



Course Syllabus: Human Behavior and the Social Environment I  
College of Health Sciences and Human Services  
Social Work Department  
SOWK 3544- J01  
Fall 2021

### Contact Information

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### *COURSE DESCRIPTION*

The goal of this course is to provide information about the multiple factors, which affect the assessment of human growth, personality development, and behavior. This course will focus on the interactions between the developing person, his/her family, and the social systems in which that lifelong development takes place. Human development is studied within the context of those biological, psychological, and socio-cultural systems, which affect, and are affected by, human beings. Incorporated into this context is current knowledge related to spiritual development, racial and ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as disadvantaged and oppressed groups. In connection with such course content, attention is also focused on differences in values and life styles, and the issues that they generate for the understanding of human development, and for the role of the social worker.

### *COURSE OBJECTIVES*

Upon completion of this course, the students should be able to:

***Knowledge objectives:***

1. Identify the basic concepts and themes of the life span and life course perspectives.
2. Examine the various dimensions of the life course from conception to

adolescence and the implications of social work practice across the lifespan from conception to adolescence.

**Value objectives:**

3. Identify and examine issues related to the effects of gender, race, ethnicity and culture, social class, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and position in global community/immigrant, on life course trajectories.
4. Describe the relationship between the life course perspective and individual unique life stories as a configuration of specific life-events and person-environment transactions over time.

**Skills objectives:**

5. Analyze the various paradigms of knowledge about human behavior and the social environment in the assessment process.
6. Demonstrate skills in observing, analyzing and interpreting human behavior and the social environment in which it takes place.

**Relationships among Core Competencies, Course Objectives, Practice Behaviors, and Assignments:**

| <i>Core Competencies</i>                      | <i>Course Objectives</i> | <i>Practice Behaviors</i>   | <i>Assignments</i>      |
|---|--------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior | 3 & 4                    | Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics; use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations; demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic | Assignments # 1, 2, & 3 |

| <i>Core Competencies</i>  | <i>Course Objectives</i>  | <i>Practice Behaviors</i>   | <i>Assignments</i>   |
|---|---------------------------|---|--|
|   |                           | communication;<br>use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior  |  |
| Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice                               | 3 & 4                     | Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;<br>apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies | Assignments # 1, 2, & 3  |
| Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | All the course objectives | Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies   | All the assignments, community service practicum, reading quizzes, final exam and class exercises. |
| Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities      | All the course objectives | Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and  | All the assignments, community service practicum, reading quizzes, final exam and class            |

| <i>Core Competencies</i> | <i>Course Objectives</i> | <i>Practice Behaviors</i>   | <i>Assignments</i> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------|
|                          |                          | other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies | exercises.         |

**Required Text:**

Zastrow et al. (2019). *Understanding human behavior and the social environment* (11<sup>th</sup> ed.). Cengage: Boston, MA.

**COURSE INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS**

This course will be taught through use of lectures, large and small group discussions, and audiovisual presentations. Students are expected to attend classes and to actively participate in discussions. The expectation is that students will have read the assigned readings to facilitate class dialogue and interaction.

Note: Please send your email on outlook (instead of D2L). Except for the weekend, I will check my emails during all the weekdays. Please expect a reply within 24 hours. In case you need any clarification, please don't hesitate to contact me either via email.

**D2L**

D2L will be used throughout the semester for communication between class sessions. The course material (Syllabus, Power points, and other relevant items) will be posted onto D2L.

