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, race, 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; and (7) social justice issues pertinent to this developmental group.

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 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 narrative of your biological/psychological/sociological 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 some 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.

b) Group Presentation – There will be one in-class group presentation during the semester. Students will view a film that highlights distinct adolescent issues. Groups will be formed in class utilizing core issues 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) demonstrate productivity 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 (1 page).
   (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. Finally, you will create a one-page summary of what you have learned in this topic research that you could translate into a lay language summary suitable for parents of teens. These will be extracted from each paper and compiled into a resource book for each of you to have and use with families in your current or future practice.

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?- 50%

2. **Organization**: Is the paper logically organized? Is information presented in a systematic and readable manner? - 20%

3. **Form**: Is the grammar correct? Are there typographical errors – 10%

4. **Synthesis**: Was student able to synthesize the paper into a one-page informational sheet for parents? – 20%

C. Grades

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

10% = Participation (5%) and attendance (5%) at class sessions (an attendance sheet will be circulated weekly)

15% = Reflective paper on own adolescence

10% = Literature review for final paper - emailed to professor

25% = Group presentation

40% = 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. **Accommodation for Disability Statement**

Any student who feels that s/he may need an accommodation for any type of disability (physical, mental or learning, temporary as well as chronic), please feel free to contact me at any time during the semester so that we can discuss options that will enable you to complete the course responsibilities. I will treat any information you share with me as personal and confidential.

8. **Writing Assistance**

For further assistance with writing, you may go to the Writing Workshop 1139 Angell Hall 764-0429.

9. **Statement on Plagiarism:**

All academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and misrepresentation will be treated seriously. You will find a discussion of plagiarism in your *Student’s Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program* (online).

10. **Source Materials for Course:**

A. **Coursepack (available through Excel)**

B. **Required Texts:**


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

C. **Recommended Texts and Articles:**


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

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?              The Ice Storm
Basketball Diaries                      Thirteen
The Incredible True Story of Two Girls in Love

Recommended Journals:

Adolescence                           Journal of Adolescent Research
American Journal of Public Health      Journal of Early Adolescence
American Psychologist                  Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Child and Youth Care Quarterly          Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychiatry
Child and Youth Services               Merrill Palmer Quarterly
Child Development                      Journal of Adolescent Health Care
International Journal of Adolescence

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan. 12                              Introductions /Class Content & Expectations
                                      Review syllabus
                                      Biological markers of Adolescence: So what is adolescence anyway?
                                      Historical overview of adolescence (Models & Theories)
                                      Minority Adolescents
Jan. 19  
MLK Holiday

Jan. 26  
Developmental Phases & Tasks of Adolescence I  
Physical, affective-moral, cognitive and psychosocial changes  
Piaget, Erikson, Bandura, Super, Kohlberg

Readings:  
F&E, Chs. 2 The Role of the Pubertal Process (coursepack)  
The Making of an 8 Year Old Woman – NY Times (coursepack)  
Pipher, Ch. 1  
Pollack, Introduction, Chapter 1  
Erikson, E. H. Childhood & Society Ch. 7 & 8 (in library)  
Tatum, Identity Development in Adolescents Ch. 4 (coursepack)

Video- Puberty  
Speaker – Susan Holmes/ African American fathers & their adolescent daughters

Feb 2  
Developmental Phases of Adolescence II  
Physical, cognitive and psychosocial changes  
Self-esteem  
Gender differences

Readings:  
F&E, Ch. 13,14 (coursepack)  
Pollack, Ch. 3,4,7  
Pipher, Ch. 2,3  
Inside the Teen Brain (Brownlee) (Coursepack)  
Gender Differences – Chap 4 (Potter) (coursepack)  
Gibbs & Huang – Issues of sexuality across culturally diverse youth  

Video - Mary Pipher  
*First paper due

Feb. 9  
Developmental Tasks of Families of Adolescents  
Models of family treatment with adolescents

Readings:  
F&E, Ch 6&10  
Pipher, Ch 4, 5 &6  
Pollack, Ch 5& 6  
Multisystemic Therapy (coursepack)

Guest Speaker: Rockland

Feb. 16  
Psychosocial Factors and Stressors  
- Sexual Orientation/Coming out  
- Trauma/violence/suicide
- Date rape

**Readings:**
- Pollack, Chs. 9,14
- Owens, Ch. Queer Kids Chaps 1-4
- Jenson, Youth Violence Ch. 1,4 (coursepack)
- Surgeon General Report on Youth Violence (coursepack)
- Isolation or Inclusion: Creating safe spaces for lesbian & gay youth (coursepack)
- Kids & Guns: How Politicians, Experts, and the Press Fabricate Fear of Youth by Mike Males (online book)
  [http://home.earthlink.net/~mmales/contents.htm](http://home.earthlink.net/~mmales/contents.htm)

**Guest Speakers – LGBT Office**

**Feb. 23**  
**Spring Break**

**March 1**  
**Psychosocial Factors and Stressors**
- Divorce/Loss
- Working with Hostile/Resistant Teens
- Gangs/girl offenders

**Readings:**
- Pollack, Ch. 14
- Jenson, Ch. 5 – Violence and Aggression in Girls
- Wallerstein – The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce (lecture/powerpoint)

**March 8**  
**Violence in Schools/Community/Bullying**
- Violence in Homes

**Readings:**
- Pollack, Ch 10,13
- Pipher, Ch 11
- Youth Violence: Lessons from the Experts (handout)
- Columbine High School Shootings: Community Response
- In School Violence: Assessment, Management, Prevention (coursepack)
- Young Killer: Bad Seed or Work in Progress? NYTimes (coursepack)

**Video-Bullydance**

**Guest Speakers – Neutral Zone**

**March 15**  
**Thinking about prevention in relation to problems in adolescence**
- Health promotion
- Self-injurious behaviors
- Suicidality
- Eating Disorders
- Obesity
Readings: Pollack, Chapt 12  
Pipher, Ch. 9  
Health Promotion (Chapt 12) Johnson et al

Group presentations

March 22  Internalizing Behaviors
- Depression
- Anxiety and O.C.D
- Schizophrenia onset
- Psychopharmacology lecture

Readings:  Steiner, Ch 4, 5, 9  
Pipher, Ch 8  
Pollack, Review Ch. 12

Group presentations

March 29  Externalizing Behaviors
- Substance Abuse
- ADHD/Oppositional Defiant/Conduct Disorders

Readings: Pipher, Ch 10  
Substance Use & Abuse in Strasburger & Brown Adolescent Medicine  
(lecture/powerpoint)  
The War on Addiction  Newsweek (2001)

Guest speaker

April 5  Externalizing Behaviors
- Risk-taking behaviors - truancy
- Sexual acting out - Teen pregnancy

Readings: Ron Taffel, The Wall of Silence: Reinventing Therapy to Reach Teens  
(will provide)  
E. Bell, Not our Kind of Girl (qualitative study-optional reading)

Group Presentations

April 12  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  
Mattaini, Peace Power (coursepack)
Literature review due

Guests: Pioneer High School students

April 19  Getting Launched: Challenges for the Emerging Adult
       Ideals and Ambitions/Having a Voice
       Media and Youth

Readings:  Pipher, Ch 12,13 & 14
           Finn, J. & Checkoway, B. 1998. Young people as competent
           community builders: A challenge to social work. (online)
           Males, M. Myth: The Media Tell the Truth about Youth (coursepack)

Final paper due in my mailbox by 5PM on Monday (4/26) of exam week.