Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Multidimensional Perspective & Theory

Class Meeting: Tues./Thurs. 9-10:15A
Time & Location: Mariposa 1014

Office Hours: Time & Location:
Mariposa Hall 3018
10:30-11:30 Thurs.

Instructor Contact Information:

Instructor: Lester Wielstein PhD LCSW
Office: Mariposa Hall Rm. 3018
Email: dr.wielstein@gmail.com

Office Hours: 10:30-11:30A

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Using the multidimensional approach, social work theory and life-course frameworks, this course emphasizes the influence that context has in shaping individual and family dynamics across the life span. This course examines the contexts of family, community, complex organizations, and society in a world in which technological, economic, political and ecological systems are rapidly changing, thereby altering the world as an environment for human life. This course is built upon a foundation of the liberal arts perspective that students receive in GE courses and extends that perspective by integrating content about human behavior from such disciplines as human biology, philosophy, history, communication, ethnic and women's studies, sociology, economics, psychology, the humanities, and anthropology.

Social work theory examines the networks and relationships that link the individual with the context in which he or she functions. Diverse groups including ethnic and racial "minorities" (specifically, African American, American Indians, Asian Americans, Chicanos, and Latinos), diverse genders, people with disabilities, gays and lesbians and people experiencing poverty are an important focus in this course. The impacts of discrimination, social and political oppression are explored as they impact human development. Identification of potential strategies to optimize well-being, to enhance social justice in the environment and to prevent harm to diverse individuals, families, groups, or communities are explored. Empowerment and the strengths perspective are emphasized.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course builds upon and extends the Liberal Arts Perspective. Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Describe human behavior and functioning from a social work theory perspective and describe the usefulness of this approach to social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
2. Describe the following social systems as separate entities and in dynamic interaction
with each other: the individual, family, small group, community, organization and community.

3. Identify and describe the major theoretical approaches to human behavioral in the social environment. Critically analyze these approaches by listing their strengths and limitations.

4. Explore and identify your values and ideas about human functioning and social conditions. Be aware of how your upbringing and experiences filter how you understand the course material. Become aware of how your development follows or strays from the theoretical perspectives and concepts taught in the course.

5. Describe how negative environmental conditions (i.e., poverty, unsafe neighborhoods, and deteriorated schools) and social attitudes and behaviors (i.e., racism, sexism, homophobia, social exclusion, social stigma, and violence/abuse) impair human behavior.

6. Apply social work values and ethics to human behavior in the social environment theory and information.

CSWE Competencies & the SWRK 125A Course Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Relevant Competencies</th>
<th>Course Objectives</th>
<th>Course Assignments Assessing Competencies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competency 1</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Course engagement free-writes and small group discussions inviting students to consider their biases, values, etc…</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate Ethical &amp; Professional Behavior</td>
<td>4, 6</td>
<td><strong>Theory Paper: values clarification section</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Final Exam: self-exploration essay question</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency 2</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Theory Paper: values clarification section</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice</td>
<td>1, 2, 5, 6</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam: self-exploration essay question</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Course engagement free-writes and dyad/small group work as well as large class discussion inviting students to consider their biases, values, etc.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency 3</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Lectures on social injustice, ism-inequalities, etc.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advance Human Rights &amp; Social, Economic &amp; Environmental Justice</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6</td>
<td><strong>Midterm Exam: multiple choice and short answer questions regarding social conditions</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Course engagement free-writes and dyad/small group work as well as large class discussion inviting students to social inequalities</strong></td>
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<td>Competency 4</td>
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<td><strong>Midterm Exam: multiple choice and short answer questions regarding HBSE research</strong></td>
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<td>Engage in Practice-Informed Research &amp; Research Informed Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam: multiple choice and short answer questions regarding HBSE research</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Theory Paper: Integrating quality research into case assessment</strong></td>
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<td>Competency 5</td>
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<td><strong>Midterm Exam: multiple choice and short answer questions on policies that promote and prevent social justice</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage in Policy Practice</td>
<td>1, 2, 5</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam: multiple choice and short answer questions on policies that promote and prevent social justice</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Course engagement free-writes and dyad/small group work as well as large class discussion inviting students to brainstorm policy solutions</strong></td>
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<td>Competency 7</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Quiz, Midterm and Final exam content that requires knowledge regarding multidimensional (biopsychosocial) approach</strong></td>
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<td>Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations &amp; Communities</td>
<td>1, 2, 4, 5, 6</td>
<td><strong>Theory Paper: requires assessment of a case</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Course engagement free-writes and dyad/small group work discussing and applying theory to case examples</strong></td>
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Source: Final 2015 Educational Policy (CSWE, 2015)

