SW 951: APPLIED THEORY SEMINAR: CAREGIVING
Spring, 2012

The initial impetus for research is the search for theory. Theory development relies on research, and research relies on theory. (J. Fawcett)

To admit the importance of theory is to make an open-ended commitment, to leave yourself in a position where there are always important things you don’t know…Theory makes you desire mastery…[but]…makes mastery impossible. (Jonathan Culler)

There is nothing so practical as a good theory. (Kurt Lewin)

Some theories are good for nothing except to be argued about (Georg C. Lichtenberg)

A theory is the more impressive the greater is the simplicity of its premises, the more different are the kinds of things it relates and the more extended the range of its applicability (Albert Einstein)

COURSE OVERVIEW

This interactive, intensive doctoral-level seminar is designed to introduce a broad range of topics related to the role of theory in caregiving research. Students will be introduced to the fundamental relationship between theory and research, with attention to how theories are developed, how they evolve, and how they may most appropriately guide social science research and be applied to research questions and design to ensure theoretical and methodological congruence. Caregiving research that is theory driven and also in which theory is developed will be reviewed. Several faculty scholars contribute to the seminar to assist in the exploration of a range of caregiving topics and the micro, mezzo and macro theories used to study them. Attention is given to theoretical assumptions, key concepts and definitions, how the theory is employed, and consideration of appropriate strategies for ensuring methodological and theoretical congruence.

Students will gain experience evaluating application of theories to caregiving issues. Though the course will focus on caregiving topics, the issues and theories associated with these topics are relevant to the study of a wide variety of other topics in the social and health sciences. The expectation in this seminar is that each of us will develop the critical skills necessary to evaluate many different kinds of research and that we will leave seminar able to more skillfully draw upon and use theory in our own work. Students will be assisted to think deeply about the application of theory to their own areas of interest.

While each seminar session may differ somewhat in discussion methods employed, each session will begin with a more general discussion of the topic or theory, followed by critique of the assigned empirical articles, and in-depth discussion of faculty and student generated open-ended questions relevant to the course objectives.
COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To increase understanding of contemporary trends and issues associated with the phenomenon of family caregiving in the U.S.

2. To deepen student understanding about what constitutes good scientific theory, the functions and types of theory and conceptual and methodological congruence considerations for scientific enquiry.

3. To help students identify and clarify the connections and distinctions between conceptual frameworks, theories and models.

4. To enhance student understanding about how one’s stated (conscious) or unstated (unconscious) theoretical perspective on social problems influences what one is drawn to investigate and the research questions one asks, and how the choice and use of theory influences the potential implications of one’s research.

5. To help students become critical consumers of theory through examination of the strengths and limitations in the range of a sampling of micro, mezzo and macro theories employed in caregiving research and their potential implications (e.g., for policy and practice).

6. To provide students with experience in critically evaluating other scholar’s use of and application of theory and congruence with research methods, using caregiving exemplars as the practice arena.

7. To help students identify and think deeply about the application of theory to their own areas of research.

COURSE FORMAT

This course is organized as a seminar that may be defined as:

*Collaborative intellectual dialogue facilitated with open-ended questions about a text.* (National Paideia Center, 2011).

*A small group of advanced students in a college or graduate school engaged in original research or intensive study under the guidance of a professor who meets regularly with them to discuss their reports and findings.* (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000).

*A focused collaborative group discussion of a text or another common academic experience...asks that students develop responsibility and skills in working with their peers to understand the texts and their relationships to the learning community themes.* (Evergreen State College, 2011)

In summary, a seminar is considered a collaborative learning environment allowing for an exchange of ideas. The purpose of this seminar is to achieve a deeper understanding about the use of theory in research (using caregiving as the focal area of exploration). This will be accomplished primarily through the process of group conversation and discussion to assist us in constructing meaning through listening, disciplined analysis, interpretation, and participation. For any seminar to be successful, seminar members must:

- Consistently complete weekly readings and be prepared to participate
- Speak openly to the whole group, not just to the leader
- Develop good interpretive, literal and evaluative open-ended questions
- Come prepared with written questions to ask (see below)
• Actively and respectfully listen to one another and seek to understand what is being communicated
• Actively share one’s own insights, reactions, thoughts and ideas that are stimulated from the readings or the observations and comments of others
• Address an idea or argument by connecting it to what someone else has said; summarize the point you are responding to and then provide your own idea.
• Invite others into the discussion
• Be appropriate, respectful, and focused on topic
• Be comfortable with silence (Silence gives time to process thoughts)
• NOTE: The natural talkers will need to be disciplined in order to learn how to listen better; quiet individuals must learn to share their insights; everyone should speak during each seminar.

