SWK 511: Human Behavior in the Social Environment I
Tuesday
4:30 p.m. to 7:10 p.m.
Mesquite Campus
Fall 2012

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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday: 10:30 – 2:30 (Commerce); 3:30–4:30 (Mesquite); Thursday: 10:00 – 3:00 (Commerce); 4:00 – 6:00 (Mesquite); Other times by arrangement

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This foundation course in Human Behavior in the Social Environment is designed to provide foundation students with an understanding of the bio-physical, psychological, and behavioral aspects of human development from before birth through adolescence. Content in this first course covers interactions between individuals, families, and their relationship to the social environment. Systems theory is the underlying context used to underpin all other major theories of individual and family development. Life stages will be considered in diverse frames of reference, e.g. different cultures/ethnicity/races, gender and sexual orientation, poverty, and physical or mental disabilities. In addition to theory, practical skills in parenting, communications, self-esteem and relationship building will be explored. As you know, adults learn differently than children and do not respond well to lecture-only formats, rote learning, or memorization. For that reason, this class will incorporate various learning venues to include group discussion and activities, outside speakers (when available) and audio-visual presentations as much as possible to supplement course assignments and readings.

GOALS & COMPETENCIES:

F 1. Prepare MSW graduates for professional advanced generalist practice that reflects application and integration of critical thinking, theoretical frameworks, and differential interventions. Students will be able to reflect the following competencies:

   F 1.1 Demonstrate critical thinking and effective communication (2.1.3)
   F 1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of HBSE and its application to practice (2.1.7)

F 2. Enable MSW graduates to apply ethical reasoning to advance equality, justice, and social change. Students will be able to reflect the following competencies:

Master Syllabus as of Fall 2011
F 2.2 Apply social work ethics & principles (2.1.2)
F 2.3 Engage diversity in practice (2.1.4)
F 2.4 Promote human rights and social and economic justice (2.1.5)

F 3. Promote leadership and service that is relevant to individual contexts of practice and enhances well-being and quality of life. Students will be able to reflect the following competencies:

F 3.1 Engage as professional social workers (2.1.1)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
This course is designed to provide first semester foundation students with an understanding of the biophysical, psychological and social systems aspects of human development. Content in this course in human behavior covers interactions between individuals and their environments and between families and their environments. It covers the lifespan from conception through adolescence. Systems theory is the underlying context used to underpin all other major theories of individual and family development. In addition, the course addresses issues of diversity including ethnocentrism, racism and physical/intellectual ability.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
• Students will demonstrate in writing and through class participation the formulation of an ecological frame of reference for describing human behavior which is based on foundation of systems theory.
• Students will demonstrate through objective evaluation (exams) basic knowledge of the ecological factors stemming from biological, psychological, and sociological origins that affect the functioning of individuals, families, groups, organization and communities;
• Students will demonstrate through objective evaluation and class participation the ability to synthesize information regarding specific human diversity factors (i.e. memberships in racial and ethnic groups, gender issues, and sexual orientation) which have influence from infancy through adolescence and can affect an individuals’ ability to cope with difficulties or changes in his/her environment.
• Students will demonstrate through class participation, written assignments and objective evaluation an understanding of the relationship between individual growth and development and the larger systems in which it occurs, particularly families, groups, neighborhoods and communities.
• Students will explain multi-determinants of social functioning including biological, psychological, spiritual, and socio-cultural factors that contribute to the make-up of the whole person.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES:
This course is an integral part of the foundation sequence in the program. It is the first exposure to systems theory, which is essential to an understanding of the generalist and advanced generalist courses, as well as field practicum courses.

Master Syllabus as of Fall 2011
TEXTS:

Additional articles and handouts will be given throughout the semester to enhance the students’ knowledge base.


**Supplemental Texts:**


I understand that money is often limited for graduate students. However, you will be using the Publication Manual of the APA in almost all of your social work courses, and I would highly recommend you purchase this manual. When I write for publication I always have this manual available to look up information on citing references, the use of headings, proper documentation of references on the reference page, etc.

**GRADING:**
Grading will be done on a contractual, graduated grading scale. Each student will have the opportunity to map out his/her destination by opting for a tract leading to an A or B. The student is to notify the instructor by the third class week of his/her decision.

**OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS (Subject to Change):**

1. **EXAMINATIONS:** All students are expected to take two examinations: a midterm and final examination. Exam dates are noted on the syllabus Course Outline. The midterm will cover the information from readings, lectures and class discussion prior to the test date. The Final exam will cover the materials in the second half of the course. *Each exam is worth 100 points and will be taken online, not in class.*

2. **LIFE SCRIPT:** Every person has *life scripts* (plans) that are formed during childhood and are based on early beliefs about oneself and others. These scripts (plans) are developed from early interactions with parents and others and are largely determined by the pattern of *strokes* that are received. *Strokes* are forms of human recognition. Positive strokes include greetings, smiles, approval, cheers, and applause. Negative strokes include cold looks, disapproval, criticism, and frowns.

