Human Behavior and the Social Environment
Fall Semester 2009

Course: SWK 303   Dr. Kathleen Boland, ACSW, LCSW   Suzanne Weaver, ACSW, LSW
Credits 3   Curtis 232   Curtis 233
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Course Domain:

The primary objective of this course is to build a strong theory foundation for social work practice with specific content in social, behavioral and biological sciences. Knowledge from prior foundation courses (sociology, anthropology, psychology and biology) will be integrated to provide a bio-psycho-socio-spiritual framework for students to view human growth and development through the lifespan. The "person in environment" focus is approached from an ecological perspective of individuals in the context of family, groups and the community. Discussions on ethnic minorities, gender, people with disabilities, gay men and lesbians and others affected by oppression will add to an understanding of human and environmental diversity. The social systems model will help students focus on the dynamic interplay and reciprocal nature of the person and the environment.

Course Objectives:

Program Competency 2.1.4, 2.1.7

1. Demonstrate understanding of the distinguishable stages of human development over the lifespan, the range of social systems in which people live and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being;

2. Demonstrate a holistic understanding of human behavior which comprises biological, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual components;

3. Apply knowledge to understand the person-in-environment perspective guided by assessment;

Program Competency 2.1.3

4. Develop understanding of the theoretical dimensions of behavior evidenced within various social groups, organizations and communities;

5. Connect the knowledge of social issues and problems with theories in human behavior to develop appropriate social work assessments;

6. Develop sensitivity to human diversity (i.e., race, ethnicity, class, gender, disablement and sexual orientations) and incorporate this with an understanding of the impact of racism,

sexism, ageism, classism, that shape individual functioning, group processes and social institutions;

7. Demonstrate and apply knowledge from prior liberal arts courses and foundation courses (i.e., sociology, psychology, anthropology and biology) to the bio-psycho-social-spiritual factors that affect human behavior and environment;

Program Competency 2.1.6, 2.1.3, 2.1.10

8. Identify the importance of scientific research in providing theoretical perspectives regarding human development; evaluate studies concerning social and environmental context of human behavior to understand individual development and behavior across the lifespan and the interactions among individuals and between individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

Program Competency 2.1.2

9. Incorporate human behavior and the social environment knowledge with social work professional values and ethics; identify ethical issues and apply ethical reasoning strategies that impact on social work practice with various size systems;

10. Demonstrate understanding of human behavior and the social environment in the context of the ecological model and the systems theoretical framework.

Course Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate understanding of human behavior and the social environment in the context of the system theoretical framework.

Assessment: Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills in the application of systems theory to a non-fiction novel and documentary through a scholarly paper.

Students will demonstrate skill mastery in understanding the stages of human development, an understanding of the bio-psycho-social cultural-spiritual components of human behavior. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the bio-psycho-social spiritual factors that affect human behavior.

Assessment: Students will successfully complete one written examination.

Students will demonstrate knowledge of human behavior in a generalist perspective with attention to the function of the family, social groups, organizations and communities as well as knowledge of social issues, human diversity and the impact of racism, sexism, ageism, classism that shape individual functioning, group processes and social institutions.

Assessment: Students will give an oral and written presentation researching a certain developmental stage in the life cycle with regard to diversity factors or

environmental deficits. The project will highlight the impact of individual development, membership in families, groups, organizations and communities.

Textbooks:

Pelzer, D. (1995). *A child called it*. Dearfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc.

Zastrow C., & Kirst-Ashman, K. (2004). *Understanding human behavior and the social environment*, (7th ed.). Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall Publishers.

Recommended Readings:

Unit I Ecological Perspective on Human Behavior:

Germain, C.B. (1991). *Human behavior in the social environment: An ecological view*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Mulroy, E. (1997). Building a neighborhood network: Interorganizational collaboration to prevent child abuse and neglect. *Social Work*, *42,* 255-264.

Taylor, S., Austin, M., & Mulroy, E. (2004). Evaluating the social environment component of social work courses on human behavior and the social environment. *Journal of Human Behavior and Social Environment*, 61-84.

Warren, K., Franklin, C., & Streeter, C. (1998). New directions in system theory: Chaos and complexity. *Social Work*, *44,* 357-371.

Unit II; Lifespan Development – Infancy and Childhood:

Burman, S., & Allen-Meares, P. (1994). Neglected victims of murder: Children's witness to parental homicide. *Social Work*, *39*, 28-34.

