ECSU Social Work Program Mission
The social work program at Eastern Connecticut State University prepares effective generalist social workers who advance human well-being, draw upon client strengths in practice, empower the oppressed, and are committed to the promotion of social justice.

SWK 213 THE HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT
COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Description:
The Human Behavior and Social Environment course provides students with a knowledge base for understanding human behavior utilizing a multidimensional approach. In this course students gain knowledge of various theories related to the influence of the eight dimensions of environment on human behavior: physical environment, culture, social institutions and social structures, families, organizations, communities and social movements with particular attention to influences of oppressive systems. Through the critical examination of various theories students gain an appreciation for the inherent strengths, complexities and variations in the human experience. The experiential approach to the presentation of knowledge utilized in this course assist students in examining and sharing their own views as well as gaining a better sense of self-awareness.

Course Objectives:
Upon completion of the course students will:

1. Gain knowledge of various theories and perspectives of human behavior such as; the ecological and strengths perspective, systems theory, conflict theory, rational choice theory, social constructionist theory, psychodynamic theory, developmental theory, social behavioral theory and humanistic theory.

2. Gain a familiarity with the various ways of knowing (experience, intuition, tradition, and science), and develop skills in becoming an active rather than passive learner in the pursuit of knowledge routinely applying a sense of curiosity and healthy skepticism as they deliberate whether to accept, reject, or suspend judgment on the knowledge that is being presented.

3. Gain an understanding of the meaning and manifestations of values along with related concepts and how they influence human behavior on both micro and macro levels.

4. Understand the dynamics and negative impact of human oppression, discrimination, and social and economic injustice on, and transmitted through the eight dimensions of environment.

5. Develop insight about their own growth, functioning, and values in the context of the eight dimensions of environment.

6. Gain an understanding of the implications of general knowledge about human behavior for social work practice.

7. Demonstrate understanding of, and appreciation for, the variations and similarities of human behavior.
8. Demonstrate understanding of the effects of marco-systems on the functioning, challenges and opportunities of populations at risk especially the poor, women, gay and lesbian people, physically challenged, racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, children and the elderly, and other non dominant groups.

**Required Texts:**


Additional articles will be handout in class.

**Course Requirements:**

**Attendance Policy:** Students expected to attend all classes, as learning will be participatory and interactional. More than three absences from class may result in a lower grade (i.e. And "A" would turn into an "A-", and so on).

**Assignments/Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments/Ggrading:</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework assignments:</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #1</td>
<td>5% 9/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment #2</td>
<td>15% 9/29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment #3</td>
<td>20% 10/27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment #4</td>
<td>15% 12/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20% 10/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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[Note: Any assignments submitted late will only receive as a maximum 80% of allotted points]

**Instructor’s Contact Information**

Students are encouraged to contact the instructor with learning concerns at any time during the semester and preferably as soon as a learning need is recognized.

**Office** Webb 439
**Office Hours**
- Tuesday 8:30 – 9:00 AM
- Tuesday 12:00 – 1:00 PM
- Wednesday 9:00 – 9:30 AM
- Thursday 9:30 – 12:30 AM
- Other times by appointment

**Telephone**
- Voice: 860-465-0102

**Internet**
- E-mail: matthewse@easternct.edu

**Notice of Non-Discrimination**

Students who have special learning needs should notify the professor at the beginning of the course so that reasonable accommodations may be made when necessary.

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of Disability Services at (860) 465-5573. To avoid any delay in the receipt of accommodations, you should contact the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible. Please understand that I cannot provide accommodations based upon a disability until I have received an accommodation letter from the Office of Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.
Outline

I. Course Introduction and Overviews
   A. Student introductions
   B. Course Overview
   C. Exploration of the Significance of this Course for Social Workers
      1. What is the study of Human Behavior?
      2. Examining the Social Work Code of Ethics
      3. Making the connection between our understanding of Human behavior and our role as social work practitioners

II. Theoretical Foundation for the study of Human Behavior
   A. Differentiation between Knowledge and Values
      1. Understanding different ways of knowing
      2. Understanding general knowledge and unique knowledge
   B. Building a knowledge Base
      1. What is theory? How do we evaluate theories?
      2. The role of research in knowledge building
   C. Introduction of the Multidimensional Approach to Understanding Human Behavior.
      1. Understanding the three aspects of human behavior
      2. Understanding the dimensions of human behavior
   D. Theoretical Bases of knowledge about human behavior
      1. Strengths perspective
      2. Systems theory
      3. Conflict theory
      4. Rational Choice theory
      5. Social Constructionist theory
      6. Psychodynamic Theory
      7. Developmental theory
      8. Social Behavioral theory
      9. Humanistic theory

   E. Evaluation of the major tenants of each theory using criteria for a good theory
   F. Explore the implications for social work of each theoretical perspective

Reading: Chapter One: Aspects of Human Behavior: Person, environment, time

Homework Assignment: Think about the problem of persistent poverty among Puerto Rican female single parents. List five things that you know about it. Think about how you know what you know. Where does you knowledge fit using the chart on page 31 of your text “Ways of understanding”. How would you go about confirming or disproving your current state of knowledge on this topic.

