Human Behavior in the Social Environment: SW 502
Master Syllabus FOR ONLINE Sections

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

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 empirical knowledge base for social work practice. It emphasizes the bio-psycho-social development patterns of individuals and families as they interact in various environments throughout the life course. 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. To that end, the Liberatory Consciousness framework which according to Dr. Barbara Love (Love, 2011) is “a framework used to maintain an awareness of the dynamics of oppression characterizing society without giving in to despair and hopelessness about that condition and enabling us practice intentionality about changing systems of oppression.” and “enables humans to live their lives in oppressive systems and institutions with awareness and intentionality, rather than on the basis of the socialization to which they have been subjected” (Love, p. 470), is introduced as an analytic tool to further focus the assessment of theories, policies pertinent to social work practice.

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 and BASW Programs at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE uses the 2015 Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) to accredit and reaffirm baccalaureate and master-level social
work programs in the United States. These accreditation standards can be reviewed at cswe.org or by accessing the link on the Rutgers School of Social Work homepage.

The Rutgers University School of Social Work has integrated the nine CSWE competencies, which are in the 2015 EPAS, within its curriculum. This course will assist students in developing the following specific two 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:

**Generalist Competency 10 (RU SSW Specific):** Liberatory Consciousness: Social workers identify how the development of a liberatory consciousness is a pre-condition for engaging in effective liberation and social justice work. Social workers recognize that all members of society have been socialized into various systems of oppression and that the development of a liberatory consciousness “enables humans to live their lives in oppressive systems and institutions with awareness and intentionality, rather than on the basis of the socialization to which they have been subjected” (Love, p. 470). Social workers understand and actively engage the four elements of developing a liberatory consciousness (awareness, analysis, action, and accountability/allyship) in order to challenge oppression and promote social, racial and economic justice.

Social workers:
· Practice Awareness by “noticing what happens in the world around” them and use this awareness to recognize and acknowledge stigma, discrimination, and oppression (Love, p. 471)

· Analyze “what is happening from a stance of awareness” (Love, p. 471) of oppression and consider a range of possible activities to promote greater social, economic and racial justice

· Act “to transform society” and “move to a more just world” and by encouraging and/or organizing others to take action, locating resources to empower others, and encouraging others to exercise their voice and power (Love, p. 472).

· Hold themselves Accountable and practice in Allyship by working in collaboration and connection with others, disentangling patterns of internalized oppression (both internalized subordination and internalized domination), and remaining open to perspective sharing and analyses of inevitable mistakes and/or oppressive positions and/or behaviors.

**Course Specific Learning Goals:**
This course will enable students to:

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

- Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior;
- Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice; and
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.

The other required readings are available through the RU libraries electronic reserve system. Go to [https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/](https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/) and search under ‘course reserves.’ The reserves will be listed under the faculty name ‘Rachel Schwartz’ and the course name ‘Human Behavior in the Social Environment.’

**Course Assignments and Grading:**

There are five graded course components for this class:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENT</th>
<th>WEIGHTING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #1</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #3</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developmental Quiz</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Participation (includes worksheets, activities, discussions and self-assessments)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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*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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-81</td>
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Weekly Participation (25% of total grade):

You are expected to be active contributors to our online learning community throughout the semester by completing activities each week. In general, activities include the following:

**Worksheets:** These are designed to help you engage more fully with the materials. They are presented after video and/or written lectures and are to be completed on your own. Students who submit them to the instructor in a timely fashion and who demonstrate an earnest attempt to complete the worksheet will receive one point. Once you submit your answers, you will be able to view sample answers. No points will be given for late work. Worksheets are worth 1 point.

**Required Discussions:** Each module includes a question for the class to discuss. You are expected to post a thoughtful thread in response to the question, as well as one response to a classmate, which can earn up to two points. Please refer to “Rubrics” and “Netiquette” below for more information. No points will be given to late posts.

**Self Assessments:** At the end of each module, you will be asked to rate yourself on core learning objectives. This information is shared with the instructor only, and simply completing this exercise on time for each module is worth .5 points. No points will be given for late work.

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Open-Book Developmental Exam (15% of total grade):

As a review of key concepts and ideas from the Hutchison (2019) text, there will be an open-book, multiple-choice exam during Module 14. All questions will address material in the text only, and you will have several days to work on the exam.

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**Assignment 1 (15%), Assignment 2 (20%) and Assignment 3 (25%):**

Working on your own, you will complete three assignments during the course that address several modules. These assignments will require you to demonstrate your conceptual understanding of the course material, as well as your ability to critique, apply, and integrate the material with an organization relevant to social work that is of interest to you. Each assignment prompt will include guidelines for the format of these essays.

