

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number:	SW 381R	Instructor:	Valerie Braden
Unique Number:	60925	Email:	Valerie.braden@austin.utexas.edu
Semester:	Fall 2024		
Meeting Time/Place:	Thursdays	Cell Phone:	254-723-6781
	5:30pm – 8:30pm	Office Hours:	By appointment
	MEZ 1.212		

Human Behavior and the Social Environment

I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

This graduate-level course will focus on evidence-based theories and conceptual approaches that undergird social work practice and research with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations in social systems. A number of frameworks, including, but not limited to, ecological systems theory, critical race theory, the strengths-based perspective, psychodynamic theory, conflict theory, developmental theory, social behavioral theory, exchange and choice theory, social constructionist theory, humanistic theory, and additional theories with antiracism and anti-oppressive focus will serve as conceptual guideposts for understanding social work’s person-in-environment, contextual approach to the interaction between human behavior and the social environment across the lifespan. Students apply critical perspectives of theory in practice to (1) evaluate how theoretical knowledge is constructed through the lens of diversity and equity, and (2) explain how micro, mezzo and macro systems are influenced by factors related to racialization, ethnic origin, class, gender identity and expression, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical and mental abilities, caste, immigration/refugee status, national origin of communities and tribal sovereign status. They will apply this knowledge in engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of client systems. The influence privilege and oppression have on risk and resiliency is emphasized as the learning community explores how the environment shapes multi-dimensional (i.e., biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual, intersectional) aspects of the human experience and change across the lifespan.

II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

1. Demonstrate knowledge about relevant theories of human behavior and development comparing definitional components, philosophical underpinnings, value assumptions, strengths, and limitations.
2. Critically evaluate theoretical frameworks through an anti-racist, anti-oppressive lens.
3. Analyze the interaction between human behavior and social systems, identifying how power differentials in these interactions influence health and well-being as well as risk and vulnerability.

4. Gain knowledge of counternarratives to evaluate theoretical concepts, empirical evidence, and relevant critiques of theories of human behavior and development.
5. 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, intersectionality, and human interactions within social systems.
6. Understand the interaction between the biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of the human experience and lifespan development.
7. Conduct a scientific review of empirical evidence and theory to address human behavior, psychosocial, and developmental issues.
8. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person in environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with, assess data from, select and implement interventions with, and evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
9. Reflect on the student's own lived experience and identities and incorporate this greater awareness in order to impact their social work practice.

III. TEACHING METHODS

This course is designed to provide the student with a meaningful learning environment that will incorporate diverse perspectives of thought about human behavior. The class will be conducted using active learning approaches that will emphasize inclusion and different learning styles. Course activities will include a combination of group discussion, small group critique and feedback, audiovisual presentations, case study analyses, readings, experiential exercises, speakers, and informal lecture. Students are expected to be open to learning and actively engaged in class discussion and activities, to take appropriate personal risks, and to demonstrate both critical thinking and self-reflection throughout the course. Classes are designed to encourage student participation, input and discussion.

IV. REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS

Hutchison, E.D. & Charlesworth, L.W. (2022). *Essentials of human behavior: Integrating person, environment, and the life course* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your grade for this course will be based on the following requirements (further guidance for class participation and all assignments is included in the syllabus appendix):

Student Participation - Attendance and active participation are critical to the teaching and learning in this class. Students are expected to participate during class sessions, or, in extenuating circumstances, to notify the instructor if they cannot participate. This portion of the grade will be determined by attendance and quality of contribution as demonstrated by student preparation level. Preparation includes completing readings and assignments by due dates and coming to class prepared to discuss them, and “being present” and involved in experiential

activities and discussions. Note that even if absences are excused, missing more than one class may impact your participation grade (unless it is because of a religious holiday) since you cannot participate if you are not present. 10% of final grade

Literature Review Paper – Students are expected to use critical thinking to complete a scholarly literature review on a selected human development/behavior topic that may be confronted in social work settings. This paper allows you to examine a specific topic, problem, or issue in depth by reviewing what other scholars have written about it. 20% of final grade

Literature Review Matrix – Complete the document titled Literature Review Matrix from Canvas for 5 sources for your literature review. The matrix is intended to help students organize and prepare for writing the literature review. Submit via Canvas. 5% of final grade

Literature Review Hand out and Presentation – Consider an organization or population that might be interested in information in your literature review. The goal is to transform the technical and scientific knowledge from your literature review for a different audience. Present a **one-page** hand out (digital copy) to the class that summarizes the main points of the literature review. Either on the title of your hand out, or in the notes with the submission, indicate who is the intended target audience. This might be a school staff meeting, a town hall meeting, education for therapy clients, an advocacy group or something else. Think about presenting the content to a real life, non-academic setting and consider using images or graphs to help. One page only! You will present your handout with the group. This is an informal presentation. No other preparation is needed beyond the handout. 10% of final grade

