
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number: SW 327

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Semester: Fall 2015

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Human Behavior in 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.

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.

Writing Flag Course:

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.

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 Textbooks:

Hutchison, E.D. (2015). *Dimensions of human behavior: Person and environment (5th ed.)*. Sage Publication, Inc., CA.

Selected Readings: Additional readings from other books and journal articles may be assigned. Any additional readings will be available on UT Canvas.

V. Course Requirements

Class Participation: It is important to attend class on time, remain for the entire class, and to be actively and meaningfully present for effective learning and demonstration of professional behavior. In order to receive the highest level of participation points, healthy risk-taking for professional growth must be demonstrated. Participation points will be determined by attendance, level of interest, respect for others' learning needs and contributions to classroom discussions and activities. Being prepared for class by reading assigned material is part of this professional expectation as well. **10 points**

Writing Prompts: The professor will assign 7 writing prompts throughout the course (see course schedule for due dates) . Each prompt will be designed to support the student's learning of the course content and writing skills. If the student fails to complete a writing assignment, points will be deducted from their Class Participation grade as follows:

- 1 missing assignment = 3 points deducted
- 2 missing assignments = 6 points deducted and the student will need to schedule office hours to discuss Class Participation issue
- 3 missing assignments = 10 points deducted, 0 credit for Class Participation
"no credit" for writing prompts

The professor will provide a written assignment sheet for each course requirement to students in class and each assignment sheet will also be posted on Canvas.

1. Case Analysis (Paper)	40 points
2. Writing Groups (Peer Review)	10 points
3. Writing Prompts (credit/no credit)	0 points
4. Exams (20 points each)	40 points
5. Class Participation	10 points

Total: **100 points**

Extra Credit: A detailed description of two extra credit opportunities will be given to students at the beginning of the course. Students may take advantage of one these extra credit opportunities and earn points up to 5 points. All extra credit assignments will have a hard deadline; no late submissions will be accepted.

Grading Scale:

94.0 and Above	A
90.0 to 93.999	A-
87.0 to 89.999	B+
84.0 to 86.999	B
80.0 to 83.999	B-

77.0 to 79.999	C+
74.0 to 76.999	C
70.0 to 73.999	C-
67.0 to 69.999	D+
64.0 to 66.999	D
60.0 to 63.999	D-
Below 60.0	F

VII. Classroom Policies:

Professional Accountability/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.

Part of professional accountability includes treating others with respect and courtesy. Within the class this entails listening to the opinions and concerns of others with openness, offering suggestions and ideas in a positive and respectful manner, and being willing to promote group cohesiveness in the learning environment.

The student is expected to bring any concerns directly to the professor on an individual basis, if the issue is not appropriate to be discussed in class. Students should be prepared to discuss the concern openly, with willingness to accept feedback, and offer possible solutions.

Please turn off cell phones and laptops during class. Avoid side conversations. A description of proper classroom etiquette will be provided.

Time Management: Students will lose 2 points per calendar day that an assignment is late. Assignments are due on Canvas at the beginning of class. Papers turned in after class begins are considered late. On subsequent days, papers must be submitted before 5:00 p.m. to avoid an additional 2-point penalty. The student should email the professor to indicate that the assignment has been submitted.

If a student is absent on the day of a exam, they will need to schedule a make-up by contacting the professor or class TA within 3 business days by email. If the exam has not been made up within 3 business days 5 points will be deducted from their grade. All exams must be made up within one week of the original date of the test or no credit can be earned.

Classroom exercises, discussions, role-plays, guest speakers and other class experiential exercises are essential for the students' professional learning and continued development of self-awareness. This form of learning cannot be "made up" once missed. Students will be expected to contact their peers to secure any missed notes or handouts. The student may schedule an office visit with the professor if they wish to discuss missed classroom material in more detail.

Students are to notify the instructor prior to class at the given office number or by email if they cannot attend class due to an illness or emergency.

