School of Social Work  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
1350 University Avenue  
Madison, WI 53706  
SW 711: Human Behavior in the Social Environment  
Fall, 2016-17

Instructor Name: Professor Katherine Magnuson  
Class Day(s) & Time: Thursdays 1:20-3:15, Van Hise 494  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 12-1 pm in Social Sciences Bldg or by appointment  
Office: 206 Social Work Building, 3432 Social Sciences Building  
Phone: 608-263-4812  
Email: kmagnuson@wisc.edu

Catalog description
The literature on human behavior and the environment is reviewed from a bio-psychosocial perspective. Special attention is given to understanding individual and development and behavior as a function of reciprocal interactions with families, groups, communities, organizations and society.

Course overview
This foundation course promotes students’ understanding of human behavior and development as a function of complex interactions between individuals and their environments. Students learn about biological, psychological, sociological, cultural, religious and spiritual developmental tasks across the lifespan. Theoretical perspectives are critically discussed and applied as organizational and interpretative frameworks for understanding human behavior in the context of family, group, community and organizational systems. Special attention is given to the impact of ethnicity, gender, social class, spirituality/religion, and sexual orientation at each developmental stage (infancy, childhood, adolescence, early and middle adulthood and late adulthood). In addition, students are asked to reflect on how their own developmental experiences have shaped their own beliefs and values regarding others.

Course competencies and practice behaviors
Successful completion of this course implies that students will have progressed towards achieving some of the core social work competencies by demonstrating the following practice behaviors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies addressed in course</th>
<th>Practice behaviors addressed in course</th>
<th>Assignment(s) measuring behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.</td>
<td>* Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development.</td>
<td>Reflection paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3: Apply critical thinking</td>
<td>* Distinguish, appraise and integrate multiple</td>
<td>Exams, Reflection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to inform and communicate professional judgments

sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom.
* Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention and evaluation.
* Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and colleagues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1.4: Engage diversity and difference in practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams, Reflection paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1.5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Understand the mechanisms of oppression and discrimination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams, Reflection paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1.6: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Use research evidence to inform practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the process of assessment, intervention, and evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Readings**

The following required textbook is available from the University bookstore, Hutchison, E., (2015). *Dimensions of Human Behavior: The Changing Life Course.* Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage. It is available online in electronic formats, and also on reserve at the Social Work library. As a text book, this serves as a foundation text and not all aspects of the material are central to the course. This may suggest that you think about sharing the text with others or not buying a new copy of the text.

In an effort to save paper, all readings for the course are posted online at the Learn@UW website. The readings are also available on reserve at the Social Work Library. If having readings accessible online presents any hardship for you, please discuss alternative arrangements with the instructor. Required readings are listed first on the syllabus and demarcated with a bullet point below (●).

There are two types of supplementary readings, which are not required and are also available in pdf form on the Learn@UW website. The first set of readings are written for an academic audience and related to the substantive topic. These readings are for students who wish to learn more about the particular topic. These supplementary readings are identified by a check below (✔). The second set readings are supplementary readings and written for a more general audience, including newspaper or magazine articles on related topics. These articles are educational as well as interesting and engaging. These fun articles are marked by a (◇) and also are not required reading.
Class Website, Podcasts, & Lecture Outlines
Additional class materials will be available on the class website available through Learn@UW, which can be accessed from the academic tab in MY UW (near the course descriptions) or https://uwmad.courses.wisconsin.edu/. Use your net ID and password to logon to the class website. In addition to the syllabus and descriptions of assignments, you will find links to additional readings, and related documents. The website includes the following information:

- **Announcements**—including information on exam review, new readings and other useful information.
- **Q & A**—an on-line discussion that allows students and the instructor to ask/answer questions about course content and format, and other relevant issues.
- **Lecture Outlines**—when available, these will be posted by noon the day of the lecture under the “content” section of the website (they will often be posted the evening before). Some students may find the outlines useful as a guide for taking lecture notes. Further information about assignments, including details about the short paper assignment and examples of good papers from last year are also posted under the content section.
- **Podcasts**—some weeks a short podcast will be uploaded with material to be listened to prior to coming to class. This podcast will be short, and will be in lieu of direct lecture. Please listen to the podcast prior to coming to class and please also make note of any questions that you have after listening to it.
- **Required and Supplementary readings**—PDFs of all readings are available under the “content” section of the website.
- **Grades**—Grades for the short papers and exams will be posted in the Grades section so you can assess your progress in the class.

Class Schedule

Week One, Thursday September 8
**Introduction**
- Introductions
- Overview of course, syllabus, & assignments
- Application of HBSE theory to social work practice

Week Two, Thursday September 15
**Ecological and Systems Perspectives**

Week Three, Thursday September 22
Risk, Resilience, Stress, Competence, and Adaptation

- Walsh, Joseph, “The Psychological Person” in E. Hutchinson (2105), Chapter 4

Week Four, Thursday September 29
Infant and Child Development: Biology & Psychology

- Hutchison Textbook, Chapter 3 & 4 (in chapter 4 you can skim “the role of play”)
Week Five, Thursday October 6
Role of Social Systems in Infant & Child Development


Week Six, Thursday October 13
Midterm exam

Week Seven, Thursday October 20
Middle Childhood

- Hutchison Textbook, chapter 5 (skim “mental and physical challenges”).

