SW 601 Adolescent Development and Behavior

Winter 2004

Monday, 8:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M.  
Monday, 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM  
Jan. 12 to April 19, 2004  
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Course Description:

This course will examine the individual, interpersonal and contextual changes and behaviors that are part of normal adolescent development. Within the context of normal adolescent development, the course will focus on: (1) the epidemiology and etiology of adolescent problem behaviors; (2) the extent to which these behaviors vary across gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status; (3) the ways in which these behaviors relate to normal adolescent development; and (4) existing programs and policies designed to prevent, and, to a lesser extent treat problem behaviors.

Course Content:

The broad content of this course will focus upon the changes, contexts, and psychosocial development and problems of adolescence. The key changes that occur during adolescence are biological, cognitive, and social. The section of this course on biological changes will focus on the pubertal process and its physical, psychological, and social impact, as well as subgroup and generational differences in its onset and timing. The cognitive development portion of this course will examine the 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, and interpersonal) changes that occur as adolescents make the transition to adulthood.

The social contexts that are central to the development of most adolescents include family, peers, schools, 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 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 schools will focus on the varied purposes of schools, the ways in which their organization influences adolescents' learning, and their direct and indirect influence on adolescents' future life chances.
Employment issues that will be addressed include changes in the nature of adolescent employment, the long and short term costs and benefits of adolescent employment, and the meaning of work for young people who do not attend college. Content on adolescent leisure activity will examine its role in socializing adolescents for adulthood, its influence on adolescents' academic success and failure, and its economic importance.

The final section of this course will focus on adolescent psychosocial problem behaviors, such as alcohol, and other substance use, violence, suicide, eating disorder, precocious sex, 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.

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 the primary interpersonal and contextual influences on adolescent behavior.
3. Identify and describe the ways in which the individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors common to adolescence intersect and relate to adolescent problem behaviors.
4. Identify what social workers and other professionals can do to promote adolescent health and well being and prevent and treat adolescent problem behaviors.
5. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to adolescent development and behavior

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.

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.
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
- Merrill Palmer Quarterly

Required Texts:


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

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

(All readings appear in the schedule on the date they will be discussed in class)

Jan. 12  
Introduction /Class Expectations  
History of Adolescence, Particular issues for Minority Youth

Jan. 19  
MLK Birthday

Jan. 26  
Developmental Tasks of Adolescence: Identity Construction and Physical, Affective-Moral, Cognitive and Psychosocial Changes during Adolescence

Readings:  
Feldman & Elliot Chapter 4 – Historical Perspectives – (coursepack)  
F&E, Ch. 2, The Role of the Pubertal Process (coursepack)  
F&E, Ch. 14, Self and Identity Development  
Steinberg & Morris – Adolescent Development (coursepack)  
Gibbs & Huang – Intro & Overview – Children of Color  
Tatum – The complexity of Identity – Chap 2 (Coursepack)  
Tatum, Identity Development in Adolescents Ch. 4 (coursepack)

Presentation:  Susan Holmes/African American fathers and their adolescent daughters

Feb. 2  
Physical, Affective-Moral, Cognitive and Psychosocial Changes during Adolescence II. The Impact of Gender.

Readings:  
Pipher, Ch. 1, 2  
The Making of an 8 Year Old Woman – NY Times (coursepack)  
Pollack, Introduction, Chapter 1  
F&E, Ch. 13 (coursepack)  
Inside the Teen Brain (Brownlee) (Coursepack)  
Gender Differences – Chap 4 (Potter) (coursepack)  

Video: Reviving Ophelia
Feb. 9  
*Developmental Tasks of Families of Adolescents*

**Readings:**
- Pipher, Ch 3, 4, 5, & 6
- Pollack, Ch 5&6
- Owens, Ch. 10
- F&E, Ch 6&10 (coursepack)
- *Multisystemic Therapy* (coursepack)

**PAPER 1 DUE**

Feb. 16  
*Psychosocial Factors and Stressors 1*

- Poverty
- Sexual Orientation
- *Media Project 1*

**Readings:**
- Pollack, Chs. 9
- Owens, *Queer Kids* Chaps 1-4
- *Isolation or Inclusion: Creating safe spaces for lesbian & gay youth* (coursepack)

*(Presentation: Holly Ferize from the Office Of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Affairs, will present on working with LGBT teens)*

March 1  
*Psychosocial Factors and Stressors 2*

- Trauma
- Ethnicity
- *Media Project 2*

**Readings:**
- Jenson, Ch. 5 – Violence and Aggression in Girls (coursepack)
- Owens, Ch. 6

March 8  
*Peer Relationships, Leisure and Work*

**Readings:**
- Pollack, Ch. 8
- Males, M. *Myth: The Media Tell the Truth about Youth* (coursepack)
- Feldman and Elliott, Ch. 7, *Peer Groups and Peer Cultures*
- Feldman and Elliott, Ch. 9, *Leisure, Work, and the Mass Media*

