

Indiana University School of Social Work

S510: Human Behavior and the Social Environment: Individuals, Families and Groups (3 credits)

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Semester Year: Fall, 1998
Section No.: V087
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I. Course Rationale & Description

In relation to S511, this course presents and critiques select theoretical frameworks that explain the interaction among individuals and among various sized social systems (families and groups). Using such frameworks as person-in-environment, ecological perspectives, and the dual perspective, this course examines how these frameworks may be applied to understand and evaluate human behavior across the life span. The course focuses on the dynamic interplay among biological, psychological, and social variables within a diversity context. Social work values and ethics provide the guidelines for addressing and critically analyzing issues of personal well-being and the social functioning of populations-at-risk. Students will come to understand how systemic inequality and oppression impact human behavior and the need to advocate for social and economic justice among people of color, women, lesbians and gay men, and other populations-at-risk as distinguished by age, ethnicity, culture, class, religion, and physical or mental challenges.

II. Objectives

In this course, students are expected to demonstrate achievement of the following objectives:

1. Identify the biological, psychological, and socio-cultural variables and the interaction among them, that may shape person-environment behavior across the life span.
2. Understand the process of critical thinking and apply it to the analysis of human behavior.
3. Apply and critique various theoretical frameworks in relation to interactions between and among people as members of families and groups.
4. Evaluate applicable theoretical frameworks within the ethical and value base of the profession.
5. Identify oppressed populations including people of color, women, lesbian women and gay men, and other populations at risk such as those distinguished by age, ethnicity, culture, class, religion, physical or mental ability, as well as the diversity of family systems;
6. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression as well as theoretical frameworks that explain and predict its impact upon the development and functioning of individuals, families and

III. Course Outline and Readings

A. Required Texts

Schraver, J. M. (1998). Human behavior and the social environment: Shifting paradigms in essential knowledge for social work practice (Second Edition). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Payne, M. (1997). Modern social work theory: A critical introduction (Second Edition). Chicago: Lyceum.

Other required readings are listed under the course outline and will be on reserve at the library or are in the *Encyclopedia of Social Work*.

B. Course Content

Unit 1 - Paradigms and Theories: What does it mean to me?

a. Required Readings:

1. Schraver text, Chapters 1, 2 and 3.
2. Turner, F. J. (1979). Social Work Treatment (Second Edition). New York: The Free Press. Chapter 1. (On reserve).
3. Gitterman, A. (1991). "Creative connections between practice and theory". Theory and practice in social group work: Creative connections. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press. (On reserve).
4. Payne text, Chapters 1 and 2.
5. Payne text, Chapter 6, "Systems and ecological models".
6. *Encyclopedia* entries: Ecological Perspective

b. Assignment: In three to five typewritten pages, describe the theoretical foundation of your actual or future social work practice. Using the above readings as resources, reflect upon your undergraduate education as well as personal experiences and identify theory which influences your thinking about working with people and provide an example of how it may impact what you actually do (or will do) in practice. This paper is UNGRADED. **DUE Sept. 28th.**

Unit 2 - Traditional/Dominant Perspectives on Individuals

a. Required Readings:

1. Schriver text, Chapter 4
2. Payne, Chapters 3, 5, 8 and 9.
3. *Encyclopedia* entries: Cognition and Social Cognitive Theory

b. Assignment: Quiz #1 - **October 12th.**

Unit 3 - Alternative/Possible Perspectives on Individuals

a. Required Readings:

1. Schriver text, Chapter 5 (One part on specific assigned focus group) and introduction, summary and each of the "illustrative readings".
2. Chestang, L. (1976). "Environmental influences on social functioning: The black experience." In Cafferty P. and Chestang, L. (eds). The diverse society. 60-74. Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.

b. Assignment: You will be assigned (based upon your selected preferences) to one of the four focus groups identified by Schriver. You will be expected to do a one-hour class presentation on the materials presented in your section of the chapter. You are encouraged to also use video/audio tapes to heighten awareness of the class to specific issues of these populations addressed by the theories presented.

GROUP PRESENTATIONS - October 19th and 26th .