**COURSE REQUIRMENTS:**

**Social Work Program Attendance Policy**

Students are allowed three excused absences as defined by MSU absence policy. For an absence to be excused the **student must inform the instructor the reason for the absence** and provide documentation supporting the need for the class absence. A **student who has missed five classes** (including the three excused absences) will **receive a lower letter grade. After six absences the student will be dropped from the class. If the sixth absence were to happen after the last day for "W", the student will receive grade "F."**

It is expected that students attend every class. If unable to attend class, please inform

the instructor before the class starts (or before class time). If unable to attend class due to an emergency, please inform the instructor as soon as possible. Please note that **for each “uninformed class absence” 5 points will be taken off from the final points.** Please note that the instructor should be informed directly via email or office phone. In case of an emergency, please inform the instructor as soon as possible. **Coming late to class and leaving early from class without any prior notice will also have an adverse impact on attendance and participation grade.**

#### Class Participation:

It is expected that students will contribute to the maintenance of a healthy learning environment, by paying attention to lectures, to fellow students' contributions in the class and by not being disruptive in class. It is expected that students actively participate in class discussions and exercises. It is also expected that everyone who shares ideas/views is respectful of others' time and ideas/views. We could agree to disagree but we ought not to be disagreeable.

Class participation is expected not only at the time of class discussions but also during lectures by raising pertinent questions, by contributing relevant ideas and by sharing relevant examples. Students will be expected to read all the assigned materials prior to class and be prepared to engage in class discussions related to the class topics.

As and when needed, the instructor will assign topic(s) for class debate(s). Everyone is expected to participate in the debate(s). Specific details will be provided in class.

#### Laptop and Cell Phone regulation:

No Photographing, recording, text messaging is allowed without the permission of the instructor. Please turn off or set cell phones on vibrate. Please do not surf the internet, listen to IPOD music while in class. **Please note that using electronic devices during class time will have an adverse impact on attendance and participation grade.**

Students with Disabilities: Note: Individuals requiring special accommodations according to the Americans with Disabilities Act, please present the instructor with a special Accommodation Request Form from the Midwestern State University Counseling Center.

#### Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is essential to the mission of Midwestern State University. As such, students are expected to perform their own work (except when collaboration is expressly permitted by the course instructor) without the use of any outside resources. Students are not permitted to use old papers when preparing for this paper, nor may they consult with students who have already written the paper. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that all students are fairly graded. Violations to the Academic Integrity Policy undermine the educational process and will not be tolerated. It

also demonstrates a lack of respect for oneself, fellow students, and the course instructor and can ruin the university's reputation and the value of the degrees it offers. We all share the obligation to maintain an environment which practices academic integrity. Violators of the Academic Integrity Policy will be subject to failing this course and being reported to the Office of Student affairs for disciplinary action which could result in suspension or expulsion from Midwestern State University.

All students are expected to submit their own original work. The presentation of another's words or ideas as your own, without giving credit to the source is regarded as plagiarism. Academic fraud, plagiarism, dishonesty, and cheating are serious acts of academic misconduct. If you are unclear about the proper use and citation of sources, or the details and guidelines for any assignment, you should discuss your concerns prior to the due date with the instructor.

Academic fraud and cheating includes these and other misrepresentations:

- presentation of the ideas of others without credit to the source;
- use of direct quotations without quotation marks and without credit to source;
- paraphrasing without credit to the source;
- participation in group project which presents plagiarized material;
- failure to provide citations for material obtained through electronic research;
- downloading and submitting work from electronic data bases without citation;
- submitting material created/written by someone else as one's own;
- copying from someone else's exam, homework, or laboratory work;
- allowing someone else to copy or submit one's work as his/her own;
- accepting credit for a group project without doing one's share;
- submitting the same paper in more than one course;
- using notes or other materials during test without authorization;
- not following the guidelines specified by instructor for "take home" exams; and
- the fabrication of research data.

### ***COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:***

***Reading quizzes and Final Exam:*** There will be four reading quizzes (each worth 10 points) and a final exam (worth 30 points). The final exam will be given on the date scheduled by the university. For the quizzes and the final exam, students will be required to use Scantron.

The quizzes and the final exam will consist of multiple-choice questions and true or false statements. As class presentations will be based on the text as well as materials from other sources, ONLY what is presented in class will be included in the quizzes and final exam.

