanding social work's person-in-environment, contextual approach to the reciprocal relationship between human behavior and the social environment. Other traditional and alternative theories are also examined, including Psychodynamic, Cognitive Behavioral, Social Learning, Empowerment, Transpersonal, and Feminist. A critical perspective is emphasized to understand (1) theoretical knowledge construction, evaluation, and integration, and (2) theoretical relevance to explain the influence and contribution of factors related to race, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and physical and mental ability to human behavior and development. Methodological, empirical, and ethical considerations of contemporary issues (i.e., poverty, privilege, oppression, risk, and resiliency) and multi-dimensional aspects of the human experience and change across the lifespan (i.e., biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual) will be critically examined.

II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge about and critically analyze relevant theories of human behavior and development comparing definitional components, philosophical underpinnings, value assumptions, strengths, and limitations. **(PB23)**
2. Analyze the reciprocal relationships of human behavior and social systems, and how this interaction influences health and well-being as well as risk and vulnerability. **(PB24)**
3. Describe the social construction of theoretical concepts, empirical evidence, gaps in knowledge, and relevant controversies regarding theories of human behavior and development. **(PB23)**
4. Analyze the impact of such factors as race, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and physical and mental ability on risk and resilience, identity development, and human interactions within social systems. **(PB24)**

5. Understand the interaction between the biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of the human experience and lifespan development. **(PB24)**
6. Conduct a scientific review of empirical evidence and theory to address human behavior and development topics. **(PB23)**

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 1, 3 and 6

Assignment: Case analyses, Case analysis presentations, exams

PB24 Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

Objectives 2, 4 and 5

Assignment: Case analyses, Case analysis presentations, exams

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.

Scales, T. L., & Wolfer, T. A. (2006). *Decision cases for generalist social work practice: Thinking like a social worker*. Thompson: Brooks/Cole, CA.

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

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. Case studies (3 cases) | 30 pts |
| B. Case study revision | 10 pts |

C. Mid term exam	20 pts
D. Final Exam	20 pts
E. Case Presentation	15 pts
F. 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. **Case analyses (to assess PB 23 and 24).** Students are required to complete 3 case analyses. Each case analysis is worth 10 points. The first case analyses will be rewritten as part of the Writing Flag requirement. This revision case is worth 10 points. Case analyses are due on the date assigned in the syllabus at the beginning of class. You are responsible to get the case 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 you paper to the professor or TA, be sure they get a hard copy too.
2. **Case analysis presentation (to assess PB 23 and 24):** One group will be assigned to lead the case discussion for each case. The group will present the case, their analysis and recommendations for the case. The group will lead a mock team meeting where classmates will contribute to further analysis of the case. Students are expected to attend class for all case presentations and written input will be collected each case analysis presentation, which will part of the student participation grade.
3. **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.
4. **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.

VII. 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	Aspects of human behavior	W 1/26	Hutchison Ch.1 Scales & Wolfer Ch. 1, 2	
3	How to do a case analysis	W2/2	Scales & Wolfer-Case #12 Scales & Wolfer-Case #8	
4	Perspectives on human behavior	W 2/9	Hutchison Ch. 2	Case # 3
5	Biological/ psychological person	W 2/16	Hutchinson Ch. 3 Hutchison Ch. 4	Case # 9
6	The psychosocial person	W 2/23	Hutchison Ch. 5	Case # 4

7	The spiritual person	W 3/2	Hutchison Ch. 6	Case # 6
8	Mid-term week	W 3/9	Review	MID-TERM
	SPRING BREAK	W 3/16	NO CLASS	
9	The physical environment	W 3/23	Hutchison Ch.7	Case # 10
10	Culture	W 3/30	Hutchison Ch. 8	Case # 2
11	Social Institutions	W 4/6	Hutchison Ch. 9	Case # 5
12	Families	W 4/13	Hutchison Ch. 10	Case # 1
13	Small groups	W 4/20	Hutchison Ch. 11	Case # 7
14	Formal organizations	W 4/27	Hutchison Ch. 12	Case # 11
15	Final week	W 5/4	Review	FINAL EXAM

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.

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Atwood, N. C. (2001). Gender bias in families and its clinical implications for women. *Social Work, 46*(1), 23-38.

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- Orlin, M. (1995). The American with Disabilities Act: Implications for social services. *Social Work*, 40(2), 233-239.

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