1. Course Description:

This course will begin by examining the individual, interpersonal, and contextual lifecycle changes and behaviors that are part of normal adolescent development. Under this heading of normal adolescent development, we will focus on: (1) major developmental theories of adolescence; (2) growth patterns and sexual development; and (3) familial and extra-familial relationships. After this "normal" framework has been established we will begin to explore current research and knowledge of: (1) the epidemiology and etiology of adolescent problem behaviors and mental disorders; (2) the extent to which these behaviors vary across gender, ethnicity, social setting, and socioeconomic status; (3) existing innovative treatments and therapies for these behaviors (Best evidence practice - where established); (4) the ways in which these behaviors relate to normal adolescent development; and (5) stigmatization, oppression, and victimization of adolescents who are labeled "different"; (6) existing positive programs and policies designed to prevent, and, to a lesser extent treat problem behaviors.

2. Course Content:

The content of this course will focus upon the changes, contexts, and biopsychosocial development and problems of adolescence. Key changes that occur during adolescence are biological, cognitive, and social. The course content on biological changes will focus on the pubertal process and its physical, psychological, and social impact on the individual and family, as well as, subgroup and generational differences in its onset and timing. The cognitive development portion of the course will examine the best-known theoretical perspectives on adolescent thinking, and changes in adolescent thinking patterns and abilities that occur from pre-adolescence to late adolescence. Finally, this course will examine the social (e.g., economic, legal, political, moral, and interpersonal) changes that occur as adolescents make the important transition to adulthood.
Social contexts that are most central to the lives and development of adolescents include family, peer, school, work, and leisure environments. The family issues that this course will examine include different parenting styles and their impact on a variety of adolescent outcomes, the effects of changing and cross-cultural family patterns on adolescent development, and reciprocal relationships between the family and adolescents. The peer-related issues that this course will address include the historical origins of adolescent peer groups, the nature and structure of peer groups, and the influence of peers on both pro-social and problem behavior. Course content on school issues will focus on (i) the varied purposes of school interventions, including violence and bullying prevention, (ii) the means by which the school organization influences adolescents' learning and development, and (iii) the direct and indirect influences on adolescents' future life.

Vocational issues will be addressed in the course and include: (i) "normal" vocational development and achievement, (ii) changes in the nature of adolescent employment, (iii) the long and short-term costs and benefits of adolescent employment, and (iv) the meaning of work for young people. Content on adolescent leisure activity will examine the societal role of socializing adolescents for adulthood, including the effect of increasing adolescent unsupervised "discretionary" time; risk-taking by teens; use of substances; the role of cultural influences on adolescents' success and challenges.

The final section of this course will focus on specific adolescent behaviors that are problematic, such as, alcohol, and other substance use, violence, suicide, eating disorder, precocious sex and teen pregnancy, and delinquency. Particular attention will be given to the epidemiology, etiology, trends and population distributions of these problems. Considerable attention will also be given to identification of the risk and protective factors for these problems and the policies and programs related to their prevention and treatment. This part of the course will integrate practice-relevant material, small group discussion, speakers, and multi-media activities.

3. Course Objectives:

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

1. Identify and describe the biological, psychological, and social changes that characterize normal adolescence.
2. Identify and describe a range of interpersonal, contextual, and societal influences on adolescent behavior.
3. Identify and describe the ways in which the individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors common to adolescence intersect across diverse groups, and relate these outcomes to adolescent developmental problem behaviors, discrimination, and conflict, including youth violence.
4. Identify what social workers and other professionals can and should do to promote adolescent health and well-being and act to prevent and treat adolescent problem behaviors in homes, schools, and other community settings.
5. Discuss ethical concerns related to adolescent development and behavior.

4. Course Design:
This course will use a variety of strategies to promote student understanding of the course material, including powerpoint lectures, course tools, small group discussions, video, student presentations, invited speakers, group reaction and debate, case presentations from field placements, and written assignments. Evaluation and feedback is welcomed by the instructor informally at any time during the semester.

A. Attendance, Participation, and Reading:
Class attendance, keeping up with the assigned readings, and participation in class discussions are required due to the issue-focused and interactive format of the course. A sign in sheet will be circulated for each session. Frequent absences without informing the instructor will result in the lowering of the course grade. An e-mail group will be created during the first week of class and the instructor will use this to advise about changes that will occur during the semester. A course tools site will also be created in the first week.

B. Assignment format:
Written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and edited for spelling and grammatical errors. Papers will be read and graded for quality and clarity. If papers are confusing to read or have many spelling or grammatical errors, there will be a half-letter grade deducted.

