



GRACE ABBOTT SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT I

SOWK 3010 | 3 credit hours

Class Meetings: TBD

Instructor: TBD

Office: TBD

Office Phone: TBD

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Office Hours: TBD

Department: Grace Abbott School of Social Work

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COURSE INFORMATION

Description

This course is the first part of a two-semester sequence within the MSW required curriculum. It focuses on major contributions of theories from the biological, social, and behavioral sciences that help to understand human functioning across the lifespan, within the social environment at the micro- and macro-level (e.g., individuals, families, groups, organizations, institutions, and communities), as they relate to effective social work generalist practice.

Rationale/Overview

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with basic knowledge of major contributions of the biological, social, and behavioral sciences to the understanding of human functioning across the lifespan. This course focuses on the reciprocal relationships between human behavior and social environments within the context of micro- and macro-level social systems (e.g., individuals, families, groups, institutions, organizations, and communities). Within a social systems framework, this course emphasizes theories of biological, psychological, sociological, cognitive, moral, and cultural development. These lifespan development theories are applied to dimensions of human life, including culture, class, race, ethnicity, nationality, age, ability, sexual orientation, spirituality, and gender. The intent of this course is to develop students' ability to assess and intervene with social



work clients, utilizing a strengths-based, person-in-environment perspective in a way that will foster the health and well-being and promote social and economic justice.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

1. Describe human behavior and functioning from a social systems theory perspective and its usefulness in social work practice on the micro-macro level continuum (e.g., individuals, families, groups, organizations, institutions, and communities).
2. Describe theories of lifespan development (e.g., bio-psycho-socio-cultural-spiritual) and the impact of development on human behavior across the lifespan.
3. Describe the impact of the micro-macro level continuum (e.g., individuals, families, groups, organizations, institutions, and communities) on the promotion of and obstruction to individual well-being across the lifespan.
4. Assess the use of lifespan models of development with diverse populations, including such factors as anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (A DEI), race/ethnicity, nationality, ability, gender, class, sexual orientation, and religion/spiritual beliefs, particularly as it applies to the lifespan.
5. Identify the impact of oppression, discrimination, and economic deprivation upon populations at risk across the lifespan.

REQUIRED TEXT(S)/SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Required text(s)

TBD

COURSE STRUCTURE/FORMAT

Instructional methods used in this course may include lectures, class discussions, media/internet instruction, guest speakers, field experiences, reflective and self-awareness exercises, group exercises, written assignments, handouts, and quizzes/exams. Instructional methods in this course will be supported by UNO’s Learning Management System (e.g., Canvas).

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Session/Date	Topic	Assignment
Session 1 [date]	Introductions of Instructor and Class, Overview of the course	
Session 2 [date]	Objective: Intro to Theory, Strengths, PIE, BioPsychoSocial Model, Levels of SW Practice AND Objective: BioPsychoSocial, The Brain and Nervous System	Life Event Assignment #1
Session 3 [date]		
Session 4 [date]	Objective: Theories of Development	Quiz #1
Session 5 [date]	Objective: Social Change Dimensions	Read for Next Week:



Session/Date	Topic	Assignment
		Part IV & Chapters 7-8
Session 6 [date]	Objective: Heredity, Prenatal Development and Birth	Read for Next Week: Part V & Chapter 9 Part VI & Chapters 10-12
Session 7 [date]	Objective: Development in Infancy and Toddlerhood	Read for Next Week: Part VII & Chapter 13-15 Life Event Assignment #2
Session 8 [date]		
Session 9 [date]	Objective: Development in Early Childhood	Read for Next Week: Part VIII & Chapters 16-18 Theory Application #1
Session 10 [date]	Objective: Development in Middle Childhood	Read for Next Week: Part IX & Chapters 19-21 Due November 2nd: Quiz #2
Session 11 [date]	Objective: Development in Adolescence	Read for Next Week: Part X & Chapters 22-24 Due November 9th: Life Event Assignment #3
Session 12 [date]	Objective: Development in Early Adulthood	Read for Next Week: Part XI & Chapters 25-27
Session 13 [date]	Objective: Development in Middle Adulthood	Read for Next Week: Part XII & Chapters 28-30 Theory Application #2
Session 14 [date]	Objective: Objective: Development in Late Adulthood	Reading: 1131-1297 Part XII, Chapters 28-30 Due December 7th: Quiz #3



Session/Date	Topic	Assignment
Session 15 [date]		Due December 14th: Life Event Assignment #4

IMPORTANT DATES

Last day to drop a course (via MavLink) and receive a 100% refund	TBD
Last day to withdraw from a course (via MavLink) with a grade of “W”	TBD

NOTE: This syllabus is written as an expectation of class topics, learning activities, and expected learning outcomes. However, the instructor reserves the right to make changes in this schedule that may result in enhanced or more effective learning for students. These modifications will not substantially change the intent or objectives of this course.

