

1-2002

# SW 300.01: Human Behavior and Social Environment

John C. Spores

*University of Montana - Missoula*

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

---

## Recommended Citation

Spores, John C., "SW 300.01: Human Behavior and Social Environment" (2002). *Syllabi*. 3439.  
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/3439>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

Social Work 300

Human Behavior and Social Environment

Spring Semester, 2002

Instructor: John Spores

Office: 21 Jeannette Rankin Hall

Office Hours: 2:00-3:00 MWF, 10-12 Tu Th, and by appointment

Telephone: 243-5792

Introduction

Human Behavior and Social Environment explores human behavioral dynamics through review of selected biological, social, and behavioral science content relevant to beginning generalist social work practice. As an organizing framework, the ecosystems and strengths perspectives will be employed in combination with the analytical framework developed by Berger, McBreen and Rifkin. Human behavior will be explored with attention to all social system levels: individual, family, group, complex organizations, community, and society. Practice-relevant content is selected and reviewed and practice applications considered. Special emphasis is placed on the incorporation of practice-relevant content relating to ethnic, racial, cultural, gender, ability/disability and sexual orientation diversity.

Increased familiarity with human behavior-relevant theory and knowledge will broaden student perspectives, a process especially imperative since social workers and other human service professionals repeatedly deal with situations requiring understanding of multi-system interactions. Employment of the organizing framework developed in the course will assist students in improving their ability to analyze and reach insights about individual, behavioral and systems dynamics. This provides critical foundation for the selection of appropriate social work practice strategies.

Enrollment in SW 300 is concurrent with enrollment in the first advanced social work practice course, SW 350. In relation to social work intervention skills, SW 300 concentrates on the first stage of the problem-solving process: problem assessment. Thus SW 300 provides an integrated foundation knowledge base for problem assessment designed to complement the intervention planning and implementation emphases of SW 350 and SW 360. Social work majors enrolling in SW 300 must have completed at least six of eight of the extra-departmental requirements established by the Department of Social Work and, in particular, must have already completed or be concurrently enrolled in Psychology 240: Developmental Psychology. Additionally, social work students must have been officially approved as social work majors at the upper division (junior-senior) level.

Objectives of SW 300

1. To integrate concepts of human behavior and ideas and theories fundamental to understanding the functioning of humans individually and collectively.
2. Understanding and accurate utilization of the ecosystems perspective and the Berger-McBreen-Rifkin analytical framework as unifying and organizing tools.
3. To develop and improve analytical and diagnostic skills in assessing the interaction of the individual and the environmental systemic forces that influence behavior.

4. Secure an orientation to and increased understanding of the person as a total physical-psychological-social being, viewed both as a unique system and as a component part of various social systems.
5. Improved ability to recognize and understand the social and psychological aspects of human behaviors that occur during the various life stages and in different environmental contexts.
6. To improve the ability to formulate accurate assessments of client service needs and their relationship to existing resources.
7. An improved ability to analyze, forge links between, and reach insights about individual, behavioral and systems dynamics.
8. Increased understanding of the primary importance of careful and accurate observation of human behavior, including one's own, and increased ability to engage in such observation.
9. Exploration of patterns of functioning, life styles, and value systems which differ from one's own, and a positive commitment to understanding the differing goals of individuals and populations, most especially those defined as socially oppressed.
10. Expanded knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity in our society, with particular emphasis on Native American, African American, Hispanic, and Asian American individuals, families, and groups.
11. Understanding the implications of gender and sexual orientation diversity in assessing and addressing human needs in our society.
12. Analysis of issues relating to social and economic justice and their relevance for understanding human behavior.
13. Consideration of social problems and cultural diversity in an international context, with special emphasis on Southeast Asia.

#### **Required Books**

Robert L. Berger, James T. McBreen and Marilyn J. Rifkin, Human Behavior: A Perspective for the Helping Professions. Fourth Edition. (New York: Longman, 1996.)

Anne Fadiman, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures. (New York: Noonday Press, 1997).

Photocopied Readings, available through U.C. Bookstore.

**Class Attendance**

Your attendance in class is required. Attendance will be taken regularly. Six or more absences, excused or otherwise, automatically result in a failing grade for the course.

