COURSE SYLLABUS FALL 2006

SWK 235 A --HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT I

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Theoretical Bases of Social Behavior is taught in two semesters and is designed to provide the foundation generalist social work knowledge, from an ecological perspective, concerning the application of bio-psycho-social theories to contemporary social work practice situations. The course sequence is designed according to the Curriculum Policy Statement (CPS) on Human Behavior in the Social Environment (HBSE) for Master’s Degree Programs in Social Work Education.

In addition, the profession of social work aims to work respectfully within a diverse (age, gender, ethnicity, mental and physical ability, sexual orientation, religion/spirituality) society. Therefore, the course stimulates student thinking about the role of privileged and oppressed statuses and their influence on human development. This emphasis is supported by the NASW Code of Ethics, which states “Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability” (NASW Code of Ethics, 1.05c).

The Professional Foundation of the MSW Program must provide content concerning the following:

- Theories and knowledge of the human bio-psycho-social development,
- A range of social systems in which individuals live (families, groups, organizations, communities, institutions),
- Interactions among biological, social, psychological, and cultural systems
- Impact of social and economic forces on diverse groups
- Analysis of how systems promote or deter optimal health and well-being
- Exploration of values and ethical issues related to bio-psycho-social theories particularly addressing the ways they enhance or hinder promotion of social justice

The purpose of this course sequence is to enable students to understand the multi-level, multi-dimensional processes of development. This is a prerequisite course for advanced practice courses and for field internships to assist students in developing a knowledge base to draw from in preparation for social work micro, mezzo and macro practice.
The course is based on a diversity perspective emphasizing close attention to culture, gender, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. The approach is ecosystemic, multidimensional, eclectic, postmodern/constructivist, and empirical. The course integrates theories and content about diversity (class, race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental abilities) into a multi-dimensional framework to insure that it is comprehensively covered. The course sequence in built upon and extends the Liberal Arts Perspective by incorporating ideas from such areas as ethics, cultural anthropology, economics, political science, history, biology, psychology, social psychology, sociology, and philosophy. Students may expect to gain an understanding of the nature of theory, theoretical application, and a critical analysis of theoretical constructs.

During the fall semester course (SW 235A) emphasis will be placed on human growth and lifespan development from conception through late adulthood in the context of family, community and society. Students will develop a basic understanding of systems and ecological theory, which are the basis for social work’s person-in-environment, contextual approach to understanding human behavior. From this theoretical perspective, both traditional and alternative theories of human behavior, including psychoanalytic, ego psychological, attachment, learning, cognitive-behavioral, feminist theory and critical race theory will be carefully evaluated. The course perspective is centered in client strengths and empowerment perspectives. Students will learn how to apply these different theories in order to understand human behavior in its social context by critically examining a variety of case studies which cover phases of the life cycle and involve micro, mezzo, and macro system issues.

The spring semester course (SW 235B) continues the study of human behavior, drawing again from a multi-dimensional framework. While SW235A addressed human development within the context of expectable environments, the second semester course (SW 235B) will be organized around human behavior in contexts of challenges and vulnerable life conditions: poverty and its impact, homelessness, social injustice and institutional discrimination, strengths and risks, attachment and separation, dynamics of trauma, interpersonal and institutional violence, family dysfunction and transition, mental and behavioral disturbances, physical illness, disability and death and loss, oppression and challenges to group, organizational community, societal and global functioning.

**Statement of Course Sequence Goal**

The goal of the HBSE course sequence is to enable students to understand and critically analyze theories and develop a knowledge base about human behavior and lifespan development using multi-dimensional frameworks. This knowledge base empowers the social worker to create effective and empowering relationships with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in the profession of social work and to work toward social change in an effort to obtain social justice for vulnerable populations.

**core Objectives of the HBSE Sequence**

It is expected that students will be able to demonstrate the objectives listed below by the completion of the course sequence (SWK 235A and 235B).
1. Students will be able to think critically about the theories and process of human development as demonstrated by class discussion, written assignments and oral presentations.

2. Students will be able to demonstrate their comprehension of the person-in-environment perspective (the dynamic transactions that occur among the biological, psychological, social, cultural, environmental, ecological, economic and political systems) as measured by class discussion, written assignments and oral presentations.

3. Students will be able to apply the concepts of the ecological model of human development and relate those concepts to the process of human development as measured by class discussion, written assignments and oral presentations.

4. Students will be able to describe various theories of identity development as they play out in a context of social-political privileges and oppressions as demonstrated by class discussion and written work.

5. Students will be able to explain how environmental conditions (i.e. poverty, unsafe living quarters, inadequate nutrition, lack of health care, deteriorated schools, and other manifestations of oppression or social stratification, material deprivation and inequitable distribution/ access to life sustaining resources) impact human development as measured by classroom discussion and small group activities.

6. Students will be able to recognize the negative social attitudes and behaviors, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, social exclusion, and social stigma that negatively influence human development as demonstrated in class discussions and written work.

7. Students will be able to reframe deficit-based perspectives of human development by employing the strengths and the empowerment models as a means to understand human agency and resistance to oppressive social and political circumstances as demonstrated in classroom discussion and small group activities.

8. Students will be able to integrate values and ethics compatible with the profession of social work as demonstrated in class discussion and small group activities.