### ***Human Behavior and Macro Systems (Community Service Practicum):***

One of the most important parts of every student's learning experience will be

participation in one community service practicum during HBSE I course. Students could choose agencies of their preference but should make sure they are mentored by Social Workers. Students should complete twenty-five hours of practicum in the agency.

As discussed in the text, individual human behavior is affected by macro systems namely, communities, and organizations. Therefore, the purpose of this practicum is to observe how individual human behavior is affected by the macro systems, and also to gain understanding of the agency's purposes, structure, services provided, and populations served.

Students will turn in the HBSE I Agency Report form (found on MSU's Social Work web page) for the agency duly signed by the mentor. In order to receive credit for the practicum, students will complete the required hours before the due date for turning in the agency report form and the student's individual report. Please note that NO LATE SUBMISSION of the form and the report will be accepted. Students will submit a brief typewritten report (not less than a page) and do a brief oral presentation in class (3-5 minutes) about their volunteering experience. As students may complete the required hours at different times, they may do the oral presentation in class, as and when they complete the hours. Oral presentation will be part of the grade for community service practicum. Oral presentation should primarily focus on what students learned about the role of a social worker in the given setting (although they may refer to other areas as might seem fit). If time permits, there may be a brief Q & A, followed by the presentation.

Note: The signed and scanned copy of the agency report form, and the individual report will be submitted in D2L DropBox.

### ***Assignment # 1: Case Study: Intergenerational Stresses in the Clark Family***

You have been asked to investigate the possibility that Martha Clark's family caregivers are emotionally and physically abusing her, as well as neglecting her. Martha Clark is an 81-year-old Euro-American widow who has lived with her 58-year-old son, Al, and his wife, Betty, since moving from her one-story apartment in a senior housing project when her husband died 2 years ago. Mrs. Clark never held a job outside the home, and her current income consists of the \$400 per month she receives from Social Security. She has no savings. Mrs. Clark has arthritis that limits her mobility, making it difficult for her to walk the stairs from the main floor of Al and Betty's home to her bedroom and to the only bathroom, both on the second floor. Mrs. Clark also has heart disease and diabetes. She has been challenged by periodic episodes of depression throughout adulthood, and she has been despondent since her husband died.

Nine months ago, Al Clark was laid off from the plant where he had worked for the past 15 years. He had a massive heart attack 6 months ago, and he remains very fearful of having a second heart attack. Betty Clark works an 8.30-4.30 shift at the factory where she has worked on and off for 30 years. Al and Betty Clark have two young adult

children, both of whom live out of town. Their son, father of two children, was recently divorced; their daughter is pregnant with her third child. Both children are struggling financially, and their son often turns to Al and Betty with his grief about the divorce.

Before she leaves for work every morning, Betty prepares breakfast for Al and Martha. Most mornings, Martha does not come down until it's almost time for Betty to leave for work, and then Martha only picks at her food. Al has become concerned that Martha usually eats no lunch, and he admits that on several occasions he has lost his temper, screamed at his mother, and even hit her a few times. He feels angry, frustrated, and ashamed for losing his temper, but he doesn't know how to get his mother to eat. He also discovered recently that she has not been taking her medication for depression. When he discovered that, he berated Martha, screaming that she is "just a useless woman."

Since Al's heart attack, money has been tight. The family car needed an expensive repair, and the hot water heater had to be replaced. Martha's medications are not covered by Medicare, and for the past two weeks, Al and Betty have not renewed some of her prescriptions, hoping each week that the money situation will be better next week. Al and Betty often have harsh words about the money problems.

Martha Clark reports that Al and Betty are doing a good job caring for her. She says that she has lived too long anyway, and that Al is right: she is a useless old woman. The doctor tells her that walking would be good for both her arthritis and her heart disease, but she spends most of her time sitting in a chair in her bedroom. She says she does not eat because she has no appetite.

