1. Course Description

This course will focus on biological, psychological, and social experiences, challenges, and changes characteristic of the first decade of life viewed from a multicultural perspective. "Normal" development, as well as the prevalence, etiology, and prevention of a variety of developmental concerns and problem behaviors will be reviewed. Emphasis will be placed on the integration of research and practice, with particular attention to the development of resiliency and social competence among infants and children. This course will also analyze how various environmental influences such as parental circumstances and behavior, poverty, and social justice issues impact infant and child development.

2. Course Content

This course will present developmental and social systems frameworks for assessing human development during the early stages of the life span. Individual development will be considered within the context of human relationships and particular social environments. Emphasis will be placed on fostering the student’s understanding of how culture and biology interact to promote or inhibit adaptation and coping at particular life stages within social settings. Human development from conception through the transition to adolescence will be explored through a variety of topics including: ecology of the family as a context of human development, biological aspects of development, family and care-giving relationships, social risk factors and resilience, peer relationships and the school environment, and the interface of mental and physical health and well-being. Insights that illuminate the life span developmental process will be drawn from a variety of social science disciplines, including developmental and social psychology. The relationship between theoretical insight and social work practice...
will be continually addressed. Special attention will be given to the relationship among life stages, critical life conditions, (i.e. poverty, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation), life events (i.e. separation, illness, transition to school) and psychological and physical functioning.

Throughout the course, relevant social science research will be examined and emphasis will be placed on the research methodology employed concerning issues of gender, ethnicity, and social class. The relevance of this course to Interpersonal Practice Methods courses and Field of Service course, such as those dealing with families and children, will be explicated.

3. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, student will be able to:
1. Describe key developmental stages and their associated issues, conflicts, and tasks during the infancy, toddler, early childhood, and late childhood periods.
2. Describe patterns of life cycle development from a multicultural perspective, including gender, ethnicity, social class, and religious and regional beliefs.
3. Describe how theoretical knowledge of coping and adaptation in children, their caregivers, and the care-giving contexts relate to social work practice.
4. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate and critique various theories of development.
5. Discuss relevant ethical concerns related to infant and child development and behavior.

4. Course Design

This course will include a series of readings, lectures, class discussions, videotapes, and student presentations. Students may be asked to assume various roles during experiential exercises.

5. Relationship to Four Curricular Themes

- *Multicultural and Diversity* themes will be address by careful attention to the impact of culture, gender, social class, religion, family structure, and ability on child behavior and development.

- *Social Justice and Social Change* will be addressed through discussion of the impact of economic and social oppression on infant and child development.

- *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation* will be addressed through an emphasis on factors that may contribute to infant, child, and family
resiliency or increase vulnerability. We will identify the kinds of environmental
conditions, programs, and interventions that promote optimal development at
this critical life stage.

- *Behavioral and Social Science Research* will be emphasized by drawing on
empirically based knowledge from a number of disciplines, particularly
developmental psychology.

6. Relationship to Social Work Ethics and Values

Since child development is so profoundly impacted by environmental and social
conditions, a number of ethical dilemmas may arise for social workers working
with infants and children. Dilemmas will highlight the importance of identifying
client strengths and working with the entire family or community in determining
appropriate interventions. This course will address the impact of social conditions
and social policy and the need for macro and micro intervention to improved the
conditions under which many children develop.

7. Assignments

1. Small Group Presentation-20 % (Sign up in class)
2. Research Paper- 30 % (Due, in class, March 6)
3. Developmental History-25% (Due, in class, March 27)
4. Child Observation-25% (Due, in class, by April 17)

(Papers must be turned in on assigned dates. I do not accept papers via email.)

Class Attendance and Participation

Attendance and active participation in class are required. Part of active
participation is coming to class with the required readings completed and
participating in group activities and class discussions. Please call or e-mail me
ahead of time if you will be absent from class. Excessive absences will result in a
lowering of the final grade.

Presentation (20% of final grade) Sign up in class

Each student will be required to do a class presentation, on a topic selected from
the instructor's list. Presentations will be 30 minutes in length, verbally delivered
during class, and should include an original handout for your fellow students. If
you would like me to make copies of your handouts for the class, please give me
the original, in class, one week prior to your presentation.

Due to class size and time constraints, presentation must be made on the date
you sign up for. If, due to illness or other emergency, you must make a change, it
is up to you to arrange to switch with your classmates and to notify me at least one week prior to the presentation.

Please turn in a detailed outline of your presentation to me in class the day of your presentation. A PowerPoint outline used during your presentation is an aid to classmates and highly recommended. Presentations will be graded based on oral presentation, quality of the handout, and presentation outline.

