

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

COURSE NUMBER: SW 327
UNIQUE NUMBER: 63470
SEMESTER: FALL 2009
MEETING TIME: M, W 11-12:30
MEETING PLACE: SSW 2.118

INSTRUCTOR: PAMELA MALONE, MA,
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HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

(W- CONTAINS A SUBSTANTIAL WRITING COMPONENT; REQUIRED BSW COURSE)

I. Standardized Course Description

This course explores the biopsychosocial and cultural functioning of human beings across the life span using an ecological-systems lens and major developmental theories as a framework. Using the generalist social work lens, this course integrates content from other human behavior courses. The students will gain an understanding of what physical, mental, social and economic justice hazards can adversely impact an individual's growth and development during his or her lifetime. Frameworks incorporating an eco-systems/developmental perspective, including systems/ecological and psychosocial (life span development) frameworks, are used to conceptualize stages of human growth and development, with a primary focus on adolescence, early adulthood, the middle years, and the aged adult within an intergenerational family context. The impact of the family, social groups, organizations, communities, and society on individuals during these stages of the life span are also discussed. This course emphasizes empirically based research reflecting a risk and resilience perspective in making client assessments and recommending appropriate interventions. This contributes to a social worker's ability to understand and critically analyze the interactions among individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Students will be able to understand how personal values are reflected in socio-cultural contexts, such as culture, race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, class, and religion, and how they can influence human behavior. Increasing access to resources, reducing risks, and considering ethical dilemmas involved in dealing with human behavior are also considered.

This course is the second course in the HBSE curriculum area. Course prerequisites include Social Work 310, 312, and either Psychology 304 (Child Psychology) or Child Development 313 (Child Development). Social Work 325 (Foundations of Social Justice) is also required as part of this curriculum area and is taken concurrently with SW327.

II. Standardized Course Objectives

By the end of the course, the student will be able to:

- 1) Explain the unique perspective that social work has in viewing the relationship between the individual and environment in comparison to other helping professions;
- 2) Explain and apply basic principles of learning theories and the systems/ ecological and psychosocial frameworks and analyze individual, family, group, organizational, community, and societal dynamics from each of these perspectives;
- 3) Describe biological, psychological, social, and cultural aspects of adolescent, early adult, middle adult, and older adult developmental states within the context of the broader environment;
- 4) Describe the dynamics of social groups, organizations, communities, and societies, and the ways that they can impact individual development and behavior;
- 5) Explain ways that ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, and other factors contribute to human development and their implications for social work practice;
- 6) Describe relevant research and identify and conceptualize additional research needs relating to human behavior and the social environment;
- 7) Apply information and theories related to human behavior and the social environment to life situations in a manner consistent with social work values and the promotion of social and economic justice;
- 8) Use critical thinking skills in writing an academic literature review on a human development question of interest.

III. Teaching Methods

This class is conducted using a variety of teaching methods such as lectures, videos, guest speakers, experiential activities and group discussions. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class period. Class instruction is designed to encourage student participation and input.

IV. Required Readings

Textbooks:

Hutchison, E. D. (2008). *Dimensions of human behavior: Person and environment* (3rd ed.). Sage Publication, Inc., CA.

Scales, T. L., & Wolfer, T. A. (2006). *Decision cases for generalist social work practice: Thinking like a social worker*. Thompson: Brooks/Cole, CA.

Selected Readings: Additional readings from other books and journal articles may be assigned, and will be available on UT Blackboard.

V. Course Requirements

A. Case studies (5 out of 10)	50%
B. Mid term exam	20 %
C. Final Exam	20 %
D. Class participation (<i>Can drop two absences in case of emergency</i>)	<u>10 %</u>

TOTAL 100%

VI. Grading Scale

94-100	=	A
90-93	=	A-
87-89	=	B+
84-86	=	B
80-83	=	B-
77-79	=	C+
74-76	=	C
70-73	=	C-
67-69	=	D+
64-66	=	D
60-63	=	D-
59 and below	=	F