[Write two to three pages double spaced typed. This assignment is due 9/15/04] This assignment is 5% of your grade
III. The Multiple Dimensions of Person

A. The Biological Person
1. An integrative approach for understanding biological health and illness
2. Biological Systems
   a. Nervous system
   b. Endocrine system
   c. Immune system
   d. Cardiovascular system
   e. Musculoskeletal system
   f. Reproductive System
3. Socioeconomic status and health
4. Implications for Social Work

Reading: Chapter 3 The Biological Person. There will not be a lecture on this material however in preparation for your midterm students should complete the attached handout “The Biological Person”. Answers to the questions are in chapter 3

B. The Psychological Person
1. Theories of cognition
   a. Cognitive theory
   b. Information processing theory
   c. Social learning theory
   d. Theory of multiple intelligences
   e. Theories of moral reasoning
   f. Theories of cognition in social work practice
2. Theories of emotion
   a. Psychoanalytic theory
   b. Ego psychology
   c. Attribution theory
3. Cognitive /emotional disorders
4. The Self
   a. as Soul
   b. as Organizing activity
   c. as Cognitive Structure
   d. as Verbal activity: Symbolic interactionism
   e. as Experience Cohesion: Self Psychology
   f. as a Flow of Experience
5. Implications for social work

Reading: Chapter 4: The Psychological Person: Cognition, Emotion, Self. [read for 9/15]
D. The Psychosocial Person
1. The self in relationship
   a. Object relations theory
   b. Feminist theory of relationship
   c. Afrocentric Relational theory
   d. Social Identity theory
   e. Impact of Early Nurturing
2. The concept of stress
   a. Three categories of psychological stress
   b. Stress and crisis
   c. Traumatic stress
   d. Vulnerability to stress
3. Coping and adaptation
   a. Biological coping
   b. Psychological coping
   c. Coping styles
   d. Coping and traumatic stress
   e. Social support
4. Normal and Abnormal coping
   a. Medical (psychiatric) perspective
   b. Psychological perspective
   c. Sociological approach: deviance
   d. Social work perspective: Social functioning

Reading:

E. The Spiritual Person
1. The meaning of spirituality
2. Transpersonal theories of human development
   a. Fowler’s stages of faith development
   b. Wilber’s full spectrum model of consciousness
3. The role of spirituality in social work

Reading: Chapter 5: Psychological Person & Chapter 6: Spiritual Person [read for 9/22]

IV. What We Know So Far: Integrating the Biological, Psychological, and Spiritual Aspect of the Person into Social Work
1. Discussion of the Interview with John
2. Reviewing key Concepts/Responding to Mid

Homework assignment: The purpose of this assignment is to assist you in getting a feel for how biological, psychological, and spiritual aspects of the person can be integrated into practice. Review the “Interview with John” on page 269 and respond to the questions on 271. Your responses should be typed. Assignment is due 9/29. This assignment is 15% of your grade
V. The Multiple Dimensions of the Environment

A. The Physical Environment
1. The Relationship between the physical environment and human behavior
   a. Stimulation Theories
   b. Control theories
   c. Behavior Settings Theories
2. The Natural Environment
3. The Built Environment
   a. Institutional Design
   b. Defensible Space and Crime Prevention
   c. Behavior Setting and Addictions
4. Place Attachment
5. Accessible Environments for Person with Disabilities
6. The physical environment and human behavior across the life course
7. Implications for Social Work
   Reading: Chapter 7: The Physical Environment [read for 9/29]

B. Culture
1. The Challenge of defining Culture
2. Traditional understanding of culture and variation in human behavior
3. A contemporary, holistic application of culture
   a. A Practice Orientation
   b. Cultural Maintenance, Change, and Adaptation
4. Diversity
   a. Race
   b. Ethnicity
   c. Social Class
   d. Gender
   e. Sexual Orientation
   f. Family
5. Implication for social work practice
   Reading: Chapter 8: Culture [read for 10/6]

C. Social Institutions and Social Structure
1. Patterns of social life
2. Contemporary trends in US social institutions
3. Theories of social inequality, social mobility, and resilience
4. Mechanism of Oppression and Privilege
5. The Nature of prejudice and Discrimination
6. Implication for social work practice