REQUIRED READINGS

All required and recommended readings (with the exception of a recommended texts) are posted and available in electronic reserves in Learn@UW.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

A. Class Attendance, Participation and Preparation of Weekly Active Engagement Requirements

Attendance, active participation, and regular assessment of the seminar process and student evaluation of participation are important components that contribute to the success of the seminar as a teaching forum (McCartney, 2011; Scarborough, 2011). Students will be asked to regularly evaluate the seminar process (see Appendix A) and their own level and quality of participation in the seminar (see Appendix B).

Participation credit will include mandatory submission of a weekly reflection paragraph and three typed questions that will become part of the basis for class discussion during the seminar period. The weekly reflection paragraph may address any of the following: 1) a personal response or reaction to the weekly readings; 2) a discussion of how a particular theory highlighted in the weekly reading is potentially relevant to one’s own substantive area of interest; or 3) thoughts about the implications of some aspect of the reading for research, practice or policy. The typed questions for discussion should be open-ended questions, stemming from the theoretical and empirical articles that are in some way related to the course objectives for discussion. Students are encouraged to consider different types of questions such as interpretive (i.e., that ask for interpretations of the reading), literal (i.e., that elicit factual information that may be answered directly from readings to ensure comprehension), or evaluative (i.e., that elicit positions, or opinions about the reading). Students should write down the exact page and paragraph from the required reading that stimulated the question (if relevant). Students may design any questions relevant to the course objectives or consider using any of the following, but should consider what they would find most valuable to address learning needs:

What puzzles me is…
I’d like to talk with people about….
Don’t you think this is similar to…?
Do you agree that the big ideas seem to be…?
I have questions about…
How would this theory be applied to a different topic or area of interest?
This theory seems to ignore…what else is it failing to consider?
What does it mean when the author says…?
Do you agree with the assumptions that…?
What does this word or phrase mean?
How does this compare to theory X?
Why is this point important?
B. Theory Handout

Each student will be assigned to prepare a brief (no more than 2 page) handout, that summarizes one of the caregiving theories or models that are addressed in class and to present and review this handout at the beginning of each class. Doctoral students and researchers in general need to develop skills to critically review writings about particular theories, to determine the kinds of problems they are suited to address and to summarize the key assumptions and concepts relevant to the theory. This information is necessary to inform the development of prelim papers and proposals and a variety of other forms of scholarly writing. Preparing the theory handout will assist students to organize and share their own thinking about the following:

1) Primary problems or questions addressed by the theory or model;
2) Core assumptions;
3) Key concepts (conceptual definitions and operationalization of major concepts), and if appropriate, 
4) A visual diagram or description of how the key concepts are linked to one another.

Students may use the course and/or supplemental reading to prepare the handout. Please note that it is not expected that these handouts will be flawless descriptions of theory. It will not be possible to draft a totally complete description. Rather this assignment will provide an opportunity for skill development and the handout itself will serve as a spring board for our discussion about the core ideas of the theory itself. Seminar participants and visiting faculty will be invited to contribute additional insights to the essential aspects of the theory.

Please submit the handout to Betty by Monday evening (8:00 p.m.) prior to class.

C. Brief Written & Oral Critique of One Selected Empirical Article

Each student will be assigned to prepare and deliver a critique (approx. 15 minutes) and facilitate discussion (approx. 15-25 minutes) of 1 of the assigned empirical research articles. The critique (of no more than two written pages), should include: 1) a concise statement of purpose and methods; 2) critique of the strengths and limitations with special attention to the theoretical or conceptual framework employed, and theoretical and methodological congruence; 3) your overall assessment of the quality and contributions of the study or any other insights you would like to share; and 4) two or three discussion questions stemming from the critique.

Please submit your written critique by email to Betty by Monday evening (8:00 p.m.) prior to class.