Teaching Method:

My first goal in teaching is to establish effective communication with you. I encourage you to come visit me in office hours or send emails as questions and concerns arise. I will typically respond to emails within 24-48 hours during the course session. Proactive and creative problem
solving is an essential social work competency. Please let me know as early as possible if there are circumstances impacting your ability to attend or participate in groups, class, or complete required work.

I have designed this course to appeal to a variety of learning styles, including those who learn by hearing, reading, discussing, and doing. The classroom content will include a mixture of lectures, discussions (in large and small groups), and activities. The required material will also be varied and include a textbook, journal articles, and media sources. The goal of your assignments is to ensure that you are able to remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create using the material presented in the course. I have high standards and expect excellent quality work from all students.

**Course Required Text and Materials**

*Required Textbooks:*


Note: There are several earlier editions of this text available. If you purchase an earlier edition, please spend some time looking through the newest one (you are welcome to come by office hours and look at mine) to see how significant the differences are. You will be responsible for knowing the assigned material in this newest edition.

*Other Resources:*

Other required readings and/or viewings are listed in the weekly schedule or will be announced later in the semester. All non-textbook readings will be available on the course website.

*The Course Instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus and/or its contents if deemed in the best interest of student learning.*

**Participation Expectations**

*Attendance & Participation: Class attendance is a very important component in this course. You are allowed one (1) unexcused absence. Student’s who have a second (2nd) unexcused absence will have their final course grade lowered by five (5) points. Students who have a third (3rd) unexcused absence will have their final course grade lowered by one (1) half-letter grade (ie: A to A-). Students who have a fourth (4th) unexcused absence will have their final course grade lowered by a full letter grade (ie: A to B), additional unexcused absences will result in a drop of one (1) on full letter grade (ie: A to B, B to C and the like). It is essential for you to be here, be prepared, and be ready to engage. Please read, listen to, or view all of the assigned course materials by the first class of the week (Tuesday). You’ll be expected to share your knowledge, experience, comments, feedback, and alternative opinions. Different people have different styles, so for some of you, speaking out in class may be a challenge. If you are one of those people, look for opportunities to “step forward” as we’ll be eager to learn from you. If you are one of those people who speaks often in class, remember to reflect on ways that you might “step back” to make room in the discussion for others. Discussions (and learning!) involve give and take, and work best when we are respectful of those around us. As per the course objectives, you will be asked to model appropriate and professional behavior to your fellow colleagues and the
instructor throughout the course.

A note on technology: Note-taking on computers is here to stay and can be a useful and environmentally friendly learning tool. As an instructor, it is obvious that computers can often be a distraction, not just for those that are off-task but also those that surround them. Please be considerate and consider the impact of your in-class use of computers, cell-phones, and other tablets on the overall learning environment. Our class periods are relatively short and 99% of personal texts, phone calls or emails can wait. If you are using these devices off-task or in a distracting manner I may ask you to leave and your engagement grade could be affected.

Summary of Assignments (100 Total Points Possible)

Course Engagement (25 points maximum)
- Your course engagement will be determined by your participating in the following: 1) in-class written discussion (pass/not pass); 2) short in-class spontaneous quizzes (graded but easy); 3) in class oral activities (pass/not pass). Throughout the semester, 30 points will be available of which you can earn a maximum of 25 (this accounts for the regular absences, illnesses, or other issues that come up throughout a semester). Most but not all lectures will have the opportunity for course engagement points. No special preparation is needed except completing the required reading/listening beforehand, coming to class, and a willingness to engage in the course content.

