1. Course Description:

This course will examine multicultural and critical perspectives on understanding: individuals, families, and their interpersonal and group relationships; life span development; and theories of well-being, stress, coping, and adaptation. This course will emphasize knowledge about individuals and small social systems and the implications of this knowledge for all domains of social work practice. Students will be introduced to the concepts of risk and protective factors, with relevant examples at the individual and small system levels. Students will also consider the implications of this knowledge for intervening in social problems and supporting rehabilitation once problems have developed. Major components of the course will be concerned with the processes of oppression, privilege, and discrimination and factors that help people and small social systems to change. The knowledge presented will include the interrelationships between smaller and larger social systems, and in particular, how biological factors and the larger social and physical environments shape and influence individual and family well-being.

2. Course Content:

Content will include selected theories of human behavior, human development, families and small groups, and individual and small system change. Students will consider how relevant concepts have been developed, the types of knowledge and data that inform different theories, and current gaps and controversies in biological, behavioral, and social science knowledge and theory. Emphasis will be placed on similarities and differences related to human diversity and
dynamics of oppression and privilege. In addition, this course will focus on how individual and small system factors and processes can facilitate attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, family characteristics, and group processes that either promote multicultural human well-being and social justice or help to recreate inequities and problems.

3. **Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge about and be able to critically analyze relevant theories of human behavior, human development, families and small groups, and individual and small system change through the life course emphasizing similarities and differences and the effects of oppression and privilege.
- Articulate the concepts of risk and protective factors and give examples at the individual, group, and family levels.
- Describe the impact of such characteristics as economic class, culture, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, religion, and age on risk and protective factors, human development, human interactions, and the structures of small social systems.
- Identify the interrelationships between smaller and larger social systems and describe how biological factors and larger social and physical environments interact to influence individual and family well-being.
- Describe how relevant concepts have been socially constructed, what knowledge and empirical evidence support selected theories, some current gaps in knowledge, and key controversies about these theories and related knowledge.
- Conceptualize how individual and small system factors and processes can either promote multicultural human well-being or recreate inequities and problems.
- Examine theories of individual, family, and group change and their relevance for all types of social work practice towards a multicultural and socially just world.
- Discuss typical ethical concerns related to human differences, social relationships, well-being, and change through the life course.

4. **Course Design:**

The instructor will select required and recommended readings and in addition will include a range of pedagogical methods, e.g., discussions, films, written assignments, and experiential exercises related to course materials. Guest speakers may be invited to address special topics.

5. **Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:**

- *Multiculturalism and Diversity.* Students will examine the ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, social class, age, and other forms of social stratification and disenfranchisement affect individuals and small social systems. Emphasis will also
be placed on the processes of oppression, privilege, and discrimination, as well as the factors that help people and small social systems to change.

- **Social Justice and Social Change.** Students will analyze selected theories in terms of the factors and processes that either promote social justice and change or help to recreate inequities and problems.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation.** Students will learn about social problems, as well as the spectrum of interventions and supportive rehabilitation currently used to alleviate these problems.

- **Behavioral and Social Science Research.** Students will critically analyze relevant theories of human behavior, human development, families and small groups, and individual and small system change through the life course. The research supporting these theories will provide a foundation for the content in this course.

6. **Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:**

This course will address ethical and value issues related to working with individuals, families, communities, and small social systems. The NASW Code of Ethics will be used to inform practice in this area. For example, students will learn about client issues, such as confidentiality, privacy, rights and prerogatives of clients, the client’s best interest, proper and improper relationships with clients, interruption of services, and termination. In addition, this course will focus on the social worker’s responsibility to promote the general welfare of society by preventing and eliminating discrimination, ensuring equal access to resources, expanding choices and opportunities for all persons, encouraging respect for diversity, advocating for changes in social policies, and encouraging informed participation by the public.