Many details of a life script are supplied by parental opinions, suggestions, and encouragements. Examples include:

“She’s such a cute girl, everyone loves her.”

“He’s stupid and will never amount to much.”

Master Syllabus as of Fall 2011
“He’ll be famous someday.”

“She retarded and all she’ll ever be good for is having babies.”

Fairy tales, myths, TV shows, early life experiences, movies, and children’s stories are also important sources of life scripts. While outside influences are important contributing factors, the life script is still the creation of a young child. One’s life script may be either winning or losing, success or failure, exciting or dull. Each script also includes specific roles, such as heroes and heroines, villains and victims, etc. Decisions about life scripts are generally made early in childhood.

Harris (1969) theorized that each person chooses one of four general life scripts in regard to how he or she views him/herself in comparison with others. The four scripts are:

1. I’m OK – You’re OK.
2. I’m OK – You’re not OK.
3. I’m not OK – You’re OK.
4. I’m not OK – You’re not OK.

People who decide to use “I’m OK – You’re OK” tend to be productive, law-abiding people who are successful and who have positive, meaningful relationships with others. People who decide to use “I’m OK – You’re not OK” predispose themselves to succeed at the expense of others. This type of person may be a criminal, ruthless business executive, or a destructive lover who “loves ‘em and leaves ‘em.” People who decide to use “I’m not OK – You’re OK” feel inferior in the presence of those they judge as superior. Such a life script frequently leads to withdrawal from others as a way to avoid being reminded of not being OK. Withdrawal is not the only alternative. The person can write a counterscript based on lines borrowed from early authority figures: “I can be OK if …” The person is then driven to achieve the “if” contingencies. Examples of such contingencies include making huge sums of money, being submissive, or being entertaining by making others laugh. Such a person strives to meet these contingencies in order to receive approval from others. People who decide to use “I’m not OK – You’re not OK” tend to the most unhappy and disturbed. Without intervention from caring others, these individuals will live out a self-destructive life of institutionalization, irreversible substance abuse, senseless homicide, or suicide. Scripts (as in a play in a theatre) are plans that we learn and then carry around in our heads. These scripts are plans for directing what we need to do to complete our activities and to accomplish our goals. Scripts are also devices for helping us to remember what we have done in the past.

A life script and a theatrical script have many similarities. Each has a set of characters, dialogue, themes, and plots, acts and scenes, and generally both move toward a climax. Often, however, a person is unaware or only vaguely aware of the life scripts he or she is acting out. Public stages on which people act out their scripts include home, social gatherings, church, school, office, and factory. As Shakespeare wrote, “All the world’s a stage.”

Master Syllabus as of Fall 2011
As children grow they learn to play roles—villains, law enforcers, heroes, heroines, victims, rescuers, etc.—and seek others to play complementary roles. Through playing roles, children integrate new themes and parts into their roles and gradually develop their life scripts. The particular scripts that are developed are substantially influenced by the reactions they receive from significant people in their lives. It is important to note families and cultures also follow scripts. (Zastrow, C.H. & Kirst-Ashman, K.K. (2004). Understanding human behavior and the social environment. (6th edition). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole)

Your Life Script

1. **Brief introduction**

2. **Set of characters and other outside influences**
   Be specific in your description of each character in your script. Why is the person a part of your script? What contribution did he/she make to your script? Identify other specific outside influences that helped you create your script.

3. **Themes**
   Identify at least three themes that provide the basis for your script. Be specific! Provide a rationale for selecting these themes to be a part of your script. Describe the impact of each theme on your script.

4. **Acts and scenes**
   Specifically identify the acts and scenes that make up your personal script. What outside influences play important roles in these acts and scenes? Be specific about why you have included each outside influence in the acts and scenes.

5. **Harris’s four general life scripts**
   As a summary to your life script indicate which one of the four general life scripts identified by Harris is most representative of your script. Discuss the rationale for your choice.

6. **Brief summary**

Your life script must use 5 headings, excluding the Introduction. Papers without headings will not be graded. Use one inch margins, 12 point font, double space, and page numbers. A cover page must accompany your life script but will not count in your 5-6 page limit. DO NOT put your paper in any kind of folder. Just staple in the top left hand corner. Confidentiality will be maintained by the professor. This is your life script, and it should be personal and honest. The Life Script is worth 100 points and is due as noted on the syllabus.

