RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  

Human Behavior in the Social Environment  
Master Syllabus FOR ON-THE-GROUND Sections

Section Information
Meeting Date/Time:
Location:
Instructor:
Email:
Office Hours:

Catalog Course Description:
Theories, themes, and issues concerning the interaction among individuals—as they grow, change, and develop over the life course—and their social context are reviewed. Theories and assumptions about human behavior and diversity are critically applied to social work contexts. Values and ethical issues related to biopsychosocial development are examined.

Course Overview:
This course is designed to provide the theoretical and knowledge base for social work practice. It emphasizes the bio-psycho-social development patterns of individuals and families as they interact in various environments. Theories of human behavior pertaining to individuals and families are critically reviewed. The course looks at the policy and research implications of human behavior in social environments. In keeping with the School’s mission, special attention is given to vulnerable populations and how social systems promote or deter the development of individuals and families.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all courses will be offered either fully online or synchronously during the originally on-the-ground designated day and time. The course will consist of a 90 minute synchronous lecture and other real-time classroom activities. The remaining 50 minutes will be spent completing asynchronous activities on your own time, such as writing a reaction paper, or participating in a discussion board related to the content and process of the synchronous portion of the session.

Place of Course in the Program:
This is a required, first year, generalist course. There are no prerequisites.

The Council on Social Work Education Policy and Accreditation Standards:
The MSW Program at Rutgers is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE’s accreditation standards can be reviewed at www.cswe.org.

In keeping with CSWE standards, the Rutgers School of Social Work has integrated the
CSWE competencies within its curriculum. These competences serve as program level Learning Goals for the MSW Program and include the following. Upon completion of their MSW education students will be able to: demonstrate ethical and professional behavior; engage in diversity and difference in practice; advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice; engage in practice informed research and research informed practice; engage with individuals, families, groups organizations and communities; intervene with individual, families, groups organizations and communities; and evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

This course will assist students in developing the following competencies:

**Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.

**Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

**Course Learning Goals**

Course level learning goals primarily relate to the aforementioned competencies/program level learning goals as the course addresses policy analysis skills and competencies as well as addresses human rights and social, economic and environmental justice through the study of the evolution of the US welfare state and the emergence of the social work profession. (Note: Faculty, please add brief statement that highlights the alignment of the course learning goals with the competencies/program level learning goals above)
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to: (Note: Faculty please use active language, per Bloom’s taxonomy)

1. Recognize that human behavior is multi-determined and that, from an ecological perspective, biological, psychological, sociological, cultural, organizational and community systems have transactional effects on individual and family functioning;

2. Identify the ways in which the social environment can constrain (through, for example, poverty, racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia) or enhance the development of individuals and families;

3. Critically evaluate and integrate various theories of human behavior regarding individuals and families;

4. Increase awareness of personal attitudes and values regarding human diversity and vulnerable populations and thus better articulate professional values and ethics in support of social and economic justice as a means of promoting the optimum development of individuals and families.

School of Social Work Mission Statement and School Wide Learning Goals

The mission of the School of Social Work is to develop and disseminate knowledge through social work research, education, and training that promotes social and economic justice and strengths individual, family, and community well-being, in this diverse and increasingly global environment of New Jersey and beyond.

School Wide Learning Goals: Upon graduation all students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior;
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice; and
3. Engage, Assess, and Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Course Materials:

There are two required texts, plus required journal articles and book chapters, for this course. The two texts are:

Please check your campus bookstore for these items or order online through platforms such as Amazon.com.

Other required readings (separate from textbook) are available through the Rutgers University Library “Reading List” that is integrated into your Canvas course. To find your readings:

Click on the “Reading List” tab in the Canvas navigation bar to the left hand side of the course. Please note: this list contains links to articles and other required readings separate from the textbook (if applicable). Please follow the syllabus and/or Canvas Readings and Resources page in each module for more specific required readings and resources for each week (including textbook/media). For further instructions please click here for a video tutorial.

