STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
BSW PROGRAM

Class Days and Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 11 am – 12:15 pm
Class Location: SWK 204

Class Schedule:
SWK 225.001
Human Behavior and the Social Environment I
Spring 2019

Faculty: Steve Cooper, PhD, LCSW
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Office hours: Tuesday, 9 – 11 am; Wednesday, 9 am to 12 noon; Thursday, 9 – 11 am, 1 – 4 pm; other times available by appointment.

Prerequisite:
Non-majors- Consent of Department Chair
Majors- BIO 121, 123, or 238

Co-requisite: None

COURSE SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE) I is an introduction to the concept of the person within his/her social environment. Utilizing a generalist perspective, students will examine problems in living as experienced by multi-sized systems including dyads, nuclear families, extended families, and informal support groups. (HBSE II) will move this examination into the areas of larger systems including groups, organizations, and communities. The student is expected to have a foundational knowledge of basic biology, sociology and psychology before beginning this course.

This course will develop the person-in-situation perspective by examining biological, sociological, and psychological, cultural, and spiritual development of the individual across the lifespan within the context of small systems (including families, friendship networks, and fictive kin systems). Students will achieve an increased awareness of personal and professional values in relation to individual and family systems. Students will gain knowledge that will enable them to recognize diversity within and between individuals and the family. Attention will be given to the social worker's function in the analysis of these areas as they impact the family. This course also prompts the student toward self-assessment.

REQUIRED TEXT:

RECOMMENDED TEXT:
II. CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION

The BSW program at SFASU features generalist social work practice, defined as follows:

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice.

Briefly, generalist social work practice:
- Is multi-level to include individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
- Is multi-theory, allowing for the free selection of theories as appropriate
- Utilizes a problem identification and solving focus that follows a problem-solving framework
- Utilizes multiple interventions at multiple levels, as appropriate
- Addresses the complexity of individual, family, group, organizational and community system interactions
- Requires an integration of awareness, competence, and professional response to issues of values, ethics, diversity, culture, social justice, and populations-at-risk.

III. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (PLO) (CSWE CORE COMPETENCIES)

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior.
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice.
5. Engage in Policy Practice.
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.
7. Assess, Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

*Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS, 2015) from the Council on Social Work Education

IV. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLO)

Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Examine the problems in living experienced by individuals, families and groups. (Competency 6)
2. Incorporate concepts of ethical standards, laws and regulations and their impact on all levels of practice (micro and mezzo levels.) (Competency 1)
3. Understand the intersectionality and aspects of diversity including but not limited to, age
class, color, culture, disability/ability ethnicity, race, gender identity and all forms of
difference. (Competency 2)
4. Discuss how personal and professional values as well as cognitive and affective reactions
influence professional judgement and behavior. (Competency 1)
5. Express the importance and value of social work in working with inter-professional
teams. (Competency 1)
6. Recognize the importance of life-long learning and continue to increase knowledge for
effective social work practice. (Competency 1)
7. Understand knowledge of the numerous dimensions of diversity and difference that
impact the human experience. (Competency 3)
8. Appreciate and utilize the theories of human need and social justice and strategies that
promote human rights and social and economic justice globally. (Competency 3)
9. Incorporate knowledge that social workers engage diverse clients and constituencies,
including individuals, families, and groups. (Competency 6)
10. Integrate knowledge of theories of human behavior and the social environment, and will be
able to critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and
constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
(Competency 7)
11. Integrate knowledge of theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically
evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. (Competency 8)
12. Engage in relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate
engagement with clients. (Competency 6).

V. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

The primary instructional model for this course is collaborative learning. Specifically, the instructor
will set course content, course objectives, and methods of classroom assessment. The course will
incorporate the following instructional strategies: lecture, extensive class discussion, group exercises,
online activities, assigned readings, and individual projects. Students are encouraged to actively
participate in activities, ask questions, and contribute comments for discussion. Students are also
encouraged to offer input regarding instructional strategies and assignments. Most importantly,
students are expected to be active learners and to ask for clarification when they have questions. In
order to be successful in the class, it is important that students attend regularly, read the assigned
material, and come to class prepared to discuss what they have read. Students will be expected to not
only know the material presented, but to be able to apply it in experiential activities. Lectures will not
duplicate the reading material except to clarify or to expand upon it and to review material covered in
prerequisite courses. The goal of this approach is to develop a safe learning environment that addresses
a variety of learning styles, promotes critical thinking, and fosters creativity.

