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 problem behaviors (e.g., failure to thrive, prematurity, and developmental delays) 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 behavior, poverty, and social justice 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 caregiving relationships, social risk factors and resiliency, peer relations 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 relationships among life stage, critical life conditions, (i.e., poverty, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation), life events, (i.e., separation, illness, and transition to school) and psychological and physical functioning.
Throughout this 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 courses, such as those dealing with families and children, will be explicated.

3. Course Objectives

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

1. Identify and describe biological, psychological, and social changes that characterize normative development specific to the various stages infancy/early childhood.
   • Relate the key developmental issues, tasks, and conflicts during infancy, toddler, early childhood or middle childhood.
   • Critique and evaluate various theories of development from a multicultural perspective and a social justice perspective.
   • Describe theoretical knowledge of coping and adaptation in infants, children, and their caregivers within the mutual regulation of the care giving context, and how it relates to social work practice and social welfare.
2. Describe the transactional relationship between a child’s development, their environment, and any influencing historical or cultural inequities that may be at work. Critique the influences of interpersonal, community, governmental, societal, and cultural forces from the perspective of how these forces promote or disrupt privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice.
3. Identify and describe the ways in which these external influences intersect to promote or threaten healthy child development across diverse groups.
4. Identify what social workers and other professionals can do to promote health, well-being, and social justice at the various life stages of childhood in the home and community settings.
5. Discuss ethical dilemmas that may arise for social workers engaged in working with children and their families at the various levels of practice and across the various stages of development.
6. Recognize how an individual’s history, culture, group memberships and social positions within society (ascribed and earned) shape their perceptions, attitudes, cognitive processes and actions.

4. Course Design

This course will include a series of readings, lectures, class discussions, videotapes, guest speakers, and student presentations. We will make use of Ctools for this course; please visit it throughout the semester to access assigned articles in pdf files, to obtain handouts for assignments, to communicate with me and with your classmates, and to check for any scheduling changes. You may access the site for this class at: https://ctools.umich.edu/portal
5. Relationship of Course to Four Curricular Themes

• **Multicultural and Diversity** themes will be addressed by careful attention to the impact of culture, gender, social class, religion, family structure, and ability on child behavior and development. Different patterns of development which may result from different biological and/or social environments will be identified and differentiated from those patterns of development which may result from deprivation or impairment.

• **Social Justice and Social Change** will be addressed through discussion of the impact of economic and social oppression on infant and child development. The potential impacts—both positive and negative—of social work intervention on the child, the family, and the child’s relationship to the family and community will be discussed.

• **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** will be particularly important in social work with infants and young children because of the potential lifelong impact of facilitating or harmful conditions at this stage of life. This course will emphasize factors that may contribute to resiliency and vulnerability and identify the kinds of environmental conditions, programs, and interventions that promote optimal development.

• **Behavioral and Social Science Research** will be emphasized throughout the course which will draw on empirically based knowledge from a number of other disciplines, particularly developmental psychology. Discussion of developmental theories will emphasize critical evaluation of these theories in light of behavioral, social science, and biological research.

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

As child development is so profoundly impacted by environmental and social conditions, a number of ethical dilemmas may arise for social workers working with this population. 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 improve the conditions under which many children develop.

7. Assignments and Grading.

♦ **Attendance and Participation**

Attendance at all classes is required, as is participation in the class. Students are responsible for securing lecture notes and handouts from fellow classmates when circumstances require them to be absent. I plan to engage the class with the material as much as possible and as such will base 10% of your grade on your attendance and participation.

♦ **Assignments**

**Group Presentation**

Due date: You will choose a date on which you would like to present on the first day of class.
**Presentation:** Each class day is organized around an aspect of or influence on infant and child development and includes reading assignments relevant to this topic. The goal of this group presentation is to summarize and integrate the readings for the day and to bring in other relevant material regarding current events, ethical concerns, cross-cultural relevance, and/or implications for intervention and treatment. You are expected to discuss each of the readings in your presentation. A guided discussion (e.g., with questions prepared ahead of time) of the articles would be a good way to achieve this, but you are welcome to use handouts, a PowerPoint presentation, group activities, or media clips as ways of making the material engaging for the class. I encourage you to meet with me ahead of time if you have questions about your presentation.