**Course Assignments and Grading:**

This is set up in Canvas.

There are six graded course components for this class:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENT</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
<th>WEIGHTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #1</td>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #2</td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #3</td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Quiz</td>
<td>Open-book and online; all multiple-choice questions based on Hutchison (2019); opens in December and due by December XX</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance</td>
<td>Ongoing throughout the semester.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation/Asynchronous Activities</td>
<td>Ongoing throughout the semester.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students’ grades across the components will be averaged together (weighted according to the percentages above). Final grades will follow the school-wide cut-offs as follow, with scores rounded up at .5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Policies:**

**Class Attendance**

The benchmarks below will be used to assess students’ class attendance at the end of the semester:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A/B+</td>
<td>Misses up to two class sessions. Arrives on time. Returns from breaks on time. Stays through remainder of the class session. Attends course wrap-up session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(87-100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/C+</td>
<td>Misses three class sessions or does not attend final course wrap-up session. Noticeable pattern of arriving to class late and/or leaving early.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(77-86)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Misses three class sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(70-76)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Misses four class sessions or more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0-69)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Class Participation**

The rubric below will be used to assess students’ class participation at the end of the semester:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A/B+</td>
<td>Demonstrates attentive listening while in class. Appropriately and consistently speaks up to answer and ask questions. Contributes to class discussion in thoughtful ways. Encourages classmates to fully participate as well. Participation in small group, is focused, and on topic. Demonstrate evidence of active listening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(87-100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/C+</td>
<td>Demonstrates attentive listening while in class. Only occasionally speaks up to answer and ask questions in the large-group setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(77-86)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Rarely speaks up to answer and ask questions. Sometimes contributes to class discussion, or contributions to class discussion verge on dominating class time. Inconsistent or overbearing participation in small group activities. Signs of being “checked out” from class (e.g., not responding in a reasonable time if called upon).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(70-76)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Oftentimes seems checked out while in class. Never speaks up to answer and ask questions. Never contributes to class discussion. Regularly observed as inactive in small group activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0-69)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Late Work Policy

You must turn in written work before the time specified in Canvas. Work on writing assignments that is submitted within 24 hours after a deadline has passed will be penalized one full letter grade. Anything submitted beyond 24 hours of a due date will not be accepted. If an emergency arises with a due date, students must request an extension as much as possible in advance and in writing. The timeliness of the request for an extension will be weighted heavily in the instructor’s decision as to whether or not the extension is warranted. If an extension is granted, the student will receive this information in writing from the instructor indicating when the assignment needs to be submitted. Please refer to the schedule of course topics and readings for deadlines with respect to each assignment. Please note that no late work is acceptable on the final course quiz.

Submitting Written Work

All students must read the “Orientation to HBSE Assignments” item on the course website for a complete list of policies on how to submit written work. The instructions on this item apply to all writing assignments and should be reviewed for each of them.

Academic Integrity

As per Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, “Students are responsible for understanding the principles of academic integrity and abiding by them in all aspects of their work at the University. Students are also encouraged to help educate fellow students about academic integrity and to bring all alleged violations of academic integrity they encounter to the attention of the appropriate authorities.” All SSW students are expected to review and familiarize themselves with the RU Academic Integrity Policy in its’ entirety.

As per Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, “The principles of academic integrity require that a student: make sure that all work submitted in a course, academic research, or other activity is the student’s own and created without the aid of impermissible technologies, materials, or collaborations; properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, images, or words of others; properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work; obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with the student’s interpretation or conclusions; treat all other students ethically, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This principle requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress; uphold the ethical standards and professional code of conduct in the field for which the student is preparing.”

Students should review all types of Academic Integrity Violations per the RU Academic Integrity Policy. Below are some of the more common violations, as articulated in Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy:

“Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the use of another person’s words, ideas, images, or results, no matter
the form or media, without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, a student must identify every direct quotation using quotation marks or appropriate indentation and cite both direct quotation and paraphrasing properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Some common examples of plagiarism are: Copying word for word (i.e. quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution: Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one’s own words another person’s written words or ideas as if they were one’s own, regardless of the nature of the assignment; Incorporating into one’s work graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other non-textual material from other sources, regardless of format, without proper attribution.”