3. **RESEARCH PAPER:**
   A 10-15 page paper to be written utilizing an ecological perspective for analyzing the potential effect

Master Syllabus as of Fall 2011
of a life event on a child or adolescent during one of Erikson’s, stages of development. References required are 8-10 peer reviewed journal articles. The textbook cannot be used in the writing of this paper. The Reference Page is not counted in the 10-15 page limit. The purpose of this paper is to add to the student’s understanding of how Erikson’s theory and ecological perspective apply to an in-depth analysis of a client. Also it is intended to add to the students’ knowledge in assessing the impact of the micro, mezzo and macro levels on client functioning or potential functioning. This paper is due as noted on the syllabus, is worth 200 points and should be focused on the following issues:

- Introduction
- Characteristics of the client (e.g. memberships in a racial group, ethnicity, gender age etc).
- Describe a major event in a client’s life.
- Select and identify the issues of the stage when the major event occurred.
- What will happen if this stage is delayed? Describe the consequence of pathology for that stage in general terms, and secondly, illustrate how you subject will demonstrate this pathology.
- How will the trauma event ripple through subsequent stages? While this is speculation, use the subsequent conflicts as described by Erikson to defend your speculation. Also, discuss the relationship of this event and its potential to produce social and economic oppression as well as other continuing risk factors for the individual.
- Discuss any specific cultural issues and how these may have impacted the client.
- Summary

Seven headings, following APA style, must be used when writing this paper. You do not need a heading for the Introduction. Papers turned in without headings will not be graded and a zero will go into the grade book. You will need a cover page. Staple in the top left handed corner. DO NOT put in any kind of folder.

Examples
- A five year old African-American child looses a parent in an automobile crash
- A thirteen year old witnesses a school shooting at his/her middle school
- A sixteen struggles with his/her sexual identity

GUIDELINES FOR ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:
Written work for this class must be in APA style using 12-point font (Times New Roman) double-spaced with 1 inch margins DO NOT double-double space. Grading criteria for written work includes: thoroughness, logical development of points, clarity of written expression, application of scholarly research and appropriateness of information presented as it relates to topic chosen. This is a graduate level course and expectations are considerably higher than those at an undergraduate level. You must use complete sentences, spell words correctly, have subject and verb agreement, and contain full and understandable ideas. It is important to demonstrate your ability to do research, to critically analyze various positions, comparing and contrasting strengths and weaknesses, and presenting facts in a manner persuading the reader to his/her own conclusions. Citations from course texts, the internet (unless accessing an on-line journal or government document), popular magazines or handouts given by the instructor do not represent scholarly research and should be used not be used. NEVER use Wikipedia since there is no way of knowing where the material came from. Master Syllabus as of Fall 2011
Papers with references/citations must use correct APA style in the body of the paper, and there must be a Reference page with correct APA style. One-fourth of the grade for all papers will depend upon the above issues.

**GRADING:**

The maximum points a student may earn in the course are as follows:

- Mid-Term Exam: 100 points
- Final Exam: 100 points
- Life Script: 100 points
- Research Paper: 200 points
- Total: 500 points

Class grade will be based on the following points:

- A = 500-450
- B = 449-400
- C = 399-350
- D = 349-300
- F = 299-0

**CLASS ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:**

Class attendance and participation are mandatory. Student class attendance is essential to achieving the course goals. Roll will be taken at the beginning of each class. Students attendance will also be taken after reach breaks. Anyone student who miss more than half of class will not be given credit for attendance. Students will be allowed 2 absences for any reason. A third absence will result in one letter grade drop from the final average. Anyone who misses 4 or more classes will automatically be given a failing grade. Excused and unexcused absences present the same problems to your success in this class.

Class participation has three components: (1) appropriate verbal and non-verbal interactions with classmates, (2) attentiveness, and (3) active involvement in class activities. Evaluation of class participation is based on instructor observation. Students will be given verbal feedback if problems are evident.

**POLICY ON DUE DATES:**

Papers are accepted on the time and date scheduled. There are no exceptions to this policy. Exams can’t be taken any other time than the date scheduled. Please do ask for an exception to these policies. There are ways to avoid not meeting deadlines: save your paper on a flash drive as a Master Syllabus as of Fall 2011.
backup; plan ahead and make sure you have enough ink for your printer; have a backup plan in case your computer crashes; etc.