7. **Source Materials:**

a. **Books**


b.  **Journals**
COURSE PHILOSOPHY AND FORMAT

Social work practice presumes the practitioner’s knowledge of theories of human development and human behavior, i.e., her or his understanding of how the development and behavior of people are explained and how social work intervention impacts them. The public also makes this assumption. In fact, social workers may be called on to provide expert testimony in legal cases or to provide consultation to other professionals that calls on their knowledge of human development and behavior. For example, social workers may be asked to testify in court regarding a possible relationship between an individual’s traumatic experiences during childhood (e.g., severe abuse) and their adult criminal behavior. Although understanding human development and behavior may seem intuitive, both are very complex phenomena. The interaction between the biological, cultural, and social environment and behavior and development complicate this picture further. For this reason, careful and informed attention to knowledge building in the areas of human development and behavior is essential for social workers. I take seriously the responsibility for the acquisition of such knowledge in this course.

The course will be conducted in a seminar fashion, meaning that you will be expected to participate fully in the entire learning process. Classes will involve a range of activities, including lectures and discussions, speakers, small group activities, class presentations, and videos. In the first class session, small groups will be formed which will continue for the remainder of the semester. Assignments and in-class activities involving small groups will be carried out in these groups.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Participation: It is my desire that your experience in this course is beneficial to you in your future practice as a social worker. Therefore, I will make every effort to facilitate your success in the learning experiences that have been incorporated by 1) providing didactic and experiential encounters that have been found useful to social workers; 2) providing a supportive learning environment; and 3) being clear regarding expectations of you in the course. Please call my attention to any questions or lack of clarity regarding any of the assignments.

Prompt attendance at, and active participation in all class sessions is essential. SW 500 provides knowledge that serves as the basis for preparation in a number of subsequent courses. Since the knowledge derived from the class is based in large part on in-class activities, you should attend all class sessions and participate in class activities. In spite of this expectation, two absences are permitted without penalty. Use your discretion in your absences, but absences may result from your own illness or that of a family member, the death of a person close to you, observation of religious holidays, job or field placement interviews, or other personal needs. Please e-mail members of your small group if you must be absent from a class. Please notify me if it is essential for you to be absent beyond the two allowed classes, since additional absences will not typically be excused and absences from more than two class sessions will result in an automatic deduction of 5 points from your final grade for each missed class session. Students for whom an extended illness or incapacitation interferes with their attendance and fulfillment of in-class and/or out-of-class activities should strongly consider withdrawing from the course and taking it later at a more convenient time.

Required Texts and Other Readings:


Social Work Library Reserve:


ASSIGNMENTS
A. & B. Multidimensional Framework Assessment - Small Group Presentation (Maximum 15 points) and Individual Paper (Maximum 35 points)

This assignment contains an oral group presentation and a self-contained 8-10 page individual paper that expands the element of the group presentation you were responsible for. The assignment provides an opportunity for you to connect theories that may be used by social workers to explain individual behavior or development issues that are surrounded by controversy. The assignment is expected to stimulate your critical thinking skills. You will receive a separate handout for this assignment. The written paper is to be submitted two weeks following the group presentation.

For each class in which a group presentation is made, students not presenting will be expected to:
- Read, in advance, the reading(s) recommended by upcoming small group presenters
- Participate in the discussion of the topic
- Complete an unsigned evaluation form providing feedback about the presentation as a whole that highlights at least one strength and any suggestions by which it could have been improved. (I will receive these and provide them, in aggregate form to the student group.)

C. Family Analysis Paper (Maximum: 20 points)

For this assignment, you will be asked to read and summarize a novel (fiction or non-fiction) centering around the life of a family differing in form or culture from the family of which you are or were a part, then discuss (in a 5 page paper) inherent protective and risk factors (within and surrounding the family), using assigned readings in Carter & McGoldrick (1999) and in the Kail and Cavanaugh (2004) text. You will receive a separate handout for this assignment.

D. Small Group Analysis Paper (Maximum 20 points)

For this assignment you will be asked to write a five-page paper that analyzes your small group experience during the semester, from the standpoint of the assigned reading in Ashford, LeCroy, and Lortie (2001). You will receive a separate handout for this assignment.

