



Human Behavior in the Social Environment
SWRK 330 (3 credit hours) Fall 2021

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Office Hours:

- Tuesday: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Wednesday: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Thursday: 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Other Times by Appointment

Phone: 270.745.2523

Class Meeting Times/Dates: Online

Fall Semester: August 23, 2021 – December 10, 2021

Course Description:

This course introduces students to theories informing human behavior within the context of individual, family, group, community, and organizational resources. Emphasis is placed on the applicability of varied theories to diverse populations. Thus, we consider how theoretical frameworks empower social workers to advocate for economic and social justice. These frameworks are also used to understand the functioning of individuals as members of families, groups, communities, and larger social organizations, in order to intervene effectively at various system levels. Course objectives are achieved through the use of experiential exercises, class discussions, didactic presentations, and/or films, which encourage students to develop skills in critical thinking.

Required Text:

Hutchinson, E.D. (2016). *Essentials of Human Behavior: Integrating Person, Environment, and the Life Course* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Supplemental Text: American Psychological

Supplemental Text:

American Psychological Association. (2020) *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.), <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

BSW Mission Statement

The mission of the BSW Program at Western Kentucky University is to prepare culturally competent professionals who practice with diverse communities and client systems. The program promotes a commitment to professional ethics, leadership, professionalism, social justice and lifelong learning in order for graduates to practice successfully in a global community.

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Definition of Generalist Practice

The Council on Social Work Education defines Generalist Practice as the following:

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice. The baccalaureate program in social work prepares students for generalist practice. The descriptions of the nine Social Work Competencies presented in the EPAS identify the knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors associated with competence at the generalist level of practice (EPAS, 2015, p. 11).

Learning Outcomes

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

Knowledge

1. Explain the impact of biological, cultural, social, and environmental influences on human development across the lifespan.
2. Identify major theoretical concepts

Values

3. Discuss the influence of one's own experience in understanding the experiences of marginalized groups.
4. Evaluate the influence of privilege, diversity, oppression, and social/economic/environmental justice on micro, mezzo, and macro systems.

Skills

5. Evaluate the utility of various theoretical perspectives to social work practice on micro, mezzo, and macro systems.
6. Using case scenarios, apply various theories to inform assessment and interventions with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations.

Cognitive/Affective

7. Analyze the impact of the intersections of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, gender, class, political affiliation, and religion on own life experiences and relationships with colleagues, administrators, client systems, and communities.

CSWE EPAS Core Competencies for BSW Education

The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) core competencies taught in all Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited BSW programs are included in **Appendix 1** of this syllabus. Core competencies addressed in this class are included in **Appendix 2** of this syllabus.

Topical Outline:

Unit I: Introductions and Course Overview

- A. Introductions and Review of Course Outline and Expectations.
- B. Review of Generalist Practice.

Unit II: Human Behavior: A Multidimensional Approach

- A. Person in Environment
- B. Macro Influences on Human Development across the Lifespan
- C. Diversity, Oppression, and Privilege
- D. Scientific Knowledge: Theory Informed Practice

Unit III: Theoretical Perspectives

- A. Theories:
 - 1. Systems
 - 2. Conflict
 - 3. Exchange and Choice
 - 4. Social Constructionist
 - 5. Psychodynamic
 - 6. Developmental
 - 7. Social Behavioral
 - 8. Humanistic
- B. Merits of Multiple Perspectives
- C. Implications for Social Work Practice

Unit III: Biological Person

- A. Interior Biological Health and Illness
 - 1. Nervous
 - 2. Endocrine
 - 3. Immune
 - 4. Cardiovascular
 - 5. Musculoskeletal
 - 6. Reproductive
- B. Exterior Environmental Factors
- C. Implications for Social Work Practice

Unit IV: Psychological Person

- A. Theories of cognition
 - 1. Information processing
 - 2. Social learning
 - 3. Multiple intelligence
 - 4. Moral reasoning
- B. Theories of Emotion
 - 1. Physiological

- 2. Psychological
- 3. Social
- C. Stress
- D. Coping and adaptation
- E. Implications for social work practice

Unit V: Spiritual Person

- A. Spiritual dimension
- B. Transpersonal
- C. Role of spirituality in social work/Implications for practice