Class Participation Points will be deducted per absence from class in the following manner:

Absence 1: Zero points deducted

Absence 2: 1 points deducted

Absence 3: 3 points deducted

Three or more absences may result in the student being dropped from the course. Late arrivals will be noted if the student is more than 10 minutes after the start of class. Three late arrivals will count as one class absence.

Contacting the Professor: The professor is available to discuss any issues that arise related to class during office hours or by appointment. Additionally, the student can email the professor via Canvas with questions regarding assignments and/or concerns. The student should be prepared that it could take 24-48 hours for the professor to respond. There is a TA assigned to the course and in some instances, the student may receive a response from them instead of the professor.

VII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

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.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM. The professor expects students to act as 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. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive

classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

UNANTICIPATED DISTRESS. Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/.

POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION. Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material that could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including *any* information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in *any* way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

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://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>).

USE OF COURSE MATERIALS. The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the professor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.

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). A student should present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed and followed. 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/>.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS. By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, examination, work assignment, or 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.

TITLE IX REPORTING. In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct based on gender. Students who report incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or sexual misconduct to faculty, instructors, and/or staff who supervise students, will be provided a list of University resources. If the incident is impacting the academic environment, a report will be provided to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may be found at <https://www.utexas.edu/student-affairs/policies/title-ix>.

CLASSROOM CONFIDENTIALITY. Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters is considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational supervision and is protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.

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 for keeping the university informed about a change of 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>.

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.

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 between 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>.

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 in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.

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

VIII. Course Schedule

08/26/15	Review of Syllabus and forming Writing Groups	Reading Assignment (RA): Syllabus	
08/31/15	Human Behavior: A Multidimensional Approach	RA: Chapter 1	

09/02/15	Human Behavior, continued	RA: Chapter 1	
0/9/07/15	Theory	RA: Chapter 2	Due: Writing Prompt 1
09/09/15	Theory Continued and Writing Groups meet	RA: Chapter 2	
09/14/15	The Biological Person	RA: Chapter 3	
09/14/15	The Biological Person, continued	RA: Chapter 3 (and readings as assigned)	
09/16/15	Guest Speaker	RA: readings as assigned	Due: Writing Prompt 2
09/21/15	The Psychological Person and Writing Groups	RA: Chapter 4	
09/23/15	The Psychosocial Person	RA: Chapter 5	
09/28/15	The Spiritual Person	RA: Chapter 6	
09/30/15	Guest Speaker	RA: readings as assigned	Due: Writing Prompt 3

10/05/15	The Physical Environment and Writing Groups	RA: Chapter 7	Due: Case Analysis Rough Draft Part 1
10/07/15	Culture	RA: Chapter 8 and readings as assigned	
10/12/15	Review for Exam 1 and Culture Continued	RA: Chapter 8	Due: Writing Prompt 4
10/14/15	Exam 1		
10/19/15	Social Structure/Social Institutions and Writing Groups	RA: Chapter 9	
10/21/15	Families	RA: Chapter 10 and readings as assigned	Due: Case Analysis Rough Draft Part 2

10/26/15	Families Continued and Writing Group	RA: Chapter 10	Due: Writing Prompt 5
10/28/15	Small Groups	RA: Chapter 11	
11/02/15	Formal Organizations	RA: Chapter 12 and readings as assigned	
11/04/15	No Class		Due: Case Analysis Rough Draft Part 3
11/09/15	Communities	RA: Chapter 13	Due: Writing Prompt 6
11/11/15	Communities continued	RA: Chapter 13 and assigned readings	
11/16/15	Social Movements	RA: Chapter 14	
11/18/15	Social Movements and Advocacy	RA: Chapter 14 and assigned readings	Due: Writing Prompt 7
11/23/15	Writing Groups		Due: Case Analysis Rough Draft Part 4
11/25/15	No Class		

11/30/15	Review for Exam		
12/02/15	Exam 2		
12/04/15			Due: Final Case Analysis Paper by 12p via Canvas