**POLICY ON PLAIGIRISM AND CHEATING:**

Every student is expected to do his/her own work. Law, ethical standards, university policy and departmental policy demand students refrain from plagiarism and any other form of cheating. Plagiarism is the “Act of appropriating the literacy composition of another, or parts of passages from of his (or her) writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the products of one’s own mind: (Black’s Law Dictionary, Abridged Fifth Edition, 1983). When using others’ words, phrases, or ideas in writing, the original author should be given proper credit.

Cheating may take different forms. These include, but are not limited to, copying others’ answers during an exam, using notes or other forms of help during an examination or quiz, except when explicitly permitted by the instructor, giving or receiving help on exams or assignments, or submitting work for one class which has already been submitted for another class credit.

The department does not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. A student found to be engaging in such illegal and unethical conduct may receive a failing grade in the course and may be subjected to further disciplinary proceedings. Any assignment or exam that lacks honesty will be given a grad of “0”.

**ACCEPTABLE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:**

“Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws, in addition to the regulations of the University. The standards of Student Conduct including disciplinary rules and procedures are designed to provide and conform to the basic tenets of due process, as developed by institutions of higher education. As such, the University distinguishes these procedures and regulations as an educational and growth process which is not intended to conform to adversary proceedings as in a court of law. (Student’s Guide Book. 2011, p. 35).

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS:**

The Department of Social Work expects all social work students to conduct themselves in an ethical, professional manner. Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession articulates its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics to guide social workers’ conduct. The Code is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve. Accordingly, we expect social work students to demonstrate courtesy, respect and support for fellow students, instructors, clients, and all other persons.

All students enrolled in BSW or MSW classes are expected to observe the tenets of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Social Work Student Code of Conduct. Our Code of Conduct is reflective of professional and academic expectations – a student who cannot demonstrate appropriate behaviors

Master Syllabus as of Fall 2011
will not be appropriate for practice in the social work profession. Students who violate these Codes may be asked to meet with appropriate Social Work faculty (instructors or Program Directors). In addition, the department’s Academic and Professional Issues (API) Committee is responsible for dealing with student issues when requested by faculty.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

It is the policy of Texas A&M University-Commerce and the Social Work Department to do everything we can to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law, and the University’s commitment to providing equal opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example, in accessibility, seating placement or in arrangements for examinations should not hesitate to inform the instructor. If required, large type, Braille or cassette recordings of syllabus or assignments can be provided.

Students with conditions that require special attention or accommodation should contact the Director of Disability Resources & Services at 903-468-5150 (located in the Library, Room 132).

**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING POLICIES:**

1. No assignments may be rewritten once they have been graded.

2. No extra credit is provided in this class.

3. All assignments must be turned in on time. **Late assignments are not accepted.**

4. The professor does not read assignments and provide feedback before they are due.

5. One-fourth of the grade for all written assignments will be based upon the correct use of the latest edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) style manual for citations and references, as well as the correct use of grammar, spelling, sentence structure, etc.

6. You must provide correct citations within the body of each paper **when you use any information that you have taken from any source, even if you put the information in your own words.** Then each of the references used in the body of the paper must appear on the reference page, in APA style, at the end of the paper. Failure to cite information taken from other sources may result in a grade of zero on the paper.

Master Syllabus as of Fall 2011
# COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments, Class Activities &amp; Points</th>
<th>Reading Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/28/2012</td>
<td>• Student/Teacher Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Review Syllabus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Review Student Code of Conduct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussion of course expectations of students/instructor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9/4/2012</td>
<td>Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior and the Social Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 1 in Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/11/2012</td>
<td>Biological Development in Infancy and Childhood</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 2 in Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/18/2012</td>
<td>Psychological Development in Infancy and Childhood</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 3 in Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9/25/2012</td>
<td>Social Development in Infancy &amp; Childhood</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 4 in Textbook Handouts and Power Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10/2/2012</td>
<td>Ethnocentrism and Racism</td>
<td>Life Script Due at Beginning of Class</td>
<td>Chapter 5 in Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/9/2012</td>
<td>Ethnocentrism and Racism Cont.</td>
<td>Mid-Term Test Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10/16/2012</td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Master Syllabus as of Fall 2011
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/23/2012</td>
<td>Biological Development in Adolescent</td>
<td>Chapter 6 in Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10/30/2012</td>
<td>Psychological Development in Adolescents</td>
<td>Chapter 7 in Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11/6/2012</td>
<td>Social Development in Adolescents</td>
<td>Chapter 8 in Textbook Article by Johnston and Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/13/2012</td>
<td>Gender Role and Sexism</td>
<td>Research Paper Due at Beginning of Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11/20/2012</td>
<td>Gender Role and Sexism Cont.</td>
<td>Final Exam Test Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11/27/2012</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12/4/2012</td>
<td>Class Evaluations</td>
<td>Review of Class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>