**Research Paper (30% of final grade) Due March 6th**

Select a topic that focuses on a particular aspect of infant or child development and behavior. Choose a concept discussed in class or in readings that you would like to learn about in more depth. Topic examples: resiliency; effects of divorce on children; the effects of racism, gender discrimination, or poverty as contexts for child development; the role of play in development; autism; mental retardation; speech delays; the effects of early exposure to lead; moral development; international adoption, identity development in bi-racial children; children of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgendered parents; the development of empathy; the effects of neighborhood violence, etc. These are only examples; any similar topics are acceptable. The topic should be of personal interest to you. If you have questions regarding appropriate topic selection, please see me. Research the topic by using at least 8 current primarily peer-reviewed journal articles, selected documents, or books. (Internet sources do not meet this criteria.) In order to be current, these sources should have been published in the last fifteen years.

Discuss the findings from your readings, including the following themes:
1. An overview/definition of the topic you have chosen.
2. Developmental stages or associated developmental issues, conflicts, and/or tasks relevant to your topic.
3. Relevant multicultural and social justice issues including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, economic class etc.
4. Social work practice issues of prevention, assessment, and/or treatment relevant to your topic.

The paper will be 10 double spaced pages in length and have 8 current references cited. Following the APA format, include a bibliography of the references. Use footnotes if needed. **Clear and appropriate citation is important and required.**

**Developmental History (25% of final grade) Due March 27th.**

Complete a developmental history for an infant or child. The instructor will provide a developmental interview format for those of you who are not already using one in your field placement. The interview does not have to take place in a
clinical environment. You can interview any parent about their child’s development or an adult about their own developmental history. Using the information obtained from the developmental interview format, write up a 3 page, double-spaced, developmental history.

**Infant/Child Observation** (25% of final grade) Due April 17th.

Observe a child (age birth-11 years) individually or in a group, for approximately 15-20 minutes. Carefully observe the child’s behavior without making judgments or forming conclusions. Unless it would be absolutely too intrusive, take specifics notes about the context of the observation and what the child is doing during the period of observation. Depending on the age of the child, observations about physical activity, verbal expressions, play sequences, activity shifts, interactions with others etc. may be relevant. Write an approximately two-page description of your observations. Next discuss the child’s behaviors within the context of two relevant developmental theories. Give a brief, cited, overview of the theories you have chosen and how each was helpful to you in understanding the child’s behavior.

For example, if you choose one of Erikson’s eight stages of (human) development, how did the child’s behavior demonstrate Trust vs. Mistrust? Or, if you choose attachment theory, what did you notice about the child’s attachment behaviors? In this section, please give examples you observed and explain how the behavior was relevant to the two chosen developmental theories. The paper should be 4-5 pages in length (including the child observation and discussion).

### 8. Readings

Required Texts:


Available at Shaman Drum Bookstore, 313 State Street, Ann Arbor.

Additional Readings as Assigned.
9. Class Calendar and Readings (The schedule of weekly topics may vary based on guest presenter availability. These changes will be announced in class.)

January 9, Introduction to class and course content

January 16, No class, MLK Day

January 23, Contexts of Development; Developmental Assessment
Davies, Introduction I. - Chapter 2 (pp. 3-60)
Berk Chapters 1-2
Handouts:

January 30, Prenatal and Neonatal Development
Davies, Chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 61-130)
Berk Chapters 3 and 4

February 6, Infant Development
Davies, Introduction to Part II-Chapter 5 (pp.133-171)
Berk Chapters 5 and 6

Feb 13, Infant Development
Davies, Chapter 6 (pp. 172-192)
Berk, Chapter 7

Feb 20, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Guest Presentation

Feb 27 - No Class

March 6, Toddler Development
Davies, Chapter 7, (pp.193-233)
Berk, Chapters 5 and 6 (Review)
Research Paper Due
March 13, Toddler Development  
Davies, Chapter 8 (pp. 234-257)  
Berk, Chapter 7 (Review)  

March 20, Preschool Development  
Davies, Chapter 9 (pp.259-310)  
Berk, Chapter 8 and 9

March 27, Preschool Development  
Davies, Chapter 10 (pp.311-334)  
Berk Chapter 10  
Developmental History Paper Due

April 3, Middle Childhood Development  
Davies, Chapter 11 (pp.335-388)  
Berk, Chapters 11 and 12

April 10, Middle Childhood Development  
Davies, Chapter 12 (pp. 389-418)  
Berk, Chapter 13

April 17, Developmental Knowledge and Practice  
Davies, Chapter 13  
Child Observation Paper Due