

**SWK 310 – HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT I
FALL 2007 – SYLLABUS**

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine human behavior dynamics and provide a knowledge base upon which to build assessment skills, intervention skills and prevention skills necessary for generalist practice. This knowledge base will be achieved through identifying biological, psychological, and socio-cultural variables, which influence human development over the life cycle. The impact of the family, social groups, organizations, communities and society on individuals will also be discussed.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This course will incorporate a variety of teaching methods including brief lectures, discussions, case study analysis, audiovisual materials, small group exercises, role-play, possible guest speaker(s). There is an expectation that you will attend class regularly, be prepared to discuss and analyze the readings and homework assignments and actively and verbally participate in the discussion, small group exercises and other class activities.

REQUIRED TEXT

Zastrow, C. & Kirst-Ashman, K. (2007). *Understanding Human Behavior in the Social Environment* (7th ed.). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

EVALUATION – Two (2) Options

1. Two (2) non-cumulative exam, in class exam	50 %
2. Two (2) journal entries	20%
3. One (1) cumulative, in class final	25%
4. Class attendance and participation	+ 5%
	100 %

All exams due dates will be announced at least 3 weeks before the due date. This gives us some flexibility on how long we take to cover some of the material. This syllabus is subject to change at the discretions of the professor.

COURSE OBJECTIVE

- 1) Apply critical thinking skills concerning human development, human behavior, life tasks, environmental factors, and human diversity as they impact on a system development and growth. (Outcome measures: all exams and the Garcia Family)
- 2) Practice within the values and ethics of the social work profession and with an understanding of and respect for the positive value of diversity. (Outcome measures: all exams, class discussion and activities, Garcia family, liberal vs. conservative approaches to social problems, and attitudes toward later adulthood)
- 3) Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply the strategies and skills of change that advance social and economic justice. (Outcome measures: all exams, Garcia family, other classroom activities and journal)
- 4) Understand the bio-psycho-social and spiritual variables that affect individual development and behavior and the theoretical frameworks that explain interactions among individuals and between individuals and social systems. (Outcome measures: all exams and many classroom activities)
- 5) Analyze the impact of social policies and social systems on client systems, workers, and agencies. (Outcome measures: all exams, several classroom activities and journal)
- 6) Evaluate research studies and apply findings to practice. (Outcome measures: all exams and class discussions)
- 7) Understand the structure of organizations and service delivery systems and methods or organizational change. (Outcome measures: exam 1, class discussions, and classroom activities)

THE LIBERAL ARTS FOUNDATION

It is expected that each student will utilize and integrate conceptual and theoretical knowledge gained from their liberal arts foundation courses in their understanding of HBSE. The knowledge from previously taken natural and social science will help each student understand and assess individual and community influences on human behavior including vulnerable and oppressed populations. Foreign language, cultural history and language, religion and performing and fine arts will help students appreciate human diversity. Oral communication and writing skills and critical thinking that has been developed in the core courses in general, will be further developed through papers, class activities and exams.

HUMAN DIVERSITY

Respect for the uniqueness of individuals, their diversity and their right to self-determination will be further developed in this course. This will be accomplished through the analysis of diverse and oppressed populations and the macro and micro influences on their behavior and be sensitive to the impact and consequences of oppression.

Your studies of foreign languages, the arts, sociology, political science, economics, psychology, and history offer insights into diverse populations, their cultural beginnings, how needs of diverse groups are or are not met, and how diverse individuals and groups may behave and function.

SOCIAL WORK VALUES AND ETHICS AND THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Social work is a discipline based upon particular value assumptions. It is expected that the student will isolate and analyze social and cultural values relative to human behavior in a social environment. You will have ample opportunity throughout the semester to learn and understand social work values; clarify your personal values; and examine your Christian perspective as they relate to ethical dilemmas, specific social work situations and professional values. This will be accomplished through class lecture and activities, case analysis and readings.

PROMOTION OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND AT-RISK POPULATIONS

Two professional foundation areas that will be covered in this course are at-risk populations and promotion of social and economic justice. In this course, at-risk populations will be discussed and examined with a focus on defining at-risk populations, understanding and assessing the system dynamics and institutions that encourage or perpetuate the risk and those that may reduce risk.

Essential to social work practice is the promotion of social and economic justice. Examination of organizations, services and resources that empower at-risk groups and promote social and economic justice will also be undertaken.

COURSE OUTLINE

August 28 – Introductions & Syllabus

Reading:

August 28 – Chapter 1

Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior and the Social Environment

Foundation knowledge and the purpose of social work

The importance of assessment

Impacts of systems in the environment

The Systems Impact Model

People's involvement with multiple systems

Communities and human behavior

Social work values and ethics

The impact of society and culture on ethnic minorities, women, and persons of variant sexual orientation is reviewed as a framework for analysis, which will continue throughout the course. Each of these will also be reviewed from a social work and Christian values and ethics perspective.

Readings:

August 30 – Chapter 1

Ethnocentrism and Racism

Ethnic groups and ethnocentrism

Race and racism

Racial and ethnic stereotypes

Race is a social concept

Micro and macro system discrimination

Effects of discrimination and oppression

Enhancing social justice

Ethnic sensitive social work practice

The Garcia family: An exercise.

Readings:

August 30 & September 4 – Chapter 5

September 6 – EXAM 1 (Chapters 1 & 5)

September 11 – Movie: “9 – 11”

Infancy and Childhood

Effects of diversity on development

The impacts of macro system policies on practice and access to services

Infertility

Sex-role socialization

Theories of psychological development

Emotional development
Developmental disabilities and their meaning in culturally diverse groups
Significant issues and life events
The individual as a social system

Readings:

September 13 & 18 – Chapters 2 & 3

September 18 – Chapter 3

September 18 – JOURNALS DUE!