*(Presentation: Presentation from the Neutral Zone, a Teen Center in Ann Arbor. Possibly to be held on-site at the Neutral Zone)*
March 15  \textit{Thinking about prevention in relation to problems in adolescence}

- Self-injurious behaviors
- Suicidality
- Eating Disorders
- \textit{Media Project 3}

Readings:
Pollack, 12
Pipher, Ch. 9
Owens, Ch. 8
Steiner, Chs. 4, 5, 9 (coursepack)
Gibbs & Huang Ch 10 – \textit{Children of Color in systems of care}
Scales and Leffert – \textit{Developmental Assets} (coursepack)
Mattaini, \textit{Peace Power} (coursepack)

Paper 2 due

March 22  \textit{Externalizing Behaviors I}

- ADHD
- Conduct Disorders
- \textit{Media Project 4}

Readings:  Steiner, Ch. 2 (Coursepack)
Pollack, 253-262

March 29  \textit{Externalizing Behaviors II}

- Substance Abuse
- \textit{Parenting Teens Conference 1}

Readings:  Steiner, Ch 3 (coursepack)
Pipher, Ch 10
Owens, Ch. 8

Presentation:

April 5  \textit{Schools and Achievement/Violence in Schools/Community}

- \textit{Parenting Teens Conference 2}

Readings:  Pollack, Ch 10,13
Pipher, Ch 11
Surgeon General Report on Youth Violence (coursepack)
Jenson, *Youth Violence* Ch. 1,4 (coursepack)
Owens, Ch. 5

*Kids & Guns: How Politicians, Experts, and the Press Fabricate Fear of Youth* by Mike Males (online book)
http://home.earthlink.net/~mmales/contents.htm

Columbine High School Shootings: Community Response: In *School Violence: Assessment, Management, Prevention* (coursepack)

*Young Killer: Bad Seed or Work in Progress?* NYTimes (coursepack)

*(Presentation: James Robert and Aaron Pollack, teachers at Pioneer High School, will speak about adolescents and the school experience)*

April 12  
**Internalizing Behaviors and Divorce**

- *Parenting Teens Conference 3*

  **Readings:**
  
  Steiner, Ch 4&5 (coursepack)
  
  Pipher, Ch 8
  
  Pollack, Ch. 14, Review Ch. 12
  
  Owens, Ch. 9

April 19  
**Getting Launched: Challenges of Late Adolescence, Ideals and Ambitions**

- *Parenting Teens Conference 4&5*

  **Readings:**
  
  Pipher, Ch 12,13 & 14
  
  Owen, Chs. 11, 12
  
  Gibbs & Huang, Ch. 11

**Paper 3 due**
Format of Course

General Overview

This course will approach adolescent behavior and development from the three following perspectives:

1. **The current research** – students will be asked to read about and consider the latest research about adolescence. Two of the texts, *At the Threshold* and *Treating Adolescents*, are research-oriented and provide extensive references to other (fairly current) research into adolescence.

2. **The experiential**- students will be asked to explore their professional and personal experiences in working/living/interacting with adolescents. The two other texts, *Reviving Ophelia* and *Real Boys*, incorporate many case histories and the authors’ experiences of the adolescents with whom they work.

3. **The personal** – students will be asked to reflect on their own adolescent development to facilitate deeper understanding of the issues. This personal exploration is meant to help students integrate their personal stories with their actual experience of adolescents and with the insights delineated in the research.

Grades

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

- **10%** = participation and attendance at class sessions = punctual, present, respectful, active effort to participate
- **10%** = Group presentation relating some type of media (film/video, magazine articles, MTV video, music, etc.) to the particular topic being covered in class and in the readings **OR** 5 minute presentation (5 minutes for questions) on the theme of your second paper
- **20%** = Paper 1
- **40%** = Paper 2
- **20%** = Paper 3

Small Group Presentations

**Media**

Each small group will be responsible for:

1. Identifying a form of media which deals with the particular theme of the class.
2. Presenting your media example (no longer than 10 minutes)
3. Facilitating a discussion (using discussion questions) which relates your example to the in-class readings.

Each presentation should be no longer than 30 minutes. During the 2nd class, you will be assigned a date for your presentation.
Your presentation should have specific learning objectives that include:

a. “terms” (actual terms from the readings);
b. “facts” (important facts you feel the class should remember); and

(c) “principles of practice” actual practice principles revealed either in the video or in the readings.

(examples: “treatment utilizing a multi-disciplinary approach works best with Eating Disorders”)

At the time of your presentation, I would like to get a copy of your hand-out(s) attached to a note from the group (signed by each individual) which states clearly what each individual did in preparation for the presentation.

Grades will be based upon the following:

33% - Were “terms” from the readings effectively brought out in the presentation?
33% - Were “facts” from the readings effectively brought out in the presentation?
33% - Were principles of practice clearly brought out in the readings?
1% - Did the presenters bring something good to eat and did I like it?

