

SYLLABUS
SWK 310 – Human Behavior in the Social Environment I (Fall 2009)

Prof. Melissa Villarreal

Van Zoeren Office: 255B

Office Hours: Mondays – 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.; Wednesdays – 2:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.; or by Appointment

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CLASS MEETING DATES

Class meets in Van Zoeren 240 on Tuesdays & Thursdays from 1:30 P.M. – 3:20 P.M. unless stated on the course outline.

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. 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.

EVALUATION

1. Three (3) non-cumulative exam, in class exam	75%
2. Two (2) journal entries	20%
3. Class attendance and participation	<u>+ 5%</u>
	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.

REQUIRED TEXT

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

CLASS POLICIES

1. Late assignments will lose 5 points for each week they are late up to 25 points.

2. Unexcused absences will decrease your attendance/participation grade by 5 points for each day absent.
3. This course has a zero tolerance policy for academic misconduct, which includes plagiarism (using another writer's words without proper citation), using a paper writing service or having someone else write a paper for you, submitting a single paper for credit in two different courses, or cheating on an exam by copying from someone else's paper, getting an advance copy of an exam or through using notes during an exam without permission. Academic misconduct will be dealt with on an individual basis.

GRADING SCALE

94 – 100%	A	74 – 77%	C
90 – 93%	A-	70 – 73%	C-
88 – 89%	B+	68 – 69%	D+
84 – 87%	B	64 – 67%	D
80 – 83%	B-	60 – 63%	D-
78 – 79%	C+	< 60%	F

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice. (Outcome measures: all exams, the Garcia Family, collaborative group and classroom discussions and activities, and journal entries)
2. Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practice accordingly. (Outcome measures: all exams, class discussion and activities, Garcia Family, and the Code of Ethics)
3. Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. (Outcome measures: practice demonstration, collaborative group discussions, and all exams)
4. Understanding the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply the strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice. (Outcome measures: all exams, journal entries, and many classroom activities)
5. Apply the knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice with systems of all sizes. (Outcome measures: all exams, class discussion, group activities, and practice demonstration on Garcia family)
6. Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations,

- and communities. (Outcome measure: all exams, collaborative group and classroom discussions and activities)
7. Evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions. (Outcome measures: all exams, class discussion and collaborative small group activities)
 8. Use communication skills differentially across client populations, colleagues, and communities. (Outcome measures: class discussions, collaborative small group activities, journal entries, and Garcia family)
 9. Function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems, seeking necessary organizational change. (Outcome measures: all exams and classroom discussions and activities)
 10. Integrate Christian perspectives with the knowledge, skills and values of the social work profession. (Outcome measures: all written assignments, readings, collaborative group activities, and practice demonstration)

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.

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.

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.

POPULATIONS-AT-RISK AND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Two professional foundation areas that will be covered in this course are at-risk populations and 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 to integrate social and economic justice content grounded in an understanding of distributive justice, human and civil rights, and the global interconnections of oppression. Examination of organizations, services and resources that empower at-risk groups and promote social and economic justice will also be undertaken.

HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

This course will provide the students with content on the reciprocal relationships between human behavior and social environments. This content will include empirically based theories and knowledge that focus on the interactions between and among individuals, groups, societies, and economic systems. This course will review theories and knowledge of biological, sociological, cultural, and psychological development across the life span.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Any student whose disability falls within ADA guidelines should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any special accommodations or equipment needs necessary to complete the requirements for this course. Students must register documentation with the Office of Disability Services and/or Academic Support Center. If you have questions, call Student Development at extension 7800.

COURSE OUTLINE

<i>Date:</i>	<i>Topic:</i>
Sept.1	Course Introduction & Syllabus
	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

Reading: Chapter 1

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.

Sept. 3 & 8

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.

Reading: Chapter 5

Sept. 10

Movie: “9 – 11”

Sept. 15

EXAM 1 (Chapters 1 & 5)

Sept. 17

Infancy and Childhood

Effects of diversity on development
Developmental milestones

Reading: Chapter 2

Sept. 22

***Written Assignments Due: Two (2) Journal Entries
(Garcia Family & 9 – 11 Video Assignment)***

Sept. 22 & 24

Infancy and Childhood

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: Chapter 2, 3 & 4

Sept. 29

EXAM 2 (Chapters 2 – 4)

Oct. 1 & 6

Adolescence

Psychological reactions to physical changes
Significant issues & life events

Reading: Chapter 6

October 8 & 13

Adolescence

Identity formation
Moral development
Suicide
Social problems – eating disorders

Readings: Chapter 7 & 8

October 15

Final Exam @ 1:30 P.M. (Chapters 6 – 8)

October 20

**Fall Recess/No Class Session – 1st Half Semester Classes
End**

JOURNAL

Journals will include the following:

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

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 that the children would be returned to them when they 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 in the 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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