Unit 4 - Perspectives on Families and Groups

a. Required Readings;

1. Schriver text, Chapter 6 and 7.
2. *Encyclopedia* entries: Families: Demographic Shifts; Families: Direct Practice; Self-help Groups;

b. Assignment: Quiz #2. **November 23rd.**

Unit 5 - Oppression and Populations-at-risk

a. Required Readings:

1. Payne, Chapters 10 and 11.

b. Assignment: Service Learning **DUE December 7th** (Alternative assignment: Book Report **DUE November 16th**). See appendix for specific instructions about these assignments

Unit 6: Putting it all together

a. Required reading:

1. Schriver text, Chapter 10.

2. Payne, Chapter 12.

2. Grimley, D., Prochaska, J., Velicer, W., Blais, L. & DiClemente, C. (1994). Chapter 1 - "The transtheoretical model of change" in T. Brintaupt & R. Lipka (Eds.) Changing the self: Philosophies, techniques and experiences. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

b. Assignment: Final paper (see specific instructions). **DUE Dec. 14th.**

Course Outline

- 8/31: Welcome and review syllabus
Critical thinking group activities
- 9/7: Paradigms - video (**All sections together**)
Task: Orientation for service learning.
- 9/14: Theory 101: Analyzing theory and its relationship to practice.
Perspectives for Social Work Practice: Systems theory, Strengths perspective and Life Model.
Task: Preferences for alternative presentations.
- 9/21: Activity on Major perspectives for social work practice
Intro to traditional theories on individual development.
Task: First meeting for alternative presentations.
- 9/28 Traditional theories continued: (**All sections together**)
Erickson video
Task: Group presentation meetings
First theoretical paper due
- 10/5: Traditional theories on individuals (complete and summarize)
Task: Each group develops 5 questions for quiz
Group presentation meetings
- 10/12 **Quiz #1**
Introduction to alternative theories: Oppression, empowerment and feminist theory
Task: Meetings for group presentations.
- 10/19: Presentations #1 and #2
- 10/26: Presentations #3 and #4
- 11/2: Dual Perspective video. (**All sections together**)
Reflection Session #1 for Service Learning
- 11/9: Small group theory.
Task: Analysis of your own small group process.

Unit #1 - Personal Theories paper	20
Unit #2 - Quiz	20
Unit #3 - Group Presentation	20
Unit #4 - Quiz	20
Unit #5 - Service Learning/Book Report	20
Unit #6 - Final Paper	20
Ungraded	20
	<hr/> 100%

Each unit will have an assignment which has been briefly described under Course Content. Specific information on each of the written assignments is included in the appendices to this syllabus. In addition, students will also be assigned a final paper which should serve as a tool to integrate the information covered during this course. The assignments will be weighed as such:

A variety of teaching/learning methods and experiences will be used throughout the semester in an effort to help students meet course objectives. Activities include lectures, class discussion, class presentations, and videos. Since the class is designed for learning by participating, experiencing and practicing, your attendance and active interaction are expected!

IV. Course Format & Assignments

Family theories. (All groups together).	11/16:
Traditional and contemporary family theory	
Task: Groups develop 5 questions for second quiz.	
Book reports due.	
Quiz #2 (You may make arrangements to take this quiz on Friday, Nov. 20th)	11/23:
Discuss service learning and final papers	
THANKSGIVING BREAK!!	
Wrap up group and family theories	11/30:
Reflection #2 for Service Learning	
Final class!!	12/8:
Ecclectic practice: the Transstheoretical Model	
Class evaluation.	
Service Learning Papers DUE	
Final Paper DUE! HAPPY HOLIDAYS!	12/14:

V. Course policies, Evaluation & Grading

1. Students are expected to respect the opinions and feelings of others, even when they differ from their own.
2. Plagiarism or any sort of academic dishonest is prohibited by University policy. See the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association for guidelines concerning in-text references.
3. If a class must be missed, please let the instructor know via a phone message. It is the student's responsibility to get notes from other students regarding materials covered in a missed class.
4. Students who miss class excessively, don't participate in group presentations or hand in late assignments may lose points from their overall total or from a specific assignment.
5. In accordance with the Indiana University School of Social Work grading policy, students must earn at least a "C" to pass this course. Students will be assigned grades based upon the following scale:

97 to 100 = A

93 to 96 = A-

89 to 92 = B+

85 to 88 = B

81 to 84 = B-

77 to 80 = C+

73 to 76 = C

Below 73 = C-

Theoretical Framework Paper Outline

In the first assignment for this course, you will write a brief (2 to 3) page paper identifying the theories which have influenced your thinking and your practice. In the final assignment, you will build upon that paper, using the material covered in this course, to expand and update that assignment. For this final assignment, you will write 5 to 7 pages, describing the theoretical foundation of your future social work practice (your current employment, your upcoming practicum placement or your long-term practice goal). (Please review your first paper and attach it with this final paper!)

For both papers, reflect upon the theories about human behavior (individuals, groups and families) which we have discussed in class, your undergraduate education and any direct practice experiences which you may have had. Identify the theories which influence your behavior as a helper when working with people. Provide specific examples of how the theories might impact what you actually do (or will be doing) with people.

NOTE: This course focuses on human behavior of individuals, families and groups. So, your proposed practice must focus upon direct practice with individuals, families and groups. If you are planning to do macro practice, you might consider the practice in your proposed Foundation field placement which will include both micro and macro practice.

I. Brief description of future practice: Describe what kinds of clients and social problems upon which your practice will focus. (3 points)

II. Identification of theories and rationale for their choice: Describe what theory/theories seem of major importance and which are of lesser importance in this kind of practice. (It may make sense to describe which theories you would NOT use!) How do these theories integrate with professional social work values as well as your personal values, goals and beliefs? What are your reasons for choosing the theories you have selected? (10 points)

III. Practice examples of theory application: Give specific examples of how the underlying theory would lead you to pursue specific practice interventions. (E.g. For empowerment, what is the process and what are the outcomes?) (7 points)

For the first part of this assignment, bibliographic citations are not necessary. For the final assignment, please include citations from your text or other reading, using the APA format. For both parts of the assignment, as in social work practice in general, the ability to present a clearly defined written argument is important for effective practice. Make sure you are articulate and that you say what you mean! Points may be deducted from the total score for inadequate or incorrect citations or poor writing (grammar, spelling, logic, etc.)

TOTAL: 20 points

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Service Learning Reflection Paper

For this assignment, students must complete 20 hours of voluntary service at an approved community-based service agency which serves children, families or single adults who experience oppression in their lives. Students will be provided orientation to the service learning agencies, and required to attend two Reflection sessions to discuss issues of oppression with agency staff or course instructors. As the graded product for this experience, students are expected to submit a signed log sheet indicating the hours worked as well as a 5 page Reflection Paper following this outline:

I. The Setting (5 points)

Describe your initial reaction to the setting. Discuss your own stereotypes about the agency. What dimensions of diversity reflected by the population of persons served by the agency are similar/dissimilar to yourself? Ride around the neighborhood surrounding the agency and note how the neighborhood is similar/dissimilar to your own. What are some of your assumptions about people in this setting? How you will interact with them or they with you? What are your fears? What are your comfort areas?

II. Your Values and Beliefs (5 points)

Describe and demonstrate your understanding of your own values and beliefs. What are the implications for relationships with persons from other backgrounds? How are your values a help and a hindrance? What were your initial assumptions about how the clients might relate to you? What has been surprising to you about your initial assumptions and your actual interaction with people at the agency?

III. Social and Economic Justice (5 points)

Describe your understanding, appreciate and personal sensitivity to the unique lifestyles, customs, value systems, aspirations and experiences of the persons with whom you have come into contact at the agency. How does the agency empower its consumer group?

Discuss how issues of inequality, social and economic injustice are part of the everyday lives of persons served by the agency. What have you learned about the strengths of those persons? What are the survival strategies which help them manage discrimination in the United States? Indiana? Indpls?

IV. Human Behavior (5 points)

Identify behaviors of the persons served. Using at least one human behavior theory discussed in this class, explain and/or analyze that behavior. Give specific examples of how this theory would direct your thinking and actions in practice at this agency.

