COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Human Behavior sequence includes two courses: Human Behavior in the Social Environment (HBSE) and Psychosocial Pathology. HBSE is the first of the two courses in the Human Behavior and will introduce students to the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that inform our understanding of the human condition and the normative stages of human development from prenatal through old-old age. The course material will focus on the reciprocal and transactional influences between individuals and their environment with an emphasis on the micro, mezzo, macro and chrono systems and the importance of cultural competence for the social work practitioner. The growth and development of the individual will be viewed as a person in dynamic transition through the context and lens of the life course perspective. The individual, family, community, and larger society will be explored as elements in a state of perpetual flux, each uniquely affected by socioeconomic, political, historical, and ecological forces that are part of an overarching framework.

A unique aspect of this course is the emphasis on issues that deal with the ‘self’ in an ecological context, with specific attention to the exploration of the individual, physical, intellectual, and temperamental endowments in transaction and conflict with socio-cultural norms, family patterns, and the crises, struggles, conflicts, risks and opportunities encountered throughout the life course. This course lays the foundation for social work’s understanding of the diverse elements that unite contemporary knowledge and theories regarding human behavior and the social environment and the intersectionality of the human experience. Specific emphasis will be placed on the capacity and adaptability for individuals, groups and organizations to improve the conditions in their own lives in response to external forces.

Through the perspective of the Life Course Theory, the student will begin to approach their interactions with clients using a differentiated lens that reflects the critical influence of the environment on human development. The course utilizes class discussions, readings and assignments to develop increased awareness of themselves in relation to their own life experience, thereby gaining greater sensitivity and cultural competence related to the external forces that contribute to individual development.

COURSE COMPETENCIES

This course addresses Council on Social Work Education Competencies #1, and #2. Competency #1 is measured with student outcome data.

Competency 2- Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression,
immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.

Social workers apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;

Social workers present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their experiences; and

Social workers apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

**COURSE COMPETENCY OUTCOMES**

Competency #1 is measured with student outcome data.

**Competency 1- Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the professional history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes as appropriate in context.

Social workers use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;

Social workers demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;

Social workers use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and

Social workers use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.
MEASURE 1A- Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice.

MEASURE 1B- Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics.

MEASURE 1C- Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts.

II. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Learning will occur through a variety of experiences including readings in theoretical and fictional sources, didactic lectures, films and class discussions. Class sessions are designed to permit exploration, not review, of the content assigned readings, and of the students' responses.

III. COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING

Students are expected to attend all classes and to be on time. Class participation is an important part of the learning process and ALL students are expected to participate in all assigned exercises and discussions. Students are expected to complete assignments on time, complete readings and to be prepared for related class discussions. You will be graded on the depth of your contributions and preparedness for class. In addition, all students must submit a weekly journal entry reflecting their reaction to assigned readings and class discussion. Each assignment will be weighted as follows:

- 10% Assigned readings in preparation for and participation in class discussions.
- 15% First Written assignment- “Reflection on Environmental Influence On Early Development.”
- 25% Quizzes and Reflective Journals
- 25% Midterm: Written assignment- “Application of ecological perspective to a film”
- 25% Final: Written assignment- “Self-Assessment through Journal Reflection”

Required Texts:

ISBN-10: 1138819514


Recommended Texts:

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ASSIGNMENT I - Due Session 3 - Reflection on Environmental Influence On Early Development

We have introduced the various levels of the Ecological Perspective and the idea of environmental press. This framework provides social workers with a useful tool for understanding some of the profound ways individuals are shaped by direct and indirect systems. You were born into an environment that provided certain experiences, opportunities and challenges. Consider the environment of your early development (childhood years) and the ways in which that environment influenced

- How you think about yourself
- Your current worldview – the lens through which you see the world
- The important relationships in your life

This is a 3-4 page reflective paper on how you understand the impact of the environment in which your childhood development occurred. Please be sure to consider micro, meso, exo, macro and chronosystems.

Do not use literature or citations in this paper. (3) Due Date: 3rd class. This paper is reflective, therefore the content is not graded. However, the paper will be evaluated on how well you have presented ideas in writing, organization of the paper and grammar (5) All papers must be typed, double spaced. The cover page must be attached to the back of the paper so that the name of the writer is unknown until after the paper has been read.