VI. COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS (per SFA Office of Instructional Technology)

This course will utilize Desire2Learn (D2L) to support the delivery of course content. You will need
basic skills regarding the use of a word processor and web browser. You must have access to a
computer that meets the university’s minimum computer system requirements (see
http://sfaonline.sfasu.edu/gettingstarted.html or the Center for Teaching and Learning for details).
Computers are available to you through a number of labs across campus (see www.sfasu.edu or the
instructor for details).
VII. COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1  
Course Overview/APA/D2L/EPAS
Introduction
Human Behavior Theory and Social Work Practice
CSWE Core Competencies
Generalist Practice
Theory and Practice in Social Work
Theoretical Range
Theories as Maps
Readings: Dale & Smith, Chapter 1; NASW Code of Ethics; IFSW/IASSW Code of Ethics; CSWE EPAS

Week 2  
Foundations for Social Systems Theory
Nature of Theory
Social Systems Perspective
General Systems Theory
Ecological theory
Person in Environment
Functional theory
Symbolic interactionism and role theory
Readings: Dale & Smith, Chapter 2

Week 3  
Foundations for Social Systems Theory (cont)
Social Systems and Social Work
Social systems in generalist practice
Development of social systems
Social systems cycle
Social systems features
Definitions
Readings: Dale & Smith, Chapter 3

Week 4  
Social Systems and Social Work (cont)
Social Systems and Social Roles
Systems, role theory, generalist practice
Major role concepts
Roles as social structures
Role dynamics
Common role problems
Role problem resolution strategies
Readings: Dale & Smith, Chapter 4

Week 5  
Social Systems and Social Roles (cont)
Readings: Dale & Smith, Chapter 4
EXAM I
Week 6  Psychodynamic Theories
Individual theory
Psychoanalytic/psychodynamic theory
Theoretical base of analytical psychology
Theoretical base of individual psychology
Childhood attachment theory
Object relations theory
Neurosis and striving
Sane Society
Psychodynamic theory in systems perspective

Readings: Dale & Smith, Chapter 5

ASSIGNMENT A DUE

Week 7  Psychodynamic Theories (cont)

Week 8  Psychosocial Theory: A Social Systems Perspective
Psychosocial theory
Biological connection
Infancy, Post infancy, Preschool, School age
Adolescence, Early adulthood, Middle adulthood, Late adulthood

Readings: Dale & Smith, Chapter 6; Barnett & Belfield (2006); Haynie et. al (2006)

Week 9  EXAM II
Behavioral Learning Theories
Behavioral learning theory
Concepts
Social learning theory
Cognitive behavioral theory

Readings: Dale & Smith, Chapter 7

Week 10  Behavioral Learning Theories (cont)

Readings: Dale & Smith, Chapter 7

Week 11  Cognitive and Humanistic Theories
Cognitive development theory
Moral development theory
Humanistic theory
Person-centered theory

Readings: Dale & Smith, Chapter 8

Week 12  Video - TBA
EXAM III

Week 13  Family Theories
Families as emergent structures
Structural family theory
Family Systems Theory
Communications/Interactive theory

Readings: Dale & Smith, Chapter 9

ASSIGNMENT B DUE
Week 15  **Group Theories**

- Social Groups
- Primary and secondary groups
- Natural and rational will
- Formed vs natural groups
- Task vs treatment groups
- Field theory
- Exchange theory

**Readings:** Dale & Smith, Chapter 10

Week 16  **Final Exam**

VIII. **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

A. **Class Attendance and Participation:** In order for the class to discuss the readings, it is essential for you to read assigned material before coming to class, to attend class regularly, and to participate in class discussion. You are responsible for all material covered in class and assigned in the syllabus, whether or not you have attended class.

   **Cell Phones/Pagers/Electronic Devices:** Because such devices are disruptive to the classroom environment, I ask that you refrain from using them during class. I also ask that you either place such devices on silent mode or turn them off during class. Repeated interruptions may result in a deduction of points from the final average.

B. **Readings:** The course outline provides a list of required readings for each week. Since lectures and class discussions are designed to answer questions about the material and expand upon the basic concepts, you are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to class. Furthermore, you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the information, as evidenced by active participation in class discussion. For example, you should present well-formulated questions and comments that demonstrate prior preparation.

