HUMAN DIFFERENCES, SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS, WELL-BEING & CHANGE
THROUGH THE LIFE COURSE

Social Work 500.003
Fall 2002

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Office Hours:
Tues. 2 - 3:00 P.M.
By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course takes a multicultural and critical perspective on understanding individuals, families, and their interpersonal and group relationships; life span development; theories of well-being, stress, coping and adaptation. The emphasis within this course is on 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 group levels. Students will also consider the implications of this knowledge for intervening in social problems and supporting rehabilitation once problems have developed. Major components will be concerned with the processes of oppression, privilege, and discrimination and factors that help people and small social systems change. The knowledge presented will include the inter-relationships 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.

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. The course will emphasize similarities and differences related to human diversity and dynamics of oppression and privilege. An important aspect is to emphasize how individual and small system factors and processes can facilitate attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, family characteristics and group processes that either promote multi-cultural human well-being and social justice or help to recreate inequities and disease.
OBJECTIVES:

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

1. Demonstrate knowledge about and be able to critically analyze relevant theories of families, small groups, and human behaviors, development, and change through the life course emphasizing similarities and differences and the effects of oppression and

2. Articulate the concepts of risk and protective factors and give examples at the individual, group, and family levels.

3. Describe the impact of such characteristics as economic class, culture, 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.

4. Identify the inter-relationships between small and larger social systems, and describe how biological factors and larger social and physical environments interact to influence individual and family well-being.

5. Describe how relevant concepts have been socially constructed, what knowledge and empirical evidence supports selected theories, some current gaps in knowledge, and key controversies about these theories and knowledge.

6. Conceptualize how individual and small system factors and processes can either promote multicultural human-well being or recreate inequities and problems.

7. 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.

Course Design:

This course will typically involve a combination of lecture and discussion, multimedia presentations, and student presentations may be used to supplement and enhance discussion of individual topics.
Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

1. **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be addressed through analysis of differences in needs among subgroups within society and the differential application and impact of policies and services.

2. **Social Justice and Social Change** will be addressed by considering issues such as the distribution of social security and other benefits, varying standards for assessing the need for intervention (e.g., protective services and guardianship), and differing outcomes for behavior considered harmful to self or others.

3. **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** will be addressed by considering the spectrum of policies and services ranging from promotion and prevention (e.g., pre-retirement programs and in-home services) to treatment and rehabilitation (e.g., income support for those with inadequate resources and nursing homes).

4. **Behavioral and Social Science Research** will be addressed by the inclusion of theoretical frameworks for understanding social roles, social stratification, and societal functioning among the elderly. The findings of research studies relevant to the design and evaluation of policies and services for older adults will also be included.

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

This course will address Social Work values and ethics in terms of the extent to which policies and services adequately meet the needs of the individuals.

CLASS DESIGN AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

**Class Process:**

We will conduct the class in a seminar fashion, which means students will be expected to fully participate in the learning process. Seminars will include a range of activities, lectures, guest speakers, discussions, audiovisuals, and student presentations. The above activities will be integrated at critical points in the semester to facilitate a better understanding of the course content.

**Writing Policy:**

Good writing skills to express information accurately and concisely to individuals involved in helping client systems, are a requirement for effective social work practice. Therefore, formal writing assignments for this course (i.e., papers) will be evaluated both for content, ideas presented, and for the clarity of the presentation.

Appropriate referencing is required on all written assignments. *Failure to use quotation marks for short quotations or indentations for longer, direct quotes with appropriate citations will result in a grade of zero as will failure to provide citations for indirect quotations.* If you do not know
how to reference a paper, now is the time to learn. Please seek assistance before you submit your assignments. One source is “Writing Term Papers . . .” by Professor Kossoudji, in your Student Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program. See also other appropriate University publications for penalties that may result from scholastic dishonesty such as plagiarism or cheating on tests.

The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association is the style manual to be used by all students. **Papers are to be double spaced, typewritten/word processed with a 12-point font.** All papers should be in **narrative format.**

LSA has a College Writing Workshop which faculty of the English Composition Board staffs. Workshop faculty offers students assistance in completing specific assignments or projects to help in improving academic writing skills. Feel free to use this service. Students have found it to be very helpful. For further information contact:

*Sweetland Writing Center*

734-764-0429

**I will grade ALL written assignments according to the following criteria. Please review this section before handing in each paper:**

1. **COMPLETENESS AND THOROUGHNESS:** MAXIMUM POINTS = 30

   How fully has the issue been addressed? Has the student sufficiently researched the issue using library resources, interviews, and other means to gain differing perspectives and full knowledge of the issue? Does the paper leave the reader with the impression that major questions have been considered or are important issues not addressed? Has the paper been carefully proofread?

