

SOCW 510 – Human Behavior and the Social Environment I
Texas A&M University–Texarkana Master Course Syllabus
Master of Social Work program
Fall 2020

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General Course Information

Text: Zastrow, C. & Kirst-Ashman, K. (2019). *Understanding Human Behavior and the Social Environment (11th ed.)*. Boston, MA: Cengage. We will use the MindTap accessory. It is available as a loose-leaf text (not bound, so you can get a 3-ring binder to put it in). It is also available as an eBook if you prefer that route. The bookstore will carry both options.

Fadiman, A. (1997). *The spirit catches you and you fall down: a Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Recommended Text:

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, (7th ed.)*. Washington, DC: APA.

Prerequisites: Admission to MSW program.

Course Description: Presents biological and social science concepts and how they influence human behavior, particularly in the context of the social environment. Focuses on human development from the prenatal period through adolescence. Investigates varying social environment factors, such as race, culture, ethnicity, stress, adaptation, and gender. Examines biological, psychological, social, and spiritual theories and how they contribute to client assessments.

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Evaluate the influence of race, culture, ethnicity, stress, adaptation, gender, and their roles in social environments.
2. Outline the stages of lifespan development from prenatal period through adolescence and how the various stages interplay with social environments.
3. Apply biological, psychological, social, and spiritual theories to make proper assessments.
4. Differentiate between the micro, macro, and mezzo influences and their impact on client systems.

Course Competencies and Practice Behaviors: This course addresses three of the competencies that are identified by the Council on Social Work Education as necessary for professional social work practice. Each competency has a specific practice behavior(s). These practice behaviors determine the nature of the tasks (assignments) for the course. The following are the competencies and related practice behavior(s):

Competency 1G: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

- a. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context

Competency 2G: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

- a. Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
- c. Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies; and

Competency 7G: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- a. Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- c. Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- d. Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

Competency 8G: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

- b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies.

Course Requirements

346 Points Total

Exams:** (50 points each; 100 points total). There will be two exams during the semester based on the material covered in class and the material found in the textbook. The exams may include multiple choice, short answer, and fill in the blank type questions. (These exams address and will assess for competencies 1G, 2G, 7G, and 8G.). You will take the exams on MindTap. ***Exam 1 is due Oct. 18th, and Exam 2 is due no later than Dec. 10th.

***MindTap assignments:** (96 points). There will be a case study and a reflection in each chapter you will complete in MindTap. They are worth 6 points each and will be due by Sunday evening every other week. The specific dates are in MindTap. (These assignments address and will assess competencies 1G, 2G, 7G, and 8G.)

Theory Paper: (50 points). Write a 3-4 page paper which defines and discusses the use of theory and the bio/psycho/social/spiritual framework in social work practice. (This assignment addresses and will assess competencies 1G, 2G, 7G, and 8G.)

- The paper should contain three sections, each at least one page in length, addressing the following elements:
 - Define the term theory as related to social work practice.
 - Define and describe the bio/psycho/social/spiritual framework and discuss its relevance to social work practice.
 - Show how the bio/psycho/social/spiritual framework could be used to understand and intervene with *a specific* population or social problem.
- Students should utilize a minimum of *four peer-reviewed* journal articles in addition to the course text.
- The paper should demonstrate strict adherence to APA (7th ed.) formatting and style.
- Write it when you feel you understand the concepts, however, ***your paper is due no later than Oct. 18th.***

Case Integration Paper: (100 points). This paper brings together (a) “case” material, (b) scholarly knowledge developed from a literature review, and (c) critical thinking to produce a paper that examines the intersection of a child, adolescent, and/or his/her family and a social system that impacts the developmental trajectory. You will select an individual you are working with in your practicum or work place. (If neither of these apply to you, contact me to discuss other options.) Similar to what Fadiman did in *The Spirit Catches You*, you will take the reader through a brief ethnographic-like examination of the life course of the individual you chose. You are answering the question, “How did this system impact their development?” The answer to this question will never be a simple one nor do I want it answered in a brief, unexamined way. By the end of the 8-10 page paper, the reader should be able to identify the ways that this individual’s life course has been impacted by their interaction with the various systems. Specific requirements for the paper will be posted on Blackboard. (This assignment addresses and will assess competencies 1G, 2G, 7G, and 8G.). ***The paper will be due November 25th.***

Course Policies

Grading Scale (%)

100 – 90 = A

89 - 80 = B

79 – 70 = C

69 and below = F

Mutual respect and creating an anti-oppressive learning environment: In this course, each voice in the classroom has something of value to contribute. Please take care to respect the different experiences, beliefs and values expressed by others.