E. Class Participation (Maximum 10 points)

Your active participation is important. Throughout the course, you will be expected to complete the assigned readings (weekly and related to small group presentations) on time, to participate in class discussions, to participate in small group activities, to conduct observations, to provide written evaluative feedback following small group presentations, and to participate in other activities aimed at enhancing your development of knowledge in this course.
Grades for Assignments

Multidimensional Framework Assessment -  
  Oral Presentation – Small Group members  15 points maximum  
  Individual paper  35 points maximum  
  Small group analysis paper  20 points maximum  
  Family analysis paper  20 points maximum  
  Class participation  10 points maximum  
  TOTAL  100 points maximum

Writing Policy

All written assignments will be evaluated for organization, content, ideas presented, clarity, correct spelling, grammar and sentence structure, proper credit to authors from whose works written material has been derived, and the extent to which the work adheres to what was requested for the assignment. In assignments in which you are asked to cover certain points, it helps in grading to include headings in your paper that match those points. The 5th edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) is the style manual that should be used. Papers should be double-spaced, typewritten/word processed, with a 12 point font. All papers should be in narrative format. The College of Literature, Science and Art (LS&A) offers a College Writing Workshop that many students have found useful. For information contact: Writing Workshop, 1139 Angell Hall, 1003, 764-0429. In addition, the School of Social Work Office of Student Services offers help with editing and proof-reading student papers. E-mail them at ssw.workstudy@umich.edu

FINAL GRADES

Grade Calculation: 94-100 points = A; 90-93 points = A-; 84-89 points = B; 80-83 points = B-; 74-79 points = C; 70-73 points = C-; 64-69 points = D; 60-63 points = D-; 59 points and below = F. A grade of C or better is required to receive credit for the course.

COURSE OUTLINE

Please Note! The following represent weekly reading assignments. The authors have made every effort to present the material from a multicultural perspective, incorporating a diversity of experiences. Content includes emphasis on development and behavior from an individual, small group, family, biological, psychological, and sociocultural perspective.

September 9th  Session 1 - Introduction to the class  
  Class introductions, introductions to the syllabus, lecture, exercise
September 16th  
Session 2 - Theories of Development and Behavior 

Required reading:  

Ashford, LeCroy, & Lortie (2001), Chapter 1: A Multidimensional Framework for Assessing Social Functioning (pp. 29-34)  
Kail and Cavanaugh (2004), Chapter 1: The Study of Human Development 

Thinking about development  
Recurring issues in human development  
   Nature versus nurture  
   Continuity versus discontinuity  
   Universal versus context-specific development  

Basic forces  
The biopsychosocial framework  

Developmental theories  
   Psychodynamic and psychosocial theory  
   Learning theory  
   Cognitive-development theory  
   Ecological and systems approaches  
   Life-span, life-cycle, and life course perspectives  
   Interactions  

Transferring theory to research  
   Measurement in human development research  
   General designs for research  
   Designs for studying development  
   Conducting research ethically  
   Communicating research results  
   Applying research results: Social Policy implications  

PART I: PRENATAL DEVELOPMENT, INFANCY, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD  

September 23rd  
Session 3 – Heredity, prenatal development, and birth  

Required reading:  
Kail and Cavanaugh (2004), Chapter 2 - Biological foundations.  

Chromosomal beginnings  
   Mechanisms of heredity  
   Genetic disorders  
   Role of environment  
   Balancing genes and environment
Conception to birth
   Period of the zygote
   Period of the embryo
   Period of the fetus

Influences in prenatal development
   General risk factors
   Teratogens
   Prenatal diagnosis and treatment

Labor and delivery
   Stages of labor
   Approaches to childbirth
   Birth complications
   Infant mortality (the social context)

AND

September 23rd  Session 3 - Physical Development in Infancy and Early Childhood
Required reading: Kail and Cavanaugh, Chapter 3

The newborn
   Reflexes
   Assessment
   Newborn states
   Temperament

Physical development
   Growth of the body
   Nutrition and malnutrition
   The emerging nervous system

Motor development
   Locomotion
   Fine motor skills

Perception
   Smell and taste
   Touch and pain
   Hearing
   Seeing
   Integrating sensory information

Awareness
   Origins of self-concept
   Theory of the mind
September 30th

**Session 4 – Cognitive Development in Infancy and Early Childhood**

*Required reading: Kail and Cavanaugh (2004). Chapter 4: The Emergence of Thought and Language*