**Logistics:** Your group will have 30 minutes for the presentation. If you would like me to make copies of handouts for you, please send or bring them to me by noon on the Monday before your presentation. If you decide to do a PowerPoint presentation, I encourage you to send it to me ahead of time so that I can have it loaded and ready for you to access.

**Grading:** Each group will include 3 students; you are expected to divide the work evenly amongst yourselves and to share in presenting the material to the class. Grading of this assignment will be based on clarity of presentation, extent of integration of the different readings, and ability to engage fellow classmates in a discussion on the topic. Each member of the group will receive the same grade.

**Case Study/Child Observation Paper**

**Due date:** February 21st

This paper has two parts: (1) a case study/observation (1-2 pages), and (2) an analysis of the case study (3-4 pages).

**Case Study/Observation:** Choose a child (aged 1 year to 12 years) with whom you currently work or have worked with in the recent past. Based on your interactions with and observations of this child, write a 1-2 page case study of this child. To the extent possible, include specific examples of what the child has done or said that you think indicates where the child is developmentally and what his or her strengths and needs are. Your descriptions of this part of the paper should be strictly objective, including only the actual behaviors, conversations, and interactions you observe. Use only the first letter of the child’s name or a pseudonym in your case study to preserve confidentiality.

**Analysis:** Using your observations and your knowledge of child development, write a brief paper (3-4 pages) discussing:

1. The child’s progress in attaining developmentally appropriate skills and/or the child’s manifestation of developmental concepts using theories or concepts you have learned in class to interpret the behaviors and interactions you witnessed. For example, you might discuss attachment theory in relation to a 4 year old child’s reaction to their parent coming to pick them up from school, or you might discuss language milestones such as telegraphic speech when describing the speech you observe of a 1.5 year old. You may also choose to discuss the significance of the child’s behavior for their development, make comparisons
among the abilities and skills of your focal child and other children, discuss how one area of
development you observed influences or is influenced by another area of development.
2. The child’s resources/strengths and needs at the biological, psychological, social,
environmental, and structural levels.
3. Discuss what resources, services, or supports might assist the child and family, as well as
how the agency with which you work might have a role in helping the family access these
resources.
4. A concluding paragraph that summarizes the key things you have observed about this child.

**Grading:** The assignment will be graded on: objectivity and thoroughness of case
study/observation; appropriateness of links to theories and key concepts; ability to identify the
child’s strengths, resources, and needs; resourcefulness in generating potential resources,
services, or supports for the child and family; synthesis and conclusion; and presentation
(spelling, grammar, punctuation, organization).

**Issue Research Paper**

This paper and its components constitute the major assignment for this course. It is divided
into separately graded assignments, described below. In this assignment, you are encouraged
to choose a controversial issue regarding child development about which you are inherently
curious and to research it across sources, across time, and across cultures in order to fully
understand the multiple sides to the issue. You may choose one of the issues below or you
may choose a different issue with my permission.

**Required Paper Components**

In this paper, you will address each of the following questions:

1) **What is the controversial issue?**
   --Define the issue and the controversy surrounding it. If possible, state the controversy
   as a question (see examples below).
   --Describe the position of each side of the controversy, backed up with examples and
   research as much as possible.
   --Give a brief history of how this issue has evolved over time.

2) **What are the implications of this issue for development?**
   --Detail the developmental tasks, abilities, or challenges associated with this issue
   --Examine the implications of different perspectives on this issue for child
development.

3) **What ethical and social justice issues are involved with this issue?**
   --Consider children’s rights vs. parents’ rights, cultural vs. science-based child-rearing
   advice and values, individual rights vs. societal interests (these are examples only).

4) **How do cultural groups differ on the issue?**
   --Explore whether this issue is equally controversial across different racial-ethnic,
   religious, cultural, or regional groups in the U.S.?
   --Where possible, describe international differences by comparing and contrasting the
   prevailing attitudes and behaviors on the issue in the U.S. with attitudes and practices
   in other countries.
5) What have you learned about the issue?
--Reflect on what you have learned about the issue and whether what you have learned has changed your position on the issue.
--Point to aspects of the issue that still need further research.
--Summarize what social workers should know about this issue.

**Please note: this final section is the only one in which you are welcome to give your opinion on the issue. The previous four sections should be objective and based on research findings.

