

School of Social Work
The University of Iowa
Des Moines Center
Center Director: Bob Jackson
Fall 2002

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42:140 EXA - HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Human behavior and development in the context of social/ecological systems and human diversity. Overview of theoretical perspectives applied to understanding biopsychosocial dimensions of the person, individual behavior and development throughout the lifespan, and within contexts of diversities of family, group, community, organizational, and cultural systems.

Co-requisite and Pre-requisites:

42:022 Introduction to Social Work for undergraduate students

Graduate standing, as well as admission to the Social Work program, for graduate students

III. GOALS OF THE COURSE

1. To develop theoretical foundations for practice by applying critical thinking skills to knowledge and theory of human behavior, development, and diverse ways of being and knowing.
2. To apply an ecological systems perspective to understanding mutual effects that individuals and larger systems have upon each other, including social and economic forces, in either promoting (empowering) or deterring people from achieving optimal health and well-being.
3. To apply an ecological systems perspective along with other course content to identify strengths of various social systems, as well as environmental obstacles to their optimal health, well-being and empowerment.
4. **To identify the diversity of attitudes toward aging, mental illness and family roles, and the influence of aging on family dynamics, as well as one's own views on aging.**

IV. ACADEMIC OUTCOMES OF THE COURSE

1. To critically analyze and apply knowledge of bio-psycho-social variables that affect individual development

2. To demonstrate an understanding of how the scientific method as well as different ways of knowing contribute to research guiding effective practice.
3. To apply theories of person-in-situation and theories of development to understand the interactions among individuals and between individuals and social systems (i.e. families, groups, organizations, communities, and cultures).
4. To analyze how theory and knowledge presented in the course fit with strengths-based practice and empowerment of individuals and larger social systems.
5. To articulate social and economic justice needs within and between the range of social systems as directed by social work values and ethics.
6. To integrate knowledge and theory in developing culturally competent practice.
7. To critique how various theories of human behavior - including theories of bio-psycho-social and lifespan development, apply to diverse individuals and groups, including diversity by race, culture, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, spirituality, national origin, and social aging.
- 8. To identify successful adaptations to life transitions of aging, the spiritual tasks of successful aging and the effects of cohort experiences to world view.**

IV. Instructional Method: Reducing the “Teacher” vs. “Learners” Dichotomy

Traditional roles of the teacher and learner imply a linear relationship. A teacher imparts a truth which the learner passively accepts. While this may work when instructing someone how to assemble a model car, it is not appropriate when exploring various models others have constructed to attempt to understand human behavior. Our intent is to discuss theory so that each of us can pull from those we choose to further construct our unique models of the social world. To do so, it is important that each of us feel free to discuss our thoughts in order to get feedback and to help others clarify their own perspectives. A traditional lecture format will not work because we are not teachers. The word professor fits better.

The word professor is chosen carefully. Teachers have a corner on knowledge about the subject (for instance, a good way of learning how to read). Professors can state what they think to be true but it is for the student to decide if they agree (for instance, the interpretation of what was read). We will take the risk of stating our opinions but hope you will feel free to disagree without fear. Taking the risk of professing your own views can help others' learning including the professor's!

Professor's Policies

1. Class attendance is assumed as a requirement of our learning partnership. Exams will cover both classroom content and readings. Put bluntly, it will be difficult to succeed if you do not attend all classes. Lateness may also result in grade reduction.
2. All exams and assignments must be taken/handed in as scheduled. In event of extenuating circumstance prior arrangements should be made. The right is reserved to reduce credit by one letter grade for papers that are turned in late or to not accept those handed in over one week late if prior agreement about an extension was not made.
3. All written assignments must be typed (using a word processor if possible) and be consistent with university writing standards. Papers with significant writing flaws may be either returned ungraded for revision or reduced a letter grade. Any student with a writing problem is strongly urged to talk with me about it. Assistance is available.
4. Any student with special needs of any kind effecting abilities in the classroom and/or with testing should let me know. I will do my best to accommodate them.
5. Whenever possible, assignments will be blind graded. Student ID numbers should be used instead of writing names on papers.

Grading

All letter grades will be based upon the University grading scale:

| | | |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| 100 - 97 = A+ | 96 - 93 = A | 92 - 90 = A |
| 89 - 87 = B+ | 86 - 83 = B | 82 - 80 = B- |
| 79 - 77 = C+ | 76 - 73 = C | 72 - 70 = C- |
| 69 - 67 = D+ | 66 - 63 = D | 62 - 60 = D- |
| 59 or less = F | | |

Final course grade will be determined by averaging scores of all graded assignments, with each having a potential 100 points:

Exam I = 20% of final grade
Exam II = 20% of final grade
Paper = 20% of final grade
Oral Presentation = 20% of final grade
Interview = 20% of final grade

V. Texts and Readings

Schriver, Joe M. (1998). 2nd Ed. *Human behavior and the social environment: Shifting paradigms in essential knowledge for social work practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Frankel, Viktor E. (1984). *Man's Search For Meaning*. New York: Washington Square Press.

