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

Social Work 500.003 and 500.005
Fall 2003

Sharon Kalbfleisch M.S.W.
Office: Room 2766 SSWB
Phone: (734) 332-6082
E-mail: skalbfle@umich.edu
Office hours: Monday 12-1:00 and after class by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course takes a multicultural and critical perspective on understanding individuals, families, and their interpersonal and group relationships; lifespan development; theories of well-being, stress, and 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 peoples 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 multicultural 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 multi-cultural 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 multi-cultural and social just world.

**Course Design:**

This course will 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 individual.

**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, is 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. 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.
Papers will be marked for:

1. **COMPLETENESS AND THROUGHNESS:**
   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:**
   Is the paper well written and organized in a logical manner? Are there appropriate transitions between, paragraphs, and sections? Is 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:**
   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:**
   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- (20% 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.

- Attendance is required, and you are to arrive on time and remain for the entire class.
- Each student is expected to actively participate in all class activities and discussions.
- All reading assignments should be completed before class on the day indicated in the syllabus, to enhance the learning experience and class discussions.
- Attendance and class participation are an integral part of the grade.

Classroom Activity

Each student is expected to do one presentation during the semester. The presentation should be about 10 minutes in length to allow for discussion. Suggested activities:

- Report on a publication about an aspect of life span development from a newspaper article, magazine, or TV show for the general public. Comment about the publication or presentation in terms of what we are discussing about life span development, developmental theories, and disruptions in well-being.

- Report on issues in other cultures, or in this culture in poverty stricken families or families at risk, as they pertain to what we are studying.

- Present notes or consultation notes demonstrating the need to know about developmental theories. Remember, this is not a clinical course and what you said to the client is unnecessary, only the material presented by the client and why knowledge of developmental theory is important.

- Present material related to ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, social class, age, and their forms of social stratification and disenfranchisement affect individuals and small social systems.
ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are expected to be submitted according to schedule barring serious, unforeseen problems. If such an issue should arise, please notify the instructor as soon as reasonably possible.

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.

1. **Family Diversity Analysis Paper (25% of final course grade)**

   A list of "Selected Diversity Novels" will be distributed. Select and read one of the books listed. *Using your book selection, and any journal articles or research reports related to the reading*, write a 6-7 page, doubled-spaced, typewritten analysis that includes the following elements:

   a. 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?

   b. 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.

   c. 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.

   d. Describe the likely consequences of discrimination and oppression on the ability of the families and their members to reach or maintain optimal stages of life-span development, health, and well-being. Using your knowledge from your social welfare class, suggest a family-centered policy or service that might help remove the barriers presented by discrimination and/or oppression for the families reflected in the reading. [Note: *NASW Speaks is also a good resource for this.*]

   **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.

**DUE DATE:** October 20 or 21, 2003
2. **Group Observation and Analysis Paper (25% of final course grade)**

   a. To complete this you are to participate in a class small group, and write a short group paper (no more than 5 pages) which addresses the following elements.

   - Membership
   - Leadership
   - Boundaries
   - Norms
   - Roles
   - Decision-making
   - Task vs. Maintenance
   - Group process

   Using your knowledge of groups gained from the readings, group discussions, experiences and additional sources, define and illustrate **at least 5 of the following 8 group concepts** that you observed during the group experience.

   Describe, briefly, any human diversity or diversity related issues observed during the meetings. 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.

   **DUE DATE:** November 17 and 18, 2003

3. **Multidimensional Framework Integrative Analysis Paper (30% of final grade)**

   This assignment is intended to allow you to do a personal assessment of your ability to apply the theories that have been presented during the course of the semester. The focus of this paper is the impact of your personal and professional development on various issues related to human behavior and the social environment. This assignment is not designed to force you to reveal information about yourself that you do not want. It is your paper. You have full control of what you include. It is not the point of this exercise to reveal information that you do not feel comfortable revealing. To complete this assignment, write a paper of 8-10 pages which includes at least the following elements:

   a. A general description of yourself 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 to which you have experienced so far in your life. The assessment models as outlined in Ashford, et al., or any other theories studied during the semester can be used as a guide. Be sure to cover all aspects of human behavior and social environment in your analysis.
b. Using theories of models of individual development or identity formation presented in class and/or the text, describe your progress through the life-span to this point in time. That is, where are you now, and what phases have you passed through?

c. A brief discussion of the values you bring with you as your progress through phases of your life-span that remain. Discuss briefly whether these values are likely to be strengths or limitations in your professional development as a social worker.

d. Designate your 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.

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

f. Identify and briefly describe at least three major events or factors in the larger environment, such as political or social movements or national problems, which have influenced you. For each one, briefly describe how your development and personal and professional world view were affected.

g. 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 development and personal and professional world views.

No fewer than twelve references are necessary for this paper. You can use as many as you feel are needed to support your positions. Use required readings, text and outside citations.