C. Papers and group presentation:
There will be three papers and an in-class oral group presentation upon completion of which the final grade will be given.

   a) Reflective Paper – The first short paper will focus on integrating the initial readings and course material from the first few sessions with your own personal narratives of the biological/psychological/sociological aspects of adolescent development. Using your own adolescence or the observed adolescence of someone close to you (i.e. child, sibling, other relative), either trace "key" milestones or turning points in a developmental narrative of your teen years, or pick a single issue, school year, or event, and discuss the contributions of factors such as environment, family, culture, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, media, gender, school influences, or peers to the impact of that event in your adolescent development. Limit the paper to 6-8 pages. Citations should only be included for the developmental theories or models you are referencing. The paper should end with a consideration of possible social work interventions for the adolescent you have chosen to profile. The paper should also propose a larger societal response to the issues presented in your history. If possible, include a picture of yourself as a teenager, and attach it to the paper. The photo will be returned with the paper. We will spend class time discussing the experiential aspects of writing this paper. Probing questions will be distributed and discussed in class to assist in the framing of the paper and to help you explore core adolescent developmental issues. It is possible that we may want to code the narrative data as a class in order to see what common themes emerge, if so, all papers can be sent as email attachments.

   b) Group Presentation – There will be one in-class group presentation during the semester. Additional two-hour time blocks will be arranged for viewing selected films chosen by the class that highlight distinct adolescent issues. Students will watch one of the two films and then groups will be formed in class utilizing a core issue from the film as the substantive area for
the in-class presentation. Additional time will be given during the class for meeting with other members of the group in order to prepare the presentation.

The primary focus of this assignment will be to:

1) select a core issue(s) or character(s) representative of an issue from the movie plot and develop a half hour presentation of that issue for the class.
2) treat the presentation as if you were developing an in-service or mini-conference presentation for school or agency professionals on the topic.
   (i) use of powerpoint, handouts, videos, experiential exercises
   (ii) demonstrate family, group, school treatments
   (iii) use of novel intervention approaches (e.g. games)
   (iv) use of literature to inform the presentation
   (v) alternatively, your "audience" can be adolescents
3) work well together as a group - some participants can be "behind the scenes"
   (i) Each group member will submit a brief write-up of your contribution to the group.
   (ii) The audience will be active participants, providing each group with written feedback.

   Be creative, make it fun! Utilize role-play, therapy demos, visual materials!
   Additional directions will be given in class.

c) Meta-Analysis & Literature Review for Final Paper - In order to assist each of you in preparing for your final and introducing you to the concept of using meta-analysis, each of you will choose your topic, we will have an in-class presentation of the specific literature review that includes meta-analysis and best-evidence practices and then you will submit an annotated bibliography*.

   *This bibliography will be considered a work in progress for your final paper.

d) Final Paper – The final paper will consist of choosing a particular adolescent psychosocial issue of interest and relevance to your chosen concentration where there has been some empirical research on treatments (i.e. eating disorders, teen pregnancy, adolescent depression and suicide). Set up this 8-10 page paper by grouping research that seems to articulate a particular direction or outcome in the area you have chosen. In other words, if there are 4 studies which describe improved school outcome for depressed adolescents for a specific treatment model or program, grouping them should give you a sense of where the field is headed with a possible best-evidence practice. Alternatively, if there is no cogent group of studies in the area you have chosen, or if there are studies showing that particular treatments do not seem particularly valid, then briefly describe the variety of directions you have found in this area.

This paper will be assessed on the following criteria:
1. Content: Did the writer clearly meet the objectives of the assignment – is there a central question, is there a review of the relevant literature, is there a logical summary and conclusion? - 60%
2. Organization: Is the paper logically organized? Is information presented in a systematic and readable manner? - 30%
3. **Form**: Is the grammar correct? Are there typographical errors – 10%

### C. Grades

Your grade for this course will be based on the following:

- **10%** = Participation (5%) and attendance (5%) at class sessions
- **10%** = Familiarity with the readings (attendance sheet will be circulated weekly)
- **15%** = Reflective paper on own adolescence
- **15%** = Literature review for final paper
- **25%** = Group presentation
- **35%** = Final paper

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

*Multiculturalism and Diversity* will be addressed throughout this course. Racial, ethnic, gender, and social class differences in the timing, sequencing, nature, and outcome of adolescent developmental experiences will be central to every facet of this course.

*Social Justice and Social Change* will be addressed through information and discussion on the ways in which social status mediates the experiences of adolescents and the ways in which various programs, practices, and policies help or hinder the successful development of all young people.

*Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation* will be central to this course, particularly in the section that focuses on adolescent problem behaviors. General principles of program design, implementation, and evaluation will be presented and examples of successful programs and policies will be discussed.

*Behavioral and Social Science Research* will provide the substantive foundation for this course. Emphasis will be placed on the review, critique, and synthesis of the existing scientific knowledge base as prerequisite to interventions that promote health and well being, and prevent or treat adolescent problems.

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

Values and ethics will be addressed as they relate to working with young people. This course will emphasize the importance of understanding the range of “normal” adolescent development, working with disadvantaged populations, and sensitivity to the possibility of unintended negative consequences of interventions such as promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

### 7. Source Materials:

#### A. Required Texts:


*Additional required articles will be listed as electronic resources on Course Tools.*

**B. Recommended Texts and Articles:**


Kaplan, Elaine Bell. (1997). *Not our kind of girl: Unraveling the myths of Black teenage motherhood*.