Heifer, R. (1991). Child abuse and neglect: Assessment, treatment and prevention. October 21, 2007. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *15*, 5-15.

Levin, A., & Mills, L.G. (2003). *Fighting for child custody when domestic violence is at issue: Survey of state laws*.

Lindsay, D., & Regehr, C. (1993). Protecting severely abused children: Clarifying the role of criminal justice and child welfare. *American Journal Orthopsychiatric Association*, *63*, 509-517.

Unit III: Adolescence and Young Adulthood:

Berger, R. (1990). Passing: Impact on the quality of same-sex couple relationships. *Social Work*, *35*, 328-332.

Carroll, M. (1998). Social work's conceptualization of spirituality. *Spiritualization in Social Work: New Directions*, *18*, 1-13.

Hall, T., & Edwards, K. (1996). The initial development and factor analysis of the spiritual assessment inventory. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, *24*, 233-246.

LaSala, M. (2007). Parental influence, gay youths, and safer sex. *Social Work, 32*, 49-55.

Mann, E., & Reynolds, A. (2006). Early intervention and juvenile delinquency/prevention: Evidence from the Chicago longitudinal study. *Social Work, 30*, 153-167.

Poindexter, C. (1977). Sociopolitical antecedents to Stonewall: Analysis of the gay rights movement in the United States. *Social Work, 42*, (6) 607-615.

Van Dorn, R., & Williams J. H. (2003). Correlates associated with escalation of delinquent behavior in incarcerated youths. *Social Work*, *48*, 523-531.

Unit IV: Middle Adulthood:

Lucas, Z., Goldschmidt, L., & Day, N. 2003). Alcohol use among pregnant African American women: Ecological considerations. *Health and Social Work*, *28*, 273-283.

McQuaide, S. (1998). Women at midlife. *Social Work*, *43*, 21-31.

Unit V: Late Adulthood:

Fuller, T.E., & Minkler, M. (2000). African American grandparents raising grandchildren: A national profile of demographic and health characteristics. *Health and Social Work*, *25*, 109-117.

Kjemer, B. (2000). Husbands caring for wives with dementia: a longitudinal study on continuity and change. *Health and Social Work*, *25*, 97-107.

International Social Work Readings:

Balqopal, P. (2000). *Social work with immigrants and refugees*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Pierce, L., & Steptember, R. (2000). Reconceptualizing child maltreatment: Providing better services for children and families in South Africa. *Social Development Issues, 22*, (1) 30-34.

Ramanathan, C., & Link, R. (1999). *All our futures: Principles and resources for social work practice in a global era.* Pacific Grove, CA: Wadsworth.

Van Soest, D. (1977). *The global crisis of violence: Common problems, universal causes, shared strategies.* Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

<u>Week</u>

8/26, 9/2 Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior
      Assignment—Chapter 1, Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman

9/9, 9/16 Biological Systems and Infancy and Childhood
      Psychological Systems and Infancy and Childhood
      Social Systems and Infancy and Childhood
      Assignment—Chapter 2, Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman

9/23   *A Child Called It.* Pelzer, D**.**
      Child Abuse, Maltreatment and Neglect
      Video: *The Unquiet Death of Eli Creekmore*
      Assignment—Chapter 3, Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman

9/30 **Due:** **Paper due - on Eli Creekmore and *A Child Called It*** (use outline for paper in
      syllabus)
      Video: *First Look DVD 616.85882*
      Assignment—Chapter 4, Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman

10/7   Ethnocentrism and Racism
      Assignment—Chapter 5, Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman

10/14   **Exam – 10/14/09**
      Chapters 1 through 5

10/21, 10/28 Biological, Psychological and Social Development in Adolescence
      Video: *Secret Life of Teens*
      Assignment—Chapters 6, 7, 8, Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman

11/4   Gender Roles and Sexism
      Mental Health
      Video: *Killing Us Softly*
      Assignment – Chapters 8, 9, Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman

11/11   Sexual Orientation
      Video: *The Bisexual Experience*
      Assignment—Chapter 13, Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman

11/18   Middle Adulthood
      Assignment—Chapters 11, 12, Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman
   Due **Class Presentations**

11/25   **No Class – Thanksgiving Break**

12/2 **Due** **Class Presentations**

Cedar Crest College
Classroom Protocol

Appropriate classroom behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest College Honor Code. Such behavior is defined and guided by complete protection for the rights of all students and faculty to a courteous, respectful classroom environment. That environment is free from distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, inappropriate conversations, cell phones, beepers, and any other behaviors that might disrupt instruction and/or compromise students' access to their Cedar Crest College education. No laptops in the classroom.