Borland, Hal. (1963). *When The Legends Die*. New York: Harper & Row.

Sarton, May. (1973). *As We Are Now*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Articles:

Alwin, D. (1997). Aging, Social Change and Conservatism. In *Studying Aging and Social Change; Conceptual and Methodological Issues*. By Hardy, M. Thousand Oaks, Ca. Sage, pp164-190.

Caputo, R. (2001). Depression and health among grandmothers co-residing with grandchildren in two cohorts of women. *Families –in-Society*. 82(5):473-483, Sept-Oct.

Dombrowski, P & Rice, T. (2000). Changing Identities and International Relations Theory: A Cautionary Note. *National and Ethnic Politics*, 6,4,winter, pp.83-105.

German, C. (19). The ecological perspective.

Hall, E. T. (1989). The paradox of culture. In *Beyond Culture* (pp. 9-23). New York: Anchor Books.

Korten, D. C. (1995). Prologue: A personal journey. In *When Corporations Rule the World*. Co-publication of Berrett-Koehler Publishers & Kumarian Press.

Payne, M. (1997). *Modern social work theory*. (2nd ed.). Chicago: Lyceum Books. (selected sections only).

Pollitt, K. (1995). Marooned on gilligan's island: Are women morally superior to men? *In Reasonable creatures: Essays on woman and feminism*. New York: A. Knopf.

Probstfield, M. (2001). Perceptions of Death. *Southern Sociological Society*. Orlando, Fl. University of Central Florida.

Sermabeikian, P. (1994). Our clients, ourselves: The spiritual perspective and social work. *Social Work*, 39(2), 178-183.

COURSE SEQUENCE*

*minor changes may occur based upon evolving learning needs and opportunities

Monday, August 26th

Introductions - “Getting to know you” group exercise

Overview of professor’s orientations to theory, practice and hopes for course

Open discussion of students’ interests and hopes for course

Foundations of contemporary social work theory: ecological systems, strengths and empowerment-based practice.

Readings for next class: Schriver: Chapter One pages 1-21, Chapter Two pages 60-89
Chapter Three pages 133-155
“The Ecological Perspective”
Alwin – “Aging, Social Change and Conservativism

Monday, September 9th

Introduction to concepts of traditional and alternative paradigms and paradigm analysis

Shifting dominant historical worlds and theories

Generational cohorts and effects on world view- current elder population

Applying an ecological perspective

Readings for next class: Schriver pp. 19-26 and 89-113
When The Legends Die (Native American Novel)
“The Paradox of Culture” by Hall
“Changing Identities and International Relations Theory”

Monday, September 16th

CULTURE: The all encompassing social system; The paradox of culture

Inter-linking concepts? Ethnicity, race, and culture

Culturally competent practice

Accommodation vs. Assimilation: systemic application to practice values

Cultural identity, geographic region, social class and age cohorts

Activities: Discussion of “When The Legends Die” and effects of culture on the

life cycle and aging

Film: Portraits of Aging (contrast aging in 4 different cultures)

Reading for next class: Schriver pp. 116-129
“Psychodynamic Perspectives” by Payne

Monday, September 23rd

Ways of thinking (theory) for the social work practice toolbox
Appreciation of metaphor and ambiguity – Social Constructivism
The person as political - Feminism
Language as metaphor and creator of realities – Narrative Therapy

Activities: What are each of us pulling into our individual theory bases?

Readings or next week: “Our clients, Ourselves: The Spiritual Perspective and Social Work Practice” by Sermabeikian
“Perceptions of Death” by Probstfield

Monday, September 30th -EXAM I

Self Care – Guest Speaker – “Why Self Care?”
Spirituality -Dimensions of a Social Work Perspective
Tasks of spirituality before death; cultural attitudes toward death

Readings for next class: Schriver: Chapter 9
Sarton: As We Are Now (Aging in a care facility)

Monday, October 7th

COMMUNITIES:

Traditional and newer concepts of community, Functions of community
Discrimination at the community level: blockbusting, steering, and redlining
Alternative models of community, Communities and diversity
The unique challenges of aging and community, daycares and community
Discussion of “As We Are Now”, Unique needs of rural communities

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Reading for next class: When Corporations Rule the World
Schriver pp. 426-431

Monday, October 14th

ORGANIZATIONS

Globalization of the rural U.S. Activity: assessing our own communities

Introduction to organizations and the human services

The three C's: Capitalism, Corporations, and McCulture

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Reading for next class: Schriver Chapter 8

Monday, October 21st - (Organizations – continued)

Traditional theories of organizations and bureaucracy

Organizational cultures

The alternative of humanocracy

Discussion: application of systems, particularly community and organizational theories,

The Third Age: Seniors in the work force/dynamics of the baby boomer generation

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Readings for next class: Schriver, Chapter 7; Frankel: Part One

Monday, October 28th

GROUPS:

Groups and Social Work

Functional and systemic perspectives on groups and group roles

Dimensions of Group and group work

Human diversity in groups and in group work

Oppression and groups – Frankel and concentration camps

Groups as a adaptation of lifestyle for elders – continued discussion of “As We Are Now”