ASSIGNMENT II - MIDTERM – APPLICATION OF THE ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE TO A FILM.

This assignment is a combination of demonstration of mastery of content as well as application of content to the characters/circumstances in the film. All written assignments require understanding of theoretical concepts and materials presented in classroom and readings. This paper is an opportunity for you to apply what you have been learning this semester.

You are required to view the film “The Boys of Baraka” on your own time prior to session 7 this will be the basis of your midterm paper. The film is available on Netflix as well as on your tube however; on your tube you may need to sign-up to view it.

1. Define Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Perspective including all five (5) levels of systems – making note of each of the systems as they are expressed in the film.
2. Choose two (2) of the main characters (among the “boys”).
3. Through a multidimensional and life cycle perspective discuss how each system interacts with these characters to inform their functioning and development. Compare and/or contrast the differences or similarities between the environmental factors of these two characters.
4. Make sure to include the environmental press, the interlocking circles of risk as well as elements of resource and resilience.
5. Include any value conflicts and personal biases that may have emerged for you in viewing the film.
6. You may use any and all required readings as well as 4 additional peer reviewed journal articles.

This is an analysis not a film review. You are expected to apply acquired knowledge to your understanding of the development of the characters you’ve chosen. Although you will focus on one character this paper is also about interlocking systems and the probable systemic impact on your character’s development. Do not use online computer sites such as Wikipedia or sites that provide psycho-educational information. Use professional scholarly journals and texts only!

This paper should be presented in a scholarly fashion using APA-6 style citations and references. Make sure to include an **Introduction** and a **Conclusion**. You may use headings to organize your paper if it helps. Number your pages. This paper should be 8-10 pages (NO MORE). Proofread your paper before submission. Due date: 9th session. LATE PAPERS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.

ASSIGNMENT III – Presentation on Stages of Development: Due Date: Throughout the second half of the semester (Students should be assigned a stage by class 4)

In this portion of the course students will teach the class about a stage of development as follows:

- In order to facilitate a productive experience for both the “teachers” and the class please identify two articles and send them to everyone, including your professor, at least one week prior to the class you teach. Have three (3) questions for the class following your presentation that will reflect both the readings and your presentation on the developmental stage that will stimulate a class discussion.
- You will be asked to use a real or imagined case as part of your presentation. There are also cases available in your textbook, but if at all possible, utilize a case from the field. Your professor is available to meet with you to discuss the appropriateness of your case.

The presentation should be approximately one hour, but may exceed that time. The following is an outline of the areas that should be addressed in your presentation. Remember, you are the ‘expert’.

1. Describe the stage of Development and expectations for this stage, ie. the developmental tasks (across biological, psychological, emotional, physical, spiritual)
2. What is the psychosocial crisis, according to Erickson?
3. What are the central themes during this stage of development?
4. What are the basic strengths/virtues, or possible positive outcomes that may arise as a result of the constructive resolution of this developmental stage?
5. What are some of the major challenges individuals may face at this stage? What environmental risks do we need to be more cognizant of at this stage? How about family risks?
6. What is the syntonic resolution/ the dystonic resolution?
7. What are the new coping skill that result from the resolution of the crisis?
8. How is this stage related to previous stages?
   a. What aspects of previous stages do we see playing out in this stage?
   b. How can the individual overcome issues that may have arisen as a result of a poorly resolved psychosocial crisis?
9. How is this stage related to later stages?
   a. What aspects of this stage might we see playing out in later stages?
   b. What may be expected if the psychosocial crisis is unresolved during in this stage?
10. The impact of chronosystems on the experiences of this stage
11. Utilize a real or imagined case study of an individual at this stage of development and address the following: (You may use yourself or a family member)
   a. Please describe the central themes of Life Course Theory and how they apply to the individual and the circumstances.
   b. How can Life Course Theory be used to understand this stage of development?
   c. Are there any other theories that would be useful to us in understanding this individual at this life stage? Please give examples, along with an explanation of why you have chosen this theory why you believe it would be useful in your work with the client.
12. Discuss the possible outcomes for the individual and his/her circumstance and an intervention that would help the individual resolve a psychosocial crisis during this life stage.