ASSESSMENTS (ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXAMS)

Theory Application	40 points
Quizzes	60 points
Life Event Assignment #1	25 points
Life Event Assignment #2	50 points
Life Event Assignment #3	75 points
Life Event Assignment #4	100 points
Discussions 5x 10	50 points

Total = 400 Points

GRADING SCALE

Percent	Final Grade	Quality Points
98–100%	A+	4.00
94–97.9%	A	4.00
91–93.9%	A-	3.67
88–90.9%	B+	3.33
84–87.9%	B	3.00
81–83.9%	B-	2.67
78–80.9%	C+	2.33
77–77.9%	C	2.00
71–73.9%	C-	1.67
68–70.9%	D+	1.33
64–67.9%	D	1.00
61–63.9%	D-	0.67
Below 60.9%	F	0.00



WRITING GUIDELINES

Students should make sure that writing assignments are free of grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. Papers should adhere to the most recent citation style outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA).

PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

In this course, students will submit written work by making use of information and ideas found in print or online sources. Whenever material from another writer is used, it is important that students quote or paraphrase appropriately and cite the source.

The UNO Academic Integrity policy defines plagiarism as "presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source) and submitting academic work in whole or in part as one's own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person."

Failure to cite sources appropriately is plagiarism, a serious academic offense. Plagiarized work will not be accepted. Consequences for plagiarism are up to the discretion of the instructor; they may range, for example, from rewriting all or part of a paper to a grade of F for the course. Students who plagiarize more than once are subject to disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the university.

Students SHOULD NOT GUESS when it comes to using or citing another writer's work. Students should contact the instructor or a consultant at the UNO Writing Center with questions. Students should take a printout of the original source as well as the paper that is being written to the consultation.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The maintenance of academic honesty and integrity is a vital concern of the University community. Any student found responsible for violating the [policy on Academic Integrity](#) shall be subject to both academic and disciplinary sanctions. Violations of the policy on Academic Integrity include, but are not limited to, the following: cheating, fabrication and falsification, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials and/or equipment, complicity in academic dishonesty, falsifying grade reports, and/or misrepresentation to avoid academic work. More information about these areas and the procedures addressing academic integrity is available from the Office of Academic and Student Affairs (EAB 202 | 402.554.2262).

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Students will be expected to have access to a computer frequently, as all writing assignments used will be typed out and not handwritten. The software students use to write assignments is irrelevant, as long as the writing guidelines outlined in this syllabus are followed. It is expected that students have access to a computer weekly. Public computers are available on the UNO campus. Consult [Information Technology Services](#) and the [Criss Library](#), for more information on equipment locations and availability.



TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Technical support for common university systems, including Canvas and email, is available from Information Technology Services [technical support](#) located in Eppley Administration Building (EAB) 104.

ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

Reasonable accommodations are provided for students who are registered with Accessibility Services Center (ASC) and make their requests sufficiently in advance. For more information, contact ASC (Location: 104 H&K, Phone: 402.554.2872, Email: unoaccessibility@unomaha.edu)

CRISS LIBRARY

UNO's Criss Library offers a wide variety of resources that support student learning. Subject specialist librarians have in-depth knowledge of researching within specific disciplines and can provide guidance for a specific area of study. Students are encouraged to explore customized resources featured on the [Criss Library](#) website.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The University of Nebraska at Omaha is prepared for a wide range of emergencies. Students should familiarize themselves with procedures and assistance available on UNO's [emergency information page](#). If travel to campus is not feasible due to a declared emergency, a combination of Canvas, teleconferencing, and other technologies will be used to facilitate academic continuity. Students will be notified of procedures through Canvas course site announcements and email as appropriate.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement or threatening weather, students should use their best judgment regarding travel to and from campus. Students who are not able to attend class due to adverse weather conditions should contact the instructor as soon as possible. Similarly, if the instructor is unable to reach the class location, students will be notified of any cancellation or change as soon as possible (by approximately 1 hour before class starts and by posting an announcement in Canvas). Students who cannot get to class because of weather conditions, will be provided allowances relative to attendance policies as well as any scheduled tests, quizzes, or other assessments.