“Cheating: Cheating is the use or possession of inappropriate or prohibited materials, information, sources, or aids in any academic exercise. Cheating also includes submitting papers, research results or reports, analyses, and other textual or visual material and media as one’s own work when others prepared them. Some common examples are: Prohibited collaboration: receiving research, programming, data collection, or analytical assistance from others or working with another student on an assignment where such help is not permitted; Copying another student’s work or answers on a quiz or examination; Using or having access to books, notes, calculators, cell phones, technology, or other prohibited devices or materials during a quiz or examination; Submitting the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without permission from the instructors involved; Preprogramming a calculator or other device to contain answers, formulas, or other unauthorized information for use during a quiz or examination.; Acquiring a copy of an examination from an unauthorized source before the examination; Having a substitute take an examination in one’s place; Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement; Submitting as one’s own work a term paper or other assignment prepared, in whole or in part, by someone else.”

Any faculty member or academic administrator who becomes aware of a possible academic integrity violation must initiate a formal complaint with the Office of Student Conduct and the SSW’s Academic Integrity Facilitator (Laura Curran at lacurran@ssw.rutgers.edu). The AIF deciding the case (the “adjudicator”) shall notify the accused student of the allegation in writing or by electronic communication within fifteen working days of the time the faculty member becomes aware of the alleged violation.

Once the student has been notified of the allegation, the student may not drop the course or withdraw from the school until the adjudication process is complete. A TZ or incomplete grade shall be assigned until the case is resolved. For more information, see RU Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures for Adjudicating Academic Integrity Violations.

To promote a strong culture of academic integrity, Rutgers has adopted the following honor pledge to be written and signed on examinations and major course assignments submitted for grading: On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination/assignment.
Receiving Course Messages through Email

Students are expected to regularly check their Rutgers email account for course messages. If students prefer to use a non-University email account, they are responsible for setting up account preferences such that mail sent to their Rutgers account is automatically forwarded to their other account.

Netiquette

1. In all of your interactions, remember there is a person behind the written post.
2. Pause and reflect on a post that is uncomfortable before responding. Consider the root of your emotional reaction.
3. Remember, we are discussing ideas and disagreements that are not personal in nature. Take care in crafting your response to demonstrate your disagreement with the idea, not the person.
4. Do not participate in "flaming." Flaming is inflammatory comments that are hostile and insulting and do not contribute to the learning process. Choose not to respond to "flames" to support a better learning experience for everyone.
5. Be careful with humor and sarcasm. Because the visual cues are absent, many people cannot tell if your comments are meant seriously or facetiously.
6. Contribute to a meaningful discussion by presenting your "best self" in the course environment: Take the time to explain your ideas respectfully and completely. However, also keep brevity in mind. You want to make your point clearly, but also make it concisely.
7. If a peer misinterprets your meaning, acknowledge this without being rude or defensive. It can be challenging to communicate some ideas in writing. This is your opportunity to practice clarifying your ideas to others.
8. Do not post in all caps. This is the equivalent of SHOUTING at someone and is not acceptable.

Diversity Statement

The RU SSW supports an inclusive learning environment where diversity, individual differences and identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) are respected and recognized as a source of strength. Students and faculty are expected to respect differences and contribute to a learning environment that allows for a diversity of thought and worldviews. Please feel free to speak with me if you experience any concerns in this area.

Disability Accommodation

Rutgers welcomes students with disabilities into all of its educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled,
participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation (learn more at https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’ disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form.

Writing Assistance

Success in graduate school and within the larger profession of social work depends on strong writing skills. Several resources are available to help students strengthen their professional and academic writing skills. Writing assistance is available to all MSW students as described below.

