Theoretical Bases of Social Behavior (SWRK 235A & SWRK 235B) is taught across two semesters and is designed to provide the foundation generalist social work theoretical knowledge base for social work practice. A bio-psychosocial perspective of human development across the lifespan is emphasized. Various theoretical perspectives are highlighted to enhance an understanding and contextualization of how human development is perceived and assisted.

The two semester course is based on the following assumptions: a) close attention is given to culture, gender, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, mental/physical ableness, and sexual orientation as variations on the human condition (CPS M5.4.2, 7.2); b) the approach is ecosystemic, multidimensional, eclectic, postmodern/constructivist, and empirical within a multicultural framework (CPS M5.4.2, 7.2); and c) the course sequence extends the student’s Liberal Arts foundation into the areas of ethics, cultural anthropology, economics, political science, biology, psychology, and sociology (CPS M 5.9, 5.10, 5.11).

SWRK 235A examines human growth and development across the life span; examining life processes through the contextual lenses of individual, family, community, and society. Various theories that have framed analysis of the human condition as it relates to human development and process are explored. Emphasis is given to the development of the individual within a micro (family, groups) perspective. Macro (global, societal) and mezzo (community, neighborhood, organization) perspectives are considered secondarily. The latter perspectives are more fully emphasized in the second semester.

SWRK 235B builds on theoretical frameworks presented in SWRK 235A, however SWRK 235B examines human growth and development with primary emphasis given to the impact of macro (global, societal) and mezzo (community, neighborhood, organization) perspectives on the individual, family, and groups. Various theories emphasizing macro and mezzo frameworks for analyzing human development and the human condition will be highlighted. This course completes the theoretical foundation informing the practice of social work across levels.
COURSE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the SWRK 235A/B sequence is to enable students to critically analyze and understand human behavior and development from multiple theoretical perspectives and in an ecologically and contextually sensitive manner. This lens of informed sensitive analysis then facilitates the student’s ability to select from a broader range of theoretical and practice perspectives likely to be productive across time and setting which promote empathetic and empowering relationships with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and societies.

The following list of objectives is emphasized to varying degrees within each course and across the sequence:

1. The sequence of courses shall consider and promote student understanding of major theoretical approaches and models explicating critical developmental processes across various human systems including family, small group, organizations, community, societal, and global systems.

2. The sequence of courses shall consider and promote student understanding of how to apply major theoretical approaches and models explicating critical developmental processes across various human systems including individual, family, small group, organizations, community, societal, and global as they apply to client situations.

3. The sequence of courses shall consider and promote student understanding of human development knowledge and theories required by professional social workers in attempting to influence client systems in a manner consistent with the values and ethics of professional social work practice across various human systems.

4. The sequence of courses shall consider and promote student understanding of how to reframe deficit-based theoretical and practice models to reflect a strengths-based expression of client systems and to value cultural diversity as an expression of cultural vitality and capacity created by natural support systems.

5. The sequence of courses shall consider and promote student understanding of the dynamic interaction between biological, cultural, psychological, and social systems affecting human capacity, resilience, risk, strength, and vulnerability.

6. The sequence of courses shall consider and promote student understanding of issues such as, but not limited to, domestic and international violence and abuse; mechanisms which affect and effect prejudice, oppression, racism, sexism, homophobia and heterosexism, and ageism; and the immediate and cumulative effect of these events and reactions on the development of the individual and human systems.

7. The sequence of courses shall consider and promote student understanding of multi-causal and multi-level nature of life challenges and transitions which may promote or deter optimal health and well-being across human systems.
COURSE GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

To encourage a positive learning environment:

- Students should be prompt. Repetitive lateness (i.e., 15 minutes late – more than three times) will affect the final grade. Speak to the instructor individually if you believe that you will be repetitively late for class.
- Students should turn off beepers and cell phones during class.
- Students should not ridicule others; rather engage in civil and respectful discourse.
- Students should own expressions of bigotry. In other words, rather than attribute a negative characteristic to a social group or to a member of that group, students begin with, “this is how I have been taught to believe,” or “I don’t like to admit it but I do have the belief that…”
- Students are committed to personal/professional growth and self-exploration.
- Students behave in a non-violent verbal and physical manner.

Course Format:

Learning activities will include readings, writings, discussion, interactive lectures, speakers, audiovisual resources, and experiential exercises. The class will be organized as a learning laboratory, utilizing small group context for developmental application skills in the area of human behavior and the social environment.

Cooperative learning is dependent upon student preparation and participation. Students are expected to have read all assigned readings prior to class sessions. Students are expected to participate in cooperative and collaborative learning exercises in class.

Students are expected to bring to the classroom experiences from their field practicum or other life experiences. Because of this requirement, all in-class practice examples or case presentations are considered confidential to the classroom. Students are expected to change a client’s name during the presentation.

It is the belief of the instructor that there is a wealth of experiential knowledge in each classroom which often remains untapped in favor of lectures about theorists and research findings. Although this class will include that element (sorry, but this is an institution of higher education), it is hoped that part of each class session can be devoted to our own “in-house specialists” on growing up and growing old. The rules of confidentiality apply to classroom discussion: if students are willing to share personal, sometimes painful situations with the class, it becomes the professional responsibility of all participants to abide by the code of ethics by NOT disclosing that information outside of class.

Attendance:

Students’ interest, time, and commitment to the course, as well as personal/professional development is highly valued. Attendance will be taken at all class sessions. As a matter of fairness and equity, anyone missing more than two scheduled class sessions will have their final grade reduced by one grade. Missing a third scheduled class session will result in a second grade reduction. Missing more than four scheduled class sessions will result in being dropped from
the course and will require the student make arrangements to complete the course at another time in a manner acceptable to the M.S.W. Director (where appropriate) and/or Director of the Division of Social Work. There is no substitute or make-up for attendance and participation.

