STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
BSW PROGRAM
Class Days and Time: Wednesday 6:45 – 9:15 pm
Class Location: TJC Jenkins 205

SWK 2325.401 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I
Fall 2021

Faculty: Christy R. Collins, LCSW
SWK Office: Social Work 103
Email: collinsc2@sfasu.edu

Office hours: Wednesdays 8:30-11:30 am, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm (virtual, make appointment)
Thursdays 9:00am-12:00 pm, 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm (face to face, SFA office)

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)

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:

10. Examine the problems in living experienced by individuals, families and groups. (Competency 6)
11. Incorporate concepts of ethical standards, laws and regulations and their impact on all levels of practice (micro and mezzo levels.) (Competency 1)
12. 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)

13. Discuss how personal and professional values as well as cognitive and affective reactions influence professional judgement and behavior. (Competency 1)

14. Express the importance and value of social work in working with inter-professional teams. (Competency 1)

15. Recognize the importance of life-long learning and continue to increase knowledge for effective social work practice. (Competency 1)

16. Understand knowledge of the numerous dimensions of diversity and difference that impact the human experience. (Competency 3)

17. 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)

18. Incorporate knowledge that social workers engage diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, and groups. (Competency 6)

19. 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)

20. Integrate knowledge of theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. (Competency 8)

21. Engage in relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients. (Competency 6)

IV. 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.

V. COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS

This course will utilize Desire2Learn (D2L) to support the delivery of course content. You will This course will utilize Brightspace/D2L to support the delivery of course content (for help with Brightspace/D2L go to https://www.sfactl.com/student-support). You will need basic skills regarding the use of a word processor and web browser. Computers are available to you through several labs across campus (see www.sfasu.edu or the instructor for details).
VI. 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 2-3*

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 4*

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:** none  
**ASSIGNMENT A PART 1 DUE**  
**REVIEW for EXAM 1**

Week 5  
**EXAM I**  
**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
Week 6

**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 7

REVIEW for EXAM 2

Week 8

**EXAM II**
**Behavioral Learning Theories**
Behavioral learning theory
Concepts
Social learning theory
Cognitive behavioral theory
*Readings: Dale & Smith, Chapter 7*

Week 9

**Cognitive and Humanistic Theories**
Cognitive development theory
Moral development theory
Humanistic theory
Person-centered theory
*Readings: Dale & Smith, Chapter 8*

Week 10

REVIEW for EXAM 3

Week 11

**EXAM III**
**Family Theories**
Families as emergent structures
Structural family theory
Family Systems Theory
Communications/Interactive theory
*Readings: Dale & Smith, Chapter 9*
Start Movie

Week 12

Continue Family Theories/Watch Movie
ASSIGNMENT B DUE

Week 13

Continue Family Theories/Watch Movie
Week 14  THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15  Group Theories/Review

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

ASSIGNMENT A PART 2 DUE

Week 16  Final Exam

VII. 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, 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. Quizzes: A total of 8 quizzes will be given over the course of the semester. The quizzes will either test for general comprehension of the course material (assigned readings and/or previous lecture topics), be based on active participation in a classroom activity, or attendance. The quizzes will be unannounced and may occur at anytime during the class period.
Missing a quiz, regardless of the reason, will result in a grade of “0” for the quiz.

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>Exams</th>
<th>4 @ 100 pts. each = 400</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</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>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>= 680</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Scale:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>609 – 680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>541 – 608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>473 – 540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>405 – 472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 – 404</td>
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**Academic Integrity (SFASU Policy 4.1)**

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 4.1 – Student Academic Dishonesty (SFASU Policy 4.1 can be found at [https://www.sfasu.edu/policies](https://www.sfasu.edu/policies)). **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.

**Withheld Grades - Course Grades 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 by the deadline set by the instructor of record, not to exceed 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.

**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, SFA Policy 10.4). 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.

**Masks (Cloth Face Coverings)**

**Mental Health and Wellness**
SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**
- SFASU Counseling Services
  - [www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices](http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices)
  - 3rd Floor Rusk Building
  - 936-468-2401
- SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
  - [www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp)
  - Human Services Room 202
  - 936-468-1041

**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) ([https://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](https://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/)) at 936-468-3004 or disabilityservices@sfasu.edu 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, read Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities (SFA Policy 6.1) https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-accommodation-for-students-with-disabilities-6.1.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 related to families and use it to explain the dynamics within your family.

Social Interaction
Choose one human behavior theory 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 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 (death, natural disaster, war, displacement, refugees, school/job shootings, abduction).
5. Families and stress (unemployment, abuse, substance abuse).
6. Families and challenges of aging.
7. Family violence.
8. Interpersonal conflict within families (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**

Summarize the current literature and research on the chosen topic. Be sure to provide a general overview of the problem (prevalence, impact, etiology) and its impact on families. You also need to discuss coping mechanisms used by families to deal with the problem or situation. Finally, be sure to discuss the relationship between race/ethnicity and the social problem and its impact on the family system. It will be helpful to organize the information using subheadings.

**Relevant Theories**

Identify and explain three theories, which might explain the existence of the problem. 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.

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Bibliography