2. **ORGANIZATION AND CLARITY:** MAXIMUM POINTS = 15

   Is the paper well written and organized in a logical manner? Are there appropriate transitions between, paragraphs, and sections? Are the sentence structure, syntax, and grammar of appropriate quality for a graduate student? Have subtitles been used to improve organization? Has the student addressed issues in a way that someone unfamiliar with the issue can understand as well as someone knowledgeable about the particular issue?
3. REFERENCING: MAXIMUM POINTS = 25

Are there a sufficient number of references? Has the theoretical and empirical literature on the subject been incorporated into the paper? Are the references well integrated in the text of the paper? Has referencing been done appropriately and according to the style of the American Psychological Association?

4. ORIGINALITY AND CREATIVITY: MAXIMUM POINTS = 30

Has the student used his or her analytical skills in a way that suggests more than a restatement of what others have said about the issue? Has the student compared, contrasted, and integrated the different viewpoints and material on the subject in a way that shows that she or he has a thorough understanding of the issue? Has the student suggested points that others have not addressed?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

WEEKLY ATTENDANCE & CLASS PARTICIPATION - (15% of final course grade)

This course is in part, preparation for your professional career. Classroom attendance and participation are critical aspects of professional socialization. Students are responsible for assisting in the creation of a learning environment that promotes such socialization. To do so, students should assume responsibility for their own learning by being prepared for and participating in class interactions, and consulting with the instructor outside class. Opportunities for make-up assignments are determined at the discretion of the instructor.

1. Each student is expected to display professional behavior in class.
2. Attendance is required, and you are to arrive on time and remain for the entire class.
3. Each student is expected to actively participate in all class activities and discussions.
4. All reading assignments should be completed before class on the day indicated in the syllabus, to enhance the learning experience and class discussions.
5. Attendance and class participation are an integral part of the grade and will be judged on quality, not just quantity.
ASSIGNMENTS

- Assignments are expected to be submitted according to schedule barring serious, unforeseen emergencies. If this happens, please notify the instructor as soon as reasonably possible. Late assignments may be submitted, but a 2 point penalty per day will be subtracted from the grade. This 2 point penalty applies to weekends as well as weekdays.

Make up Policy - If you must miss a class or session where a paper is due, you must notify the professor prior to the start of class. I will only accept late assignments, without point deductions, if a doctor’s excuse or documented University approved reason for their absence is provided.

I. INTEGRATION PAPER ON WEEKLY READINGS - (15% of final course grade)

Each week, students are to write a short synopsis of one of articles from the required supplemental readings. The single page synopsis is to be kept by the student. The purpose is to help you to:

- Integrate knowledge/theory about human growth, development and functioning from your readings with social work practice, values, and ethics.

- Connect the HBSE knowledge/theory to what you are learning in field instruction and your other courses.

- Develop the writing skills required by every social worker and the ability to think critically about HBSE knowledge/theory and its importance to social work.

NOTE: Articles have been selected to give students the opportunity to focus more on some area discussed in the text. While students are expected to read more than one article in the weekly assignments, only one is necessary for the written weekly analysis.

1. Short responses should be made immediately after completion of each reading assignment, and dated. A well-thought out one-page (typed, double-spaced) statement that includes a brief summary of featured points.

2. Responses are not book reviews, so please do not repeat what authors have said. Instead, give your critique of each assigned reading--that is, your thoughts about it, its shortcomings, how it expands your thinking and understanding, and how it compares with other material you have read or with what you have learned earlier or in current courses.
3. Responses must also include the implications you perceive for social work, as well as examples from your own field practice that help you better understand a particular practice situation.

4. At the beginning of each class session, students will share **BRIEF COMMENTS** with the rest of the class on the reading of their choice. Students are expected to share comments on articles several times during the semester.

**DUE DATE:**
- September 17, 2002 – readings from sessions 2&3
- October 1, 2002 - readings from sessions 4&5
- October 29, 2002 – readings from sessions 6&7
- November 5, 2002 – readings from sessions 8&9
- November 19, 2002 – readings from sessions 10&11
- December 3, 2002  - readings from sessions 12 & 13

**II. GROUP OBSERVATION AND ANALYSIS PAPER**  (20% of final course grade)

1. To complete this assignment you are to observe a **NON** policy making group and write a short paper (no more than 5 pages) which addresses the following elements.

2. **Identify, attend and observe a meeting of a non policy-making group, i.e. social groups, informal groups, therapeutic groups, church groups with structure, etc.** ANY DOUBTS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CHECK WITH THE INSTRUCTOR.

