

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

Human Behavior and the Social Environment
19:910:502

Main Syllabus FOR ON-THE-GROUND 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](https://www.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. (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).

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

Course Assignments and Grading

There are five graded course components for this class:

| COMPONENT | DUE DATE | WEIGHTING |
|--------------------|---|-----------|
| Assignment #1 | | 15% |
| Assignment #2 | | 25% |
| Assignment #3 | | 25% |
| Developmental Quiz | Open-book and online; all multiple-choice questions based on Hutchison (7 th .ed); | 15% |

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| | opens on December X and due by December X). | |
| Class Attendance | Ongoing throughout the semester. | 10% |
| Class Participation | Ongoing throughout the semester. | 10% |

Class Attendance

The benchmarks below will be used to assess students' class attendance at the end of the semester:

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| A/B+ (87-100) | 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. |
| B/C+ (77-86) | Misses three class sessions or does not attend final course wrap-up session. Noticeable pattern of arriving to class late and/or leaving early. |
| C (70-76) | Misses three class sessions. |
| F (0-69) | Misses four class sessions or more. |

Class Participation

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

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| A/B+ (87-100) | 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 groups is focused on the topic. Not found on smart phone during class or using laptop inappropriately. Evidence of active listening. |
| B/C+ (77-86) | Demonstrates attentive listening while in class. Only occasionally speaks up to answer and ask questions in the large group setting. Occasionally found on smart phone during class or using laptop inappropriately. |

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| C (70-76) | Some regular observation of using smart phone and/or using laptop inappropriately. 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., falling asleep). |
| F (0-69) | Some regular observation of using smart phone and/or using laptop inappropriately. Oftentimes seems checked out while in class. Seen falling asleep in class. Never speaks up to answer and ask questions. Never contributes to class discussion. Regularly observed as inactive in small group activities. |

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. Students can find the school-wide syllabus in Canvas or in their student handbook. ***For this course in particular***, students who miss more than one class, X. For students who miss more than two classes, X.

Submitting Written Work

Commented [JF1]: Instructors: Please personalize the attendance and late work policy, and then delete this comment before uploading your syllabus to Canvas. Delete it by selecting the three dots on the upper right corner of this box.

Specify what happens when students miss more than one course for OTG program.

For example:

students who miss more than one class may receive X point deduction for their participation grade.

Students who miss more than two classes are risk of failing the course.

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 conform 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> |
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| 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> | |

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| M03 | Person- Environment Perspective & Conception/ Pregnancy | <p><u><i>The Other Wes Moore</i>, pp. 63-123.</u></p> <p>Hutchison, 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 | <p>Complex Systems Perspective</p> <p>&</p> <p>Infancy/toddlerhood</p> | <p><i>The Other Wes Moore</i>, pp. 124-183.</p> <p>Hutchison, 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, 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, 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> | |

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| | | <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, 24</i>(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> | |

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| M08 | Attachment Theory & Adolescence | <p>Hutchison, 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, 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, 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 | <p>Hutchison, Chapter 9 (late adulthood)</p> <p>Abramson, C. (2015). <i>The end game: How inequality shapes our final years</i> (pp. 133-148). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.</p> <p>(LC: General Competency 10): Awareness, Analysis)</p> | |
| M12 | Risk and Resilience & Old-Old Adulthood | <p>Hutchison, Chapter 10 (very late adulthood)</p> <p>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.</p> <p><i>Supplemental:</i> Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic: resilience processes in development. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 56(3), 227-238.</p> <p>(LC: General Competency 10): Awareness, Analysis)</p> | |

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| M13 | Stage Theories of Human Development | 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. (LC: General Competency 10): Awareness, Analysis, Action, Accountability & allyship) | Assignment #3 Due |
| M14 | Developmental Exam | Exam | |
| M15 | | Course Wrap-Up | |