**Course Assignments:**

Students are expected to have completed assignments for the course by the scheduled due date. If special circumstances arise, the instructor may grant an extension of the due date. This must be arranged prior to the date the assignment is due and be approved by the instructor. If students need help or have questions, they are encouraged to contact the instructor during office hours or by e-mail. Should this situation occur, the student should provide several avenues through which they may be contacted (e.g., e-mail, home or work phone numbers, cell phone numbers).

Written work must conform to the APA (5th edition) format. Serious deficiencies in areas such as spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and coherent organization will result in a lower grade. Students are encouraged to use the writing lab if writing problems emerge.

**Plagiarism Policy:**

**Plagiarism** (claiming the work of someone else as your own) will result in a grade of FAIL for the course. Refer to the APA Manual (5th edition) pp. 349-350 and p.395 for clarification on this principle. Students should be aware of CSUS policy regarding plagiarism. This information can be obtained through the University Policy Manual in the section pertaining to Academic Honesty (see CSUS website: [www.csus.edu](http://www.csus.edu)).

**ADA Provisions:**

Students who have a learning disability or experience other reasons that might interfere with their ability to complete the class requirements, need to make an appointment and discuss this with the instructor. Students with documented learning difficulties can obtain special accommodations for course materials, testing facilities, and equipment by contacting the Office of Disability Services (916) 278-6955. The instructor should be advised of these accommodations so as to better assist the student with his/her learning needs.

**Incompletes:**

Incompletes are not given automatically. A grade of “Incomplete” may be assigned only in cases of illness, accident, or other occurrences clearly beyond the student’s control. It is the student’s responsibility to fulfill the University’s and/or Division’s policies and procedures for obtaining an “incomplete” for a course grade. Students who fail this policy will automatically be assigned a grade of “F” for the course.

**REQUIRED READING:**


ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Quiz 20%
2. 3 Response papers 45%
3. Final paper 35%

100%

GRADING SCALE:

A = 93-100 pts.
A- = 90-92 pts.
B+ = 87-89 pts.
B = 84-86 pts.
B- = 80-83 pts.
C+ = 77-79 pts.
C = 74-76 pts.
C- = 70-73 pts.
F = 69 or less

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

1) Quiz—There will be a quiz on Chapters 1-3 of the Payne text. The quiz will be multiple choice (*Worth 20 points*) (*Quiz is on 10/2*)

2) 3 Response Papers answering questions from the Healy text (the summary questions at the end of the chapter). Each response paper should be 3-5 pages, double spaced. (*Each response paper is worth 15 points*) (*Papers due on 10/30, 11/20, 11/27*)

3) Final Paper (*due 12/11*). Select a character from a movie, TV Show, or novel who has a particular dilemma/struggle/problem. The paper should be organized as follows:

   - Describe the character and briefly summarize the plot/narrative of the story
   - Pick a particular theory(ies) (you can pick up to 2 theories) discussed in class and use it as a lens to explain and make sense of that particular character’s life/personality/identity/development/struggle/issues, etc…
   - Discuss interventions (that are informed by the theory(ies) you have chosen) you could utilize as a social worker to help that particular character to solve their problem/dilemma(s)

This paper should be 4-6 pages, double-spaced. No need to use extra references; just cite the texts we have used in class.

*Worth 35 points*
COURSE SESSIONS:

Session #1: 9/11/06
Introduction and Overview

Session #2: 9/18/06
The Construction of Social Work Theory

Readings: Payne, Chapters 1 & 2
Healy, Chapter 1

Session #3: 9/25/06
Issues in Social Work Practice Theory

Readings: Payne, Chapter 3
Healy, Chapter 5

Session #4: 10/2/06
Psychodynamic Perspectives

Readings: Payne, Chapter 4
Healy, Chapter 3

IN CLASS QUIZ TODAY (on chapters 1-3 of Payne)

Session #5: 10/9/06
Crisis Theory and Task Centered Approaches

Readings: Payne, Chapter 5
Healy, Chapter 6

Session #6: 10/16/06
Cognitive-Behavioral Theories

Readings: Payne, Chapter 6

Session #7: 10/23/06
Systems and Ecological Perspectives

Readings: Payne, Chapter 7
Healy, Chapter 7
Session #8: 10/30/06
*Strengths and Social Constructionist Perspectives*

Readings: Payne, Chapter 8
Healy, Chapter 8

**ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY** (answer questions 2, 3, 4 on Page 170 of Healy—the “Summary Questions” section)

Session #9: 11/6/06
*Humanism, Existentialism, and Spirituality*

Readings: Payne, Chapter 9

Session #10: 11/13/06
*Feminist Perspectives*

Readings: Payne, Chapter 12

Session #11: 11/20/06
*Radical, Anti-Oppressive, and Critical Perspectives*

Readings: Payne, Chapter 11
Healy, Chapter 9

**ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY** (answer questions 1, 2, 3 on Page 192 of Healy—the “Summary Questions” section)

Session #12: 11/27/06
*Postmodern/Narrative Perspectives*

Readings: Healy, Chapter 10

**ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY** (answer questions 1, 2, 3 on Page 214 of Healy—the “Summary Questions” section)

Session #13: 12/4/06
*Cultural and Ethnic Sensitivity Perspectives*

Readings: Payne, Chapter 13

Session #14: 12/11/06
*Summary Week*

**FINAL PAPER DUE**