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**Rubrics:**

Rubrics for the written assignments are provided with those assignments.
Discussion Grading:

Posts should add value to the discussion. In short, something like "I agree" does not add to the discussion. How do you add value? Here are some ways:

- Post an **original answer** to the questions, citing relevant readings.
- Indicate whether you **agree or disagree** with what another person posted, and why. Students are encouraged to have a balance of responding to classmate’s posts as well as original posts.
- Ask another person a **follow-up question**.
- Share a **personal story** that relates to the topic. These can be from work, volunteering, education, your personal life, or elsewhere. Be sure to use pseudonyms as appropriate. Personal stories must relate back to the topic and connect to concepts from readings and other course materials.
- Come up with a **scenario/example** of how you might apply the materials.
- APA style must be used when referencing points that are not your own.

Discussion posts that demonstrate understanding of key ideas from the materials, as well as analytic thinking around the key ideas (e.g., through integration, criticism, application), will receive the full two points. Original discussion posts are due by Day 5 and response to classmates are due by Day 7 of the module for which they are assigned. Especially if you post later in the module, you are expected to have read your classmates’ contributions and to acknowledge their ideas when your thoughts relate. Posts should include new points to the discussion, rather than repeating the same points as previous posts.

Course Policies:

**Late Work Policy**

You must turn in written work before the time specified through the Dropbox on the course website. 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.
Attendance

You should complete the course modules according to the course outline. You are expected to complete readings, discussions, and assignments according to the course outline and due dates found in each module’s activity table and the course syllabus. Faculty are able to view your activity (including your time spent in module threads, listening or viewing podcasts and screencasts, etc.) to ensure you are staying actively involved in the course.

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.

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.”
Use of artificial intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT is only permitted to help you brainstorm ideas and see examples, unless otherwise directed by your instructor. All material submitted in the course must be your own as per the Academic Integrity policy.

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 (Patricia Findley at pfindley@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.

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/.
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.

Library Research Assistance

Julia Maxwell is the social work librarian on the New Brunswick Campus. Email jam1148@libraries.rutgers.edu. 848-932-6000; 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.

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.

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

https://rlc.rutgers.edu/student-services/writing-tutoring

Newark Campus

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

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

100% online students

Fully online degree program students now have access to Smarthinking, a service sponsored by Rutgers Teaching and Learning with Technology (TLT). Fully online degree students are provided TEN hours of service per semester (please just follow up with your advisor for additional time). Please see the link under “Course Essentials” for access to the writing center.

Additional Online Resources

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.
The Purdue OWL website also provide assistance with APA style
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

**Email Etiquette for Students**
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/694/01/

**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. Services are free, 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 case 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.

**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 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.

**Assistance with Writing**
As with other social work skills, writing is one that requires a commitment of time, practice, and mentorship. Graduate school is an opportune time to develop this skill. On-campus resources are available to help students strengthen their professional and academic writing skills.

**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](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](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](http://learn.camden.rutgers.edu/writing-assistance)

**Course Schedule and Readings** (See each weekly module for assignment details):

**M01: Course Intro**

No Readings

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**M02: Thinking Theoretically**

*The Other Wes Moore, pp. 1-62.*


**M03: Person-Environment Perspective**

*The Other Wes Moore*, pp. 63-123.

Hutchison, Chapter 2 (pregnancy)


**M04: Complex Systems Perspective**

*The Other Wes Moore*, pp. 124-183.

Hutchison, Chapter 3 (infants/toddlers)


**M05: Social Environments and the Body**

Hutchison, Chapter 4 (early childhood)


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**M06: Social Cognitive Theory**

Hutchison, Chapter 5 (middle childhood)


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**M07: Psychodynamic Theory**


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**M08: Attachment Theory**

Hutchison, Chapter 6 (adolescence)


**M09: Macro-Systems Perspectives**

Hutchison, Chapter 7 (young adulthood)


**M10: Symbolic Interactionism**

Hutchison, Chapter 8 (middle adulthood)


**M11: The Life Course Perspective**

Hutchison, Chapter 9 (Late Adulthood)

Hutchison, Chapter 1 (A Life Course Perspective)


**M12: Risk and Resilience**

Hutchison, Chapter 10 (Very Late Adulthood)


**M13: Stage Theories of Human Development**


**M14: Developmental Review**

No readings

**M15: Wrap up**

No readings