Suggested Controversial Issues for Papers
Possible issues for this paper include, but are not limited to:

- Do the benefits of interventions at childbirth (e.g., epidural, pitocin, forceps, Caesarean section) outweigh potential harm to child and/or mother? (Birth)
- Should our country support parental leave at the birth of a child?
- Should mothers be encouraged to breastfeed, and if so, for how long?
- What are appropriate and inappropriate applications of prenatal testing?
- Should all male newborns be circumcised?
- What are the long-term impacts of prenatal drug exposure on children?
- Should parents co-sleep with their newborns in a family bed?
- Should all immunizations be legally required? If so, what should the consequences be for parents who choose not to immunize their children?
- Does full time child care have long term benefit or harm for children?
- Is transracial adoption in the best interests of U.S. children of color?
- Is international adoption in the best interests of children from developing countries?
- Do children of GLBTQ parents differ from children of heterosexual parents?
- Do car seats make children safer than seatbelts?
- Is childhood obesity the fault of genetics, parenting, society, or all three (or more)?
- Should spanking be considered child abuse?
- Do children benefit from classroom tracking?
- Should parents be encouraged to stay together for the sake of the children, even in their marriage is conflictual?
- Does watching TV and playing video games cause children to be aggressive?
- Should poor children (in third world countries or elsewhere) be prevented from working or required to go to school?
- Do parents or teachers have the main responsibility for teaching children moral behavior?
- Should parents be held responsible when their children engage in violent or criminal acts?
- What factor(s) is/are responsible for the academic achievement gap between White and minority children?

Paper requirements:
1. Hard copies of papers should be turned in at the start of class on their due dates.
2. The paper should be 10-15 double-spaced pages with 1 inch margins left and right, top and bottom; 12 point font; all pages should be numbered.
3. Papers may be submitted early. However, the grade obtained for early submissions is final.

5. You are required to appropriately cite at minimum 12 references. Utilize multiple sources of information on the issue and note any inconsistencies or biases among them. You are required to use three types of sources; to meet the requirement of 12 references, you may include more of the resources listed below or you may include books, reports, etc. You are required to include:

- At least 5 empirical (research-based) articles from peer-reviewed journals. Summaries of the literature are allowed in they are in peer-reviewed journals. Resources such as books, book reviews, online reports from agencies or organizations are not considered empirical, peer-reviewed articles. I am happy to provide a few initial references or suggestions to get you in the right direction. See definition below.
- At least 3 online sources of information on the issue (these can be governmental, research-based, advice-based, non-profit or advocacy based, etc). These do not include empirical articles that are available online. Please be aware that the content of websites cannot always be guaranteed as entirely truthful or balanced; you are encouraged to consider aspects of bias in web-based material in your paper.
- At least 2 books or articles that consider the topic from an international or cross-cultural perspective.

A peer-reviewed journal is a publication in which the papers in it have been reviewed, critiqued, and accepted as important and worthy of being published by experts in the discipline or area of expertise covered by the paper. Search engines available through the University of Michigan library can be very helpful in locating relevant journal articles. At the following site: http://www.lib.umich.edu/eresources/ you will find the following search engines that may be helpful in locating articles for your paper:

- ERIC
- MEDLINE
- PsycInfo
- PsycArticles
- Social Work Abstracts
- Sociological Abstracts

The following peer-reviewed journals are good sources for articles that you might find useful in writing your paper:

*American Journal of Community Psychology*  
*American Journal of Health Promotion*  
*American Journal of Public Health*  
*American Psychologist*  
*Applied Developmental Science*  
*Child Abuse and Neglect*  
*Child Development*  
*Development and Psychopathology*  
*Developmental Psychology*  
*Developmental Science*  
*Family Relations*  
*Journal of the American Medical Association*  
*Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*  
*Journal of Community Health*  
*Journal of Family Issues*  

*Journal of Family Psychology*  
*Journal of Marriage and the Family*  
*Journal of Mental Health and Aging*  
*Journal of Multicultural Social Work*  
*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*  
*Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*  
*Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*  
*Parenting*  
*Pediatrics*  
*Psychological Bulletin*  
*Public Health Reports*  
*Social Work*  
*Social Work with Groups*  
*The Future of Young Children*  
*Young Children*
Due dates:  
1. Idea for Issue Research Paper January 24th  
2. Literature Review for Issue Research Paper February 7th  
3. Issue Research Paper March 14th  
4. Revision of Issue Research Paper by April 18th  
5. Pamphlet for Parents on Issue March 28th  

1. Idea for Issue Research Paper  

Please email me before the beginning of class on January 24th your idea for your issue research paper, which you may select from the list above or generate your own idea. If you send me an idea not on the list above, I may suggest ways to adapt it to best fit the assignment.