D. Annotated Bibliography and Theoretical Critique   (due March 7th)

Each student will identify 4 articles that address a topic related to their substantive area of interest (caregiving or other). For each article, please provide the following: 1) the full citation; 2) a concise 1 paragraph abstract; 3) a concise 1-2 paragraph evaluation and critique of the use and application of theory; and 4) a copy of the articles reviewed. The critique should include attention to: To what extent was theory stated explicitly or implicitly and applied appropriately? How appropriate the theory seemed to be in relationship to the issue, problem or concept addressed in the article. If theory was absent, how and which theory (if appropriate) might have enhanced the study? What is your rationale? To what extent were the methods consistent with the theory? Provide examples to support your comments (e.g., to illustrate the ways in which the authors did or did not demonstrate theoretical and methodological congruence). Grades will be based on the quality of the evaluative commentary and the extent to which students demonstrate understanding of course content.
E. Presentation & Discussion – Selection of one of the following

The purpose of the “Presentation” assignment in its various forms is to: 1) Facilitate fuller investigation of one or more essential theoretical frameworks that have been used or that would be appropriate to use to study a problem area of interest (i.e., with attention to the strengths and weaknesses, and how the conceptual or theoretical approach would contribute to the existing knowledge base in the field, and how it would be operationalized) and to 2) further develop skills in articulating and presenting one’s rationale for choice of theory, while demonstrating one’s understanding of course content.

For this assignment students will need to:

1. Design a brief two page handout on the theory that is presented (similar to the “Theory Handout” assignment)

2. Submit one article a week in advance of their presentation to Betty that either describes the theory or provides background information on the substantive area that will be introduced;

3. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation or a Poster addressing any one of the following (Student’s choice):
   a. Description of your own substantive area of interest and a theory that you believe would be suitable to inform a research question in your substantive area. You will be expected to provide your rationale regarding why you selected this theory as suitable to answering your research questions, how it would address gaps in the field, and what you would take into consideration to assure methodological and theoretical congruence.
   b. Description of a theory or model that may be relevant to caregiving research you are interested in that we have not covered (e.g., attachment theory, caregiver identity theory, role theory, conflict theory, Roy Adaptation Model, Self-Regulation theory). You will be expected to provide an overview of how this theory has been applied to caregiving, and acknowledge the strengths and limitations of this theory.
   c. Description of how you would apply one of the theories we have covered to a research study in your own substantive area of interest, with attention to the strengths and limitations of this theory to answering your research questions, and how you would assure methodological and theoretical congruence.
   d. Comparative analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of two theories in terms of their suitability to address selected research questions in a substantive area that interests you.

Grades Points: Grades will be assigned using the following conversion table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>100 point scale</th>
<th>Final Grade</th>
<th>Criteria of Work Quality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Very good</td>
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<td>84-89</td>
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<td>74-79</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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COURSE OUTLINE: TOPICS AND READINGS

Introduction: The Relationship between Theory and Research

Week 1: Wednesday, January 25

INTRODUCTION AND COURSE OVERVIEW
Welcome and introductions
Syllabus and assignment review
Getting oriented: Rationale for the course
Trends and issues in caregiving
Introduction to major areas of caregiving research range of theories employed in this area


Week 2: Wednesday, February 1

WHAT THEORY IS? WHAT THEORY IS NOT?
Instructor: Betty Kramer
Conceptual frameworks, theories and models: Understanding the distinctions
What constitutes a good scientific theory?
Functions and types of theory
Conceptual and operational definitions & congruence considerations
Critiquing theory and methods in empirical research


Consider:
• How much consensus is there in what defines theory, what constitutes “good” theory and the difference between frameworks, models and theories?
• As we think about critiquing the use of theory in empirical research this semester, what kinds of things might we take into consideration?

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Micro Theories Reflecting Costs and Benefits Associated with Family Caregiving

Week 3: Wednesday February 8

STRESS PROCESS, STRESS AND COPING, AND DIATHESIS STRESS MODEL

Faculty Guest: Jan Greenberg, Professor, Social Work


Handout summarizing Stress Process Model Prepared by:____________________________________________________

Handout summarizing Diathesis Stress Model Prepared by:____________________________________________________

Research critique and discussion by:____________________________________________________
Week 4: Wednesday, February 15

THEORETICAL APPROACHES REGARDING POSTIVE ASPECTS OF CAREGIVING: “CAREGIVER ADAPTATION MODEL,” “STRESS ADAPTATION”, AND “EXISTENTIALISM”

Instructor: Betty Kramer, Professor
Consideration of various theoretical approaches to studying negative versus positive outcomes.