Podcast Analysis – Listen to the podcast The Parent Therapy Trap with Abigail Shrier on the show the Knowledge Project. Throughout the podcast, Abigail Shrier makes several references to research to support her conclusions and assertions. Pick one of the arguments that she makes (research shows...) and find at least one article that she might be referencing. Provide your analysis of the research and of the conclusion that Abigail Shrier draws about the research in a 3-5 page paper. Think about answering the following questions: What do the researchers suggest as a conclusion or application of the research? What about the conclusion Abigail Shrier reports are accurate or inaccurate? Be prepared to share a brief recap of your analysis with the class (5 minutes). No formal presentation materials are required. Submit the written analysis via Canvas. 15% of final grade

Case Analysis Paper – To fulfill the EPAS competencies of 6a, 7a, 8a, and 9a, the case analysis paper is a common assignment for all sections of HBSE. Students will complete a case analysis focusing on how to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate practice with an individual, a family, a group, an organization, or a community. Students will submit this assignment in two parts. Students may choose from cases 10.1, 10.3, 11.2, 12.2, 12.3, 13.1, 14.2, 15.1, or 16.2 or use a case from their field. Can not be the same case as used in any other class. 40% of final grade

In order to receive a passing grade, ALL assignments need to be completed and expectations for class participation met.

Summary of Assignments	Due Date	Points (100)
Lit Review		35

Topic	9/12/24	0
Matrix	9/19/24	5
Review	10/3/24	20
Handout + Class Presentation	10/10/24	10
Podcast Analysis and Class Presentation	10/24/24	15
Case Analysis		40
Part 1	11/14/24	20
Part 2	12/5/24	20
Participation		10

VI. GRADES

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

**Minimum to pass course*

VII. CLASS POLICIES

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 race, 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. This atmosphere includes working intentionally to recognize and dismantle racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism in the classroom. 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.

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.

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 and Mental Health Center at 512-471-3515 or online at <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/>.

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 (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and other forms of electronic communication (e.g. blogs) 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.

VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Attendance and Academic Behavior. At the University of Texas at Austin, regular attendance at all class meetings is expected. Instructors are responsible for implementing an attendance policy and must notify students of any special attendance requirements. See more information at <https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/academic-policies-and-procedures/attendance/>. Furthermore, students are expected to abide by the Standards for Social Work Education (available at <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/student-resources/bsw/policies-and-procedures/>). The student shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior by being punctual and

dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, and keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements.

Religious Holy Days. A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable period after the absence. A reasonable accommodation does not include substantial modification to academic standards, or adjustments of requirements essential to any program of instruction. Students and instructors who have questions or concerns about academic accommodations for religious observance or religious beliefs may contact the Center for Access and Restorative Engagement at <https://community.utexas.edu/care/>. The University does not maintain a list of religious holy days.

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.

Policy on Academic Integrity. Students who violate University rules on academic 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 academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

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.

University Electronic Mail Student Notification. Electronic mail (email), like postal mail, is a mechanism for official University communication to students. The University will exercise the right to send email communications to all students, and the University will expect that email communications will be received and read in a timely manner. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <https://it.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>.

Steve Hicks School of Social Work Policies

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Resources, Prevention of Discrimination, and Safety

Disability Accommodation Statement. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Disability and Access (D&A). You may refer to D&A's website for contact and more information: <https://community.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with D&A, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and how they apply in my class.

Behavior Concerns and Covid-19 Advice Line (BCCAL). If students have concerns about their behavioral health, or if they are concerned about the behavioral health of someone else, students may use the Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns. 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 <https://safety.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line>. The Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line has been expanded to support The University of Texas at Austin community during the COVID-19 pandemic. By calling 512-232-5050 - Option 2 for COVID-19, students, faculty and staff can be assisted in English and Spanish with COVID-19 support.

Covid-19 Related Information. The University's policies and practices related to the pandemic may be accessed at: <https://protect.utexas.edu/>

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 on the basis of sex <https://titleix.utexas.edu/>. Faculty, field instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking, dating violence, or any other forms of sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at <https://titleix.utexas.edu/>.