#### Guidelines:

Analyze the case study based on various paradigms of knowledge (or theories) pertaining to human behavior and social environment discussed in class. Your paper should include the following elements, but not simply be responses to the questions asked or required elements. Instead your paper should consist of an integrated assessment (issues and theories) and sections should be well-integrated with one another. In addition to the following guidelines, you should also feel free to integrate any other additional course material into your assignment as well.

1. This family, as many, has encountered a myriad of problems and concerns. Describe these issues concisely and how they will be prioritized when working with the family. This description should serve as a bio-psycho-social assessment of this family unit.
2. Discuss the extent to which the problems and concerns are related using the chosen paradigms or theories. Give concrete examples from the case study to support your assertions. Adequate use of terminology and key concepts related to these developmental theories is required. It is **very important** to use peer-reviewed journal articles for your discussion.



## **Assignment # 2: Adverse Impact of Biological/Psychological/Social Problem on Infants/Children/Adolescents' Development**

Students will be assigned to groups consisting of 3 or 4 members in each group (depending on the class size). The group will submit a group paper on any biological/psychological/social problem adversely impacting the development of infants/children/adolescents (e.g. infants' prenatal exposure to heroin and its effect on infant development; impact of witnessing domestic violence on childhood development; self-injurious behavior in adolescence). Please refer to the textbook regarding various biological/psychological/social problems affecting the development of infants/children/adolescents.

In addition to the group paper, the group will also do a PowerPoint presentation in class, for 15-20 minutes. The group will email their PowerPoint to the instructor at least two days before their presentation. Each group member should spend roughly an equal amount of time for the presentation. The grade given for the group will be the grade for each group member.

Please see below the requirements for the assignments:

**Requirements:** Both assignments must meet the following requirements:

- Include a title page, and a references page.
- Abstract is NOT required.
- Double-space throughout, leaving a one-inch margin on all sides.
- As permitted by APA, use an easily readable font such as, Times New Roman (12-point), or Calibri (11-point), or Arial (11-point), or Lucida Sans Unicode (10-point), or Georgia (11-point). Whichever font you choose, you should use the same font and font size throughout the assignment.
- Provide relevant section headings.
- The required writing style is that of the American Psychological Association (APA) Publications Manual (7<sup>th</sup> ed.).
- Beside the text book, at least 3 different citations should be included in your assignment. At least 3 citations **MUST** be based on articles published in peer-reviewed journals, and within the last 5 years. At least 4 different sources should be on your final references page. **Please note that assignments that do not meet the criterion in terms of the required number of sources (including the required number of peer-reviewed journals) will be given a "C" grade.**
- The first assignment should not exceed 5-7 pages, and the second assignment (impact of problem on development) should not exceed 6-8 pages, including the cover page and the references page.
- Review carefully the RUBRIC given below:

**Rubric for the Assignments:**

|                   | Unsatisfactory  | Struggling   | Good  | Proficient  |
|-------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Clarity           | <b>0-3</b><br>Ideas confusing, disconnected, and purpose is unclear.                        | <b>3-6</b><br>Ideas somewhat clear, somewhat connected, and purpose is somewhat clear. | <b>6-10</b><br>Ideas fairly clear, fairly connected, and purpose is fairly clear. | <b>10-15</b><br>Ideas clear, well connected, and purpose is clear.                                |
| Content           | <b>0-5</b><br>Less adequate or inadequate; citations are not connected or connected poorly. | <b>5-10</b><br>Somewhat adequate; citations are connected somewhat well.               | <b>10-20</b><br>Adequate; citations are connected well.                           | <b>20-30</b><br>Comprehensive; citations are connected very well.                                 |
| Relevance         | <b>0-5</b><br>3 violations of relevance of the cited sources.                               | <b>5-10</b><br>2 violations of relevance of the cited sources.                         | <b>10-15</b><br>1 violation of relevance of the cited sources.                    | <b>15-20</b><br>No violation of relevance of the cited sources.                                   |
| Logic             | <b>0-5</b><br>The transition between ideas is extremely weak.                               | <b>5-10</b><br>There are several weak transitions between ideas.                       | <b>10-15</b><br>There are very few weak transitions between ideas.                | <b>15-20</b><br>There are clear and effective transitions between ideas.                          |
| Writing Mechanics | <b>0-3</b><br>4 or more violations of APA format, grammar or punctuation.                   | <b>3-6</b><br>No more than 3 violations of APA format, grammar or punctuation.         | <b>6-10</b><br>No more than 2 violations of APA format, grammar or punctuation.   | <b>10-15</b><br>Appropriate use of APA formatting and appropriate use of grammar and punctuation. |