TOTAL: 20 poi

Book Report Outline

If you are not able to participate in the Service Learning option in this course, the book report will serve as an alternative assignment. Read a book from the attached list. This book should be about a population who regularly experience oppression with which you are NOT strongly identified yourself. After you read the book, write a 5 to 7 page "book report" following the outline below.

Section 1- Brief Summary: Briefly summarize the major plot and characters of the book, making sure you fully identify the oppression issues addressed. (4 points)

Section 2- Quote: Identify a quote which illuminates the oppression experienced by the characters in the book in a meaningful and emotionally evocative way. (2 points)

Section 3- Character's Behavior: Identify the behavior of the characters in the book that have been impacted by the oppression they experienced. (You should give a minimum of three examples!) (6 points)

Section 4 - Theoretical Analysis: Identify one theory of human behavior discussed in the text/readings from this course and analyze/explain the behaviors listed above. Also, provide a rationale for your choice of theories above others. (6 points)

Section 5 - Conclusion: Discuss how this book impacted your views about the oppressed population. Explain how this might impact upon your social work practice. (2 points)

Make sure you cite references, using APA style, on the theory from your text or other readings.

TOTAL: 20 points

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Suggested Books for Book Report Assignment

People of Color:

The Autobiography of Malcolm X by Malcolm X with Alex Haley
Beloved by Toni Morrison
Black Boy by Richard Wright
The Bingo Palace by Louise Erdrich
The Color Purple by Alice Walker
Dessa Rose by Shirley Jackson
The Education of Little Tree by Forest Carter
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou
Like Snow Falling on Cedars
The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan
The Perez Family
The Temple of My Familiar by Alice Walker
Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston
Tracks by Louise Erdrich
Yellow Raft on Blue Water by Michael Dorris

Gay/Lesbian/Bi-sexuality:

The Beautiful Room is Empty by Edmund White
Rubyfruit Jungle by Rita Mae Brown
The Dreyfus Affair by Peter Lefcourt
Angels in America presented by the Phoenix Theatre (Part 1 and Part II)

Women:

Fried Green Tomatoes by Fanny Flagg
Heart of the Country and Life and Loves of a SheDevil by Fay Weldon
(Many of the books in the previous two sections also deal with women's issues)

Disability/Differential Ability issues:

As We Are Now by Mary Sarton
The Broken Cord: A Family's Ongoing Struggle with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome by M. Dorris
The Heart is a Lonely Hunter by Carson McCullers
My Left Foot by Sir Christ Brown
There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom by Judy & Sean Barron

Bibliography

These are additional readings, including many original sources, from which you may want to do additional reading (now or in the future!):

- Anderson, R. & Carter, I. (1978). *Human behavior in the social environment: A social systems approach* (Second edition). Chapter 1, pp. 8-32.
- Bloom, M. (1992). "A conversation with Carel Germain on human development in the ecological context" in M. Bloom (Ed.) *Changing lives: Studies in human development and professional helping*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, pp. 406-409.
- Freud, S. (1991). "Psychodynamic theories: A frame for development" in M. Bloom (Ed.) *Changing lives: Studies in human development and professional helping*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, pp. 419-427.
- Hall, C. & Lindzey, G. (1970). "Roger's self theory" in *Theories of personality* (Second edition). New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Hartford, M. (1971). "Phases in Group Development" in *Groups in social work: Application of small group theory and research to social work practice*, Chap. 3.
- Heap, Group *Theory for Social Workers*. New York: Pergamon Press, 1977, Chap. 7, pp. 138-149, 183-185.
- Lowy, L. "Decision-Making and Group Work." In Bernstein, S. (ed.). *Explorations in Group Work*. Boston University School of Social Work, 1965, pp. 107-115.
- Nes, J. & Iadicola, P. (1989). "Toward a definition of feminist social work". *Social Work*, 34(1), pp. 12-21.
- Pinderhughes, E. (1983). "Empowerment for our clients and for ourselves". *Social Casework*, Pp. 331-338.
- Saleeby, D. (1992). *The strengths perspective in social work practice*. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishing Group. Chapters 1 & 2. (On reserve).
- Thyer, B. (1991). "A behavioral perspective on human development" in M. Bloom (Ed.) *Changing lives: Studies in human development and professional helping*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, pp. 410-418.