Mental Health Statement: Mental health difficulties happen to many people for a variety of reasons. You may sometimes experience problems with your mental health that interfere with academic experiences and negatively impact daily life. If you are experiencing mental health challenges at TAMUT, please contact the Student Counseling Center on the 4th floor of the University Center building. Their services are confidential, and if necessary, they can provide same day appointments. Remember that getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do – for yourself, for those you care about, and for those who care about you.

Writing Guidelines: The social work profession includes a lot of writing and documentation, so we focus on quality! Because you are in a master's program, I expect your writing efforts and presentations to be at the graduate and professional level. When you turn in writing assignments, please follow these guidelines.

- All assignments are to be submitted through Blackboard.
- Use subheadings that coincide with your questions to organize the report.
- Use standard English. No contractions, slang, excessive wordiness, or text messaging language (i.e. 'LOL' or 'IMHO'). *Be clear and concise.*
- The report should be typewritten with 12-point Times, Calibri, or Arial font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins top, bottom, left and right.
- Include a title page that includes your name, the name of the course, and the semester.
- Please proofread your paper prior to submission and get help from the Writing Center if needed. You can email them at tutor@tamut.edu.
- Please note the date and time the assignment is due as stated in Blackboard and submit it on time! You have plenty of notice so plan accordingly.
- Use subheadings that coincide with your questions to organize the report.
- Proper spelling and grammar weigh significantly into the grade, so if you desire a high grade in the course, you MUST write well. This simply means that I should not have to work hard to understand what you are trying to say!*

Confidentiality: Although you are not required to engage in a high degree of self-disclosure in this course, discussion of personal experiences may be relevant to the class. Thus, participation in class discussions appropriately can help you and your classmates understand the real-life impact of how we approach these issues and treat each other. However, since we are in a class and emotional safety is important, you are not required to self-disclose. Please give careful thought to how much you are willing to discuss about your own life and then participate to the degree you feel comfortable being careful not to share too much information. Likewise, because opening up about these issues can be so stigmatizing, I expect everyone in class to respect and honor the life stories of your peers. In other words, whatever is discussed in class, stays in class.

Late Assignments: Please be organized; keep track of assignment due dates and turn things in on time. I usually do not accept late assignments, although exceptions to this policy are individually determined. Late assignments that are accepted may lose up to 50% of the points AFTER the assignment is graded.

Academic Integrity: Academic honesty is expected of students enrolled in this course. Integrity is a core value of the profession and a key characteristic for any social worker. Cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of research data, plagiarism (whether intentional or unintentional), and undocumented use of materials from any source constitute academic dishonesty and may be grounds for a grade of 'F' in the course and/or disciplinary actions. For additional information, see the university catalog and MSW student handbook.

A&M-Texarkana Email Address: Upon application to Texas A&M University-Texarkana an individual will be assigned an A&M-Texarkana email account. This email account will be used to deliver official university correspondence. Each individual is responsible for information sent and received via the university email account and is expected to check the official A&M-Texarkana email account on a frequent and consistent basis.

Drop Policy: To drop this course after the census date, a student must see their MSW faculty advisor. If approved, student must complete a Drop/Withdrawal Request Form, located on the University Registrar's webpage or obtained in the Registrar's Office. The student must submit the signed and completed form to the instructor of each course indicated on the form to be dropped for his/her signature. The signature is not an "approval" to drop, but rather confirmation that the student has discussed the drop/withdrawal with the faculty member. The form must be submitted to the Registrar's office for processing in person, email Registrar@tamut.edu, mail (7101 University Ave., Texarkana, TX 75503) or fax (903-223-3140). Drop/withdraw forms missing any of the required information will not be accepted by the Registrar's Office for processing. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the form is completed properly before submission. If a student stops participating in class (attending and submitting assignments) but does not complete and submit the drop/withdrawal form, a final grade based on work completed as outlined in the syllabus will be assigned.