Take advantage of MSU Writing Center:

Begin drafting papers as early as possible and take advantage of the MSU Writing Center, located off the 2nd floor atrium of Prothro-Yeager! Tutoring is available Monday through Thursday from 9am to 4pm; you can also find a tutor at the satellite location in Moffett Library Honors Lounge, Sunday and Thursday from 6pm to 9pm. Writing tutors will not edit your papers for you, but they will provide support and feedback at every stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to drafting, revising to proofreading.

The Writing Center opens on Tuesday, September 6; if you would like to schedule a time for a tutor to give a brief presentation on the Writing Center, please complete the [Classroom Visit Request](#) form. We are happy to schedule visits during the first week of classes (8/23-8/28).

Campus Carry Statement:

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at <http://mwsu.edu/campus-carry/rules-policies>.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact MSU Chief of Police Patrick Coggins at [patrick.coggins@mwsu.edu](mailto:patrick.coggins@mwsu.edu).

Concealed Carry at Clinical/Affiliate Sites:

Students must follow any rules or policies established at the clinical/affiliate site they attend. If the clinical/affiliate site does not prohibit the concealed carry of firearms, the university and the department of social work do not prohibit concealed carry at the clinical/affiliate site. However, students are reminded that at their clinical/affiliate sites the students are often required to wear "scrubs" which are thin garments which may make concealed carry of a firearm difficult if not impossible. Students may have to engage in activities such as moving patients or performing examinations which may make the concealment of a firearm difficult. Students are also reminded that intentional display of a firearm may result in criminal and/or civil penalties and unintentional display of a firearm is a violation of university policies and may result in disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion from the program and university. Students should factor the above in their decision as to whether or not to conceal carry at clinical/affiliate sites if those sites do not prohibit concealed carry.

### ***Important Dates***

Deadline for December graduates to file for graduation: September 27, 2021.

Deadline for May graduates to file for graduation: October 4, 2021.

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" October 25, 2021

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

### **EVALUATION OF COURSE OUTCOMES:**

The student's achievement will be evaluated on the basis of written assignments, class exams, and class participation.

The final grade will be calculated based upon the points that a student has accumulated throughout the term. A student may earn points as follows:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Class Attendance                           | 15 Points   |
| Class participation                        | 15 Points   |
| Reading quizzes (4) – Each worth 10 Points | 40 Points   |
| Community Service Practicum                | 100 Points  |
| Case study Analysis                        | 100 Points  |
| Impact of Problem on Development           | 100 Points (75 points for paper and 25 points for class presentation) |
| Final Exam                                 | 30 Points   |
| Total                                      | 400 Points  |

### **Late Assignments:**

Late assignments shall have a negative effect on grade. Only electronic copy of the assignment will be accepted. Late assignments are assessed a penalty of 5 points per day. Do your assignments early to avoid computer, printer, or family emergencies. If anyone has difficulty with writing, please seek help from the University Writing Center.