Handout summarizing Caregiver Adaptation Model: __________________________________________

Handout summarizing Theoretical Perspectives in Farran: _______________________________________

Research critique and discussion by: __________________________________________________________

Week 5: Wednesday, February 22

LIFE COURSE PERSPECTIVE AND THEORY

Instructor: Betty Kramer, Professor


Handout summarizing the Life Course Perspective and Theory prepared by:________________________________________

Research critique and discussion by:_______________________________________________________

Research critique and discussion by:_______________________________________________________

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** Mezzo and Macro Theories

** Week 6: Wednesday February 29

** EXCHANGE THEORY –AND CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS

** Faculty Guest: Kristi Shook Slack, Professor


Handout summarizing Social Exchange Theory prepared by:________________________________________

Research critique and discussion by:________________________________________________________
Week 7: Wednesday, March 7

**Annotated Bibliography and Theoretical Critique Due Today**

NOTE: Class will end a little early today for the PhD Faculty & Student luncheon at the Faculty Center

**STIGMA THEORY AND CAREGIVING**

*Faculty Guest: Tally Moses, Associate Professor, Social Work*

Conceptualizations of stigma and its various dimensions

The application of stigma theory to families of people with mental illness

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Handout summarizing Stigma Theory prepared by: ____________________________________________

Research critique and discussion by: ______________________________________________________

Week 8: Wednesday, March 14

**FEMINIST THEORY**

*Faculty Guest: Stephanie Robert, Professor, Social Work*

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Week 9: Wednesday, March 21

**THE LIFE SPAN MODEL OF SUCCESSFUL AGING -**

*Faculty Guest:* Tracy Schroepfer, Associate Professor, Social Work


Week 10: Wednesday, March 28

**GROUNDED THEORIES OF CAREGIVING**

*Faculty Guest:* Barbara Bowers, Helen Denne Schulte Professor, Associate Dean for Research, Department of Nursing


**Caron, C.D., & Bowers, B.J. (2003). Deciding whether to continue, share or relinquish caregiving: Caregiver views. Qualitative Health Research, 13(9), 1252-71.


Handout summarizing the Grounded theory Approach to generating theory prepared by:_______________________________________________________

Research critique and discussion by:______________________________________________________________________________

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** Week of April 2: Spring break **

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** Theories Informing Caregiver Intervention **

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** Week 11: Wednesday April 11 **

** SELF-EFFICACY THEORY:**  
** Faculty Guest:** Sandy Magana  
Caregiver Interventions using promotora de salud.


Handout summarizing Self-Efficacy Theory prepared by:_______________________________________________________

Research critique and discussion by:______________________________________________________________________________

Research critique and discussion by:______________________________________________________________________________

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** Week 12: Wednesday April 18 **

** STUDENT PRESENTATIONS **

** Required readings TBA. Each student presenting this week will submit one required reading that the instructor will post on Learn at UW at least one week in advance. **
Week 13: Wednesday April 25

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

** Required readings TBA. Each student presenting this week will submit one required reading that the instructor will post on Learn at UW at least one week in advance.

Week 14: Wednesday May 2

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

** Required readings TBA. Each student presenting this week will submit one required reading that the instructor will post on Learn at UW at least one week in advance.

Week 15: Wednesday May 9

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

** Required readings TBA. Each student presenting this week will submit one required reading that the instructor will post on Learn at UW at least one week in advance.

INTEGRATION AND SYNTHESIS
Putting it all together
Course Review
Summary and Class Evaluation
Appendix A. SEMINAR PROCESS ASSESSMENTS

These scales represent your general perception of your seminar experience today. The descriptions represent each end of the scale. Please circle the number on the 10-point scale that best represents your evaluation of each dimension below (with 1 representing the lowest assessment and 10 representing the highest assessment)

**Satisfaction with discussion**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Seminar was a waste of time  Seminar was useful to my learning

**Contribution of seminar to personal learning**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Discussion did not aid my understanding of course objectives/themes  Discussion added a great deal to my understanding of course objectives/themes

**Personal involvement in discussion**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not involved at all, participation limited, not interested  Totally involved, active participation, interested in topic and discussion

**Climate of discussion**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I felt judged, criticized, not listened to; I did not feel safe in the group  I felt free to share and participate

The atmosphere felt trusting and respectful

SEMINAR PROCESS ANALYSIS/DIAGNOSIS

The following scales represent some of the specific behaviors that can help make a seminar work well. By looking at your perception of how the group did on each scale and then comparing your perception with other members, you may gain understanding about what your seminar is doing that makes the seminar successful or not. Circle the number along the continuum to indicate your perception of that scale.