C. **Exams:** Four major application exams will be given during the semester. Exam I will cover Introduction, Foundation for Social Systems Theory, Social Systems and Social Work, and Social Systems and Social Roles. Exam II will cover Psychodynamic Theories and Psychosocial Theory. Exam III will cover Behavioral Learning Theories, Cognitive Theories, and Humanistic Theories. Exam IV will cover Family Theories and Group Theories. All material provided on the topics, including all assigned readings, discussions, lectures, videos, and guest presentations are subject to examination. The exams will consist of matching, multiple choice, true/false and essay questions.

You are expected to take all exams at the scheduled time. Permission to miss any exam will be based on the policy for excused absences as stated in the SFASU General Bulletin (available online at [http://www.sfasu.edu/73.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/73.asp)). Missing an exam without either prior permission or an excused absence will result in a grade of "0" on that exam. I will schedule make-up exams.
D. **Discussion Activities:** A total of 8 discussion activities will take place over the course of the semester. Grades will be based on participation, content, and quality.

Missing a discussion activity, regardless of the reason, will result in a grade of “0” for the activity.

E. **Assignments:** You are responsible for completing assignments in accordance with the specific guidelines identified in the assignment description (in the syllabus). Assignments A & B are to be typewritten (by typewriter or word processor) in 12 pt. font with double spacing and standard margins. All assignments are to be in APA format per the *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Failure to meet these guidelines will result in loss of points. See the descriptions of Assignments A & B for guidelines.

Late assignments will result in 10% of the total possible points being deducted from the total points earned for each day the assignment is late, with 10% deducted immediately following the class period during which the assignment is due. The only exception is an excused absence as defined by the SFASU General Bulletin.

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>4 @ 100 pts. each = 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Activities</td>
<td>8 @ 10 pts. each = 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment A</td>
<td>= 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment B</td>
<td>= 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>= 680</td>
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</tbody>
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**Grading Scale:**

- A  609 – 680
- B  541 – 608
- C  473 – 540
- D  405 – 472
- F  0 – 404

IX. **Academic Integrity (SFASU Policy A-9.1)**

Honesty and representing one’s knowledge and abilities appropriately are important ethical principles of the social work profession. All violations of the Academic Integrity Policy will be addressed in accordance with SFASU Policy A-9.1 (SFASU Policy A-9.1 can be found at the web address below). All incidents will result in a grade of “0”. Given the limited number of graded assignments in this course, a “0” could have serious consequences for the student’s academic standing.

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.
**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (SFA Policy 5.5)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Please read the complete policy on Course Grades: [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/5.5_course-grades.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/5.5_course-grades.pdf)

**Acceptable Student Behavior**

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

Please see the following link for the complete policy: [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student-code-of-conduct_10.4.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student-code-of-conduct_10.4.pdf)

**X. STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS AND DISABILITIES**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-accomodation-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-accomodation-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf).
Assignment A: Bio-psychosocial Assessment  
(100 pts)

This assignment is designed to help students identify component behaviors, which augment the Nine Core Competencies. In this paper, you will talk about yourself in the context of a bio-psychosocial assessment. Since you are expected to be honest and candid about your experiences and how they have shaped you as an individual, the information provided in this paper will remain confidential. **The paper should follow the format provided below and contain the noted information.**

### Introduction

The purpose of this section is to set the stage for the assessment. Briefly tell your audience the purpose of this paper and what it will cover.

### Assessment

**Individual**

The purpose of this section is to talk about who you are as an individual. This includes more than name, age and gender. For example, be sure to include your race/ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, personality characteristics, interests, strengths/weaknesses, and coping skills.

**Biological and Psychological Development**

This section should include information about your developmental milestones. You should also identify significant biological and psychological events that have impacted your development. Include an explanation as to how these events have shaped who you are as an individual.

**Family**

This section should provide an overview of your family members/structure (both immediate and extended), including a genogram of your family system. You also need to choose one “problem in living” or crisis which your family has encountered in the past. Describe how that problem occurred, how it impacted the family system, how the family coped with the problem, and what support systems (including any friendship, fictive kin, neighborhood, or other informal) were utilized to resolve the problem. Finally, this section should include an explanation as to how your family has shaped who you are as an individual.

**Social**

This section should provide an overview of your social situation, which includes intimate relationships, friendships, social activities, religious/spiritual activities, and civic involvement. This section should also include an explanation as to how these activities and relationships have shaped who you are as an individual. Furthermore, you need to choose one significant dyad relationship that you have been involved with and explain in detail how that relationship has shaped who you are as an individual.

