

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

Human Behavior and the Social Environment

19:910:502

Main Syllabus FOR ONLINE Sections

Section Information

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.

As students read through this syllabus, they should also **remember to closely review the School-Wide Syllabus** in Canvas or the Student Handbook to find information on the School of Social Work mission statement and learning goals, school-wide policies (including academic integrity policies and the standardized attendance policy), and student resources and supports.

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 2022 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 2022 EPAS, within its curriculum. This course will assist students in developing the following competencies:

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social workers:

- advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels, and
- engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this

intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

Social workers:

- demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
- demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

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. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision-making.

Social workers:

- apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
- demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

Generalist Competency 10 (RU SSW Specific): Liberatory Consciousness

Social workers identify how the development of a liberatory consciousness is a precondition 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.

[Explore the entire set of 2022 CSWE competencies.](#)

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.

Course Materials

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

- Hutchison, E.D., Wood Charlesworth, L. (2024). *Dimensions of human behavior: The changing life course* (7th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications. Paperback: ISBN: 978071936863
- Moore, W. (2011). *The other Wes Moore: One name, two fates*. New York: Spiegel & Grau Trade Paperbacks.

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). When links to the readings are broken or directing to the wrong materials, access the reading through the Rutgers Library website (<https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/>)

For further instructions [please click here for a video tutorial](#)

Course Assignments and Grading

There are five graded course components for this class:

COMPONENT	WEIGHTING
Assignment #1	15%
Assignment #2	20%
Assignment #3	25%

Developmental Quiz	15%
Weekly Participation (includes worksheets, activities, discussions and self-assessments)	25%

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.

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

As a review of key concepts and ideas from the Hutchison & Wood Charlesworth (2024) 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.

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. Please visit your Canvas course shell for more information on these assignments.

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 on 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.

Attendance

Please refer to the school-wide syllabus for the standard attendance policy for classes in on-the-ground (traditional) program, intensive weekend program (IWP), and asynchronous online program.

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.

All written assignments **must** follow APA format. The professor reserves the right to reduce the letter grade for any assignment that does not confirm to APA format.

Course Schedule and Readings

<u>Module</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>To Be Read Before the Class Session (In Preparation for In-Class Discussion)</u>	<u>Assignments Due</u>
M01	Course Introduction	Jones, S., (2023) An Argument for Critical Race Theory as a Theoretical Foundation Model and an Analytic Tool in Teaching HBSE	
M02	Thinking Theoretically	<p><i>The Other Wes Moore</i>, pp. 1-62.</p> <p>Uehara, E. S., Barth, R. P., Catalano, R. F., et al. (2015). <i>Identifying and tackling grand challenges for social work</i>. Retrieved at http://aaswsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/WP3-with-cover.pdf.</p> <p>Levine, J. (2013). <i>Working with people: The helping process</i> (9th ed.) (pp. 120-143). Boston, MA: Pearson.</p> <p><i>Supplemental</i>: Payne, M. (2014). <i>Modern social work theory</i> (4th Ed.) (pp. 3-30). Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books, Inc.</p> <p>(LC: General Competency 10): Awareness & Analysis</p>	