- Evaluating Piaget’s theories of cognitive development
  - Basic principles of cognitive development
  - Sensorimotor thinking
  - Preoperational thinking
  - Evaluating Piaget’s theory
  - Extending Piaget’s account: Children’s naïve theories

- Information processing during infancy and early childhood
  - General principles
  - Attention
  - Learning
  - Memory
  - Understanding number

- Mind and culture: Vygotsky’s theory
  - The zone of proximal development
  - Scaffolding
  - Private speech

- Language
  - The road to speech
  - First words and many more
  - Speaking in sentences
  - Grammatical development
  - Communicating with others

October 7th

**Session 5 – Socioemotional Development in Infancy and Early Childhood**

**SMALL GROUP PRESENTATIONS BEGIN TODAY**

*Required reading: Kail and Cavanaugh, Chapter 5: “Entering the Social World”*

- Attachment and trust
  - Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development
  - The growth of attachment
  - Attachment, work, and alternative caregiving
Emotional development
   Experiencing and expressing emotions
   Recognizing and using others’ emotions
   Regulating emotions

Social interaction
   Play
   Learning to cooperate
   Helping others and theories of altruism

Gender roles and gender identity development
   Images of men and women
   Gender typing
   Evolving gender roles

PART II: SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

October 14th  Session 6 – Chapter 6: Cognitive Development in Middle Childhood

Cognitive development in middle childhood
   More sophisticated thinking
   Piaget’s theory
   Information processing strategies for learning and remembering

School aptitude and readiness
   Theories of intelligence
   Binet and the development of intelligence testing
   Effectiveness of intelligence tests
   Heredity and environment
   Impact of ethnicity and social class

Special children/children with special needs
   Gifted children
   Children with mental retardation
   Children with learning disabilities
   Children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Academic skills
   Reading
   Writing
   Math skills
Learning in Schools
  Competence of U. S. schools
  Effective schools
  Effective teachers
  Cross-national comparisons

October 21st  Session 7 – Chapter 7: Socioemotional Development in Middle Childhood

FAMILY ANALYSIS PAPERS ARE DUE TODAY

Required readings:
Carter and McGoldrick (1999), Chapter 1: Overview: The expanded family life cycle (pp. 1-16)
Kail and Cavanaugh (2004), Chapter 7: Expanding Social Horizons

Family relationships
  Family as a system
  Dimensions and styles of parenting
  Bi-directional factors
  Siblings
  Divorce and re-marriages
  Child abuse

Friendships and peer relationships
  Friendships
  Groups
  Popularity and rejections

Influence of the “outside” world (e.g., television)
  On attitudes and social behavior
  On cognition
  Criticisms of TV

Development of empathy
  Describing others
  Understanding what others think
  Prejudice
October 28th  **Session 8 – Physical and Cognitive Development in Adolescence.**
*Required readings: Kail and Cavanaugh: Chapter 8: Rites of Passage*

Pubertal changes
- Signs of physical maturation
- Mechanisms of maturation
- Psychological impact of puberty

Health
- Nutrition
- Physical fitness
- Threats to adolescent well-being

Information processing
- Improvement effects of information processing
- Limits of information processing

Reasoning about moral issues
- Kohlberg’s theory
- Cultural differences in moral reasoning
- Beyond Kohlberg’s theory
- Promoting moral reasoning

Physical development and health
- Growth, strength, and physical functioning
- Health status
- Lifestyle factors
- Social, gender, and ethnic issues in health

AND

October 28th  **Session 9 - Socioemotional Development in Adolescence**
*Kail and Cavanaugh (2004), Chapter 9: Moving into the adult social world.*

Identity and self-esteem
- The search for identity
- Ethnic identity
- Self-esteem in adolescence
- Influences on adolescents’ self-esteem
- Myth of storm and stress
Romantic relationships and sexuality
   Dating
   Sexual behavior
   Sexual orientation
   Date rape

The world of work
   Career development
   Part-time employment

Risk factors
   Drug use
   Depression
   Delinquency

PART III: YOUNG ADULTHOOD AND MIDDLE ADULTHOOD

November 4th  Session 10 – Physical, cognitive, and personality development
Required reading: Kail and Cavanaugh (2004), Chapter 10: Becoming an adult

