Theoretical Bases of Social Behavior is taught in two semesters and is designed to provide the foundation generalist social work knowledge, from an ecological perspective, concerning the application of bio-psycho-social theories to contemporary social work practice situations. The course sequence is designed according to the Curriculum Policy Statement (CPS) on Human Behavior in the Social Environment (HBSE) for Master’s Degree Programs in Social Work Education.

In addition, the profession of social work aims to work respectfully within a diverse (age, gender, ethnicity, mental and physical ability, sexual orientation, religion/spirituality) society. Therefore, the course stimulates student thinking about the role of privileged and oppressed statuses and their influence on human development. This emphasis is supported by the NASW Code of Ethics which states that “Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability” (NASW Code of Ethics, 1.05c).

The Professional Foundation of the MSW Program must provide content concerning the following:

- Theories and knowledge of the human bio-psycho-social development,
- A range of social systems in which individuals live (families, groups, organizations, communities, institutions),
- Interactions among biological, social, psychological, and cultural systems
- Impact of social and economic forces on diverse groups
- Analysis of how systems promote or deter optimal health and well-being
- Exploration of values and ethical issues related to bio-psycho-social theories particularly addressing the ways they enhance or hinder promotion of social justice

The purpose of this course sequence is to enable students to understand the multi-level, multi-dimensional processes of development. This is a prerequisite course for advanced practice courses and for field internships to assist students in developing a knowledge base to draw from in preparation for social work micro, meso and macro practice.

The course is based on a diversity perspective emphasizing close attention to culture, gender, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. The approach is ecosystemic,
multidimensional, eclectic, postmodern/constructivist, and empirical. The course integrates theories and content about diversity (class, race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental abilities) into a multi-dimensional framework to insure that it is comprehensively covered. The course sequence in built upon and extends the Liberal Arts Perspective by incorporating ideas from such areas as ethics, cultural anthropology, economics, political science, history, biology, psychology, social psychology, sociology, and philosophy. Students may expect to gain an understanding of the nature of theory, theoretical application, and a critical analysis of theoretical constructs.

During the fall semester course (SW 235A) emphasis will be placed on human growth and lifespan development from conception through late adulthood in the context of family, community and society. Theories are explored to gain an understanding of how individuals develop within various systems (groups, families, organizations, communities and society). The mutual impact of systems on individuals and of individuals on systems will be of special interest. Careful attention is paid throughout the course to the impact of different theories upon the social worker’s craft, the nature of practice applied as service, and the social work profession itself. The course perspective is strongly centered in client strengths and empowerment perspectives.

The spring semester course (SW 235B) continues the study of human behavior, drawing again from a multi-dimensional framework. While SW235A addressed human development within the context of expectable environments, the second semester course (SW 235B) will be organized around human behavior in contexts of challenges and vulnerable life conditions: poverty and its impact, homelessness, social injustice and institutional discrimination, strengths and risks, attachment and separation, dynamics of trauma, interpersonal and institutional violence, family dysfunction and transition, mental and behavioral disturbances, physical illness, disability and death and loss, oppression and challenges to group, organizational community, societal and global functioning.

**STATEMENT OF COURSE SEQUENCE GOAL**

The goal of the HBSE course sequence is to enable students to understand and critically analyze theories and develop a knowledge base about human behavior and lifespan development using multi-dimensional frameworks. This knowledge base empowers the social worker to create effective and empowering relationships with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in the profession of social work and to work toward social change in an effort to obtain social justice for vulnerable populations.

**CORE OBJECTIVES OF THE HBSE SEQUENCE**

It is expected that students will be able to demonstrate the objectives listed below by the completion of the course sequence (SWK 235A and 235B).

1. Students will be able to think critically about the theories and process of human development as demonstrated by class discussion, written assignments and oral presentations.

2. Students will be able to demonstrate their comprehension of the person-in-environment perspective (the dynamic transactions that occur among the biological, psychological, social,
cultural, environmental, ecological, economic and political systems) as measured by class discussion, written assignments and oral presentations.

3. Students will be able to apply the concepts of the ecological model of human development and relate those concepts to the process of human development as measured by class discussion, written assignments and oral presentations.

4. Students will be able to describe various theories of identity development as they play out in a context of social-political privileges and oppressions as demonstrated by class discussion and written work.

5. Students will be able to explain how environmental conditions (i.e. poverty, unsafe living quarters, inadequate nutrition, lack of health care, deteriorated schools, and other manifestations of oppression or social stratification, material deprivation and inequitable distribution/access to life sustaining resources) impact human development as measured by classroom discussion and small group activities.

6. Students will be able to recognize the negative social attitudes and behaviors, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, social exclusion, and social stigma that negatively influence human development as demonstrated in class discussions and written work.

7. Students will be able to reframe deficit-based perspectives of human development by employing the strengths and the empowerment models as a means to understand human agency and resistance to oppressive social and political circumstances as demonstrated in classroom discussion and small group activities.

8. Students will be able to integrate values and ethics compatible with the profession of social work as demonstrated in class discussion and small group activities.