2. Literature Review for Issue Paper  

In order to assist you in preparing for your issue paper, you will conduct a literature review of your chosen topic and submit it for me to review. Please see item 5 under Paper Requirements above for the three types of sources that are required; at minimum, you will review 12 sources but are encouraged to review more than that. For each source, please provide:  
1. the full citation (per APA Style) including URL if applicable  
2. a one paragraph summary of its content in your own words (this is akin to an annotated bibliography)  

For online resources, please also include:  
3. a brief description of the source (e.g., organization publishing it)  
4. a rating of the quality of the resource on a scale from 1 (low quality) to 5 (high quality).  
5. 1-2 sentences about any potential bias in the resource.

Grading will be based on breadth (how many sources did you consider) and depth (how deeply did you delve into the articles), as well as the thoroughness of your summaries.

3. Issue Research Paper  

Your completed 10-15 page paper is due to me on March 14th. See detailed description of assignment above.

Grading of this paper will be according to the following criteria:  
(1) Content: How well did you summarize the competing perspectives on the issue, including how they have evolved over time? To what extent did you address cross-cultural and international similarities and differences related to this issue?;  
(2) Organization: Is the paper logically organized? Is the writing style easy to follow yet persuasive?; and  
(3) Presentation: Grammar, punctuation, typographical errors, APA style.
4. Revision of Issue Research Paper

I feel very strongly that writing well is an important skill for social work professionals and take seriously my responsibility to help you become better writers. You will find that I put considerable time into commenting on and editing your written work. For this revision assignment, I ask that you consider each of my suggested comments and and edit your document using the Track Changes function in Word. My suggested revisions may be restricted to the formatting of citations and references or punctuation or they may entail revisions in the organization or content of your paper. If you decide not to accept one of my edits or suggestions, I ask that you insert a Comment in the document with your justification. Revisions may be submitted to me via email or printed as long as all of the Track Changes and Comment notes are observable in the right margin.

You may turn in this revision at any point after I return your paper to you with my edits. The last day I will accept revisions is the last day of class, April 18th.

Grading of this assignment will be based upon the care with which you considered my suggested edits and the extent to which you made an effort to make this a better paper.

5. Pamphlet for Parents on Issue

Your final assignment will be to take what you have learned about the controversial issue you discussed in your research paper and distill it in such a way that it can be understandable and useful to parents. I will provide examples early in the semester as a guide. Your goal is to produce a double-sided, single page pamphlet that could be distributed in locations such as an agency waiting room, a school family life office, or a doctor’s office or clinic. You will:

- describe the issue and the debate surrounding it (e.g., pros and cons);
- summarize current recommendations from experts regarding the issue (cite at least 2 references); and
- list issues that parents should consider in forming their own opinion about the issue.

Your goal is to make clear recommendations that are supported by research. I encourage you to creative with the format in order to be most engaging to parents.

Grading of this assignment will be based on your ability to translate research into lay language, your persuasiveness in framing the issue and your recommendations, and the creativity of presentation.

Grading

Course Grade Components
Your grades for this course will be based on the following:

- Class attendance and participation  10%
- Group presentation on readings 10%
- Case study/Child observation paper 20%
- Literature review for issue research paper 10%
- Issue research paper 25%
- Revision of issue research paper 10%
- Pamphlet for parents on your issue 15%
Grading Scale

A or A-  Mastery of subject content, demonstration of critical analysis, creativity, and/or complexity in completion of assignment. The difference between an A and an A- is based on the degree to which these skills are demonstrated.

B+  Mastery of subject content beyond expected competency, but has not demonstrated additional critical analysis, creativity, or complexity in the completion of the assignment

B  Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency – meets course expectations

B-  Less than adequate competency, but demonstrates student learning and potential for mastery of subject content

C or C-  Demonstrates a minimal understanding of subject content. Significant areas needing improvement to meet course requirements.

D  Substantial deficiency in competency. No course credit.

F  Failure in competency. No course credit.