Disclosures about personal issues are not appropriate for class discussions and/or presentations.

Furthermore:

Students are expected to have prompt and regular classroom attendance in accordance with the policy stated on the syllabus.

Faculty are expected to make clear on the first day of class reasons for specific classroom decorum and repercussions for noncompliance. Faculty should be aware of setting boundaries and procedures for exceptions to expectation stated in the syllabus.

Honor Philosophy

The Cedar Crest College Honor Philosophy is based upon the principle that, as a self-governing body, students have the ability to create an atmosphere of trust and support. Within this environment, individuals are empowered to make their own decisions, develop personal regard for the system under which they live, and achieve a sense of integrity and judgment that will guide them through life.

Social Work Program Attendance Policy

Social work courses typically meet only fourteen sessions each semester. In the interests of your development as a professional social work practitioner as well as the interests of your future clients, it is vital for you to attend these class sessions. Therefore, the Social Work Program's Attendance Policy is as follows:

1. You may miss two class sessions for whatever reasons without penalty.
2. If you miss a third class session the highest overall grade you can receive for the course is a "B".
3. If you miss a fourth class session the highest overall grade you can receive for the course is a "C".
4. Five or more class absences will result in your need to retake the course.

Note: Save your two accepted absences for unforeseen circumstances such as illness, transportation problems, work and child care responsibilities, etc. These will not be acceptable excuses for absence if you have already missed two class sessions.

Arriving late for class and/or leaving early will count cumulatively toward missed classes.

Students representing the college in athletic and other capacities will be excused from class for games/matches/meets, etc., only, not for practices. However, student athletes who are maintaining a less than "C" average in the course will not be excused from class.

In all cases of missed classes, it is the student's responsibility to do whatever is necessary to compensate for any missed assignments or lecture material.

Methods of Evaluation

Students submitting an assignment past the due date will have their grade lowered one letter. Strict adherence of the Cedar Crest College Honor Code Policy is required.

Class participation and attendance	5%
Reaction paper (9/30/09)	30%
Exam (10/14/09)	30%
Group project and presentation	35%
(11/18, 12/2)	

Note: The group project will consist of members of the group researching a certain developmental stage in the life cycle with regards to diversity factors and or environmental deficits. The project should highlight the impact of individual development, membership in families, groups, organizations and communities; students also need to show the interrelationship between human biology, psychology, culture, and spirituality as they affect human behavior.

Student Assignments

Each student is responsible for:

1. Regularly attending class sessions. Attendance will be kept and graded according to the actual percentage of class sessions the student attends.

2. Read all assignments in advance of class to facilitate meaningful participation in class.

3. Write one scholarly paper relevant to the Eli Creekmore video and *A Child Called It*. Specific criteria included in the syllabus.

4. Complete one in-class exam designed to test the understanding and mastery of the material from the required text and readings.

5. Complete one group project with presentation scheduled on either 11/18 or 12/2. Specific criteria included in the syllabus.

Note: **Students submitting an assignment past the due date will have their grade lowered by one letter. Strict adherence to the Cedar Crest College Honor Code Policy is required.**

Grading

Class attendance and participation	5%	
Reaction paper – (due 9/30/09)	30%	
Exam – Chapters 1-5 (10/14/09)	30%	
Group Project and presentation	35%	(10% group presentation, 25% group paper)
(11/18, 12/2)		

Assignments

1) Reaction paper on Eli Creekmore video and *A Child Called It*
   Due: September 30, 2009
   Length: 5 pages double-spaced <u>APA format</u> using appropriate in text and reference page citations.
       Value: 30%
      *Format: Paper must be stapled and have a cover page and follow APA format

   Task: To demonstrate understanding of assessment, systems theory and the micro, mezzo and macro levels of practice, and to apply these concepts on the Eli Creekmore video and the text, *A Child Called It.*

Outline for Paper – the paper is to be in narrative form, use headings, use correct APA

   I. <u>Overview the main concepts of both Eli Creekmore and *A Child Called It*</u>.
      - Assess the main issues in these two cases
      - Identify the types of abuse that occurred
      - Identify where these children <u>should</u> be developmentally (i.e., what stage are they at developmentally, socially, psychologically) <u>and</u> are they achieving those developmental stages? (this is a <u>two part</u> question)

   II. <u>Identify the key systems concepts that apply to these two cases</u>
      - What types of stressors are in each family system?
      - What are some of the causes of child abuse in both of these cases?
      - What are the subsystems in each case? (reference your textbook)

   III. What would be the role of social work in these two cases - (from a micro, mezzo and macro level of practice)?

IV.   What are your personal views of the issue?

V.   What could have been done differently in both of these cases?

VI.   Conclusion and summary.

<u>Note</u>: All references in text must be in APA, use a reference page also in APA format.