Parenting Teens Conference Presentations

You are to imagine you are presenting at a conference for parents of teens. For the presentation, you can use (but should not read from) the one-page summary you have created for Paper II. Your presentation should be no longer than 5 minutes and there will be 5 minutes for questions from the class. Your fellow class members will imagine they are parents of teens and are interested in the various topics about which you are presenting.

Your grades will be based upon the following:

33% - was your presentation clear, understandable?
33% - was your presentation in terms that non-clinical, lay people could understand?
33% - did your presentation provide clear, practical skills that parents can use?
1% - Did you bring something to eat that was low in carbohydrates, high in fiber and nutritionally sound?

The Papers

The grading for each individual paper is spelled out in detail in the next section.

ALL papers will be marked down by 5% for every day late. In order to be fair to all class members, this policy needs to be uniform. If you are unhappy with your feedback and/or grade on a paper, the paper may be rewritten and turned in no later than 1 week after it has been returned to you. The average of the two grades will then be your grade for the actual paper. The second paper should be turned in with the changes highlighted.

Paper # 1(personal perspective): Due on Feb. 9. No more than 5 typed pages, 20% of total grade

This paper should be a personal exploration of your own experiences as an adolescent. Since this is a personal paper, creativity is welcome. The paper should include sharing your experiences of both the different domains of adolescent development as well as the psychosocial issues with which you struggled.

This paper will be assessed on the following criteria:
1. Content: Did the writer touch on both psychosocial issues and contexts of adolescence? Did the writer share openly about her/his own adolescence? Were there specific examples given? Did the writer translate the abstract to the concrete – 60%.

2. Organization: Did the writer establish some kind of structure to the paper? Did the structure allow for pertinent conclusions to be drawn – 30%

3. Form: Is the writing professional? Is the grammar correct? Are the sentences clear? Are there typographical errors – 10%

**Paper # 2 (research-based perspective):** Due on March 15, no more than 8 typed pages (not including the synthesis), 40% of total grade

This 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 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 (single-spaced) summary of what you have learned on this topic that you could translate into a lay language summary suitable for parents of teens. You should include in this summary (as well as in the paper) the PRACTICAL implications of your research. Yes, you have done the research – what can parents DO about it?? 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 that is appropriate for parents? – 20%

**Paper #3 (experiential perspective):** Due on April 12, 4-6 typed pages, 20% of total grade

For this paper you are asked to:
1) identify a teen population with whom you are unfamiliar, what barriers there have been to you becoming familiar with this population, the stereotypical misunderstandings of this population, and 3-5 areas of concern that the research-literature emphasizes for this population. Be sure to footnote any references you use when referring to the research. If possible, you may obtain all references from the course text, *Children of Color*.

2) interview at least one teen from this population (asking about his/her views of minority status, peers, school, work leisure, what motivates, frustrates, angers them. Who are their heroes, heroines?) preferably in a setting of the teen’s choosing – at school, Pinball Pete’s, a café, etc.

3) explore how your interviewee’s perceptions and experiences match up to (or contrast with) your understandings from the research.
This paper will be assessed on the following criteria:

1. Content: Did the writer include each of the paper’s required steps as listed above? Did the writer draw conclusions from comparing/contrasting her/his interviews with the findings in the research- 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%

Paper 2 Alternative

I am looking for 4 class members to be the editors of the “resource guide” that your fellow class members will be writing. On March 29, all the editors’ work will be due to me for comments and grading. The editors’ work can then be rewritten (based on my comments) for the final publication date – April 19. In other words, the editors should have the books compiled and ready to be handed out on the last day of class.

Each editor will have specific tasks:

Editor 1 is responsible for:

1. Writing a 4 page, double-spaced Introduction to the book which incorporates:
   a. a clear rationale for publishing a book on these particular issues; 25%
   b. a synopsis of the major themes in the book 25%
   c. a summary of how these themes impact and/or are experienced by minority youth 25%
   d. some direction around what kinds of practical ideas to look for. 15%
   e. Understandable, grammatically correct 10%

2. Writing ¼ of the author bios (including her/his own)

Editor 2 is responsible for:

1. Writing a 4 page, double spaced Conclusion to the book which incorporates:
   a. a weaving together of the various themes mentioned in the Introduction (and throughout the book) 30%
   b. an understanding of how these themes impact and/or are experienced by minority youth 30%
   c. specific and concrete practical ideas with regard to the various themes presented (communication, discipline, fostering psychological health, etc.) 30%
   d. understandable, grammatically correct 10%

2. Writing ¼ of the author bios (including her/his own)
Editors 3&4 are responsible for:

1. Coming up with creative and brief introductions to EACH of the chapters – could be a short quote, poem, drawing, photograph, quotation from a teen, etc. 60%
2. Writing ¼ of the author bios (including her/his own). Editor 3 & 4 each do ¼ of the bios.
3. Doing a title page, table of contents page, formatting the book (bios included), adding art work, etc. 40%
4. Having a completed book to students on the last day of class