Unit VI: Culture and the Physical Environment

- A. Challenge of defining culture
- B. Postmodern view
- C. Physical environment and human behavior
 - 1. Stimulation theories
 - 2. Control theories
 - 3. Behavior setting theories
 - 4. Eco-critical theories
- D. Natural environment
- E. Built environment
- F. Place attachment
- G. Homelessness
- H. Accessible environments
- I. Implications for social work practice

Unit VII: Families

- A. Historical perspectives
- B. Theoretical perspectives for understanding families
 - 1. Psychodynamic
 - 2. Family systems
 - 3. Feminist
 - 4. Family stress and coping
 - 5. Family resilience
- C. Diversity in family life
 - 1. Nuclear
 - 2. Extended
 - 3. Cohabiting
 - 4. Couples with no children
 - 5. Stepfamilies
 - 6. Same sex
 - 7. Military
 - 8. Economic/Cultural
 - a. Economic
 - b. Cultural
 - c. Immigrant/Refugee families
- D. Challenges
 - 1. Intimate partner violence

- 2. Addiction
- 3. Divorce
- E. Implications for social work practice

Unit VIII: Small Groups, Communities, and Formal Organizations

- A. Theories of small group processes
 - 1. Psychodynamic
 - 2. Symbolic interactionism
 - 3. Exchange
 - 4. Self-categorization
- B. Formal organizations
 - 1. Rational
 - 2. Systems
 - 3. Interactional
 - 4. Critical
- C. Communities
 - 1. Contrasting types
 - 2. Spatial arrangements
 - 3. Social systems
 - 4. Social capital
 - 5. Conflict
- D. Implications for social work practice

Unit IX: Social Structure, Social Institutions, and Social Movements

- A. Contemporary trends in global and U.S. social institutions
- B. Theories of social inequality
- C. Perspectives on social movements
 - 1. Political opportunities
 - 2. Mobilizing structures
 - 3. Cultural framing
 - 4. Emerging perspectives
- 5. Implications for social work practice

Unit X: The Human Journey: A Life Course Perspective

- A. Basic concepts
- B. Major themes
- C. The family life course
- D. Strengths and limitations
- E. Implications for social work practice

Unit XI: The Journey Begins: Conception, Pregnancy, Birth, and Infancy

- A. Sociocultural
- B. Control over contraception and pregnancy
- C. Fetal development
- D. At risk newborns
- E. Typical infant development
 - a. Physical
 - b. Cognitive

- c. Socio-emotional
- F. Childcare
- G. Risk and protective factors

Unit XII: Toddlerhood and Early Childhood

- A. Physical development
- B. Cognitive development
- C. Moral development
- D. Social development
- E. Risks to development
 - a. Poverty
 - b. Ineffective discipline
 - c. Homelessness
 - d. Divorce
 - e. Violence
- F. Protective Factors
- G. Implications for Practice

Unit XIII: Middle Childhood

- A. Physical development
- B. Cognitive development
- C. Moral development
- D. Social development
- E. Spiritual development
- F. Risk and protection
- G. Implications for social work practice

Unit XIV Adolescence

- A. Biological development
- B. Psychological development
- C. Social development
- D. Spirituality
- E. Sexuality
- F. Challenges
 - 1. Substance use and abuse
 - 2. Delinquency
 - 3. Bullying
 - 4. Community violence
 - 5. Intimate partner violence
 - 6. Poverty and low educational attainment
 - 7. Eating disorders
 - 8. Depression and suicide
- G. Implications for social work practice

Unit XV Young and Middle Adulthood

- A. Theoretical approaches to adulthood
 - 1. Jung
 - 2. Erikson

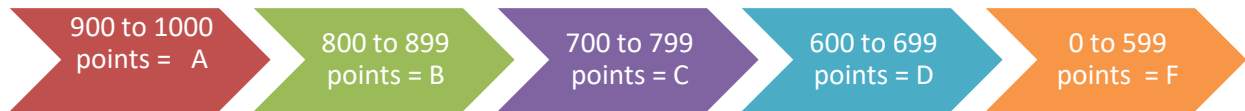
- 3. Levinson
- 4. Arnett
- B. Biological functioning
- C. Cognitive
- D. Personality and Identity
 - 1. Trait
 - 2. Human agency
 - 3. Life narrative
- E. Relationships
 - 1. Romantic
 - 2. Relationships with children
 - 3. Relationships with parents
 - 4. Relationships with friends
- F. Risk and resilience
- G. Implications for social work practice