The beginnings of adulthood
   Role transitions and cultural considerations
   College
   Psychological views

Physical development and health
   Growth, strength, and physical functioning
   Health status
   Lifestyle factors
   Social, gender, and ethnic issues in health

Cognitive development
   How should intelligence be viewed?
   Intelligence in adulthood
   Thinking in adulthood
   The role of stereotypes in thinking

Personality in young adulthood
   Creating life stories
   Possible selves
   Self-concept
   Personal control beliefs
November 11th  **Session 11 – Forming relationships in young and middle adulthood**  
*Required readings: Kail and Cavanaugh (2004), Chapter 11: Being with others.*

Relationships  
Friendships  
Love relationships

Life-style considerations  
Singlehood  
Cohabitation  
Gay and lesbian couples  
Marriage

The family life cycle  
Decisions about child bearing  
The parental role

Divorce and remarriage  
Divorce  
Remarriage

Sexual harassment and Violence in relationships

**AND**

November 11th **Session 12 – Work and Leisure**

*Required readings: Kail and Cavanaugh (2004), Chapter 12 – Occupational and lifestyle issues in young and middle adulthood*

Selecting and developing an occupation  
The meaning of work  
Holland’s theory of occupational choice  
Occupational development  
Job satisfaction

Gender, ethnicity, and discrimination in the workplace  
In occupational selection  
In occupational development  
Bias and discrimination  
Sexual harassment

Occupational transitions  
Retraining  
Occupational insecurity  
Coping with unemployment
Work and family
   The dependent care dilemma
   Juggling multiple roles
Leisure activities
   Types
   Developmental changes
   Consequences

November 18th  **Session 12 – Unique Challenges of Middle Adulthood**
**Required reading: Kail and Cavanaugh (2004), Making it in midlife.**

Physical changes and health
   Appearance
   Bones and joints
   Reproductive changes
   Stress and health
   Exercise

Cognitive development
   Practical intelligence
   Becoming an expert
   Lifelong learning

Personality development
   Stability
   The five-factor model
   Changing priorities

Family dynamics: Middle-aged adults and their children.
   Middle-aged adults and their parents.

November 25th – Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class!

**Part IV – Late Adulthood**

December 2nd  **Session 13 – Physical, cognitive, and mental health issues**
**Required reading: Kail and Cavanaugh (2004), The Personal Context of Later Life.**

Demographics of Aging

Physical changes and health
   Biological theories of aging
   Physiological changes
   Health issues
Cognitive processes
  Information processing
  Memory
  Creativity and wisdom

Mental health and intervention
  Depression
  Anxiety disorders
  Dementia: Alzheimer’s disease

AND

December 2nd  

Session 14 – Psychological, retirement, relationship and societal issues

Required reading: Kail and Cavanaugh (2004), Social aspects of later life.

Psychosocial considerations
  Continuity theory
  Competence and environmental press

Personality, social cognition, and spirituality
  Integrity versus despair
  Well-being and social cognition
  Religiosity and spiritual support

Living in retirement
  Meaning
  Reasons for retirement
  Adjustment to retirement
  Keeping busy in retirement

Support systems
  Friends and siblings
  Marriage and gay and lesbian partnerships
  Caring for a partner
  Widowhood
  Great grandparenthood

Social issues
  Frail older adults
  Living in nursing homes
  Elder abuse and neglect
  Political context: politics, social security, and Medicare
December 9th  

Session 15 – Dying and bereavement. (LAST CLASS – COURSE EVALUATIONS)

LAST DAY TO TURN IN GROUP ANALYSIS PAPERS


Definitions and ethical issues
   Sociocultural definitions of death
   Legal and medical definitions
   Ethical issues

Personal aspects of death
   A life course approach to dying
   Dealing with one’s own death
   Death anxiety
   Creating a final scenario
   The hospice option

Surviving the loss: The grieving process
   The grief process
   Normal grief reactions
   Coping with grief
   Traumatic grief reactions

Dying and bereavement experiences across the lifespan
   Childhood
   Adolescence
   Adulthood
   Late adulthood