8. Readings

Required Books:
Available at Shaman Drum Bookshop, 311-315 S. State Street, and on Reserve in Social Work Library. The first book is also available electronically.

**Also available electronically at: http://www.nap.edu/books/0309069882/html/


Class Calendar and Required Readings
Each of the articles or chapters listed below is accessible through our course website in CTools.

January 10th: History of and Perspectives on Childhood


Total = 71 pages
January 17th: Attachment

Guest lecture by Gail Halem Quenneville, MSW
In-class video: *When the Bough Breaks*


Total = 89 pages

January 24th: Prenatal Development, Birth, and the Newborn

**Due: Topic for Issue Research Paper**


Cross-cultural impacts: Small, M. F. (1998—*Our Babies*...): Ch. 1, *The Evolution of Babies* (pp. 1-14 only); Ch. 4, *A Reasonable Sleep* (pp. 109-137);


Total = 85 pages

*Optional reading:* Small, M. F. (1998—*Our Babies*...): Ch. 6, *Food for Thought* (pp. 177-212)
January 31st: Physical Development

Key developmental issues:

Cross-cultural impacts:
Small, M. F. (2001—Kids…): Ch. 3, Growing Up (pp. 57-76)

Application/Intervention:
Explore the website for the We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition) initiative:

Total = 59 pages

February 7th: Cognitive Development

**Due: Literature Review for Issue Research Paper**

Key developmental issues:
Shonkoff & Phillips (2000): Ch. 6, Communicating and Learning (pp. 146-161 only)

Cross-cultural impacts:
Small, M. F. (2001—Kids…): Ch. 5, What Kids Know (pp. 109-135)

Application/Intervention:

Total = 85 pages

February 14th: Language Development

In class video: *Sound and Fury*

Key developmental issues:
Shonkoff & Phillips (2000): Ch. 6, Communicating and Learning (pp. 124-145 only)

Cross-cultural impacts:
Small, M. F. (2001—Kids…): Ch. 4, Kidspeak (pp. 77-107)
Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, 10 (3), 291-310.

Application/ Intervention:
http://www.aafp.org/afp/990600ap/3121.html

Total = 84 pages

February 21st: Socio-Emotional Development

**Due: Case Study/Child Observation Paper

Guest lecture by Ernestine Moore, MSW, JD

Key developmental issues:
Shonkoff & Phillips (2000): Ch. 5, Acquiring Self-Regulation (pp. 93–123) and Ch.7, Making Friends and Getting Along with Peers (pp.163-181)

Cross-cultural impacts:
Small, M. F. (2001—Kids…): Ch. 6, Little Citizens (pp. 137-159)

Application/ Intervention:

Total = 93 pages

February 28th: No class – Spring Break

March 7th: Identity Development

Guest lecture by Inna Altschul, MSW, Ph.D. candidate

Key developmental issues:

Cross-cultural impacts:
Small, M. F. (2001—Kids…): Ch. 7, Girls and Boys (pp. 161-181)

Application/ Intervention:

Total = 70 pages

March 14th: Family Structure And Family Relationships
**Due: Issue Research Paper**


Total = 57 pages

March 21st: Parenting and Socialization


Cross-cultural impacts: Small, M. F. (1998—*Our Babies…*: Ch. 3, *Other Parents, Other Ways* (pp. 71-108))


Total = 108 pages


Small, M. F. (2001—*Kids…*: Ch. 8, *The Dark Side of Childhood* (pp. 183-209))

March 28th: Socio-Economic Resources

**Due: Pamphlet for Parents on Issue**
Key developmental issues:


Cross-cultural impacts:


Application/Intervention:


Optional reading:


Shonkoff & Phillips (2000): Ch. 10, Family Resources (pp. 267-296)

April 4th: Neighborhoods and Communities

Key developmental issues:

Shonkoff & Phillips (2000): Ch. 12, Neighborhood and Community (pp. 328-336)


Application/Intervention:


Total = 86 pages
April 11th: Child Care and Schools

Key developmental issues: Shonkoff & Phillips (2000): Ch. 11, Growing Up In Child Care (pp. 297-327)


Total = 87 pages

April 18th: Culture, Religion, and the Media

**Due: Last day to turn in Revision of Issue Research Paper**


Total = 71 pages

Optional reading: Shonkoff & Phillips (2000): Ch. 14, Conclusions and Recommendations (pp. 383-415)