3. Using knowledge of groups that you have gained from readings, discussions, experiences and other sources illustrate 5 of the following 7 group concepts which you observed during the group meeting you attended:
   - Membership
   - Leadership
   - Boundaries
   - Norms
   - Roles
   - Decision-making
   - Task v. Process

1. Briefly describe any human diversity issues that you observed during the meeting. Think about the persons constituting the group, those persons attending the meeting, the environment in which the meeting took place, or the issues dealt with by the group. Be especially sensitive to any of the following diverse persons: persons with disabilities, persons of color, women, gay men, lesbians, persons distinguished by age, religion, socioeconomic class or culture.
USE PREVIOUSLY CITED WRITING POLICY — Number of references - no less than six, but I prefer as many as are necessary to support your paper. Use required readings, text and outside sources. A maximum of one internet citation permitted.

DUE DATE: October 29, 2002

III. FAMILY READING ANALYSIS PAPER (20% of final grade)

You will receive a list of “Selected Diversity Novels.” Select and read one of the books listed. Using your book selection, the textbook, and any journal articles or research reports related to the reading, write a 5-6 page, doubled-spaced, typewritten analysis paper that includes following elements:

1. Discuss how the families represented in the reading are different in terms of structure and/or functions from so-called "traditional" families. Have these differences been greater or less pronounced in the past than they are currently?

2. Describe briefly the strengths available in the families discussed that could serve as resources for understanding and working with families similar to those reflected in the reading.

3. Describe the social systems with which the families represented in the reading link or interact (groups, organizations, institutions, community) and discuss the impact of the linkages and interactions for individual family members.

4. Describe the likely consequences of discrimination and oppression on the ability of the families and their members to reach or maintain optimal health and well-being. Suggest a family-centered policy or service that might help remove the barriers presented by discrimination and oppression for the families reflected in the reading. [Note: NASW Speaks is a good resource here.]

USE PREVIOUSLY CITED WRITING POLICY - no fewer than ten references are necessary for this paper, although I prefer as many as are necessary to support your paper. As a diversity exercise, be sure to include literature on the group that is discussed in your selected novel. Use required readings, text, and outside citations. Only one internet citation permitted.

DUE DATE: November 12, 2002
IV. MULTIDIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK INTEGRATIVE ANALYSIS PAPER
(30% of final grade)

This assignment is intended to allow you to do an assessment of an individual and to apply information and concepts presented in class. You are to interview a person (family member, fellow student, or acquaintance) who is at least 50 years old. The purpose of this paper is to provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate your professional development with regard to various issues related to human behavior in the social environment. To complete this assignment, write a paper of 8-10 pages which includes at least the following elements.

1. Using Ashford, J.B., et al.’s multidimensional framework, describe this individual’s progress through the life-span to this point in time. That is, where are they now, and what phases has this individual passed through?

2. Provide a general description of this person as a bio-psycho-socio-cultural being. Be sure to address each part of the hyphenated description! State how the overall combination of these characteristics influenced the opportunities and barriers this person experienced in his or her life. Note key events that contributed to the development of this person either achievements or challenges.

3. A brief discussion of the values your subject brings as they progress through phases of their life-span. Give two examples of how these values have determined choices made and directions taken.

4. Designate his or her family as a focal system. Sketch the significant subsystems that make up the family and show the linkage to the family of influential elements in the supra system.

5. Identify at least four groups and organizations in the larger environment that have been influential in his or her life. (This does not include family or individual friends.) For each one, briefly describe how it has affected their personal or professional view of the world.

6. Identify and briefly describe three major events, such as political or social movements or national problems, which have influenced your subject. For each one, briefly describe how their development and personal and professional world view were affected.

7. Diversity, discrimination and oppression affect everyone, whether they are part of the dominant group or a subordinated group. Describe the impact of diversity, discrimination and oppression on your subject’s development and personal world views.
PLEASE NOTE:
This assignment is not designed to force students to reveal confidential information that the individual participating in this interview would not want to reveal. It is your paper. Each student has full control over what he or she includes. Again, review Writing Policy, and the Kossoudji article in your student guide, and APA Manual. Document all material from the textbook or professional literature that you use in your paper whether it is a direct quote, paraphrase or just an idea. The papers are confidential and only read by the instructor.

USE PREVIOUSLY CITED WRITING POLICY - no fewer than twelve references are necessary for this paper. You may use as many as necessary to support your positions. Use required readings, text, and outside citations. Only three internet citation permitted.