Climate creation and maintenance

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No attention paid to involving people, setting goals/time, discussing process, support/confirmation, tension relieving

Goal directed activity

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Aimless, topic jumping. Excursions into trivia, no directions at all. Structure is non-existent, is resisted, or is seen as limiting.

Response to contributions

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Members ignore and do not respond to contributions; discussion is scattered; same points made over and over; members feel no progress is occurring.

Information follow-through

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Information 'dumped', no connections no follow through

Function in group

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Members use dysfunctional roles Member always participate In the same way.
### Safety/trust

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| Members are distrustful of one another, are careful, guarded, listen superficially but reject what others say; are afraid to criticize or be criticized. | Members trust one another; all use and respect the responses they get. All freely express ideas, opinions and reactions without fear of reprisal. |

### Spread of participation

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| A few dominate, some passive, some not listening, some not listened to. Several talk at once. Interruptions. | All get in. All are involved. All are listened to. Participation is active and intense. |

### Checking for meaning

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| Members assume they know what others are saying and evaluate and judge what others say before checking for meaning. | Members use paraphrase, perception checking, provisional summaries to check their assumptions of what others are saying. |

### Creative Conflict

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| Group is uncomfortable with differences in thinking and either avoids the conflict is focused on attacking and judging. | Differences in thinking are seen as useful to explore. Conflict is focused on checking, correcting and enlarging knowledge. |

### Authority/leadership

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| Group needs for leadership are not met. Certain individuals are seen as having the authority. High dependence; one or two dominate; no sharing of leadership. | As needs for leadership arise various members, meet them; anyone feels free to volunteer as s/he sees a group need; leadership is distributed almost equally. |

Appendix B. SELF ASSESSMENT OF LEVEL OF INTERACTION IN SEMINAR

Introduction: To a larger degree the intention of seminar is the process of active learning itself, made visible and audible to the entire learning community. It is the seminar that integrates the texts with the readers, and the readers with each other. Without a vital seminar, there is little hope that a coordinated studies class will be as healthy as it could be. The following is a seminar metric to help participants evaluate and consciously improve the vitality of the seminar. However, it is crucial to remember that no seminar will work if the participants have not read the material.

Metric: Because of the difficulty and complexity in discussing anyone's motivation to do or not to do anything, the following metric is based simply upon the seven levels of behavior (from least to most interactive) we have observed in seminar participants.

1- Silent - No response. Of the various reasons for this behavior, two need to be considered for our purposes: Lack of trust in the group and therefore the unwillingness to take a risk and share; or lack of confidence in one's own critical abilities a sense of being so overpowered by the material that it is hard to see the forest for the trees.

2- Silencing the text - Personal opinions, experiences and/or memories dominate, without much consideration for the text. This behavior indicates an inability to engage and is often accompanied by complacency or boredom. Possibilities for learning are greatly reduced. Often the participant is judgmental or dismisses the text altogether.

3- Testing the water - Some two or three general comments about the text to let people know s/he has read it. The participant is beginning to get their proverbial toes wet.

4- Collecting - Listing many observations and quotes from the text without analyzing them. The participant is still struggling a bit with being overpowered by the material, but what is important is that s/he is struggling with it.

5- Engaging - This signals real reading. In seminar it is usually accompanied by an emotional as well as an intellectual response to the material. At this level, participants are generally enthusiastic. Among the various responses possible: discussing the position and biases of the author; seeking to define terms (both the author's and the discussants'); seeking to make meaning out of the quotes; asking questions; answering questions about the quotes; asking questions; answering questions about the text posed by the group; clarifying each other's positions. This level indicates a strategy of learning.

6- Understanding - At this level, participants are structuring and integrating the material through association with personal experience (here, personal experience illuminates rather than dominates the text) and with other literature.

7- Discriminating - This level is the level of "critical" appreciation. The participant has fully understood the material from a number of perspectives and now makes a conscious evaluation or judgment about it.

YOUR NAME:___________________________________________ CLASS SESSION:___________________________________________

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<tr>
<th>Which category above best matches your participation in today’s class</th>
<th>Please briefly provide your rationale and share any observations you might have about your level of participation in today’s session</th>
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