1. **Case analyses.** Students are required to complete 5 case analyses. Each case analysis is worth 10 points. Students may turn in 6 analyses. Turning in 6 analyses would result in the lowest analysis grade being dropped. Case analyses are due on the date assigned in the syllabus at the beginning of class. You may email your analysis to the instructor if you do not plan on attending class on the date the analysis is due. However, the analysis must be emailed before 11am on the day of class. Further description of this assignment will be provided the third day of class.
2. **Case analysis presentation:** One group will be assigned to lead the case discussion for each case. The group will present the ecomap and genogram for the case, their analysis and recommendations for the case. This assignment is intended to be an informal presentation. The group will lead a mock team meeting where classmates will contribute to further analysis of the case. Further instructions will be given on the third class day.
3. **Exams.** There will be a mid-term exam and final exam covering the readings and class lectures. If videos and guest lecturers are part of the class, then these will also be covered on exams. Exams are not cumulative. If you are unable to take an exam on the assigned date for any reason other than an emergency, you must notify the instructor at least one week in advance of the test date.
4. **Class participation.** Students will receive 10% of their grade for class attendance, class

participation and professional conduct. Attendance will be taken every class period. A student may miss two classes without penalty. For each additional class missed, one point will be deducted from the class participation grade. In addition, students who inappropriately use cell phones, computers or any other technological device during class will have one point deducted from their participation grade each time the behavior occurs. If all participation points are deducted from a student's class participation grade and continued absences and/or class disruptions occur, additional points will be deducted from the student's final grade in the same manner in which they were deducted from the class participation grade.

VI. Class Policies

- 1. Class Attendance.** Class attendance is required every class period for the entire class period. Attendance will be taken each class. It is the student's sole responsibility to sign the attendance sheet each class. Students are allowed to drop two absences due to unforeseen circumstances. Any class material missed due to class absence is the student's sole responsibility.
- 2. Class preparation.** Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments. Failure to demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the class participation grade.
- 3. General assignment requirements.** All assignments must be typed in double spaced and have one inch margins. References/sources used in papers must be in APA format and be credible (NO Wikipedia). If questions about the credibility of a reference arise, consult with the instructor. The instructor is available by email to answer questions about assignments. Students should submit questions or requests for clarifications at least 24 hours before an assignment is due. If an assignment is due in less than 24 hours, the instructor cannot guarantee a timely response.
- 4. Assignment due dates.** Students will be penalized 10 points for each calendar day that an assignment is late. UT does not allow Incompletes (grade of X) to provide additional time to complete assignment. Students will be informed of any changes in assignments, due dates, and other class content.
- 5. The University of Texas Honor Code.** The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.
- 6. Professional Conduct in Class.** The professor expects students to act like professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism. Professional conduct also includes timely arrival to class, respectful behavior during class

and appropriate use of technology. No cell phone use, iPod or other devices are permitted during class. Computers may only be used for taking notes. Any inappropriate use of computers for emailing or internet usage is not permitted. Failure to display professional conduct may result in a deduction from attendance points.

7. **Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty.** Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>).
8. **Documented Disability Statement.** Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.
9. **Religious Holidays.** By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least 14 days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.
10. **Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students.** Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.
11. **Safety.** As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.
12. **Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL).** If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

13. Emergency Evacuation Policy. Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- a. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- b. If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- c. In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
- d. Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

VIII. Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Dates	Readings	Due
1	Class Introduction	W 8/26		
2	Aspects of human behavior	M 8/31	Hutchinson ch. 1	
		W 9/2	Scales & Wolfer ch. 1,2	
3	Perspectives on human behavior	M 9/7 Labor Day	NO CLASS	
		W 9/9	Hutchinson ch. 2 Scales & Wolfer- Case #12	
4	Biological/ psychological person	M 9/14	Hutchinson ch. 3	
		W 9/16	Hutchinson ch. 4	
5	The psychosocial person	M 9/21	Hutchinson ch. 5	
		W 9/23		Case #9
6	The spiritual person	M 9/28	Hutchinson ch. 6	
		W 9/30		Case #4
7	The physical environment	M 10/3	Hutchinson ch.7	
		W 10/7		Case # 10
8	Mid-term week	M 10/12		Case #8
		W 10/14		MID-TERM
9	Culture	M 10/19	Hutchinson ch. 8	
		W 10/21		Case # 2
10	Social Institutions	M 10/26	Hutchinson ch. 9	
		W 10/28		Case # 6
11	Families	M 11/2	Hutchinson ch. 10	
		W 11/4		Case # 5
12	Small groups	M 11/9	Hutchinson ch. 11	
		W 11/11		Case # 7
13	Formal organizations	M 11/16	Hutchinson ch. 12	
		W 11/18		Case # 1
14	Communities/Social Movements	M 11/23	Hutchinson ch. 13 Hutchinson ch.14	Case #3 Case #11
		W 11/25 Thanksgiving	NO CLASS	
15	Final week	M 11/30		
		W 12/2		FINAL EXAM

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

(May be helpful in getting your analyses started; not to replace your own literature searches.)

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- Borowsky, I. W., Ireland, M., Resnick, M. D. (2001). Adolescent suicide attempts: Risk and protectors. *Pediatrics, 107*(3), 485-494.
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- exploratory study of family functioning, adoptive child's behavior, and familial support networks. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 9, 17-32.
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