You are welcome to include appropriate videos, small portions of film, role-plays, class exercises and other tools for engaging the class in discussion and creating a stimulating classroom experience. Students may work in pairs.

All students must complete ALL class assignments, participate in class exercises, pass both midterm and final papers to receive a passing grade for the course. DO NOT make last minute requests for special accommodations for completion of work; if accommodations are necessary this must be thoroughly discussed with the professor with sufficient time to explore options and for the professor to plan.

Competency 1- Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Competency Measures

1A- Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice.

1B- Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics.
1C- Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts.

V. PLAGIARISM

The school will not condone plagiarism in any form and will sanction acts of plagiarism. A
student who presents someone else’s work as his or her own is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking or writing. Plagiarism occurs when a student directly copies another’s work without citation; when a student paraphrases major aspects of another’s work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also plagiarism to use ideas and/or work of another student and present them as your own. It is not plagiarism to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept as a reaction to someone else’s work; however, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. Any student who can be shown to have plagiarized any part of any assignment in this course will automatically FAIL the course and will be referred to the Associate Dean for disciplinary action that may include expulsion.

VI. HIPAA ALERT

In line with HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your work will need to be masked so that the person cannot be readily identified. This means that any information that would allow the person to be identified must be changed or eliminated. This may include name, date of birth, any information unique to the individual that would allow for identification including diagnosis, race, ethnicity or gender. Information such as race, ethnicity, gender and diagnosis may be included if it will not allow for identification.

VII. CONFIDENTIALITY

Given the nature of class discussion and the presentation of case material, as well as personal revelation in class, students are reminded that the same commitment to confidentiality with clients extends to classmates. WHAT IS SHARED IN CLASS REMAINS IN CLASS

VIII. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations must make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, Rochelle Kohn, Beren Campus, 917-326-4828, rkohn1@yu.edu, Abby Kelsen, Wilf Campus, 646-685-0118, akelsen@yu.edu, during the first week of class. All documentations for possible accommodation must be submitted to the professor by the third class. All possible accommodations must be discussed and negotiated with the individual professor; specific accommodations are not automatic.

IX. E-RES (Electronic Reserve)

eReserve is Yeshiva University’s on-line web based system used to provide access to journal articles, book excerpts, and other course materials. Most articles listed in each syllabus are available on eReserve. You can access full text articles from your home or from a university computer.

How do I Use E-RES?

1. Go to library’s online resources page: www.yu.edu/libraries,
2. Click on online resources
3. Click on E-RES.
4. If you are off-campus, at this point you will be prompted for your Off Campus Access Service login and password.
5. Click on Search E-RES” or on “Course Index,” and search by instructor’s name “Search E-RES” or on “Course Index,” and search by instructor’s name, department, course name, course number, document title, or document author.
6. Click on the link to your course
7. Enter the password given to you by your instructor. Read the copyright guidelines that appear on the screen, and click on “Accept” to proceed.
8. Locate and click on the item you wish to view. Titles beginning with “A”, “An”, or “The” are alphabetized under “A” and “T” respectively.
9. When the article text or book record appears on the screen, you can print, email, or save it to a disk.
10. If you have any problems, please contact-eres@yu.edu.

To view documents that are for pdf format, the computer you are using must have Adobe Acrobat Reader software. You can download it FREE at www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

Course Outline

Theme I- Orientation to the Course: Beginnings, Change, the Multidimensional Approach and the Life Course Perspective

Sessions 1-2: Beginnings and change: Beginnings relate to the student and the client. We live in a systemic society and we develop across a continuum informed by different experiences, values, relationships and the environment. Beginnings may include conflicts, anxieties, losses, excitement, struggles and aspirations; these inherent dimensions are organized and informed by our life experiences.


Session 3: Broad Definition of Systems: Development as Change including general systems theory, role theory and the ecological perspective
The person in environment construct has been used as the foundation for developing a multi-
dimensional approach. No one dimension of the person or the environment will tell the whole
story; it is the interaction of all the dimensions folded into the construct of the person-
environment relationship that tells the story. This story is told over time and within a specific
time period; understanding the importance of time helps us to understand the constant changes
in the person-environment transactions.

- Introduction of the Ecological perspective
- Environmental Press
- Radius of Significant Relationships
- Life Course Perspective

**Required Readings:**

Garbarino:
Chapter 1: Beginning at the end, or ending at the beginning? p.1-10.