**Quizzes, Examinations and Other Graded Exercises**

There will be a series of quizzes (every two or three weeks) focusing on the assigned readings and on the in-class content of the preceding week(s). These quizzes will emphasize objective items (T-F, etc.). Thus, it is critical for you to have completed and considered assigned reading prior to the class sessions for which they provide an informational base. The point total of this series of quizzes will be approximately 225. Quizzes will be announced in advance.

Additionally there will be a take-home midterm examination and a take-home final. These will be wholly essay in format and will be worth 100 and 150 points respectively. They will be distributed at least two weeks prior to the due date.

Finally, the class will be randomly broken up into four groups. Each group will have the responsibility to prepare an HBSE-relevant presentation for the class. The presentations are to be for a minimum of 50 minutes, up to a maximum of one entire 2-hour class period. The instructor will be only minimally involved in this exercise. The group presentations will be April 18, 23, 25 and 30. Each student will prepare an assessment of the group structure and process occurring as the presentation is developed and presented. The chart presented in Reserve Book Room reading #4 (Johnson, "Multiperson Interaction") provides a guide for analyzing group structure and process. This exercise will be graded up to 50 points for the relevance and quality of the presentation (everyone in the group earns the same number of points) and up to 50 points for each individual's assessment of the group's structure and process.

Periodic Quizzes . . . . .	225 points
Midterm Examination (March 5 - March 26). . . . .	100 points
Group Presentation and Group Analysis . . . . .	100 points
Final Examination (April 30 - Due May 13). . . . .	<u>150 points</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>575 POINTS</b>

## Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

RBR: Reserve Book Room, Library

### **Week 1: January 28 - February 1**

Introduction to Course  
Ecosystems, Generalist, and Strengths Perspectives

Berger: Preface (pp. ix-xv); Chapter 1, "Human Behavior and Effective Practice." pp. 1-32.

Reader: #1: Auerswald, "Maria Case." pp. 114-119.

Fadiman: READ THE SPIRIT CATCHES YOU AND YOU FALL DOWN AT YOUR OWN PACE DURING THE SEMESTER, COMPLETING IT NO LATER THAN APRIL 30. Besides class discussion, there will be a final examination exercise on this book.

### **Week 2: February 4 - 8**

Introduction continued.  
Systems: Families

Berger: Chapter 2, "The Integrating Framework." pp. 33-67.

Reader: #2: Hill, "Dispelling Myths and Building on Strengths Supporting African-American Families," pp. 1-5.

RBR: Proctor, Davis, and Vosler, "Families: Direct Practice," pp. 941-950. [RBR #1]  
Tracy, "Family Preservation and Home-Based Services," pp. 973-983. [RBR #2]  
Ehrenreich, "Evaluation," (from Nickel and Dimed), pp. 193-221. [RBR #3]

### **Week 3: February 11 - 15**

Systems: Groups

RBR: Johnson, "Multiperson Interaction." pp. 160-194. [RBR #4]

### **Week 4: February 18 - 22**

### **Week 5: February 25 - March 1**

Systems: Organizations/Communities

Berger: Chapter 3, "The Dimensions of Human Behavior," pp. 69-128.

RBR: Kirst-Ashman and Hull, "Understanding Organizations," pp. 123-163. [RBR #5]

Kirst-Ashman and Hull, "Understanding Neighborhoods and Communities," pp. 261-295. [RBR #6]

**Week 6:**                    **March 4 - 8**

Systems:        Communities  
Human Diversity: Gender

RBR: Lichtenberg, "Men: Overview," pp. 1691-97. [RBR #7]

Bricker-Jenkins and Lockett, "Women: Direct Practice,"  
pp.2529-2539. [RBR #8]

**A take-home examination will be distributed Tuesday, March 5,  
and will be due classtime Tuesday, March 26.**

**Week 7:**                    **March 11 - 15**

Human Diversity: Gender, Sexual Orientation

RBR: Tully, "Lesbians: Overview," pp. 1591-1596. [RBR #9]  
Berger and Kelly, "Gay Men: Overview," pp. 1064-1075.  
[RBR #10]

**March 11 - LAST DAY TO DROP/ADD CLASSES**

**Week 8:**                    **March 25 - 29**

Human Diversity: AIDS/HIV, Disabled  
Ethnic and Cultural Diversity (General)

Reader:        #14: Cohen, "Culture, Not Race, Explains Human Diversity,"  
3 pp.