M03	Person- Environment Perspective & Conception/ Pregnancy	<p><u><i>The Other Wes Moore</i>, pp. 63-123.</u></p> <p>Hutchison & Wood Charlesworth , Chapter 2 (conception, pregnancy, and childbirth)</p> <p>MCHB 2019, Why Home Visiting Matters https://youtu.be/SE8XoFUWcSI https://mchb.hrsa.gov/maternal-child-health-initiatives/home-visiting-overview</p> <p>Shah, L.M., Varma, B., Walsh, R.S., et al. (2021). Reducing disparities in adverse pregnancy outcomes in the United States, <i>American Heart Journal</i>, Volume 242:92-102,</p> <p>Supplemental: Hutchison, E.D. (2008). <u><i>Dimensions of human behavior: Person and environment</i></u>, 3rd Ed. (pp. 1–24). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.</p> <p>(LC: General Competency 10): Awareness</p>	
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M04	Complex Systems Perspective & Infancy/toddlerhood	<p><i>The Other Wes Moore</i>, pp. 124-183.</p> <p>Hutchison & Wood Charlesworth , Chapter 3 (infancy and toddlerhood)</p> <p>Raikes, H. H., Brooks-Gunn, J. & Love. J. M. (2013). Background literature review pertaining to the Early Head Start study. <i>Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development</i>, 78(1), 1-19.</p> <p>Robbins, S. P., Chatterjee, P., & Canda, E. R. (2006). Contemporary human behavior theory: A critical perspective for social work (pp. 36–45). New York: Pearson.</p> <p><i>Supplemental:</i> Greenfield, E. A. (2011). Developmental Systems Theory as a conceptual anchor for generalist curriculum on human behavior and the social environment. <i>Social Work Education: The International Journal</i>, 30(5), 529-540.</p> <p>(LC: General Competency 10): Awareness</p>	
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M05	Social Environments and the Body & Early Childhood	<p>Hutchison & Wood Charlesworth , Chapter 4 (early childhood)</p> <p>Masi, C. (2012). The health promise of promise neighborhoods. <i>Journal of Healthcare for the Poor and Underserved</i>, 23(3), 963-967.</p> <p>Kim, I., Chen, J., & Spencer, M. S. (2012). Social determinants of health and mental health among Asian Americans in the United States. <i>Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research</i>, 3, 346-361.</p> <p>Saleem, F. T., Anderson, R. E., & Williams, M. (2020). Addressing the myth of racial trauma: Developmental and ecological considerations for youth of color. <i>Clinical Child and Family Psychological Review</i>, 23, 1-14 https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10567-019-00304-1</p> <p>(LC: General Competency 10): Awareness & Analysis</p>	Assignment #1 Due Date
M06	Social Cognitive Theory & Middle Childhood	<p>Hutchison & Wood Charlesworth , Chapter 5 (middle childhood)</p> <p>Swearer, S. M., Wang, C., Berry, B., & Myers, Z. R. (2014). Reducing bullying: Application of social cognitive theory. <i>Theory Into Practice</i>, 53, 271-277.</p> <p>Bandura, A. (1995). Exercise of personal and collective efficacy in changing societies. In A. Bandura (Ed.), <i>Self-efficacy in changing societies</i>, pp. 1–45. New York: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>America Ferrera: My identity is a superpower -- not an obstacle TED https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjquHTj4HIY&ab_channel=TED</p>	

		<p><i>Supplemental:</i> Pervin, L. A., Cervone, D., & John, O. P. (2005). Social-Cognitive Theory: Bandura and Mischel. (Chapter 12 of <i>Personality: Theory and Research, 9th Edition</i>, pp. 415–456; Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.).</p> <p>(LC: General Competency 10): Awareness, Analysis, Action, Accountability & allyship)</p>	
M07	Psychodynamic Theory	<p>Schwartz, C. (2015, June 24). Tell it about your mother: Can brain-scanning help save Freudian psychoanalysis? <i>New York Times Magazine</i>. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/magazine/tell-it-about-your-mother.html.</p> <p>Quinn, C. R., & Grumbach, G. (2015). Critical race theory and the limits of relational theory in social work with women. <i>Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work</i>, 24(3), 202-218.</p> <p><i>Supplemental:</i> Robbins, S. P., Chatterjee, P., & Canda, E. R. (2006). Contemporary human behavior theory: A critical perspective for social work (pp. 162-197). New York: Pearson.</p> <p>(LC: General Competency 10): Awareness, Analysis, Action)</p>	