*Required and recommended texts will be on reserve at the Social Work Library*

*On order at Ulrich's and University Bookstore*

**B. Suggestions of Popular Fiction/ Videos Highlighting Adolescent Characters:**

- *White Oleander* (Girl, Interrupted)
- *This Boy’s Life* (October Sky)
- *The Virgin Suicides* (Welcome to the Dollhouse)
- *Boy's Don't Cry* (The Best Little Girl in the World)
- *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* (Basketball Diaries)
- *The Incredible True Story of Two Girls in Love*
Recommended Journals:

Adolescence
American Journal of Public Health
American Psychologist
Child and Youth Care Quarterly
Child and Youth Services
Child Development
International Journal of Adolescence
Journal of Adolescent Health
Journal of Adolescent Health Care

Journal of Adolescent Research
Journal of Early Adolescence
Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychiatry
Merrill Palmer Quarterly

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan. 8
Introductions /Class Content & Expectations
Review syllabus
Biological markers of Adolescence: So what is adolescence anyway?
Begin historical overview of adolescence
(Models & Theories)
F&E, Ch. 4

Jan. 15
Developmental Phases of Adolescence
Physical, affective-moral, cognitive and psychosocial changes
Piaget, Erikson, Bandura, Super, Kohlberg

Readings:
F&E, Chs. 2,3,5
Pipher, Ch. 1
Steiner, Ch.1
Pollack, Introduction , Chapter 1
Electronic resource (TBA)

*video- Puberty

Jan. 22
Developmental Phases of Adolescence
Physical, cognitive and psychosocial changes
Self-esteem
Gender differences

Readings:
F&E, Ch. 13,14
Pollack, Ch. 3,4,7
Pipher, Ch. 2,3
Electronic resource
Video - Mary Pipher
*First paper due

Jan. 29  Developmental Tasks of Families of Adolescents
         Models of family treatment with adolescents
         Choose class videos for project

         Readings:  F&E, Ch 6&10
                     Pipher, Ch 4,5 &6
                     Pollack, Ch 5&6
                     Electronic resource

*video (Solution–Focused)

Feb. 5   Psychosocial Factors and Stressors

         - Sexual Orientation/Coming out
         - Trauma/violence/suicide
         - Date rape

         Readings:  Pollack, Chs. 9,14
                     Owen, Ch.
                     Jenson, Ch. 1,4
                     Surgeon General Report on Youth Violence

*speaker (Ozone House)

Feb. 12  Psychosocial Factors and Stressors

         - Divorce/Loss
         - Working with Hostile/Resistant Teens
         - Gangs/girl offenders

         Readings:  Steiner, Ch. 9
                     Pollack, Ch. 14
                     Jenson, Ch. 5

*video - gangs

Feb. 19  Violence in Schools/Community/Bullying
         Violence in Homes

         Readings:  Pollack, Ch 10,13
                     Pipher, Ch 11
                     F&E, 8,12
                     Youth Violence: Lessons from the Experts (handout)
                     Columbine High School Shootings: Community Response
In *School Violence: Assessment, Management, Prevention*

**Feb. 26**  
Spring Break (No Class)

**March 5**  
Common Problems Manifest in Adolescence

- Self-injurious behaviors  
- Suicidality  
- Eating Disorders

**Readings:**  
F&E, Ch. 16  
Pollack, 12  
Steiner, Ch. 6, 180-182  
Pipher, Ch. 9

**Speaker:**  
- Watch 1st video for group presentation (12-2)

**March 12**  
Internalizing Behaviors

- Depression  
- Anxiety and O.C.D  
- Schizophrenia onset  
- Psychopharmacology lecture

**Readings:**  
Steiner, Ch 4 &5  
Pipher, Ch 8  
Pollack, Review Ch. 12

*Electronic resource*

- Watch 2nd video for group presentation (12-2)

**March 19**  
Externalizing Behaviors

- Substance Abuse  
- ADHD/Oppositional Defiant/Conduct Disorders

**Readings:**  
Steiner, Ch 2 &3  
Pipher, Ch 10  
Substance Use & Abuse in Strasburger & Brown *Adolescent Medicine* (coursepak)

**March 26**  
Externalizing Behaviors

- Risk-taking behaviors - truancy  
- Sexual acting out - Teen pregnancy
Readings:
Ron Taffel The Wall of Silence: Reinventing Therapy to Reach Teens
Monahan, D., Teen Pregnancy prevention: Implication for Social Work Practice
E. Bell, Not our Kind of Girl (qualitative study-optional reading)

Sally Lawler to present on meta-analysis

Group Presentations

April 2
Peer Relationships, Leisure, and Work (vocational development theories)
Positive Models for Adolescent Change
(e.g. Peace Power, Challenge Day, Real Justice)

Readings: F&E, Chs. 7,9
Pollack, Ch.
Mattaini, Peace Power

Group Presentations

Literature review due

April 9
Getting Launched: Challenges for the Emerging Adult Ideals and Ambitions
Creating a Utopian Teen Center

Readings: Pipher, Ch 12,13 & 14
Separation from Parents in Late Adolescence: The Same for Boys and Girls?

Group Presentations

April 16
Role and influence of popular culture in lives of teens
Music, messages, politics, consumerism

*presentation by Corner House Theatre Troupe

Final paper due in my mailbox by 5PM on Tues (4/23) of exam week.