Readings: [read for 10/20] Chapter 9: Social institutions and Social Structure
Wombach “Mechanism of Oppression
McIntosh, P “Pious
Synder, M “Stereotypes”

D. Families
1. Socio-Historical Perspective of the definition of family
2. Theoretical perspective for understanding the family
   a. Psychodynamic perspective
   b. Social behavioral perspective
   c. Family systems and family life cycle perspective
   d. ABCX Model of family stress and coping
   e. Multilevel family practice model
   f. Strengths perspective
3. Diversity in Family life
   1. Culture and family life
   2. Social class and family life
   3. Gay and lesbian families
4. Implications for social work practice

Read: Chapter 10 Families [read for 10/27]

Homework Assignment: The purpose of this assignment is to help you to begin to integrate this theoretical information about culture, social structure, and family into your understanding of self. Reflect on the following questions: What value was placed on connectedness and what value was placed on the differentiated self; what were they important behavioral rules? What were external boundaries—who was in and who was out of the family. What were the patterns of communication, what cultural economic and political factors affected stress and coping in your family; how did race, ethnicity, social class, and gender play out in your family, what were your families strengths? How do you think your experiences in your family of origin might serve as a barrier and or aid in your work with the Jones family as present in the book on page 407-410. Assignment due 10/27] This assignment is 20% of final grade

F. Small Groups
1. Small groups in social work
   a. Therapy groups
   b. Mutual Aid groups
   c. Psychoeducational groups
   d. Self help groups
   e. Task Groups
2. Dimensions of group structure
   a. Group composition
   b. Basic group Processes
      i. Theories of group processes
      ii. Group development
      iii. Group dynamics
3. The effects of physical environment of group process
4. Implications for Social Work practice
**Reading:** Chapter 11 Small Groups [read for 11/03]

**G. Organizations**
1. Definition of formal organizations
2. Perspectives on formal organizations
   a. Rational Perspective
   b. Systems Perspective
   c. Interpretive Perspective
   d. Critical perspective
3. Burnout: a negative organizational outcome
4. Organizations as a context for practice
5. Culturally competent care systems
6. Implication for social work
**Read:** Chapter 12 Formal Organizations [read for 11/10]

**H. Communities**
1. Territorial Community and Relational Community
2. The History Social Workers and Communities
3. Theoretical approaches to community
   a. Contrasting types of approaches
   b. Spatial arrangements
   c. Social systems approach
   d. Conflict approach
   e. Social Bond approach
4. Contemporary issues
   a. Community as context for practice vs. target of practice
   b. Agency orientation versus social action
   c. Conflict model of practice versus collaborative model
   d. Expert versus partner in the social change process
5. Implications for social work practice
**Read:** Chapter 13 Communities [read for 11/17]

**I. Social Movements**
1. Definition of social movements
2. Social movements and history of social work
3. Perspectives on Social Movements
4. Social Movement outcomes
   a. Political opportunities
   b. Mobilizing structures perspective
   c. Cultural framing perspective
5. The future of social movements and contemporary issues
6. Implication for social work
**Read:** Chapter 14 Social Movements [read for 12/1]
Homework Assignment: Review case of Margaret Ryan and Sacred Heart Center on page 573, respond to the questions 575-576. Responses should be typed. Assignment Due 12/8 Be prepared to discuss your responses in class. This assignment is 15% of your final grade

VI. Conclusion
A. Understanding Social Work practice in a Multidimensional Environment
B. Class Summary and Evaluation.

Quick Reference Guide to Assigned Readings
9/1 Orientation to Class
9/8 Chapter 1 & 2
9/15 Chapter 4 & Homework Assignment #1 Due
9/22 Chapter 5&6
9/29 Chapter 7 & Homework Assignment #2 Due
10/6 Chapter 8
10/13 Midterm
10/20 Chapter 9 & Articles
10/27 Chapter 10 & Homework Assignment #3 Due
11/3 Chapter 11
11/10 Chapter 12
11/17 Chapter 13
12/1 Chapter 14
12/8 Final Homework Assignment Due & Last Class
Instructions: Students should complete the following questions. You will be responsible for this material on the midterm.

1. What does the nervous system do?
2. What are the three major subsystems of the nervous system?
3. What are the three major internal regions of the brain?
4. What occurs in each of four lobes of the cerebral cortex?
5. What is a neuron?
6. What are dendrites?
7. What is the synapse?
8. What are the following systems responsible for
   a. endocrine system
   b. immune system
   c. cardiovascular system
   d. musculoskeletal system
   e. reproductive system