

Westfield State University

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

SOCW 0521: Human Behavior and the Social Environment I

SECTION 503

FALL 2016

3 CREDIT HOURS

Instructor: Name: Maria D. Mead, MSW, LCSW
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 9 a.m. -11:00 a.m.
Wednesdays 11a.m. -12:00 p.m., additional hours by appointment

Class Times: Monday 7:15-9:00 pm

Classroom: MOD Hall 105

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is the first of a two-semester course sequence that will focus on how aspects of the social environment affect human behavior and on individual development across the life cycle. This course examines human behavior in families, groups, communities, organizations, and cultures, and the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects of human development. The course emphasizes the diversity of human experience, the negative impact of oppression on individuals, families, and groups, and the importance of resilience and empowerment.

Course Content: Generalist social workers need to know about people as individuals and as members of groups such as families, organizations, communities and societies. The rationale for HBSE I is to provide a basic framework for creating and organizing knowledge of human behavior and the social environment as a foundation to practice generalist social work and on which to build generalist practice skills. The focus of this course is on individual behavior and the impact of the larger environment on the individual. A multi-systems theory approach leads to an understanding of how the biological, psychological, and social systems are interrelated and affect human development throughout the life span. Special attention is given to the impact of human diversity, discrimination and oppression on the individual's ability to reach or maintain optimal health and well-being. This knowledge and understanding is needed to understand our complex, multidimensional, interrelated and interactive world to understand whether problems occur within an individual (their own personal difficulty); as a product of environmental stresses; and as the result of the interaction between the person and their environment.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, students are expected to:

1. Understand the eclectic use of theory, ability to practice personal reflection and self-correction. (F3.1, F3.2, F7.1, F7.2, & F7.3)
2. Engage in critical thinking skills in analyzing models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation. (F3.1, F3.2, F6.2, F7.1, F7.2, & F7.3)
3. Recognize the extent to which a culture's structure and values may marginalize and alienate oppressed groups. (F3.1, F3.2, F4.1, F4.2, F4.3, & F4.4)
4. Demonstrate understanding of their own cultural beliefs and the ways that they may enhance privilege and power. (F3.1, F3.2, F4.1, F4.2, F4.3, & F4.4)
5. Apply conceptual frameworks to guide the process of assessment, intervention, and evaluation. (F3.1, F3.2, F6.2, F7.1, F7.2, & F7.3)
6. Understand the application of the multidimensional framework for assessing social functioning including biological, psychological, and social dimensions. (F3.1, F3.2, F6.2, F7.1, F7.2, & F7.3)
7. To engage in informed, sensitive, and competent practice with diverse and oppressed groups (F2.1, F2.2, F2.3, & F2.4).
8. To appreciate and understand how the values and functions of social work relate to the knowledge base of the profession (F2.1, F2.2, F2.3, & F2.4).

Required Text:

Hutchison, E. D. (2012). *Essentials of human behavior: Integrating person, environment, and the life course*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Additional required articles from social work journals and web resources may be assigned in the PLATO virtual classroom.

ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE EVALUATION

1. Group Presentations 30%
2. Individual contribution to Group 5%
2. Personal Development Paper 20 %
4. Biopsychosocial Assessment 20% (Final Paper)
5. Attendance and Participation: 25% [up to 15% (1% for every weekly online post) will be awarded toward online discussions and Plato activities, 10% for attendance and participation]

Guidelines for Assignments

Written work is due at the end of the week in which it is due (this includes each discussion in the virtual classroom). Late work, without prior approval from the professor, will not be accepted. Incompletes will only be given as a final grade if the student meets with me, develops a contract to finish the assignments, and follows through with the adjusted expectations.

STANDARDS FOR GRADING

Assessment Classification	Range	Grade	Grade Point
Excellent Work (above course expectations)	94-100	A	4.0
	91-93	A-	3.7
Good Work (meets course expectations)	88-90	B+	3.3
	84-87	B	3.0
	81-83	B-	2.7
Poor Work(meets minimal course expectations)	71-80	C	2.0
Failed grade	0-70	F	0
Incomplete* (I)*<i>can only be given in accordance with the policies stated in the Student/Faculty Guide to MSW Program</i>			

Grading Criteria for Papers

Effective practice of generalist social work requires good writing skills to communicate information accurately and concisely to others involved in helping client systems. For this reason, formal writing assignments in social work courses will be evaluated both for the content and ideas presented and for the clarity of that presentation. The grade for a paper will be based on the following criteria:

- I. Presentation and Appearance
 1. Neatness
 2. Correct grammar (noun-verb agreement, sentence structure, proper and consistent verb tense, etc.)
 3. Use of non-sexist language
 4. Spelling
 5. Punctuation
 6. Correct usage of APA style (both within the text and reference page)
- II. Organization
 1. Structure and format of the paper
 2. Logical sequencing and continuity of ideas
 3. Clarity of expression
 4. Conciseness