Rogers:

**Theme II: Family as Social System: Sessions 4 & 5:** Family is the basic social institution and
the primary social group the configuration of which varies from culture to culture. This unit
explores identity formation within the context of family, the impact of change (developmental,
ilness, immigration, loss etc.) in and on the family and the family as the mediating system
between the individual and society. The individual and his/her family are interdependent yet the
family exists within and is impacted by the community, the larger society and socio-historic time
period.

**Classroom Exercise:** An exploration of your own family - details to be provided by your
professor.

**Required Readings:**
Garbarino Chapter 4: The Family as a Social System


pp. 353-359.
Theme III - The Self in an Environmental Context, Trauma, Risk & Resilience: Sessions 6

Identification and exploration of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological perspective of development provides a lens through which we understand our clients. All systems have inherent risks and developmentally we learn to negotiate the systems in spite of and because of the risks. All systems also include resources and the interaction between risks and resources help us to develop coping skills, change and grow. This occurs through the process of response to stress, crisis and trauma experiences.

Required Readings:


Chapter 9-“Social Construction” 232-270 ERES
Chapter 11-“Risk and Resilience Theory” 315-342 ERES

  Chapter 2-“Terror” 33-50 ERES
  Chapter 3-“Disconnection” 51-74
  Chapter 5- “Child Abuse”

Learning Theme IV –Individual Person as a System
Session 7: Definition of the Person as a System Developing Through Different Stages

Introduction of the person as a system: Multiple Dimensions of a Person: Understanding the different dimensions of a person from a bio-psychosocial perspective provides a way of understanding development throughout the life span. The Eriksonian paradigm is an excellent example of development over the life span.

Choice and Will- Socio-cultural factors inform our identification and understanding of our choices and the capacity to exercise our will. The Biological Person: Biological factors may restrict and/or enable and circumscribe the parameters of human development and individual abilities. The Psychological Person: Cognition, emotions and affect are dynamic dimensions of the personality. There is a special relationship between intelligence, coping and decision making across the life cycle. In addition, ego capacities are the focal points of our psychological development. The Psychosocial Person and the Spiritual Person: The psychosocial perspective is a traditional social work perspective important in understanding human behavior. However, it is important to add to this the person’s spiritual understandings and yearnings. This refers to one’s search for meaning, purpose in life and the need to connect to others in the world. It is a process and therefore, develops over time. This is particularly important in understanding the traumatic responses of people.
**Required Readings:**


*Poisson, Jayme, (2011) “Parents keep child’s gender secret” Toronto Star, 5/21/11*

**Learning Theme V – A Life Course Perspective and Transitions in Human Development (sessions 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14)**
In these sessions the focus will be exploring the life course (life span) perspective and the necessary, universal transitions in developing through the different life stages within the environmental context for individual and family development. It will include exploration of the intersectionality of race-ethnicity, gender, social status, educational level, culture, nationality, age and previous experiences influences the way an individual negotiates transitioning into the next developmental stage.

**Session 8: Introduction to Stages of Individual Development, Conception, Prenatal Development & Childbirth, and Infancy**


Session 9: Toddlerhood and Early Childhood


Garbarino (1992) : Chapter 8 The Territory of Childhood

Session 10: Middle Childhood


Session 11: Adolescence: Psychosocial Transitions, family and Community Transactions


Session 12: Emerging Adulthood and Early Adulthood


**Session 13: Middle Adulthood**


Kobayashi, K. "Midlife Crises": Understanding the changing nature of relationships in middle age Canadian families, [https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/sedap/p/sedap212.pdf](https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/sedap/p/sedap212.pdf)

Rogers, A.T. (2016). Development in Middle Adulthood, 354-388


**Session 14: The Elderly: Old Age and Very Old Age**

**Required Reading:**


**Summary and Conclusion**

**HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**Note: Selected articles are on E-Reserve**


Reese, D.J. (1999) Hospice access and use by African American: Addressing cultural and institutional barriers through participatory action research, Social Work, 44 (6) 549-560.CLASSIC


Salzburg, S., (2004) Learning that an adolescent child is gay or lesbian: The parent experience, Social Work, 49(1), 109-118


