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SW 300.01: Human Behavior and Social Environment

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Social Work 300

Human Behavior and Social Environment

Fall Semester, 2003

Instructor: John Spores

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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).

Vimala Pillari and Moses Newsome, Jr., Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities. (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks-Cole, 1998).

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 November 18, 20, 25 and December 2. Each student will prepare an assessment of the group structure and process occurring as the presentation is developed and presented. The chart presented in the Electronic Reserve reading 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.

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|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Periodic Quizzes | 225 points |
| Midterm Examination (October 1 – October 23). | 100 points |
| Group Presentation and Group Analysis | 100 points |
| Final Examination (Due December 15). | <u>150 points</u> |

TOTAL 575 POINTS

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

ER: Reserve Book Room, ELECTRONIC RESERVE

Week 1: **September 2-5**

Introduction to Course
Ecosystems, Generalist, and Strengths Perspectives

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

Pillari: Chapter 1, "An Overview of Human Behavior in Systems of Different
Sizes." pp. 1-31

ER: Auerswald, "Maria Case." pp. 114-119 only.

Fadiman: READ THE SPIRIT CATCHES YOU AND YOU FALL DOWN AT
YOUR OWN PACE DURING THE SEMESTER, COMPLETING IT NO
LATER THAN DECEMBER 3. Besides class discussion, there will be a
final examination exercise on this book.

Week 2: **September 8-12**

Week 3: **September 15-19**

Introduction continued.
Systems: Families

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

Pillari: Chapter 2, "The Family." pp.33-86

ER: Proctor, Davis, and Vosler, "Families: Direct Practice," pp. 941-950.

Ehrenreich, "Evaluation," (from Nickel and Dimed), pp. 193-221.

Week 4: **September 22-26**

Systems: Groups

Pillari: Chapter 3, "What are Groups?" pp. 87-127.

ER: Johnson, "Multiperson Interaction." pp. 160-171 only.
Kemp, Whittaker, and Tracy, "The Diversity of Environmental Experience,"
pp. 175-197.

Week 5: **September 29 - October 3**

Week 6: **October 6 - 10**

Systems: Organizations/Communities

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

Pillari: Chapter 4, "Organizations," pp. 129-172, and Chapter 5, "Communities," pp. 173-220.

ER: Spickard, "The Illogic of American Racial Categories," pp. 12-23.

Cohen, "Culture, Not Race, Explains Human Diversity," 3 pp.

A take-home examination will be distributed Tuesday, October 1, and will be due class time Thursday, October 23.

Week 7: October 13-17

Systems: Communities
Human Diversity: Gender

ER: Lichtenberg, "Men: Overview," pp. 1691-97.

Bricker-Jenkins and Lockett, "Women: Direct Practice," pp.2529-2539.

Whittaker and Tracy, "Working with Ethnically and Culturally Diverse Clients," pp. 147-161.

October 13 - LAST DAY TO DROP/ADD CLASSES

Week 8: October 20 - 24

Human Diversity: Gender, Sexual Orientation

ER: Tully, "Lesbians: Overview," pp. 1591-1596.

Berger and Kelly, "Gay Men: Overview," pp. 1064-1075.

Okayama, Furuto, and Edmonson, "Components of Cultural Competence of Cultural Competence: Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills," pp. 89-100.

MIDTERM EXAMINATION DUE CLASSTIME, OCTOBER 23

Week 9: October 27-31

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

ER: NASW, "HIV-AIDS Policy Statement," August, 1996

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

Cox and Ephross, "Ethnicity and Social Welfare Policy," pp. 138-157

Horejsi, Heavy Runner Craig, and Pablo, "Reactions by Native American Parents to Child Protection Agencies: A Look at Cultural and Community Factors," pp. 1-14.

Week 10: November 3-7

Human Diversity: Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

ER: Heavyrunner and Morris, "Traditional Native Culture and Resilience." pp. 28-33.

Brave Heart, "Culturally and Historically Congruent Clinical Social Work Assessment with Native Clients." pp. 163-177.

Week 11: November 10-14

Human Diversity: Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

ER: Weaver, "Organization and Community Assessment with First Nations People." pp. 178-195

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.

NOVEMBER 11, NO CLASS, VETERANS DAY

Week 12: November 17-21

Group Presentations

Human Diversity: Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

Tuesday, November 18, Group I Presentation
Thursday, November 20, Group II Presentation

ER: Longres, "Hispanics: Overview." Pp. 1214-1222

Negroni-Rodriguez and Morales, "Individual and Family Assessment Skills with Latino/Hispanic Americans." pp. 132-146

Putsch, "Cross-cultural Communication: The Special Case of Interpreters in Health Care." pp. 3344-3348.

Leashore, "African Americans: Overview," pp. 101-115.

Week 13: **November 24-26**
Group Presentation
Human Diversity: Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

Tuesday, November 25, Group III Presentation

ER: "Hmong: A Unique People," entire.

Schmid, "An Invisible Counterculture."

Reecer, "Children Without Childhoods," pp. 20-27.

Balgopal, "Asian Americans: Overview," pp. 231-238.

Week 14: **December 1-5**
Group Presentation
Human Diversity: Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

Tuesday, December 2, Group IV Presentation

Thursday, December 4, In-Class Discussion of The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down

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

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

Week 15: **December 8-12**
 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 NOVEMBER 20
THE DUE DATE: 5:00 P.M., MONDAY, DECEMBER 15.**