Library Research Assistance

Dr. Karen Hartmann is the social work the social work librarian on the New Brunswick Campus karen.hartman@rutgers.edu p. 848-932-6104; Natalie Borisovets is at Newark, Dana Library natalieb@rutgers.edu 973-353-5909; Katie Anderson is at Camden, Robeson Library: Katie.anderson@rutgers.edu 856-225-2830. They are all available to meet with students.

New Brunswick Campus
In New Brunswick, all MSW students (NB, Camden, Newark, IW, online and blended) are eligible to access writing assistance at the New Brunswick Learning Center. Online tutoring may also be available.

https://rlc.rutgers.edu/student-info/group-and-individual-academic-support/writing-coaching

Newark Campus

The Newark Writing Center is available for MSW students on the Newark campus by appointment.

http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter

Camden Campus

The Camden Learning Center provides writing assistance for MSW students on the Camden campus.

http://learn.camden.rutgers.edu/writing-assistance

APA Style
All students are expected to adhere to the citation style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th* edition (2020). It can be purchased at [APA Manual 7th Edition](https://www.apa.org/store). The Purdue OWL website also provide assistance with APA style [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

**Office on Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance**

Our school is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and our school policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We understand that sexual violence can undermine students’ academic success and we encourage students who have experienced some form of sexual misconduct to talk to someone about their experience, so they can get the support they need.

Confidential support and academic advocacy are available through the Rutgers Office on Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance, **848.932.1181, [http://vpva.rutgers.edu](http://vpva.rutgers.edu)**. Services are free and confidential and available 24 hrs./day, 7 days a week.

**Active Shooter Resources**

Over the years, there has been an increase in the number of active shootings on campus. It is important that you know what to do in cases there is an active shooter on campus. Please go to this site to retrieve information that will reduce your personal risk in case of an active shooting on campus-[http://rupd.rutgers.edu/shooter.php](http://rupd.rutgers.edu/shooter.php).

**Weather Cancellations**

Students will receive notification from the instructor by email if class is cancelled because of inclement weather. Within a week of the class cancellation, the instructor will specify an alternative assignment that will allow students to receive credit for the missed session.

**Statement on Personal Technology Use**

In general, no cell phones are allowed in class. If one needs to monitor their cell phone in the case of an emergency, please discuss this with the instructor in advance of class. Otherwise, please turn all modes of ringers off, and put phones out of sight. Students can use phones during designated break periods outside of the classroom.

Also, please do not check email or browse online during class time if you are using a laptop. It might not take away from your own learning experience, but it very well could distract your classmates and the instructor. Please be respectful of the environment within our communal classroom space.
## I. Course Schedule and Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>To Be Read Before the Class Session (In Preparation for In-Class Discussion)</th>
<th>Reaction, Discussion Paper, Self Assessment, or Worksheet due Date</th>
<th>To Be Read for the Writing Assignments (Before and/or After the Assigned Class Session)</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M01</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student Introduction Discussion Board (2 points)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| M02    | Thinking Theoretically | The Other Wes Moore, pp. 1-62.  
| M03    | Person-Environment Perspective & | The Other Wes Moore, pp. 63-123.  
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| M05 | Social Environments and the Body \& Early Childhood | Hutchison, Chapter 4 (early childhood)  
| M06 | Social Cognitive Theory \& | Hutchison, Chapter 5 (middle childhood)  
| M11 | The Life Course Perspective & Young-Old Adulthood | Hutchison, Chapter 9 (young old)  
Lecture Video #1  
Lecture Video #2  
Short reaction paper, highlighting questions for further discussion | Hutchison, Chapter 1 |
| M12 | Risk and Resilience & Old-Old Adulthood | Hutchison, Chapter 10 (old old)  
M13 Game Show Activity | Assignment #3 Due |
| M14 | Course Wrap-Up | * Missing this specific session will subtract points from your course participation grade. *  
M14 Developmental Review and Exam | Final course quiz |
| M15    | Wrap-up and review of exam | Discussion board |