Case Study Paper (20 points)
- You will be asked to write a 6 page paper (not including a title page or references) based on a case study of an individual nested within a larger contextual framework. In this paper, you will be asked to analyze the case from a multi-dimensional and theoretical perspective. Your assessment should cite course materials and relevant theories and be written as if it is a professional document. The paper will be due on Friday, November 17th at 11:59pm and will be submitted to the SacCT website. The specific paper prompt will be distributed by the 4th week of class.
- Your paper should be 12-point font (Times New Roman preferred), with 1-inch margins. Your citations should be presented in APA style and listed at the end of the document. Responses should be fully formed, well-written, free of grammatical errors or typos, and display advanced critical thinking.

Mid-Term Exam (25 points)
- There will be a mid-term exam during the semester (October 12th). The exam will take place in a computer lab on campus during your regular course time (exact location to be determined). The exam will focus on the 8 theoretical perspectives and will include multiple choice and essay questions.

Comprehensive Final Exam (30 points)
- Your comprehensive final exam will include material from all class lectures, readings, and other assigned material. The exam will test both your knowledge of course concepts as well as your ability to apply that knowledge to case examples. The test will include multiple choice and essay questions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>RELATIVE VALUE</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Course Engagement</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Entire course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Case-Study Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Comprehensive Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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</table>

**Grading Scale and Procedures**

*Final Grades:* Your final grade for this course will be based on the total number of points you accumulate following the below guidelines:

- **A** 100-95
- **A-** 94-90
- **B+** 89-85
- **B** 84-80
- **B-** 79-75
- **C+** 74-70
- **C** 69-65
- **C-** 64-60
- **D+** 59-55
- **D** 54-50
- **D-** 49-46
- **F** 45 or below

Policy on Late Assignments: Assignments must be submitted by the due date and time listed under each assignment. There are **no extensions** on written work for any reason **without my prior consent**. I will subtract 2 points each day that any unexcused assignment is late.

Formatting Requirements: All written work must be submitted typed using Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double-spaced, and 1” margins. All of your written work should be original and have properly referenced citations according to the current American Psychological Association (APA) style manual.

**Academic Integrity**

*Neither cheating nor plagiarism will be tolerated.* Any evidence of either will result in a score of zero (0) on that assignment or examination and potential larger consequences. Assignments/exams submitted by you and that bear your name are presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor. In all of your written work, you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, web sites, or other sources, but only with proper attribution. "Proper attribution" means that you have fully identified the original source and extent of your use of the words or ideas of others that you reproduce in your work for this course. Be guided by this dictum: “If you did not write it, then you have to cite it.” Please also remember that when you use more than 4 words in a row from a source you must include quotation marks and an appropriate citation.

**Important Resources on Campus:**

For free, one-on-one help with writing in any class, visit the University Writing Center in Calaveras 128. The Writing Center can help you at any stage in your reading and writing processes: coming up with a topic, developing and organizing a draft, understanding difficult texts, or developing strategies to become a better editor. To make an appointment or a series of
Diversity and Values

In this course we will pay particular attention to the nature, causes, and consequences of issues of diversity such as: race, gender, culture, ethnicity, sexual identity and orientation, and social class, as they relate to individuals and families in the social environment. We will pay particular attention to issues of diversity and social injustice over the life span/ life course and their impact on oppressed and marginalized populations. Given the nature of this course, we will consider the relative fit of theories and conceptual frameworks to both the experiences of individuals as well as various social groupings.

Students with Special Learning Needs

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) provides protection from discrimination for qualified individuals with disabilities. Students with a disability, who require assistance, will need to contact the Office of Services to Students with Disabilities (SSWD) for coordination of academic accommodations. The SSWD is located in Lassen Hall, Room 1008. Their phone number is 916-278-6955 (voice) or 916-278-7239 (TDD).

TOPIC AREAS AND SEQUENCES

A Note from the Course Instructor: Computers are finicky and often times need close attention to work properly. Please insure yours in good working order so that papers are submitted and received on the date they are due.

Week 1: Opening Class

1. Icebreakers & Introductions
2. Discussion of syllabus: topics, readings, and assignments
3. Group development of guidelines for class discussions & participation
4. Why theory? HBSE or SEHB?

