

**JOINT MASTERS OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**  
**North Carolina A & T State University**  
**University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

**SWK 501/SOWK 700 Human Behavior and Social Functioning I**

**Master Syllabus**

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**I. Rationale**

This course is the first of three courses in the HBSE sequence designed to provide first-year MSW students with foundation knowledge of diversity and human development. Human Behavior and Social Functioning is designed to introduce students to theories of personality and development and provide a structure to chart individual development from birth through adolescence. The examination of the life cycle follows persons not as isolates but within the interpersonal, familial, social, and cultural settings in which they live and from which they gain support and direction.

**II. Liberal Arts Perspective**

Course content is linked to the student's undergraduate liberal arts background in two ways. First, it incorporates the following important liberal arts perspectives: the valuing of human beings; personal, social and material needs of humans; human difference and diversity; openness in thinking about human behavior; and pluralities of points of view. Content and assignments reinforce this perspective and provide students with an opportunity to apply writing skills to course content. Second, Human Behavior and Social Functioning builds upon content in the liberal arts disciplines. The course draws heavily from psychology, studying theories of cognition, personality and behavior. Students build on the knowledge learned in human biology in studying human development and growth, genetics and human behavior. The materials on values draw strongly from religion and ethics as well as philosophy.

**III. Linkage of this Course to Other Courses**

The rationale of the three Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE) courses is to provide students with an understanding of the biopsychosocial nature of human beings and their problems, recognizing that they are inseparably connected to the social community, both rural and urban, in which persons are embedded. Human Behavior and Social

Functioning I is the first course of this sequence, and presents a description and conceptualization of human development and functioning from conception through adulthood. Concurrently, students take Social Work Practice and Human Diversity, which builds on life cycle and development by providing a framework for understanding the degree to which family and individual values, beliefs, rules, and ritual are governed by ethnicity. Learning experiences are designed to increase student's competency in providing advanced generalist practice to the differing needs of persons through their study of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, age, disability, social class and sexual orientation as dimensions in human experience. This provides students with a background to further study the effects of diversity in Human Behavior and Social Functioning II. In this second-semester course, students continue the study of human behavior through the adult years. Students then expand their study of humans to include the interacting influence of family, groups, and communities. Students experience how economic injustice, inequality, and the changing nature of neighborhoods affect social functioning from an advanced generalist perspective.

#### **IV. Professional Values and Ethics**

The main thrust of this course is in laying the foundation for students to understand the vast impact of racism, sexism and classism on the development of persons. Social work students are guided in analyzing the assumptions about individuals inherent in personality, cognitive and developmental theory and their implicit bias and value orientation. Students are guided in exploring the consequences of this bias on minorities and women.

#### **V. Diversity**

This course provides a theoretical framework for understanding the differences and strengths in male and female psychological and moral development. Students are guided in seeing strengths in the diversity of life stories that their clients bring to social work practice and in appreciating the crucial role that community plays in the development of positive self-concept in oppressed groups.

#### **VI. Populations-at-Risk and Social and Economic Justice**

This course assists students in understanding the developmental consequences of poverty. Students are exposed to the effects of poverty and oppression on the spirit of the person as well as their pocketbook. Students are exposed to the effects of poverty on prenatal and infant development, readiness and motivation for learning in the school-age child, and drug, pregnancy and violence involvement in the adolescent.

Human Behavior and Social Functioning I addresses the special needs and experiences of ethnic minorities, women and other oppressed groups related to human development. Students are guided to gain knowledge of, sensitivity to and acceptance of how societal constructs limit human development and full expression of creativity.

## **VII. Course Objectives**

The goal of this course is to increase the student's understanding of human development from conception through adolescence in an ecosystemic perspective. Models and theories provide students with a framework for conceptualizing development. Upon successful completion of this course students will demonstrate competencies in the following areas:

### Cognitive Objectives

1. Identify through written examination the stages of individual life cycle development (FYO #1)
2. Identify through written examination the biological, psychological and cultural influences on individual behavior and the interactions between these components. (FYO #1, 2)
3. Identify through written essay the impact of race, class and culture on individual life cycle development. (FYO #2, 18)
4. Demonstrate through a research paper the ability to critically analyze the professional literature concerning individual behavior, with special consideration of the themes of client strengths, oppression and justice, reflection, and the relevance of knowledge to practice issues and settings. (FYO #10, 11, 18)
5. Demonstrate through written examination the ability to compare and evaluate critically various theoretical perspectives on individuals such as behavioral, psychodynamic, cognitive and moral development from a traditional and feminist perspective (FYO #10, 11, 18)

### Experiential Objectives

1. Demonstrate through assessment of case material the harmful effects of discrimination and oppression on individuals and families. (FYO # 2, 7)

2. Demonstrate through the analysis of case materials the interacting influences of the physical, emotional, spiritual, and social aspects of human functioning. (FYO #1)

### Affective Objective

1. Demonstrate in class discussion awareness of how one's own values and prejudices interact with social work practice with clients. (FYO #6, 9)