Unit XVI Late Adulthood

- A. Demographics of older adult population
- B. Cultural construction of late adulthood
- C. Social gerontology
- D. Biological changes
- E. Psychological
- F. Social role transitions
- G. Death and dying
- H. Implications for social work practice

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES/ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Assignment	Points
Exams (4 @100 pts each)	400 points
Case Studies (2 @ 100 pts each)	200 points
Environmental Justice Paper	200 points
Self Portrait	100 points
Discussion Board (4 @ 25 pts each)	100 points
Total	1000 points

Grading Scale

The professor reserves the right to make announced changes in the course due to extenuating circumstances

EXAMS

There will be four examinations administered during the semester. Each student must work on this assignment independently. Collaboration with your classmates will be considered cheating, and a zero will be given to both parties. Each exam will cover material from all required readings, lectures, class discussion, audio and videotapes. Exams are multiple-choice, true/false and/or essay questions.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PAPER

This paper focuses on how a theory of your choice informs environmental justice issues. Thus, your first task is to pick an environmental problem that contributes to a social/health problem or problems affecting individuals, families, groups, and communities. Examples of topics include, but are not limited to, air and water pollution, climate change/global warming, food insecurity, environmental disasters, environmental racism, acid deposition, plant/animal extinction, and deforestation.

Papers **MUST** include the following information:

- 1) How you selected the environmental problem.
- 2) Who defines this issue as a problem/who does it affect?
- 3) Provide historical context for this issue.
- 4) Based on your review of the literature, what are the most prevalent theoretical perspectives used to frame this social problem? What are the strengths and limitations of each theoretical perspective? Which do you believe provides the best explanation? Why?
- 5) Based on your review of the literature, what are the primary causes of this issue?
- 6) What previous attempts have been made to solve this issue? What parts were successful? Why? What parts were ineffective? Why?
- 7) What can social workers do to make communities more sensitive to this issue?
- 8) Informed by theory and the literature, what interventions do you suggest to ameliorate the issue?
- 9) Include a link to a video to show one or more of the discussion points listed above.
- 10) Paper should be typed, double-spaced, and a minimum of 8 pages (not including the title page or reference page)

SELF-PORTRAIT

This assignment is intended to allow you to address the impact on your personal and professional development of various issues related to human behavior in the social environment. To complete the assignment, write a paper that includes at least the following elements.

- 1) A general description of yourself as a bio-psycho-socio-cultural-spiritual being. Be sure and address each part of that hyphenated description! State how the overall combination of these characteristics influenced the opportunities and barriers that you have experienced so far in your life.
- 2) Using **one** of the theories or models of individual development or identity formation presented in class and/or the text, describe your progress through the lifespan to this point in time. That is, where are you now, and what phases have you passed through?
- 3) A brief discussion of the values you bring with you as you progress through the phases of your lifespan that remain.
- 4) Discuss the impact of your family of origin in your life. How have your family members affected you?
- 5) Identify at least 4 groups and organizations in the larger environment that have been influential in your life. (This does not include your family or individual friends.) For each one, briefly describe how it has affected your personal or professional view of the world.
- 6) Identify and briefly describe at least 3 major events or factors in the larger environment, such as political or social movements or national problems, which have influenced you. For each one, briefly describe how your development and worldview were affected.
- 7) Diversity, discrimination, and oppression affect everyone, whether they are part of the dominant group or a subordinated group. Describe the impact of diversity, discrimination and oppression on your development and perspective of the world (personal and professional).
- 8) Taking into consideration the experiences and influences that you have discussed above, briefly discuss the strengths and limitations that they will bring to your professional development as a social worker. Outline a plan for addressing limitations.
- 9) Paper should be typed, double-spaced, and a minimum of 6 pages (not including the title page or references).

CASE STUDIES

General Directions (students will be assigned case studies from the text)

1. Answer all the questions (bullets) associated with the case study.
2. The case study should be a minimum of 4 pages (not including the title page) in length (typed, double spaced, including headings for the bulleted items).
3. See Blackboard regarding the specific Case Study and the questions (bullets) associated with it.