DUE DATE: December 8 and 9, 2003

Final Grading Procedures

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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Diversity Analysis Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Oct. 20 and 21, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Observation and Analysis Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Nov 17 and 18, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidimensional Framework Integrative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis Paper 30%  Dec. 8 and 9, 2003
Class Participation and Class Activity 20%
100%

Grading System:

Adding the percentage scores from each assignment and classroom participation will determine your 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


Note on course reading materials. - With the purchase of your text, you have access to INFOTRAC COLLEGE. INFOTRAC "is a fully searchable online university library containing complete articles and their images." All articles are on reserve in the School of Social Work Library. Readings are in two parts with the articles in Part One being listed under Reserved Readings and Part Two being listed under INFOTRAC articles.

Sept. 2  Session 1-Class Introductions
Overview of course goals, objectives, and requirements, small group formation

Required Reading:
Ashford, J.B., et al.,... Preface

UNIT ONE
Conceptual Themes and Theoretical Prepositions

Sept. 8 & 9  Session 2- Assessing Social Functioning
Theoretical Approaches
Dimensions of Human Behavior in the Social Environment
Foundation Knowledge of Theories
Biophysical dimensions
Psychological dimensions
Social dimensions
Strategies for Intervention Planning

Required Reading:

Sept. 15 & 16  Session 3 - Assessing Biological Dimensions

Biophysical growth and development
Genetics and human behavior
Biochemical systems and behavior
Biophysical hazards
Sept. 22 & 23  Session 4 - Theories for Assessing Psychological Dimensions

Psychodynamic/Psychoanalytic - Freud
Behaviorism and Learning Theory - Watson
Cognitive Development Theory - Piaget
Psychosocial - Erikson
Social - Learning Theories

Required Reading:

UNIT TWO
Small Groups

Sept 29 & 30, Oct 6 and 7  Session 5 & 6 – Groups

Small Groups in Social Work
Therapy Groups
Mutual Aid Groups
Self-Help Groups
Task-Groups
Dimensions of Group Structure
Composition
Basic group process
Group Dynamics
Effects of Physical Environment on Group Processes

Required Readings:

Oct. 20 & 21, 27 & 28  Session 7 & 8 - The Family

Families Past and Present
Family System and Life Cycle Perspectives
Family Diversity

Required Reading:
UNIT THREE
Prenatal-Infancy-Childhood

Nov. 3 & 4  Session 9 - Prenatal & Infancy

Pregnancy
Legal and ethical issues-pregnant women who abuse drugs/alcohol
Ethics of prenatal testing
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 home

Required Reading:

Nov. 10 & 11  Session 10 - Childhood

Childhood  Physical, cognitive and emotional development
Risk to healthy development
Middle Childhood
Cognitive, moral and spiritual development
Social development
Special challenges

Required Readings:
Ashford, J.B., et al., A Multidimensional Framework for assessing social functioning, pp.300-53 (Middle Childhood)

UNIT FOUR
Adolescence - Young Adulthood

Nov 17 & 18  Session 11 - Adolescence and Young Adulthood

Transition to adulthood
Psychological reactions to biological changes
Changes in cognition
Theories of self and identity-Identify formation
Social aspects; relationships with family, peers, institutions, culture
Issues and challenges; i.e., sexuality, substance abuse, etc….
Required Readings:
Ashford, J.B., et al., A Multidimensional Framework for assessing social functioning, pp.412-67 (Young Adulthood)

UNIT FIVE
Adulthood

Nov 24 & 25, Dec 1 & 2 Session 12 & 13 - Middle and Late Adulthood

Meaning of adulthood
Major themes in adulthood
Love & work
Stage theories
Psychological aspects of aging

Required Readings:
Ashford, J.B., et al., A Multidimensional Framework for assessing social functioning, pp.468-552

Dec 8 & 9 Session 14 Final Group Presentations and Termination Class

SUPPLEMENTAL CLASS READINGS
INFOTRAC ARTICLES


**Periodicals: Social Work**

**Current Periodical Titles:**

- Administration in Social Work
- Affilia: Journal of Women & Social Work
- Child Welfare
- Clinical Social Work Journal
• Community Mental Health Journal
• Computers in Human Services
• Families in Society
• Family Therapy Networker
• Health & Social Work
• Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences (Graduate Library)
• Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research
• Journal of Community Practice
• Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect
• Journal of Family Violence
• Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services
• Journal of Gerontological Social Work
• Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment
• Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community
• Journal of Progressive Human Services
• Journal of Social Casework
• Journal of Social Work Education
• Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare
• Labor Notes
• New Social Worker
• Public Welfare
• Prevention in Human Services
• Research on Social Work Practice
• Social Security Bulletin
• Social Service Review
• Social Work
• Social Work in Education
• Social Work in Health Care
• Social Work Research

**Inactive Titles: Social Work**

• Child Abuse & Neglect (1993-1997)
• Social Casework (1950-1989) - absorbed by Journal of Social Casework
• Social Work Research