PREFERRED NAME AND PREFERRED GENDER PRONOUNS

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. The instructor will gladly honor a student's request to be addressed by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise the instructor of this preference early in the semester so that instructor records may be changed appropriately.



WRITING CENTER

The UNO Writing Center offers free one-on-one consultations with trained consultants to all students, faculty, and staff. Their goal is to help writers improve their writing skills and confidence in all types of writing, in all subject areas, and at all stages of the writing process. For more information about their hours and locations or to schedule an appointment, go to unomaha.edu/writingcenter or visit their main location in Arts and Sciences Hall (ASH) 150.

SPEECH CENTER

The [UNO Speech Center](#) provides free consulting and coaching services to all UNO students, faculty, and staff in preparing oral presentations. The Speech Center Consulting Room can help students with presentation preparation, outlining, effective delivery techniques, along with any other presentational needs. Speech consulting will help at any stage in the speech-making process. For more information, visit the UNO Speech Center in Arts and Sciences Hall (ASH) 183 and 185.

STUDENT SAFETY

A variety of resources are available to support student safety and security. Students have experienced or are experiencing a difficult personal situation, should consult the resources available through the [Division of Student Success](#).

OUTCOMES MAP AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Competencies

The student learning outcomes for this course are built upon the following nine social work core competencies set forth by the CSWE's 2022 Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) which is required for all accredited social work programs.

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
2. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
3. Engage in anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) in practice.
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed 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.

This map is intended to show how course topics, content, and activities align to the student learning outcomes outlined above. Course objectives are italicized to distinguish them from the core competencies set forth by the CSWE's 2022 EPAS.

EPAS Competency*	Course Objective/Student Learning Outcome	Assignment	Dimension *
2 = Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic,	5. Identify the impact of oppression, discrimination, and economic deprivation upon populations at risk across the lifespan.		



EPAS Competency*	Course Objective/Student Learning Outcome	Assignment	Dimension *
and Environmental Justice			
3 = Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (A DEI) in Practice	<p>4. Assess the use of lifespan models of development with diverse populations, including such factors as anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (A DEI), race/ethnicity, nationality, ability, gender, class, sexual orientation, and religion/spiritual beliefs, particularly as it applies to the lifespan.</p> <p>5. Identify the impact of oppression, discrimination, and economic deprivation upon populations at risk across the lifespan.</p>		
6 = Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	<p>1. Describe human behavior and functioning from a social systems theory perspective and its usefulness in social work practice on the micro-macro level continuum (e.g., individuals, families, groups, organizations, institutions, and communities).</p> <p>2. Describe theories of lifespan development (e.g., bio-psycho-socio-cultural-spiritual) and the impact of development on human behavior across the lifespan.</p> <p>3. Describe the impact of the micro-macro level continuum (e.g., individuals, families,</p>		



EPAS Competency*	Course Objective/Student Learning Outcome	Assignment	Dimension *
	<p>groups, organizations, institutions, and communities) on the promotion of and obstruction to individual well-being across the lifespan.</p> <p>4. Assess the use of lifespan models of development with diverse populations, including such factors as anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (A DEI), race/ethnicity, nationality, ability, gender, class, sexual orientation, and religion/spiritual beliefs, particularly as it applies to the lifespan.</p>		
<p>7 = Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</p>	<p>1. Describe human behavior and functioning from a social systems theory perspective and its usefulness in social work practice on the micro-macro level continuum (e.g., individuals, families, groups, organizations, institutions, and communities).</p> <p>2. Describe theories of lifespan development (e.g., bio-psycho-socio-cultural-spiritual) and the impact of development on human behavior across the lifespan.</p> <p>3. Describe the impact of the micro-macro level continuum (e.g., individuals, families, groups, organizations, institutions, and</p>		



EPAS Competency*	Course Objective/Student Learning Outcome	Assignment	Dimension *
	communities) on the promotion of and obstruction to individual well-being across the lifespan. 4. Assess the use of lifespan models of development with diverse populations, including such factors as anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (A DEI), race/ethnicity, nationality, ability, gender, class, sexual orientation, and religion/spiritual beliefs, particularly as it applies to the lifespan.		