**Course Format**
This class will be conducted on a lecture-discussion basis. Student preparation and participation are integral parts of the learning process. Contributions from students about their experiences from the field are encouraged. Video, guest speakers, and group exercises may also be used to accomplish the learning objectives.

**Disability Accommodation**
If you would like to request academic accommodation due to a disability, please contact Services to Students with Disabilities- Lassen Hall room 1008, phone: 916-278-6955 (voice only) or 916-278-7239 (TDD only) or http://www.csus.edu/sswd. Office hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (except holidays). If you have a letter from Services to Students with Disabilities please present the letter to me so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for this class.
COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Comment on attendance, participation, and keeping up with the course:
This class does require that you turn in your assignments on time and be present and ready to work at each class session. I expect that you will complete the assigned readings prior to each class and be prepared to share your original thoughts and reactions to the readings with the class. If you must be absent from class because of illness or a family emergency please let me know before missing a class. In the event that you must miss a class you are still responsible for the readings and for submitting any assignments that are due that day. Sometimes people get sick, have accidents, or other extenuating situations that cause them miss an assignment deadline. If something happens during the semester that prevents you from turning in an assignment on time please come and talk to me. As your instructor I will do my best to work with you to make sure that you complete the class on time and do as well as you possibly can.

The following list is a summary of the expectations for students in this class:
1) Arrive for class on time.
2) Attend each class and be an active participant.
3) Read and think about the readings prior to each class so that you may contribute to the class in an intelligent manner.
4) Challenge yourself to be an active learner by asking questions, discussing the course content with your classmates, and by addressing your concerns and criticisms to the professor.
5) Challenge yourself to be open to hearing the ideas and thoughts of people with whom you disagree.
6) If you have concerns about your understanding of the course content or assignments I expect that you will let me know so we can discuss your concerns.
7) If you have a concern about anything that happens during class please let me know so we can discuss your concern.
8) Thoughts on ethical practice. As developing social work professionals, it is expected that students will become familiar with and adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics. This code for professional behavior should guide your actions in class and in the field agency setting. Disrespect for student colleagues will not be tolerated as classroom dynamics must be safe, appropriate, on topic, open and respectful of diverse opinions and experiences.
9) Students take ownership of expression of bigotry. In other words, rather than attribute negative characteristics to a social group or to a member of that group, students begin with, “This is how I have been taught to believe,” or “I don’t like to admit it, but I do have the belief that…”

As a guideline for organizing your workload, note that it is standard educational expectation that students spend 2-3 hours outside of class time “studying” for every hour spent in class. It is expected that student class members spend 6 to 9 hours per week in preparation outside of class time.

Comment on written assignments:
Clear and concise writing are key ingredients for your future in the field of social work. As future social workers, each of you will be called upon to write letters that will impact the lives of individuals, groups, funding, and social policies. It is in this spirit that I encourage you to use the written assignments in this class to hone your writing skills. We are fortunate to have access to a
writing tutor here in the Division of Social Work. The development of writing skills is a life long endeavor, therefore I encourage you to seek out the assistance of the writing tutor wherever you feel the need. Additionally, after I read your assigned work I may refer you to the writing tutor.

**General guidelines for written assignments:**
1) All papers are to be double spaced and printed in 12 point font.
2) All papers are evaluated for proper use of grammar, punctuation, and spelling and coherently and logically arranged thoughts.
3) All papers are evaluated for proper use of knowledge: the integration of concepts, theories, models, and information from readings, lectures and class discussions is used in a way that demonstrates your grasp of the material.
4) All papers should demonstrate accurate citation of references (both text and internet) in the style of the American Psychological Association (APA Style).

**Plagiarism:** Any form of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. Written work must reflect your own thinking. It is considered plagiarism if you copy from your textbook or claim ideas that belong to others without citing the source of those ideas. University policy on plagiarism is an automatic failure.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>points</th>
<th>due date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation and reflection</td>
<td>15 pts.</td>
<td>Oct. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly literature and human development</td>
<td>25 pts.</td>
<td>Oct 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating observations and scholarly literature</td>
<td>25 pts.</td>
<td>Nov. 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper on Theory</td>
<td>35 pts.</td>
<td>Dec 1</td>
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1) All assignments are required to be turned in on time.
2) Late assignments will have 5 points deducted for each day the assignment is late.
3) I have provided clear guidelines for each assignment and suggest that you follow them closely.
4) I am happy to discuss and answer questions about any assignment.
5) You will receive clear feedback on each assignment so that you will know both the strengths of your work as well as the ways in which your work can be improved.

**Semester grades are based on a total of 100 points.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pts. Earned</th>
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<th>Pts. Earned</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 – 95</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>76 – 73</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>94 – 90</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>72 – 70</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>89 – 87</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>69 – 67</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>86 – 83</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>66 – 63</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>82 – 80</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>62 – 60</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>79 – 77</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment One  DUE Oct. 6
Observation and reflection of a life span segment (15 points)
(1) Choose a segment of the life span from pregnancy to adolescence that interests you: pregnancy (anytime during the 9 months), infancy (birth through about 18 months), toddler years (18 months through about 3 years), early childhood (4 years through about 6 years), middle childhood (7 years through about 12 years), adolescence (13 years through about 17 years), young adulthood (18 years through about 25 years), adulthood (26 years through about 39 years), middle adulthood (40 years through about 59 years), older adulthood (60 years though death).