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Readings for next class: Schriver: Chapter 6

Frankel: Part 2

“Depression and health among grandmothers co-residing with grandchildren in two cohorts of women” by Caputo

Monday, November 4th

FAMILY:

Family as a universal

An ecological systems view of family functioning

Traditional models of “family”; Traditional care of elders in family

Multi-generational family dynamics in diverse cultures; Human diversity and family life

Gender and family

Violence and families –**Intro to elder abuse- Film-Elder Abuse: Five Case Studies (Elder Affairs)**

Intro to child abuse

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Assignment for next class: write down a) past and current families in which you have been a member b) what your ideal family would be like as a young adult, and c) **describe your ideal family constellation when you are very old**

Monday, November 11th

Discussion of family perspectives assignment in small groups;

The role of multiple generations in your experience; your ideal aging situation

Discussion of interview assignment – **turn in written interview assignment**

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Monday, November 18th - EXAM II

THE PERSON - Through the Lifespan

Traditional theories of individual human behavior

The biological, psychological, and social dimensions of the person

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs related to aging;

Film – “Self-actualization of the Elderly” (Univ. of IA)

Reading for next class: Schriver: Chapter 4

Frankel: Postscript

Monday, November 25th

THE PERSON - HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Alternative views of the person: cultural competency and “uniqueness of the individual”

Traditional Perspectives

Erikson’s 8 stages of life; **The elder stage: Integrity vs Despair**

Discussion of Frankel’s “Man’s Search for Meaning” – implications for therapy with elders

Readings for next class: Schriver: Chapter 5

Marooned on Gilligan’s Island

Monday, December 2rd

Gender and race based considerations of the life cycle

Moral development: Piaget, Kohlberg, and Gilligan

Deconstructing the deconstructor - cultural competency in development theory

Creative Aging: The Four Phases of Potential in the Second Half of Life

Readings for next class: Schriver: Chapter 10

Monday December 9th

Personal Self Care Plans

Final Papers Due

Course wrap up and evaluation

ASSIGNMENTS

Oral Presentations

Take the critical thinking model in our book (pg. 9) and apply it to a social problem or social issue. Presentation should be 10 minutes. Use the following outline as a guide:

- 1) Briefly describe social problem from the traditional perspective
- 2) Identify the underlying assumptions of this framework
- 3) Give examples of alternative ways of framing the problem

Interviews

Interview three people using the same 3 questions (These will be provided to you)

- 1) **An adolescent**
- 2) **A middle aged person**
- 3) **An older adult (over 65)**

Please choose a variety of ethnic, racial or other fringe populations.

In outline form compare and contrast the answers of each person. Write a summary paragraph to highlight what you discovered.

Final Paper

Take any issue for which you have a passion.

- 1) Identify the traditional view of this problem
- 2) Describe alternative ways to view this issue.
- 3) **Are there multigenerational issues connected to your issue?** If so, how do they impact the problem? How does it impact families, communities and society?
- 4) **How would people from three different lifespan cohorts view this problem?**
- 5) What cultural issues effect this issue?
- 6) In what ways do the dynamics of oppression effect issue?
- 7) How might this issue be different under a different set of assumptions?

Guidelines for Classroom Discussions

The content of this course will be intellectually, personally, and emotionally challenging. In order to achieve the objectives of the course, the classroom environment must be a safe one for all to participate. Therefore, it is important that all members of the class are free to discuss their thoughts and feelings, ask questions, and state their opinions. It is equally important that all statements made are respectful and do not demean or humiliate any individual present or any group of people. The following guidelines for classroom discussions are adapted from materials written by the Center for Research on Women at the University of Memphis. We offer them here as a starting point for negotiating the ground rules we will adopt and agree to observe as a class to create a safe environment that will promote productive interaction.

1. Acknowledge that prejudice and discrimination based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, physical and mental differences and other characteristics exist.
2. Acknowledge that all of us have learned misinformation about our own group and about members of other groups, whether we belong to a majority or minority group.
3. Agree not to blame ourselves or others for the misinformation we have learned in the past, but accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
4. Assume that people--both those we study and those in this class--do the best they can.
5. Never demean, devalue, or in any way "put down" people for their experiences, backgrounds, or statements. This does not mean that you can't disagree, only that you must do so respectfully.

The following are example of statements that honor these guidelines and statements that do not.

Acceptable: I really disagree with you. It makes me angry when I hear people say that feminism is responsible for the decline of the family. [elaborate why...]

Unacceptable: You sexist pig! I can't believe anyone would say anything so stupid.

Acceptable: I've thought about it a lot, and I really don't believe that homosexuals should be allowed to marry and adopt children [because...]

Unacceptable: Gays are disgusting. If you're gay you shouldn't hang around influencing kids.

Acceptable: It doesn't seem fair that I have to wait until I'm financially secure to have kids, but mothers on welfare get my tax money to support their families and don't have to work.

Unacceptable: People on welfare are just plain lazy...all the time driving Cadillacs and buying drugs with their welfare money