2.)   EXAM
       Date: 10/14/09
       Length: A series of multiple choice and short answer questions based on
                 Chapters 1-5. This is an in-class exam.
       Value: 30%

3.)   GROUP PROJECT & PRESENTATION – 35% (10% Group presentation, 25% group
paper)
       Date: 11/18 and 12/2
       Length: 20-minute presentation and 5-7 page paper
       Short paper (outline attached) with reference page, outline of presentation and handouts
       * Provide an outline and handouts for the class as well as to the professor.
       *** All in APA format – APA reference page. Must use outside sources (journal articles
          and books to support your presentation.**
       * You must use Social Work journals and books as reference material

       I.   <u>Identification and Overview of Developmental Stage</u>
             • Select one developmental phase and <u>briefly</u> overview what is typical of this
                time developmentally, socially, psychologically and spiritually. What are
                normal milestones and events typical to this stage of life? (i.e. Infancy and
                Childhood, Adolescence and Young Adulthood, Middle Adulthood, Later
                Adulthood)

       II.   <u>Specific Issue</u>
             • Select one issue or topic related to this stage and discuss, include an overview
                of the issue, its causes, etc. (i.e., Teenage drug abuse, child abuse, elder
                abuse, Alzheimer's disease, abortion, adoption, infertility, eating disorders,
                mental illness, crime/juvenile delinquency, ADHD, autism, HIV/AIDS, date
                rape, drug addicted infants, sexual orientation, death and dying, suicide,
                domestic violence, gangs, civil unions, gay and lesbian parents, etc.)
             • You must use outside references to support your work, using Social Work
                journals and books. No internet or Wikipedia as references.

       III. <u>Bio-psycho-social-Spiritual Analysis</u>
             • Analyze the selected topic or issue from:
                o A biological perspective
                o Psychological perspective
                o Social perspective (membership in families, groups, organization,

community)
- o Spiritual perspective (what are spiritual strengths, needs and experiences)
- o Cultural perspective and diversity factors

Note: You are looking at the issue from the bio-psych-social-spiritual perspective

IV. <u>Social Work Services</u>
- Tie the issue to what relevant social work agencies would be appropriate in dealing with this specific issue.
- Identify solutions or interventions to the problem

(Be general in types of agencies or facilities likely to work with the problem)

V. <u>Conclusion and Summary</u>
- Summarize the paper briefly
- What is known, what still needs to be learned? (What research needs to be done to understand more about the issue?)

<u>Group Presentation</u> (Identify what section is completed by each group member.)

- **Note**: the group project is designed to have group members of 3-4 people researching a certain developmental stage in the life cycle with regard to diversity factors and/or environmental deficits. The project should highlight the impact of individual development, membership in families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students need to demonstrate understanding of the interrelationships between human biology, psychology, culture and spirituality as they affect human behavior.

- Each group will present for approximately 20 minutes on the selected topic. Each group should have **appropriate handouts and an outline for the class and instructor**. Interactive presentations should occur to facilitate group discussion. Each group will turn in <u>a 7-page paper following the outline in the syllabus and with a reference page</u> in APA format to the instructor on the scheduled date of the presentation.

- The paper must adhere to APA format.

- Use video clips, case studies, etc. to make the presentation interactive.

- Each group must adhere to the <u>20</u> minute allotted time.

- No opinions on your topic or self-disclosure – give a clear presentation of the facts and the issue.

- Do not use unsubstantiated internet sources or Wikipedia.

- Use interactive methods – video clips, handouts, case examples to present the selected topic.

Note: Writing Requirements for all Assignments

APA style and format required.

Grades will be determined by the following criteria:
1. Depth of analysis.
2. Completion of accuracy of the assignment.
3. Quality of critical thinking and provision of supporting evidence.
4. Care in the articulation of ideas.
5. Specificity rather than vagueness.