RBR: NASW, "HIV-AIDS Policy Statement," August, 1996 [RBR #17]

Poindexter, "Promises in the Plague: Passage of the Ryan  
White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act as a  
Case Study for Legislative Action," pp. 35-41. [RBR #18]

Weaver, "Through Indigenous Eyes: Native Americans and the  
HIV Epidemic," pp. 27-34.

Whitaker and Tracy, "Working with Ethnically and Diverse  
Clients," pp. 147-161. [RBR #11]

Spickard, "The Illogic of American Racial Categories,  
pp. 12-23. [RBR #16]

**MIDTERM EXAMINATION DUE CLASSTIME, MARCH 26**

- Week 9:**                    April 1 - 5  
Human Diversity: Ethnic and Cultural Diversity
- Reader:                   #3: Hodgkinson, "The Current Condition of Native Americans," pp. 1-2.  
                              #4: Horejsi, Craig, and Pablo. "Reactions by Native American Parents to Child Protection Agencies: A Look at Cultural and Communication Factors." pp. 1-14.
- Week 10:**                 April 8 - 12  
Human Diversity: Ethnic and Cultural Diversity
- Reader:                   #5: Broken Nose, "Working with the Oglala Lakota: An Outsider's Perspective." pp. 380-383.  
                              #6: Yukl, "Cultural Responsiveness and Social Work Practice: An Indian Clinic's Success." pp. 223-229.
- Berger:                   Chapter 4, "Human Behavior Throughout the Life Course." pp. 129-173.
- Week 11:**                 April 15 - 19  
Group Presentation  
Human Diversity: Ethnic and Cultural Diversity
- Thursday, April 18 Group I Presentation
- Reader:                   #7: Gil, "Social Work Practice with Hispanic Groups." pp. 89-102.  
                              #8: Putsch, "Cross-cultural Communication: The Special Case of Interpreters in Health Care." pp. 3344-3348.
- RBR:                      Longres, "Hispanics: Overview," pp. 1214-1222.[RBR #12]  
                              Leashore, "African Americans: Overview," pp. 101-115.  
                              [RBR #13]
- Week 12:**                 April 22 - 26  
Group Presentations  
Ethnic and Cultural Diversity
- Tuesday, April 23 Group II Presentation  
Thursday, April 25 Group III Presentation
- Reader:                   #9: "Hmong: A Unique People," entire.  
                              #10: Beck, "The Ordeal of Immigration in Wausau." pp. 84-97.  
                              #11: Schmid, "An Invisible Counterculture."  
                              #15: Reecer, Children Without Childhoods," pp. 20-27.
- RBR:                      Balgopal, "Asian Americans: Overview," pp. 231-238.  
                              [RBR #14]

**Week 13:**

**April 29 - May 3**

Group Presentation  
Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

Tuesday, April 30, Group IV Presentation

Thursday, May 2, In-Class Discussion of The Spirit Catches  
You and You Fall Down

Reader: #12: Philips, "Culturally Competent Practice Understanding  
Asian Family Values," entire.

#13: Wilkinson, "A Changed Vision of God." Pp. 52-68.

RBR: Duong Tran and Matsuoka, "Asian Americans: Southeast  
Asians," pp. 249-255.

**Week 14:**

**May 6 - 10**

Concluding Sessions

Berger: Chapter 5, "Focusing on Practice." pp. 175-212, 222-230  
only.

**THE FINAL EXAMINATION WILL BE TAKE-HOME AND WILL  
BE DISTRIBUTED APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS BEFORE  
THE DUE DATE: 5:00 P.M., MONDAY, MAY 13.**

**THE FINAL EXAMINATION FOR THIS CLASS IS  
THURSDAY, MAY 16, 1:10 - 3:10. CLASS  
WILL MEET AT THIS TIME, WITH ATTENDANCE  
REQUIRED. PLAN AHEAD.**