

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course/Unique Number: SW327/64050
Semester: Fall 2015
Meeting Time: MW 11:00 AM –12:30 PM
Meeting Place: SSW 2.118

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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 Canvas.

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.

VII. Required University Notices and 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 which 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

[\(http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/\)](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.

Schedule of Classes

Class	Date	Topic	Readings & Activities	Due
1	08/26	Introduction	Case assignment	
2	08/31	Aspects of human behavior 1	Hutchison Ch. 1	
3	09/02	Aspects of human behavior 2		
4	09/07	Labor day – no class		
5	09/09	Theoretical perspectives 1	Case analysis #1 Hutchison Ch. 2	
6	09/14	Theoretical perspectives 2	Case analysis #2	
7	09/16	The biological person 1	Hutchison Ch. 3	
8	09/21	The biological person 2	Case analysis #3.1 – 3.6	
9	09/23	The psychological person 1	Hutchison Ch. 4	
10	09/28	The psychological person 2	Case analysis #4	
11	09/30	The psychosocial person 1	Hutchison Ch. 5	
12	10/05	The psychosocial person 2	Case analysis #5	
13	10/07	The spiritual person	Hutchison Ch. 6 Case analysis #6.1 – 6.6	
14	10/12	Review session		
15	10/14	Exam 1		
16	10/19	Film part 1		
17	10/21	Film part 2		Case analysis 1 revision due
18	10/26	The physical environment 1	Hutchison Ch. 7	
19	10/28	The physical environment 2	Case analysis #7	
20	11/02	Culture 1	Hutchison Ch. 8	Film review due
21	11/04	Culture 2	Case analysis #8	
22	11/09	Social structure & institutions	Hutchison Ch. 9 Case analysis #9	
23	11/11	Families 1	Hutchison Ch. 10	
24	11/16	Families 2	Case analysis #10	
25	11/18	Small groups and formal	Hutchison Ch. 11 & 12	

		organizations	Case analysis #11 & 12	
26	11/23	Thanksgiving break - No class		
27	11/25	Thanksgiving break - No class		
28	11/30	Review Session		Case analysis 2 revision due
29	12/02	Exam 2		

Note: This schedule is subject to change.