**Disability Accommodation**
If you would like to request academic accommodation due to a disability, please contact Services to Students with Disabilities- Lassen Hall room 1008, phone: 916-278-6955 (voice only) or 916-278-7239 (TDD only) or [http://www.csus.edu/sswd](http://www.csus.edu/sswd). Office hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (except holidays). If you have a letter from Services to Students with Disabilities please present the letter to me so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for this class.

**Course Format**
This class will be conducted on a lecture-discussion basis. Student preparation and participation are integral parts of this learning process. Video, guest speakers, and in class exercises and
small group activities may also be used to accomplish the learning objectives.

**COURSE EVALUATION AND GRADING**

Your final grade in this class will be based on a 100-point scale:

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<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>93 – 100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>90 – 92</td>
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<td>87 – 89</td>
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<td>83 – 86</td>
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Your grade will be based on the following:

10% **CLASS PARTICIPATION**  Students are expected to come to class having read the assignments and prepared to critically discuss the readings.

30% **3 REACTION PAPERS (2-3 PAGES EACH).** The purpose of these papers is to encourage students to develop critical thinking skills as well as demonstrate the ability to integrate theory and practice. Students will choose one or two of our assigned articles, critically analyze and discuss its relevance to your field placement. DUE: OCT 9, NOV 6 & NOV 27TH.

10% **CLASS PRESENTATION**  One of the reaction papers will be presented in class. This presentation will include a discussion of one or two readings and its applicability to a client or your field placement.

20% **MIDTERM PAPER (5-7 PAGES).** The focus of this paper will be to choose 2 theories discussed in class, apply and critically analyze them. DUE: OCT 30

30% **FINAL PAPER -- ASSIGNMENT TO BE GIVEN OUT (APPROX 8-10 PAGES) DUE DEC 11, 2006**

**CLASS REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Attendance.** Students are expected to attend all classes and to be on time. If you miss three classes, you must make an appointment to discuss whether continuing is feasible.

2. **Assigned Readings.** Students will be expected to complete assigned readings prior to class attendance.

3. **Classroom Preparation and Participation.** Students are expected to be prepared to participate in discussions and in written and oral exercises.

4. **Assignments.** Students are expected to complete assignments and turn them in on time.
There will be a grade penalty (of -5pts/day) added each day a paper is late. Papers must be handed in at the beginning of class on the due date. Be sure to make a copy of your papers for yourself. All papers should be typewritten, double-spaced, and free of spelling and grammatical errors. Apply basic APA (American Psychological Association) style for all written assignments both in the main text and in citing references.

5. **Plagiarism.** Any form of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. Written work must reflect your own thinking. It is considered plagiarism if you copy from your textbook or claim ideas that belong to others without citing the source of those ideas. University policy on plagiarism is an automatic failure.

6. **Ethical Practice.** As developing social work professionals, it is expected that students will become familiar with and adhere to the *NASW Code of Ethics.* This code for professional behavior should guide your actions in class and in the field agency setting. Disrespect for student colleagues will not be tolerated as classroom dynamics must be safe, appropriate, on topic, open and respectful of diverse opinions.

7. The course outline is to be shared with the field instructor as soon as possible after the student's entry into the field in order to provide guidance for both the field instructor and classroom instructor in supporting the fullest possible integration of field and classroom learning.

**VI. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**


Course Reader: Available at Kinko’s

CD Containing numerous articles will be distributed to students
Course Outline

Sessions 1 and 2: September 11 & Sept 18
Welcome and Introductions
Theory and Critical Thinking in Social Work
Establishing a Contextual Framework in HBSE
Using Social Work Theory in Practice
Social Systems and the Ecological Perspectives

Required Readings

Chapter 1: The nature of theories
Chapter 2: System Theory


Chapter 6: Competing views of problems and their causes

Session 3: September 25
Psychoanalytic Theory

Required Readings

Chapter 1: An Overview
Chapter 2: Psychoanalytic and ego psychology theories pp 37-46.


Recommended

**Session 4: October 2**

**Ego Psychology and Social Work Practice: October 2**

**Required Readings**


Chapter 2: Psychoanalytic and ego psychology theories pp 46-76


Chapter 2: The emergence and assimilation of ego psychology into SW practice

Chapter 3: The ego and its functions

Chapter 4: The ego and its defenses


*Recommended*


**Sessions 5: October 9th**

**Attachment Theory and Clinical Social Work**

**Required Readings**


Chapter 3. pp 79-96


Recommended


Session 6: October 16
Cognitive-Behavioral Theories

Required Readings


Sessions 7: October 23
Alternative Theories: Addressing the Impact of Race, Class, Gender, Power and Privilege

Required Readings


**Session 8: October 30**
(Cont-- Alternative Theories: Addressing the Impact of Race, Class, Gender, Power and Privilege --The Feminist Perspective

**Required Readings**


**Session 9: November 6th**
Developmental Theory: Infancy And Early Child Development

**Required Readings**


Sessions 10 & 11: November 13 & November 20
Developmental Theory: Middle Childhood And Adolescence

Required Readings

Chapter 9. Middle childhood and adolescence, pp 337-382.


Session 12: November 27th
Developmental Theory: Adult Development

Required Readings

Chapter 10. Adult development p 383-426


Session 13: December 4th
Developmental Theory: Adult Development Old Age - End of Life Issues

Required Readings


Session 14: December 11th
Wrap up