Garcia Family

9-11 Video Assignment

September 20 – Chapter 4

September 25 – EXAM 2 (Chapter 2 – 4)

Adolescence

Psychological reactions to physical changes

Significant issues & life events

Identity formation

Moral development

Suicide

Social Problems – Eating Disorders

Readings:

September 27 & October 2 – Chapter 6

October 4 – Chapters 7 & 8

October 4 & 9 – Chapter 8

October 11 – FINAL EXAM (Chapters 6 – 8)

October 16 – Fall Recess/No Class

JOURNAL

Journals will include the following:

1. Your opinions and reactions to class discussions, videos, and/or movies;
2. In-class written assignments/exercises;
3. Homework assignments.

CASE: ASSIGNMENT

The Garcia Family

The Jesus Garcia family has come to the attention of the protective services department. It seems the two daughters, 8 and 12 are in school irregularly, the youngest, Marissa, is often ill and sometimes not well kept when she arrives at school. When the school first got involved, a school social worker went out to their trailer, which is located at the back of a farmer's land north of Holland. She found a trailer not well suited for physical occupancy. It had pieces of cloth over broken windows and it had poorly connected propane tanks that supplied the only heat available in the trailer. Because there was no plumbing, an outhouse was located near the side of the trailer with a shallow latrine ditch with open sewage.

Before contacting the family, who were not home at the time of the first visit, the social worker called protective services that sent a worker out and inspected the property. The sanitation was not seen as satisfactory in terms of community standards and protective services took over. While they were unable to contact the family, two days later, when the children returned to school, protective services took the girls into protective custody. They explained to the parents, migrant farm workers that the children could not be living in substandard housing. The parents were told, the children would be returned when the parents found adequate housing and promised to have the girls in school each day. The girls were put in temporary foster care and kept in the same school they had been attending.

Three days after the children's removal, the parents had still not contacted protective services regarding housing plans and a plan for getting their children back. The protective services worker contacted his supervisor regarding further proceedings, since it was apparent to the worker that the parents were not interested in the return of their children.

Independently, the school social worker had found out from the children that the reason they missed school was often because they had to help their parents work fields (on some days, the rain had made it difficult to get the picking done in the time allowed). Their work also meant that the children helped the parents earn extra income. The social worker also tried to contact the parents on three occasions during the day at their trailer and finally left a note on the trailer door indicating that the parents must contact the school social worker immediately.

One day after the children were taken away, another Hispanic woman came with the mother to the school to find the children. The other women went into the office and requested to speak with the principal, who at first said he would not speak with this woman since this was a confidential situation. It was only after finding out that neither the father nor mother spoke English well enough to communicate that the principal granted permission. It was explained to the principal that the mother was here alone because if the father did not work during this very busy "green season," the family would not be allowed to continue working for the farmer.

The mother wanted to know why their children had been taken since they only understood part of the reason. She also wanted to know where the children were and whether they were happy. Finally, she wanted to know how to get them back. At this

point, the principal asked that her friend leave and that the 12 year old daughter come in and translate for the mother since the information was confidential and the bilingual interpreter from the school was ill. The friend tried to explain that this was not wise and that the children did not need to be involved, but the principal demanded it. The friend became rather agitated and said this was not right and that the parents would not stand for this treatment. The principal reminded the friend that he was in charge of the school and if she did not calm down, he would have her physically removed for threatening him. The friend angrily and reluctantly left.

When the 12 year old arrived, wearing a new dress that was purchased by protective services, her mother embraced her and they spoke in Spanish for a few minutes. The principal began by saying that as he understood it, the family's housing and sanitary facilities were horrible and not fit for human use. Further more that the parents were obviously not interested in their children since they dressed them in tattered cloths that they sometimes wore for four days in a row. He added that they were sometimes not clean when they came to school and for those reasons, other students found the girls offensive. To make matters worse, the parents obviously did not care about their daughters being educated to get ahead or they would have made certain they had better attendance records. Finally, he asked if the parents were aware that they should not make money off their children when the children should be in school. If the parents could not make enough without their children working, maybe they should get another job or leave their child in foster care where they can be in a clean environment, with a wholesome family who could afford to keep them fed, clothed, clean and in school.

As the daughter was translating this, sometimes she seemed to take a long time to think of the word in Spanish though she was skilled bilingually. She also seemed to grow embarrassed as she discussed some of the specifics of her parents' failings as reported by the principal. When the principal asked if her mother understood, the girl said yes, though the principal was unsure because the mother seemed very submissive and did not have questions and did not even seem to be angry about what the principal had said. The principal decided that either mother did not care that her children were out of the home or that maybe she was developmentally disabled and could not comprehend the importance of the situation. Either way, the principal was beginning to feel strongly that it might be best that the children not return to an uncaring or incompetent home environment even if they did find a better place to live. He decided to call protective services with this new information.

The school social worker found out about the transaction the next day through a phone call from protective services. It was decided that the protective service worker would try to contact the family again and give them an ultimatum regarding making plans to leave their housing. He took the older daughter with him to the trailer as a translator and described to the mother that the family had to find alternative housing immediately and make plans for the return of their children. When the mother explained that they had no money and were working to pay off a debt that they owed the farmer and that he was letting them live there for free, the worker explained that they had better contact some agencies to see if they were eligible for money or services. When the mother meekly

asked how they might find these agencies, the worker said he knew of one that worked with Hispanics and maybe they could get something done through that agency. He gave them the name and address of the agency but said since it was late Friday and a holiday weekend, they could contact the agency on the following Tuesday.

It was at this time that you, a social worker at that agency, learned of the case and became involved.

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