Week Eight, Thursday October 27

Adolescence
- Hutchison Textbook, Chapter 6 (Adolescence, skim pp. 261-265)

Week Nine, Thursday November 3

Role of Social Systems in Adolescence


---

**Week Ten, Thursday November 10**

**Early Adulthood – Parenting and Partnering**

• Hutchison, Chapter 7 & 8 (Young & Middle Adulthood)


Week Eleven, Thursday November 17
REFLECTION PAPERS DUE
Middle Adulthood – Biology & Psychology


Week Twelve, Thursday December 1
Role of Social Systems in Middle Adulthood


Week Thirteen, Thursday December 8
Late Adulthood

- Hutchison Textbook, Chapters 9 &10 (Late Adulthood)

Week Fourteen, Thursday December 15 GUEST LECTURE TRACEY SCHROEPFER
The Dying Process

Week Fifteen, Monday December 19
Final Exam
Assignments

Reflection paper:
You are expected to write a reflection paper this semester. HBSE is a key foundation social work course and provides you with information that is necessary for working in the social work profession. This course requires that you gain a deeper understanding of your own development; the values and beliefs resulting from your development and how these values and beliefs influence your assessments of others’ behaviors and situations. Pick one stage of development (infancy & preschool, middle childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, middle adulthood, late adulthood) explain your development by applying ecological systems theories, with attention to biological, psychological, and social influences. Next, describe your developmental experiences during this period might influence your own understanding, perceptions, or interpretations of others’ behavior and circumstances. An additional handout will further explain this assignment.

Exams:
Two in-class exams will be given. These exams will cover material presented in the readings and lectures, and will provide an opportunity for you to synthesize and demonstrate mastery of the course material. The exams will include both short answer questions and short essays. In successfully answering exam questions, you will demonstrate an understanding of:
1. Key ecological system theories and how they can be applied to understand human behavior as a result of individuals’ interactions with social systems
2. Theories of biological, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual/religious development across the lifespan
3. The range of social systems that influence individual development and behavior
4. How gender, ethnicity, culture, spirituality, sexual orientation, economic deprivation, discrimination, and oppression shape developmental processes and human behavior across the life span
I will hold a review session approximately a week before each exam outside of the regularly scheduled class time.

Grading
Your final grade will be based on 100 points distributed at follows:
Midterm Exam 35
Final Exam 35
Reflection paper 30

Grades on each assignment and your final grade will be assigned as follows:

>=94-100 A Outstanding, surpasses expectations in all areas
>=88-93 A/B Surpasses expectations in many areas
>=82-87 B Meets expectations
>=76-81 B/C Meets expectations in some areas but is below
expectations in others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;=70-75</td>
<td>C  Below expectations in all areas, not acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;=64-69</td>
<td>D  Clearly unacceptable in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;64</td>
<td>F  Not acceptable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that the (>=) preceding the lower cut-off point for each grade implies that numerical grades will not be rounded up. Grades are not assigned on a curve. There are no extra credit or make-up assignments.

The grade you receive on written assignments should be based on (1) the extent to which you respond to assignment objectives, (2) the quality of your writing (to include grammar and spelling, organization, and clarity), and (3) your ability to demonstrate critical thinking, and (4) your efforts. If there is something about an assignment that is unclear to you, it is your job to bring this to my attention. I take grading quite seriously and although it is highly unlikely that I will change a grade, I am always happy to discuss the basis for any particular grade that I assign.

Policies

Reading Assignments:
You are expected to have completed assignments prior to the class date they are listed, and be prepared to discuss the readings in class. Reading and critically and evaluating the material is necessary to actively participate in class discussions and to successfully complete written assignments.

Late Assignment Policy:
All assignments are due at the beginning of the specified class data. A student who has a legitimate reason for handing in assignments after the listed due date should contact the instructor and obtain permission, prior to the due date. Unapproved late assignments will be marked down half a grade for each day at the instructor’s discretion.

Written Assignment Policy:
All written assignments are to be typed or computer-generated. Please format assignments to have one inch margins, double-spacing, and 12 point font. Always include a cover sheet (not counted as one of the required pages) with the following information: your name, the date, the title for the assignment, the course number and title. All assignments should be checked thoroughly for correct spelling and grammar. Multiple pages should be stapled together. Students are encouraged to visit the UW writing center for assistance with their writing.

Code of Ethics, Student Rights and Responsibilities & Plagiarism
BSW and incoming MSW students read and signed electronic forms of the NASW Code of Ethics, the School of Social Work Plagiarism Policy and the Student Rights and Responsibilities. In doing so, they agreed that while in the BSW or MSW Program they would honor the NASW Code of Ethics and Student’s Rights and Responsibilities, as
well as adhere to the Plagiarism Policy and that should they not do so, sanctions would be imposed. BSW and MSW students are expected to adhere to these policies in the classroom, in the field and in the preparation of course assignments.

**Attendance & Class Participation:**
In order for all students to benefit from this course, attendance and active participation are expected.

**Student Behavior:**
Please respect your fellow students. Please demonstrate your respect by listening to other students’ opinions and refraining from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. If you have a concern that needs to be brought to the class’s attention, please speak with the instructor.