Disability Accommodations: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal non-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this law requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Student Life on the 4th floor of the UC, or call (903) 223-3116.

Tentative Course Schedule

Please note - All dates are **approximate**

Date	Topics and Reading	Coursework due
Chapter 1	Course introduction, Generalist social work, Assessment, Behavior in the context of micro, mezzo, and macro systems. Social worker roles. The core competencies and practice behaviors.	MindTap exercises due Sep 6 th .
Chapter 2	Biological Development in Infancy and Childhood. Dynamics of Reproduction. Developmental Milestones, ages infant to 11 years. Abortion. Infertility.	MindTap exercises due Sep. 13 th .
Chapter 3	Psychological Development in Infancy and Childhood. Theories of personality, cognitive, and emotional development. Intelligence and testing. Intellectual, learning, and developmental disabilities.	MindTap exercises due Sep. 26 th . Theory paper due Sep. 26 th .
Chapter 4	Social Development in Infancy and Childhood. Systems theory. Dynamic family systems. Learning theory. Life events that impact children. Relevant aspects of the social environment. Child maltreatment.	MindTap exercises due Oct. 11 th .
Chapter 5	Ethnocentrism and Racism. Aspects of social and economic forces: prejudice, discrimination, and oppression. Sources	MindTap exercises due Oct. 25 th . Exam 1 due Oct. 18 th .

	of prejudice. Racial and Cultural Identity theory. Intersectionality. Effects of discrimination on growth and development. Race relations. Human Rights and Social Justice.	
Chapter 6	Biological Development in Adolescence. Physical changes during adolescence. Psychological reactions to physical changes. Significant issues and life events. Sex education and empowerment. STIs. Contraception.	MindTap exercises due Nov. 8 th .
Chapter 7	Psychological Development in Adolescence. Identity formation. Race, Cultural, ethnicity identity development. Moral Development. Faith development. Adolescent issues and life events. Suicide.	MindTap exercises due Nov. 22 nd . Case Integration paper due Nov. 25 th .
Chapter 8	Social Development in Adolescence. Peer influence and independence. Social problems and theories about adolescent issues including eating disorders, gangs, emotional and behavioral problems.	MindTap exercises due Dec. 6 th . Final Exam due Dec. 10 th .

Additional Resources:

Ashford, J.B., LeCroy, C. W., & Williams, L. R. (2018). *Human behavior and the social environment: A multidimensional perspective (6th ed.)*. Boston, MA: Cengage.

Beerbower, E., Winters, D. & Kondrat, D. (2018). Bio-psycho-social-spiritual needs of adolescents and young adults with life-threatening illnesses: Implications for social work practice. *Social Work in Health Care*, 57(4), 250-266. doi: 10.1080/00981389.2018.1430091

Fagan, K. (2017). Understanding human behavior and the social environment. *Community Development*, 48(4), 601–602. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2017.1342378>

Forte, J. (2018). Human behavior and the social environment: models, metaphors, and maps for applying theoretical perspectives to practice. *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 35(3).

Okrey, A. S., & McGuire, J. K. (2019). Personal faith and professional ethics: best practice with the families of sexual and gender minority youths. *Social Work*, 64(4), 365–372. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swz030>

Ricciardelli, L. A., Quinn, A. E., & Nackerud, L. (2020). Human behavior and the social media environment: group differences in social media attitudes and knowledge among U.S. social work students. *Social Work Education*, (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2019.1710125>

Spratt, T., Devaney, J., & Frederick, J. (2019). Adverse childhood experiences: beyond signs of safety; reimagining the organisation and practice of social work with children and families. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 49(8), 2042–2058. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcz023>