(2) Create an opportunity for yourself to observe and interact with a group of people who are in the age phase you chose. Arrange to spend 1 hour interacting with and observing this group (in research methods we call this participant observation).

(3) After your participant observation, type two double spaced (12 point font) pages that:
* describe the group you observed and interacted with in terms of: age(s), ethnicities, sexual orientations, social classes, genders. (4 points)
* describe your experience of being with this group and one new thing you learned from this experience. (4 points)
* describe your impressions of this age group in terms of what they do and say and how they express themselves. (4 points)
(4) Use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling and coherent and logically arranged thoughts. (3 points)

Assignment two  DUE Oct. 27
Exploring the professional literature on human development (25 points)
Locate six (6) scholarly articles from professional journals (this excludes magazines, newspapers, web sites) that discuss the life span segment you chose for assignment one. If you have trouble locating professional journals see the reference librarian in the CSUS library.
Two of the articles should discuss the biological issues related to the age group you chose in assignment one. Two of the articles should discuss cognitive issues related to the age group you chose in assignment one. Two of the articles should discuss psychological or emotional issues related to the age group you chose.
Read each article and prepare an annotated bibliography. (20 pts.)
Use APA style to reference the articles you chose. (2 points)
Use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling and coherent and logically arranged thoughts. (3 points)
Assignment three  DUE: Nov. 10  
Integrating observations, experiences, and the professional literature. (25 points) 
Based on your observations and interactions from assignment one and your readings from assignment two describe what would you say are the five most important issues facing the age group you chose. Be sure to support your choice of each of the five issues with evidence from your interactions, observations, and readings. (20 points) 

Papers must be typed, double spaced, use 12 point font and be no longer than five pages. 
Use APA style citation and referencing. (2 points) 
Use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling and coherent and logically arranged thoughts. (3 points) 

Assignment four  DUE Dec. 1  
Final paper on theory (35 points)  
(1) Choose two theories that we have learned about during the semester.  
(2) Write a paper (no more than 10 pages doubled spaced, 12 point font) in which you discuss the following items:  
(a) Describe each theory in terms of its major assumptions. Describe what the theory is supposed to explain about human behavior. (6 points)  
(b) Describe the strengths and limitations of each theory. (6 points)  
(c) Explain how each theory does or does not account for the influence of social privileges and social oppressions. (6 points)  
(d) Discuss how these two theories would influence your social work practice. Be sure to indicate under what circumstances each theory would be useful and the kinds of questions each theory might cause you to ask about a client’s challenges. (6 points)  
(3) Be sure to use the literature to support what you write in your paper. (6 points)  
(4) Use APA style citation and referencing of sources. (2 points)  
(5) Use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling and coherent and logically arranged thoughts. (3 points) 

REQUIRED BOOKS 

WEEKLY READINGS AND TOPICS 

| Week 1 Sept 8 | 
| Intro, syllabus, readings, assignments. |

Why study HBSE
<p>| Week 2  Sept 15 | What is theory? Taking a critical view. | | Readings: Robbins et al. Ch 1 (required) and Ch 13 (optional) | Tatum p. ix to 17 | Beck p. 3 to 104 |
| Week 4 Sept 29 | Conflict theory. Considering the impact of inequality on pregnancy and birth | | Readings: Robbins et al. Ch 3 Beck p. 199 to 328 |
| Week 5 Oct 6 | *ASSIGNMENT ONE DUE | Theories of life span development. Emphasis on infancy and toddler years | Readings: Robbins et al. Ch 7 |
| Week 6 Oct 13 | Theories of cognitive and moral development. Emphasis on early childhood | Readings: Robbins et al. Ch 8 |
| Week 7 Oct 20 | Developing knowledge of difference in early childhood. Considering behaviorism and social learning theory | Readings: Robbins et al. Ch 11 Tatum P. 18 to 51 |
| Week 8 Oct 27 | *ASSIGNMENT TWO DUE | The theory of symbolic interaction and socialization in middle childhood | Readings: Robbins et al. Ch 9 |
| Week 9 Nov 3 | Theories of assimilation, acculturation, and bi-cultural socialization in light of adolescence | Readings: Robbins et al. Ch 5 Tatum p. 52 to 74 |
| Week 10 Nov 10 | *ASSIGNMENT THREE DUE | Theories of identity development | Readings: Tatum p. 75 to 128 |
| Week 11 Nov 17 | More theories of identity development | Readings: Tatum p. 131 to 190 |
| Week 12 Nov 24 | Theories of empowerment | Readings: Robbins et al. Ch 4 Tatum p. 193 to 219 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 13  Dec 1</th>
<th>*FINAL PAPER DUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Constructionism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readings: Robbins et al. Ch 10</td>
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<th>Week 14  Dec 8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transpersonal Theory and spirituality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readings: Robbins et al. Ch 12</td>
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