**Education**

In this section, you need to talk about your educational background, including schools attended, academic performance, and your motivation for pursuing a college degree. Include a discussion about how the previously mentioned individual, family, and social factors have impacted your pursuit of a formal education.
Application of Theory

Family
Choose one human behavior theory (from the text book) related to families and use it to explain the dynamics within your family.

Social Interaction
Choose one human behavior theory (from the text book) related to social interaction and use it to explain one of the following: dyad relationship, interaction with a peer group, or interaction with an informal support system.

Socialization
Choose one human behavior theory (from the text book) related to socialization and use it to explain your socialization into the culture and traditions of your society.

Summary
Briefly summarize the main points of your paper- be sure to include the points that you want the audience to remember.

References

The assignment will be evaluated based on its adherence to the above guidelines, as well as the following criteria: 1) demonstration of critical thinking skills, 2) ability to organize and clearly present the information, 3) writing skills (such as grammar and punctuation), and 4) adherence to APA guidelines. The assignment is worth a total of 100 points, including 10 points for grammar, organization, and APA.

You must submit the assignment to D2L no later than 11 am on the due date for the assignment. The assignment will be considered late until it has been submitted to the appropriate D2L dropbox. Please refer to the course schedule for the due date.
Assignment B: Problems in Living Paper

In order to complete this assignment, you need to choose one of the following family crises or “problems in living”:

1. Families and physical health crisis.
2. Families and mental health crisis.
3. Families and poverty.
4. Families and loss (choose one: death, natural disaster, war, displacement, refugees, school/job shootings, abduction).
5. Families and stress (choose one: unemployment, abuse, substance abuse).
6. Families and challenges of aging.
7. Family violence.
8. Interpersonal conflict within families (choose one: sibling abuse, sexual abuse, gay/lesbian acceptance).

Find and read at least 8 articles from books and peer reviewed professional journals addressing this assignment. At least four of the 8 sources should be articles from peer reviewed professional social work journals (or closely related disciplines). The paper should follow the format provided below and contain the noted information.

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to set the stage for the paper. Briefly tell your audience the purpose of this paper and what it will cover.

Literature Review

Provide a general overview of the literature/research on the problem here, which will be followed by detailed subsections.

Prevalence
Discuss the prevalence of the problem (at least one-two paragraphs).

Etiology
Discuss the related causes and factors (at least one-two paragraphs).

Impact
Discuss the impact of the problem upon individuals and families (at least two-three paragraphs).

Coping mechanisms
Discuss the coping mechanisms used by families to deal with the problem or situation (one-two paragraphs).

Relationship with race/ethnicity
Discuss the relationship between race/ethnicity and the social problem. Does the problem’s prevalence, impact, etc., vary across racial/ethnic groups?
Relevant Theories

Theories
Identify and explain three theories from the text book, which might explain the existence of the problem. *If you choose to you theories that are not discussed in the text book, you should clear them with the instructor prior to submitting the paper.* For example, if your problem is “family violence”, choose theories addressing the causes and explanations of violence within the family.

Critique
Critique each of the three theories identified in the previous section. Use the following questions to guide your critique:

1. Is the theory based on research?
2. Does the theory explain only causation for certain types of families?
3. Does the theory apply to ethnic minorities and other special populations?
4. Would it apply to rural families?
5. Are there some factors for which the theory does not account?

Once you have critiqued the three theories, you need to answer the following questions:

1. Which theory it the most plausible? Why?
2. Which is the least feasible? Why?

Relevance to Generalist Social Work Practice

In this section, you need to discuss the usefulness of the three theories identified above to a generalist social work practitioner. Include in your discussion the impact of social work values and ethics on selection and integration of these theories in generalist practice. You also need to identify two ways in which a generalist social worker might intervene with a family that is experiencing the chosen problem.

Conclusion

Briefly summarize the main points of your paper. Be sure to include the points that you want the audience to remember.

References

The assignment will be evaluated based on its adherence to the above guidelines, as well as the following criteria: 1) demonstration of critical thinking skills, 2) ability to organize and clearly present the information, 3) writing skills (such as grammar and punctuation), and 4) adherence to APA guidelines. *The assignment is worth a total of 100 points, including 10 points for grammar, organization, and APA.*

You must submit the assignment to D2L no later than 11 am on the due date for the assignment. The assignment will be considered late until it has been submitted to the appropriate D2L dropbox. *Please refer to the course schedule for the due date.*
Bibliography