## **VIII. Course Content**

1. Introduction to social systems and impact on development
2. Theory development, paradigm shifts and impacts on view of humans
3. Classical Psychoanalysis (Freud) and gender critique (Chodorow)
4. Classical psychoanalytic thought and clinical social work
5. Ericksonian theory
6. Adlerian theory and social concern
7. Classical and Operant Conditioning and Social Learning theory
8. Maslow's Holistic-dynamic theory and Roger's Person-Centered theory
9. Cognitive theory (Piaget, Kohlberg & Gilligan)
10. Prenatal development and the impact of malnutrition, drug abuse and teen pregnancy.
11. Infancy/toddlerhood: memories and suggestibility
12. Preschoolers: development of self-esteem
13. Early school years: gender differences in development
14. Latency Years: Issues of competency
15. Early adolescence: Ritual and transition
16. Later adolescence: Launching and independence
17. Early adulthood
18. Middle adulthood
19. Later adulthood

## **IX. Sample Assignments**

### Research/Insight Paper

Using information from texts, library research and lecture, integrate theory and concepts (underlined) into an essay on a developmental stressor (i.e., divorce, moving, chronic illness, etc.) that could occur in a child's life. Discuss all developmental domains. Explain how the developmental process of being at certain ages might be effected by issues such as racism,

poverty, sexism, disabilities or other issues that might lead to prejudice or oppression. What would the “normal” reaction be? What would be different if one or more domains were significantly effected? In the beginning of the essay list the age and psychosocial factors influencing this child. Follow the child through three life cycle stages (i.e., infancy, toddlerhood, preschool, etc.).

### Case Studies

A simple case will be given to students after each personality or cognitive theory presentation. The case will be used to analyze the selected theory. In the analysis students are to use the specific concepts and terminology of the theory, underlining these terms as they are used. Students will then integrate these concepts and terms into an assessment of how the client developed the behaviors presented. Students may ask questions or add extrapolations in their essay to rule out or explain behaviors, i.e., “abuse during toilet training may have led to fixated anal behaviors which are demonstrated in this client by...” Students are to present a history as to why the client developed those behaviors, according to the presented theory. Any two of the ten theories presented in class may be used for an assessment. The assessment paper will be due the week following the presentation of the selected theory.

### Take-Home Exam

Students will complete a take-home examination in which they will analyze a case according to a personality and cognitive theory. Students should be prepared to describe the developmental stage of the client as well as the tasks and challenges of the client’s present developmental stage. Knowledge of the impact of racism, sexism, homophobia, poverty and disabilities on development is necessary.

### **X. Textbooks**

Zastrow, C. & Kirst-Ashman, K. (2002). Understanding human behavior and the social environment. Chicago: Nelson-Hall. 4th Edition.

Greene, R. & Ephross, P. (2001). Human behavior theory and social work practice. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

Feist, J. (1994). Theories of personality. New York: Holt, Rienhardt and Winston.

**XI. Recommended Readings**

- Adler, A. (1924). The practice and theory of individual psychology. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Social learning theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Barnes, E. (1972). "The black community as the science of positive self-concept for black children: A theoretical perspective". In I.R. Jones (ed.) Black psychology.
- Betances, N. (1994). "Race and the search for identity". In Andersen, M & Collins, P. (Eds.). Race, class and gender. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Dryfoos, J. (1990). Adolescents at risk. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Erikson, E. (1963). Childhood and Society. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
- Flavell, J. (1977). Cognitive development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Franklin, D. L. (1992). "Feminization of poverty and African-American families: Illusions and realities." Affilia, 7, 142-155.
- Garbarino, J. (1982). Children and families in the social environment. New York: Aldine Publishing Co.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). In a different voice. Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press.
- Gilligan, C. J. Ward & J. Taylor (1988). Mapping the moral domain: a contribution of women's thinking to psychological theory and education. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gould, K. (1988). "Old wine in new bottles: A feminist perspective on Gilligan's theory", Social Work, 33(5), 411-415.
- Hogan, P. T. & Siu, Sau-Fong. (1988). Minority children and the child welfare system: A historical perspective. Social Work, 33(6).
- Maslow, A. (1964). Religion values and peak experiences. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University.
- Maslow, A. (1970). Motivation and personality. New York: Harper & Row.

McLaughlin, S., Pearce, S. & Manninen, D. (1988). "To parent or relinquish: Consequences for adolescent mothers." Social Work, 33, 320-324.

Nowinski, J. (1990). Substance abuse in adolescents and young people. New York: W. W. Norton.

Pavlov, I. (1927). Conditioned reflexes. London: Oxford University Press.

Rogers, C. (1951). Client-centered therapy. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Segal, E. (1991). "The juvenilization of poverty in the 1980's." Social Work, 36, 454-457.

Tracy, E. (1990). "Identifying social support resources for at-risk families." Social Work, 35, 252-257.

Weick, A., Rapp, C, & Kisthardt, W. (1989). "A strengths perspective for social work practice." Social Work, 34, 350-354.