Title IX Accommodations for Those Pregnant, Nursing and Parenting. Pregnant, nursing and parenting students, faculty, and staff are eligible for accommodations through the Title IX Office that support equal access to education and work and prevent discrimination. Students may reach out to the Title IX Office for help with accommodations to make up missed classes, complete missed coursework, keep them safe in the classroom, apply for leaves of absence, receive priority registration and other related support. Faculty and staff, including undergraduate students who work on campus and graduate student employees, may reach out for assistance with job or schedule restructuring and obtaining modified or additional work equipment. Visit the [Title IX pregnancy](#)

and parenting resource page for more information or contact the Title IX Support and Resources team connect with a Case Manager.

Campus Carry Policy. The University’s policy on campus carry may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>.

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.

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.

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Readings
8/29/24	Class Syllabus, expectations, Introduction to Literature Review, Systems Theory		Chapter 1, Systems Theory
9/5/24	Conflict theory, exchange and choice theory, social constructionist theory		Chapter 2, Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior
9/12/24	Discuss lit review topics as a class Psychodynamic theory, developmental theory, behavioral theory, humanistic theory	<i>Bring lit review topic and be prepared to share with the class</i>	Chapter 2, Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior

<p>9/19/24</p>	<p>Biopsychological dimensions Brain-based implications for human behavior Psychological dimensions Physiological interventions Social Drivers of health Theories of Cognition and Emotion Stress and Coping</p>	<p><i>Lit review matrix due 8am in Canvas</i></p>	<p>Chapter 3, The Biological Person & 4, The Psychological Person</p>
<p>9/26/24</p>	<p>Spiritual dimensions Views of culture The natural environment/ecojustice Cultural competent assessments</p>		<p>Chapter 5 The Spiritual Person, &Chapter 6, Culture and the Physical Environment Listen to podcast: Therapy Ghostbusters Therapy Ghostbusters : Invisibilia : NPR</p>
<p>10/3/24</p>	<p>Theoretical perspectives for understanding families and family systems Diversity in Family Life Challenges that impact family life: Interpersonal violence, poverty, divorce, substance misuses Support groups in general Role of religious organizations SW in leadership Theories of Group processes</p>	<p><i>Literature Review Due 8am in Canvas</i></p>	<p>Chapter 7, Families & Chapter 8, Small Groups, Formal Organizations, and Communities</p>
<p>10/10/24</p>	<p>Trends in Global and US Social Institutions Theories of social inequality Present Lit review handouts</p>	<p><i>Lit Review handout Due 8am in Canvas; presentation in class</i></p>	<p>Chapter 9, Social Structure, Social Institutions, and Social Movements Listen to podcast: Rabbit Hole, Episode 1: Wonderland</p>
<p>10/17/24</p>	<p>The life course perspective Psychosocial/developmental frameworks Reproductive rights Pre-pregnancy and prenatal development</p>		<p>Chapter 10 The Life Course Perspective & Chapter 11, The Journey begins, Conception, Pregnancy</p>

10/24/24	Development in infancy and early childhood Risks to Healthy Development	<i>Podcast Analysis Due 8am in Canvas; Be prepared to share with the class</i>	Chapter 12, Toddlerhood and early childhood
10/31/24	Eat candy, watch a scary movie, dress up in costume	<i>No class</i>	Happy Halloween!
11/7/24	Development in middle childhood Challenges in middle Childhood		Chapter 13, Middle Childhood
11/14/24	Development in adolescence Identity Relationships Moral development Risks and decision-making	<i>Part I Case Analysis Due</i>	Chapter 14, Adolescence
11/21/24	Development in young and middle adulthood Education, work and relationships		Chapter 15, Young and Middle Adulthood
11/28/24	No Class	<i>No class</i>	Fall Break
12/5/24	Development in late adulthood Loss and grief HBSE in a changing world Course evaluations Celebration and closure	<i>Part II Case Analysis Due 8am Canvas</i>	Chapter 16, Late Adulthood

X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hutchison, E.D. (2016). *Essentials of human behavior in the social environment: Integrating person, environment, and the life course (2nd ed.)*. Los Angeles: Sage.

- Parrish, S. (Host). (2024, May 21). 194 Abigail Shrier: The Parent-Therapy Trap [Audio Podcast episode]. In The Knowledge Project. Farnam Street. [#194 Abigail Shrier: The Parent-Therapy Trap by The Knowledge Project with Shane Parrish \(spotify.com\)](#).
- Roose, K. (Host). (2020, April 16). One: Wonderland [Audio podcast episode]. In Rabbit Hole. New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/podcasts/rabbit-hole-internet-youtube-virus.html>.
- Shaw, Y. & Natisse, K. (Hosts). (2022, September 23). Therapy Ghostbusters [Audio podcast episode]. In Invisibilia. <https://www.npr.org/programs/invisibilia/1124616516/therapy-ghostbusters>.