*Dimensions Key:

K = Knowledge

S = Skills

V = Value

CAP = Cognitive and Affective Processing

REFERENCES AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

References

- Ashford, J. B., LeCroy, C. W., & Williams, L. R. (2018). *Human behavior in the social environment: A multidimensional perspective*. (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.
- Austin, M. J., Carnochan, S., Savin, K., Dannecker, E., & Chavez, R. (2018). The complex interactions between social well-being and the health and disabilities of public social services recipients: A literature review for practice and policy implications. Berkeley, CA: University of California, Berkeley, School of Social Welfare.
- Burns, A., Dannecker, E., & Austin, M. J. (2018). Revisiting the biological perspective in the use of biopsychosocial assessments in social work. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*. 29(2), 177-194.
- Greene, R. R., & Schriver, J. M. (2016). *Handbook of human behavior and the social environment: A practice-based approach*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hutchison, E. D. (2019). *Dimensions of human behavior: Person and environment*. (6th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publishing.



- Johnson, M. M. & Rhodes, R. (2015). Human behavior and the larger social environment. (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Patidar, D. J. (2015). Biological basis of human behavior. Retrieved from <https://www.slideshare.net/drjayeshpatidar/biological-basis-of-human-behavior>
- Robbins, S. P., Chatterjee, P., Canda, E. R., & Leibowitz, G.S. (2019). Contemporary human behavior theory: A critical perspective for social work practice. (4th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Schriver, J. M. (2015). Human behavior and the social environment: Shifting paradigms in essential knowledge for social work practice. (6th ed.). London: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Zastrow, C.H., Kirst-Ashman, K.K., & Hessneauer, S.L. (2019). Understanding Human Behavior and the Social Environment. (11th ed.). United States: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning.

Classic References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders. (5th ed.). Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association.
- Berzoff, J. (2011). Why we need a biopsychosocial perspective with vulnerable, oppressed, and at-risk clients. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*. 81, 132–166.
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- Cummings, E. M., Davies, P. T., & Campbell, S. B. (2002). Developmental psychopathology and family process: Theory, research, and clinical implications. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
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- Egan, S. K. & Perry, D. G. (2001). Gender identity: A multidimensional analysis with implications for psychosocial adjustment. *Developmental Psychology*. 37(4), 451-463.
- Erikson, E. H. (1980). Identity and the life cycle. New York, NY: Norton & Company.
- Nye, R. (2000). Three Psychologies: Perspectives from Freud, Skinner, and Rogers. (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Thomas, R. M. (2005). Comparing theories of child development. (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Journals

Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment

Websites

Child Abuse and Neglect / Sexual Violence



Children's Bureau (n.d.). Child abuse & neglect. Retrieved from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/>

Prevent Child Abuse America. (2020). Retrieved from <https://preventchildabuse.org/>

Tennison Center for Children. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.tennisoncenter.org/about-child-abuse/>

Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network (RAINN). (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.rainn.org/>

Disabilities

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.aamr.org/>

Power to Decide. (2020). Retrieved from <https://powertodecide.org/>

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) National Network. (n.d.). What is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)? Retrieved from <https://adata.org/learn-about-ada>

Teen Pregnancy

NARAL Pro-Choice America. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.prochoiceamerica.org/about/>

Pro-Life Across America. (2019). Retrieved from <https://prolifeacrossamerica.org/>

National Right to Life (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.nrlc.org/>

Hate Crimes

Federal Bureau of Investigation. (n.d.). FBI investigates hate crimes. Retrieved from <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/hate-crimes>

The United States Department of Justice. (n.d.). Learn about hate crimes. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/learn-about-hate-crimes>

HIV/AIDS

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2017). HIV/AIDS & STDs. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/std/hiv/>

World Health Organization (WHO). (2020). HIV. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/hiv/en/>

LGBTQ

National LGBTQ Task Force. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.thetaskforce.org/>

OutRight Action International. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://outrightinternational.org/>

Others

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. (2020). Retrieved from <http://www.missingkids.com/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2019). Prevent gang membership. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/preventgangmembership/>