M08	Attachment Theory & Adolescence	<p>Hutchison & Wood Charlesworth , Chapter 6 (adolescence)</p> <p>Moretti, M. M., Obsuth, I., Craig, S. G., & Bartolo, T. (2015). An attachment-based intervention for parents of adolescents at risk: mechanisms of change. <i>Attachment & Human Development</i>, 17(2), 119-135.</p> <p>Stern, J. A., Barbarin, O., & Cassidy, J. (2022). Working toward anti-racist perspectives in attachment theory, research, and practice. <i>Attachment & Human Development</i>, 24(3), 392-422.</p> <p><i>Supplemental:</i> Bowlby, J. (1982). Attachment and loss: Retrospect and prospect. <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i>, 52(4), 664–678.</p> <p>(LC: General Competency 10): Awareness, Analysis, Action)</p>	
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M09	Macro-Systems Perspectives/ Conducting Strategic Literature Searches & Young Adulthood	<p>Hutchison & Wood Charlesworth , Chapter 7 (young adulthood)</p> <p>Borden, L., & Serido, J. (2009). From program participant to engaged citizen: A developmental journey. <i>Journal of Community Psychology</i>, 37(4), 423-438.</p> <p>Van Wormer, K. & Besthorn, F. (2017). Theoretical Perspectives. In K. Van Wormer & F. Besthorn (2017). <i>Human behavior and the social environment: Groups, communities, and organizations</i> 3rd ed. (1-52). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Housing Segregation and Redlining in America: A Short History Code Switch NPR https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5FBJyqfoLM&ab_channel=NPR</p> <p><i>Supplemental:</i> Lee, J.A, & Hudson, R.E. (2011). Empowerment approach to social work practice. In F.J. Turner (Ed.), <i>Social work treatment: Interlocking theoretical approaches</i>, 5th ed. (pp. 157–178). New York: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>(LC: General Competency 10): Awareness, Analysis)</p>	Assignment #2 Due
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M10	Symbolic Interactionism & Midlife	<p>Hutchison & Wood Charlesworth , Chapter 8 (Middle adulthood)</p> <p>Markle, G. L., Attell, B. K., & Treiber, L. A. (2015). Dual, yet dueling illnesses: multiple chronic illness experience at midlife. <i>Qualitative Health Research</i>, 25(9), 1271-1282.</p> <p>Thompson, K. H., & Greene, R. R. (2009). Role theory and social work practice. In R. R. Greene & N. Kropf (eds.), <i>Human behavior theory: A diversity framework (2nd Ed.)</i> (pp. 101-121). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.</p> <p><i>Supplemental:</i> Greene, R. R., Saltman, J. E., Cohen, H., & Kropf, N. (2009). Symbolic interactionism: Social work assessment, language, and meaning. In R. R. Greene & N. Kropf (eds.), <i>Human behavior theory: A diversity framework (2nd Ed.)</i> (pp. 59-75). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.</p> <p><i>Supplemental:</i> Simon, J. D., Boyd, R., & Subica, A. M. (2022). Refocusing intersectionality in social work education: Creating a brave space to discuss oppression and privilege. <i>Journal of Social Work Education</i>, 58(1), 34-45.</p> <p>(LC: General Competency 10): Awareness, Analysis)</p>	
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M11	The Life Course Perspective & Young-Old Adulthood	Hutchison & Wood Charlesworth , Chapter 9 (late adulthood) Abramson, C. (2015). <i>The end game: How inequality shapes our final years</i> (pp. 133-148). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (LC: General Competency 10): Awareness, Analysis)	
M12	Risk and Resilience & Old-Old Adulthood	Hutchison & Wood Charlesworth , Chapter 10 (very late adulthood) MacLeod, S., Musich, S., Hawkins, K., Alsgaard, K., & Wicker, E. R. (2016). The impact of resilience among older adults. <i>Geriatric Nursing</i> . Advance publication online. <i>Supplemental:</i> Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic: resilience processes in development. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 56(3), 227-238. (LC: General Competency 10): Awareness, Analysis)	

M13	Stage Theories of Human Development	<p>Robbins, S. P., Chatterjee, P., & Canda, E. R. (2011). Contemporary human behavior theory: A critical perspective for social work (pp. 213-219; 228-231; 248-253). New York: Pearson.</p> <p>(LC: General Competency 10): Awareness, Analysis, Action, Accountability & allyship)</p>	Assignment #3 Due
M14	Developmental Exam	Exam	
M15		Course Wrap-Up	