### **Course Changes:**

Although much thought, study, and research has gone into designing the course and learning opportunities, often the most significant learning comes in unexpected moments. The instructor cannot predict these times but only respond to them. Therefore, **the instructor reserves the right to alter the course outline, assignments, or examination dates in order to incorporate these unexpected learning moments.**

### **GRADING SCALE**

The total grade for the course is an accumulation of the points earned on each assignment. The following letter grades are used:

A=90% of available points  
 B=80-89% of available points  
 C=70-79 % of available points  
 D=60-69% of available points  
 F=0-59% of available points

**Social Work Program Grade Policy**

A course grade of below a C or an average of below 70% will be considered a failing grade. Students must repeat social work courses in which they receive a grade of D or F.

Note: This grade policy is in effect since the Fall of 2020.

**COURSE SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)**

| <b>Week</b>   | <b>Chapters</b>   | <b>Assignments</b>                                     |
|---|---|--|
| Week 1 (August 24, Tuesday & August 26, Thursday, 2021) | Course Introduction<br><br>Ch 1: Introduction to Human Behavior and the Social Environment  | N/A  |
| Week 2 (September 3, Tuesday & September 5, Thursday)   | Ch 1: Introduction to Human Behavior and the Social Environment contd...  | N/A  |
| Week 3 (August 31, Tuesday & September 2, Thursday)     | Ch 1: Introduction to Human Behavior and the Social Environment contd...<br><br>Ch 2: Biological Development in Infancy and Childhood | Reading Quiz 1 on September 2, Thursday (Chapter 1)    |
| Week 4 (September 7, Tuesday & September 9, Thursday)   | Ch 3: Psychological Development in Infancy and Childhood  | Reading Quiz 2 on September 9, Thursday (Chapter 2)    |
| Week 5 (September 14, Tuesday & September 16, Thursday) | Ch 3: Psychological Development in Infancy and Childhood contd...   | Assignment # 1 due by 11.59 pm on September 17, Friday |
| Week 6 (September 21, Tuesday & September 23, Thursday) | Ch 4: Social Development in Infancy and Childhood   | Reading Quiz 3 on September 23, Thursday (Chapter 3)   |
| Week 7 (September 28, Tuesday & September 30, Thursday) | Ch 4: Social Development in Infancy and Childhood   | N/A  |

| <b>Week</b>  | <b>Chapters</b>  | <b>Assignments</b>  |
|--|--|---|
| Thursday)  | contd...   |   |
| Week 8 (October 5, Tuesday & October 7, Thursday)      | Ch 5: Ethnocentrism and Racism   | Reading Quiz 4 on October 7, Thursday (Chapter 4)   |
| Week 9 (October 12, Tuesday & October 14, Thursday)    | Ch 5: Ethnocentrism and Racism contd...  | N/A   |
| Week 10 (October 19, Tuesday & October 21, Thursday)   | Ch 7: Psychological Development in Adolescence   | N/A   |
| Week 11 (October 26, Tuesday & October 28, Thursday)   | Ch 7: Psychological Development in Adolescence contd...  | N/A   |
| Week 12 (November 2, Tuesday & November 4, Thursday)   | Ch 7: Psychological Development in Adolescence contd...  | N/A   |
| Week 13 (November 9, Tuesday & November 11, Thursday)  | Ch 6: Biological Development in Adolescence & Ch 8: Social Development in Adolescence contd... | N/A   |
| Week 14 (November 16, Tuesday & November 18, Thursday) | Ch 6: Biological Development in Adolescence & Ch 8: Social Development in Adolescence contd... | N/A   |
| Week 15 (November 23, Tuesday)                         | Ch 6: Biological Development in Adolescence & Ch 8: Social Development in Adolescence contd... | N/A   |
| November 24-28, 2021                                   | NO CLASSES- Thanksgiving Break   | N/A   |
| Week 16 (November 30, Tuesday & December 2, Thursday)  | Groups' Presentations  | Assignment # 2 due by 6.00 pm on November 29, Monday<br><br>Agency Report Forms (Community Service Practicum) due on December 2, Thursday (Firm deadline) |
| Week 17 (December 7, Tuesday)                          | Final Exam (3.30-5.30 pm)  | Chapters 5-8  |

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