Required Readings

Review syllabus


Dominus, S. (2015, July 9). The mixed up brothers of Bogotá. The New York Times (available on-line) - be prepared to discuss this on the 1st.

MODULE 1: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Week 2: Introduction to the Multidimensional Approach

1. What is a multi-dimensional approach?
2. Examining person, environment, & time
3. Social justice and oppression
4. How do we “know” what we know?

Required Readings

Hutchison, Chapter 1, “A Multidimensional Approach”

Week 3: Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior

1. Introduction to theoretical perspectives: Systems & Conflict Theories
2. Class activities

Required Readings

Hutchison, Chapter 2, “Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior” pgs. 36-47

Week 4: Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior continued….

1. Introduction to the rational choice and social constructionist perspectives
2. Class activities

Required Readings

Hutchison, Chapter 2, “Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior” pgs. 47-55

Listen to: Invisibilia, (2016).“The New Norm”, originally aired on June 17, 2016 [audio podcast]. Available to listen at: http://www.npr.org/podcasts/510307/invisibilia. (You can also download from itunes on a mobile device) Transcript available at: http://www.npr.org/2016/06/17/482443233/listen-to-the-episode. Be prepared to discuss this podcast on September 22. NOTE: the beginning of this podcast describes some deadly injuries to workers on oil rigs, to emphasize the inherent danger in these work environments. If you want to skip past these descriptions, start listening at about 8:30.

Week 5: Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior continued….

1. Introduction to the developmental and social behavioral perspective
2. Class activities

Required Readings

Hutchison, Chapter 2, “Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior” pgs. 58-65


Week 6: Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior continued…
1. October 4th: Online Session (see below)
2. Introduction to psychodynamic perspective
3. Class activities

**Required Readings**


Hutchison, Chapter 2, “Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior” pgs. 55-58

**Week 7: Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior completed**

1. Introduction to humanistic perspective
2. Mid-term exam October 13th (LOCATION TBA)

**Required Readings**

Hutchison, Chapter 2, “Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior” pgs. 65-69

**Week 8: The Psychological Person**

1. Introduction to theories of cognition, emotion, & cognitive/emotional disorders
2. Class activities

**Required Readings**

Hutchison, Chapter 4, “The Psychological Person”


**MODULE 2: UNDERSTANDING MULTIPLE-LEVELS OF HUMAN ENVIRONMENTS**

**Week 9: Introduction to Families**

1. Introduction to families from a historical and theoretical perspective
2. Class activities

**Required Readings**

Hutchison, Chapter 9, “Small groups & families” (pages 330-331 “The Sharpe Family”) and 341-370
Week 10: Introduction to Small Groups

1. Introduction to small group theory & practice
2. Class activities “Broken Squares”

Required Readings

Hutchison, Chapter 9, “Small groups & families” (pages 328-329 “Terry’s Support Group”) and 332-340

Week 11: Formal Organizations

1. Introduction to theories and communication in regards to formal organizations
2. Class activities

Required Readings

Hutchison, Chapter 8, “Formal Organizations, Communities, and Social Movements” (pages 280-281 “Changing Leadership at Beacon Center”) and 287-297

Week 12: Communities

1. Examining the role of communities in society as well as theories of community
2. Class activities: Defining neighborhoods

Required Readings

Hutchison, Chapter 8, “Formal Organizations, Communities, and Social Movements” (pages 282-283 “Filipina Domestic Workers Creating Transnational Communities”) and 297-311


Week 13: Social Movements

1. Introduction to theories of social movements
2. Class activities

Required Readings

Hutchison, Chapter 8, “Formal Organizations, Communities, and Social Movements” (pages
284-285 “Fighting for a Living Wage”) and 311-325


**Week 14: Social Structures & Social Institutions**

1. Introduction to social institutions from a social welfare and global perspective
2. Class activities

**Required Readings**

Hutchison, Chapter 7, “Social Structure and Social Institutions” pages 238-250, 262-265, 272-275

**Week 15: Course Review**

1. Review for comprehensive final exam

CONGRATULATIONS!!!