DISCUSSION BOARDS

Regular discussion/participation is expected of each student, since all of our learning will take place on Blackboard (***these guidelines will also be posted on Blackboard with scoring rubric***).

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

You are expected to attend and actively participate in class. THIS MEANS YOU SHOULD CHECK INTO Bb AT LEAST ONCE PER DAY. You want to be actively engaged in your learning experience.

Mask Mandate

*All students are strongly encouraged to get the COVID-19 vaccine. WKU's highest priority has always been the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff. **Vaccines remain one of the strongest deterrents to viral transmission and serious symptoms or complications. If you have not yet been vaccinated, please schedule an appointment with GGC WKU Health Services by calling (270) 745-2272.** Other vaccine locations can be found at www.vaccines.gov.*

Although this class is taught on-line, you may find yourself on campus for other classes or activities. Out of respect for the health and safety of the WKU community and in adherence with the CDC guidelines, the University requires that a cloth face covering (reusable or disposable) that covers both the nose and mouth must be always worn when in public areas within all buildings. Students must properly wear face coverings while in class regardless of the room size or the nature of the classroom activities. Students who fail to wear a face covering as required will be in violation of the WKU Student Code of Conduct and will be asked to comply or will face disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the University. Accommodations to face coverings must be determined by the Student Accessibility Resource Center and documented before a student may attend class.

All students must immediately report a positive Covid-19 test result or close contact with a person who has tested positive to the Covid-19 Assistance Line at 270-745-2019. The assistance line is available to answer questions regarding any Covid-19 related issue. This guidance is subject to change based on requirements set forth by public health agencies or the office of the governor. Please refer to the Healthy on the Hill website for the most current information. www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill

Academic Integrity

The WKU Undergraduate Catalog (2020-2021) provides the following policies.

Academic Offenses

The maintenance of academic integrity is of fundamental importance to the University. Thus, it should be clearly understood that acts of plagiarism or any other form of cheating will not be tolerated and that anyone committing such acts risks punishment of a serious nature. A student who believes a faculty member has dealt unfairly with him/her in a course involving academic offenses, such as plagiarism, cheating, or academic dishonesty, may seek relief through the Student Complaint Procedure. Questions about the complaint procedure should be directed to the Student Ombudsperson at (270) 745-6169.

Academic Dishonesty

Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the coursework in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal. The faculty member may also present the case to the Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary sanctions.

Plagiarism

To represent written work taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of a student must be his/her own. One must give any author credit for source material borrowed from him/her. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage without reference to the source after having changed a few words is also plagiarism.

Cheating

No student shall receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in taking an examination or in the preparation of an essay, laboratory report, problem assignment, or other project that is submitted for purposes of grade determination.

Other Types of Academic Dishonesty

Other types of academic offenses, such as the theft or sale of tests, should be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs at (270) 745-5429 for judicial sanction

Student Accessibility Resource Center

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact [the Student Accessibility Resource Center \(SARC\)](https://www.wku.edu/sarc/) (<https://www.wku.edu/sarc/>) located in the Student Success Center in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The contact telephone number is 270-745-5004 or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from SARC.

Learning Assistance at WKU

[The Learning Center \(TLC\)](http://www.wku.edu/tlc/) is located on the Bowling Green campus in the Academic Advising and Retention Center, DSU 2141. Should students require academic assistance with this course, or any other General Education Course, there are several places that can provide them with help. TLC tutors in most major undergraduate subjects and course levels throughout the week--they can also direct students to one of many tutoring and assistance Centers across campus. To make an appointment, or to request a tutor for a specific class, students should call 270-745-6254 or stop by DSU 2141. Students can log on to TLC's website at <http://www.wku.edu/tlc/> to find out more. The Glasgow campus also has a Resource Center.

On the Bowling Green campus, students are also encouraged to make use of the [Writing Center](#) located in Cherry Hall 123. The Writing Center offers online consultations for students. See instructions of the

website www.wku.edu/writingcenter for making online or face-to-face appointments. Or call 270-745-5719 to schedule an appointment.

Title IX Misconduct/Assault Statement

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) at

<https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf>

and

Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at

https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf

Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121.

Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

Disclaimer

The professor reserves the right to make announced changes in the course due to extenuating circumstances.