DUE DATE: December 10, 2002
Final Grading Procedure

Each student will be graded on the basis of his or her performance in each area of activity outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Response to Readings</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9-17-02</td>
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<td>Group Observation &amp; Analysis Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Diversity Analytic Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>November 12, 2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multidimensional Framework Analysis Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>December 10, 2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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Grading System:

Adding the percentage scores from the assignments and classroom participation will determine final grade. The percentages will be totaled and converted to a letter grade using the following scale:

- A+ = 101% +
- A  = 100% - 96%
- A- = 95% - 91%
- B+ = 90% - 86%
- B  = 85% - 83%
- B- = 82% - 80%
- C+ = 79% - 76%
- C  = 75% - 73%
- C- = 72% - 70%
COURSE OUTLINE AND REQUIRED TEXT


Course Pack - with supplemental readings, will be available on reserve in the Social Work Library.

September 3  
Session 1 - Class Introductions  
Overview of course goals, objectives, and requirements  
Diversity perspective  

Readings:  
Text:  

UNIT ONE  
CONCEPTUAL THEMES AND THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS  
Multidimensional Frameworks

September 10  
Session 2 - Assessing Social Functioning  
Approaches  
Dimensions of Human Behavior & the Social Environment  
Foundation Knowledge of Theories  
Biophysical growth  
Genetics and human behavior  
Biophysical hazards  
Person-In-Environment (PIE) versus DSM-IV  

Readings:  
Text:  
Course Pack:  

September 17  Session 3 - Assessing Biological Dimensions

Readings:
Text:

Course Pack:

September 24 & October 1 - Session 4 & 5 - Framework for Assessing Psychological Dimension

Psychosocial - Erikson
Psychodynamic Theory – Freud, Psychosexual Development
Cognitive Development - Piaget
Learning Theories - Watson
Social - Learning Theories
Readings:

Text:
Ashford, J.B., et al., The Psychological Dimensions . . ., pp. 70-102; .

Course Pack:


Brief Article. It’s not all in our genes. (July 3, 2000) (social and political

Sawhill, I.V. (Winter, 2000). Welfare reform and reducing teen pregnancy. The Public Interest: 40

UNIT TWO
FAMILIES & GROUPS

October 8 & 22 – Session 6 & 7 – Families, Groups, Support Systems
Ecological models
Functions of the family
Family as a system of changing roles
Family diversity
Groups

Readings:
Text:

Course Pack:


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**Group Analysis Project**

**DUE@ Beginning of Class**

**October 29, 2002**

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**LIFE COURSE DEVELOPMENT**

**UNIT THREE**

**PRENATAL - INFANCY - CHILDHOOD**

**October 29 Session 8 Prenatal Development**

Pregnancy

Legal and ethical issues - pregnant women who abuse drugs/alcohol

Ethics of prenatal testing

**Readings:**

**Text:**

Ashford, J.B., et al., *Pregnancy, Birth and the Newborn*, pp.152-192

**November 5 Session 9 Infancy**

Developmental tasks that occur during normal infant development

Role of social factors in infant’s progression through this stage

Concept of “goodness of fit”

Factors to be considered in removing an infant from the home

**Readings:**

**Text:**


**Course Pack:**


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**Family Diversity Analytic Paper**  
**DUE@ Beginning of Class**  
**November 12, 2002**

**November 12**  
**Session 10 - Childhood**  
Deficiency Theory - The Dual Perspective  
Bicultural Socialization - Identity  
Ethnic Identity

**Readings:**

**Text:**
Ashford, J.B., et al., *Early Childhood*, pp. 250-299; *Middle Childhood*, pp.300-53

**Course Pack:**
Evans, S.W., Axelrod, J.L., & Sapia, J.L. (May 2000). Effective School-Based Mental Health Interventions: Advancing the Social Skills Training Paradigm. *Journal of School Health* 70:191


**UNIT FOUR**
**ADOLESCENCE - YOUNG ADULTHOOD**

**November 19**  
**Session 11 - Adolescence & Young Adulthood**

**Readings:**  
**Text:**  

**Course Pack:**  


Hughes, W.C. (May 1999). Managed care, meet community support: ten reasons to include direct support services in every behavioral health plan. Health and Social Work 2:103


UNIT FIVE
ADULTHOOD

November 26 & December 3 Session 12 & 13 - Middle & Late Adulthood

Text:
*Late Adulthood*, pp.526-75

Articles:


Wolf, R.S. (Spring 1996). Understanding elder abuse and neglect. (Physical and Emotional Abuse) *Aging* n367:4


December 10- Session 14
Catch-up
Summation
Due Beginning of Class
Multidimensional Framework

Paper
Analysis
Supplemental Reading List Articles


