

Indiana University School of Social Work

S510: Human Behavior and the Social Environment:
Individuals, Families and Groups (3 credits)

Instructor's Name: Sandra Shelly
Office: ES 4107
Phone No.: (317) 278-1617

Semester Year: Fall, 1996
Section No.: R502
Room: ES2104

I. Course Rationale & Description

In relation to S511, this course presents and critiques select theoretical frameworks that explain the interaction among individuals and among various sized social systems (families and groups). Using such frameworks as person-in-environment, ecological perspectives, and the dual perspective, this course examines how these frameworks may be applied to understand and evaluate human behavior across the life span. The course focuses on the dynamic interplay among biological, psychological, and social variables within a diversity context. Social work values and ethics provide the guidelines for addressing and critically analyzing issues of personal well-being and the social functioning of populations-at-risk. Students will come to understand how systemic inequality and oppression impact human behavior and the need to advocate for social and economic justice among people of color, women, lesbians and gay men, and other populations-at-risk as distinguished by age, ethnicity, culture, class, religion, and physical or mental challenges.

II. Objectives

In this course, students are expected to demonstrate achievement of the following objectives:

1. Identify the biological, psychological, and socio-cultural variables and the interaction among them, that may shape person-environment behavior across the life span.
2. Understand the process of critical thinking and apply it to the analysis of human behavior.
3. Apply and critique various theoretical frameworks in relation to interactions between and among people as members of families and groups.
4. Evaluate applicable theoretical frameworks within the ethical and value base of the profession.
5. Identify oppressed populations including people of color, women, lesbian women and gay men, and other populations at risk such as those distinguished by age, ethnicity, culture, class, religion, physical or mental ability, as well as the diversity of family systems;
6. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression as well as theoretical frameworks that explain and predict its impact upon the development and functioning of individuals, families and groups.

III. Course Outline and Readings

A. Required Texts

Schraver, J. M. (1995). Human behavior and the social environment: Shifting paradigms in essential knowledge for social work practice. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Other required readings are listed under the course outline and will be on reserve at the library.

B. Course Content

Unit 1 - Paradigms and Theories: What does it mean to me?

a. Required Readings:

1. Schriver text, Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

2. Turner, F. J. (1979). Social Work Treatment (Second Edition). New York: The Free Press. Chapter 1.

3. Gitterman, A. (1991). "Creative connections between practice and theory". Theory and practice in social group work: Creative connections. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press.

4. Anderson, R. & Carter, I. (1978). Human behavior in the social environment: A social systems approach (Second edition). Chapter 1., pp. 8-32.

5. Saleeby, D. (1992). The strengths perspective in social work practice. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishing Group. Chapters 1 & 2.

6. Bloom, M. (1992). "A conversation with Carel Germain on human development in the ecological context" in M. Bloom (Ed.) Changing lives: Studies in human development and professional helping. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, pp.406-409.

b. Assignment: In three to five typewritten pages, describe the theoretical foundation of your actual or future social work practice. Using the above readings as resources, reflect upon your undergraduate education as well as personal experiences and identify theory which influences your thinking about working with people and provide an example of how it may impact what you actually do (or will do) in practice. This paper is UNGRADED.

Unit 2 - Traditional/Dominant Perspectives on Individuals

a. Required Readings:

1. Schriver text, Chapter 4

2. Hall, C. & Lindzey, G. (1970). "Roger's self theory" in Theories of personality (Second edition). New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

3. Thyer, B. (1991). "A behavioral perspective on human development" in M.Bloom (Ed.) Changing lives: Studies in human development and professional helping. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, pp.410-418.

4. Freud, S. (1991). "Psychodynamic theories: A frame for development" in M.Bloom (Ed.) Changing lives: Studies in human development and professional helping. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, pp.419-427.

b. Assignment: Quiz #1

Unit 3 - Alternative/Possible Perspectives on Individuals

a. Required Readings:

1. Schriver text, Chapter 5 (One part on specific assigned focus group) and introduction, summary and each of the "illustrative readings".

2. Chestang, L. (1976). "Environmental influences on social functioning: The black experience." In Cafferty P. and Chestang, L. (eds). The diverse society. 60-74. Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.

b. Assignment: You will be assigned (based upon your selected preferences) to one of the four focus groups identified by Schriver. You will be expected to do a one-hour class presentation on the materials presented in your section of the chapter. You are encouraged to also use video/audio tapes to heighten awareness of the class to specific issues of these populations addressed by the theories presented.

Unit 4 - Perspectives on Families and Groups

a. Required Readings;

1. Schriver text, Chapter 6 and 7.

2. Hartford, M. (1971). "Phases in Group Development" in Groups in social work: Application of small group theory and research to social work practice, Chap. 3.

3. Lowy, L. "Decision-Making and Group Work." In Bernstein, S.(ed.). Explorations in Group Work. Boston University School of Social Work, 1965, pp. 107-115.

4. Heap, Group Theory for Social Workers. New York: Pergamon Press, 1977, Chap. 7, pp. 138-149, 183-185.

b. Assignment: Quiz #2.

Unit 5 - Oppression and Populations-at-risk

a. Required Readings:

1. Pinderhughes, E. (1983). "Empowerment for our clients and for ourselves". Social Casework, Pp. 331-338.
2. Parsons, R. (1991). "Empowerment through mutual aid groups: A practice grounded conceptual framework". Groupwork. 4(1), 5-21.
3. Nes, J. & Iadicola, P. (1989). "Toward a definition of feminist social work". Social Work. 34(1), pp. 12-21.

b. Assignment: Read one fiction book from assigned list and write a three to five typewritten page book review including a summary of the plot, specific instances of both overt and subtle discrimination experienced by that population and how the discrimination impacted the behavior of the characters. See Book report format for further information.

OR: Service Learning experience- to be described in class!

Unit 6: Putting it all together

a. Required reading:

1. Schriver text, Chapter 10.
2. Grimley, D., Prochaska, J., Velicer, W., Blais, L. & DiClemente, C. (1994). Chapter 1 - "The transtheoretical model of change" in T. Brinthaupt & R. Lipka (Eds.) Changing the self: Philosophies, techniques and experiences. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

b. Assignment: Final paper (see specific instructions).

IV. Course Format & Assignments

Each unit will have an assignment which has been briefly described under Course Content. In addition, students will also be assigned a final paper which should serve as a tool to integrate the information covered during this course. Specific information regarding this paper will be distributed in the last month of the course. The assignments will be weighed as such:

Unit #1 - Personal Theories paper	(Ungraded)
Unit #2 - Quiz	20
Unit #3 - Group Presentation	20
Unit #4 - Quiz	20
Unit #5 - Book Report	20
Final Paper	<u>20</u>
	100%

V. Course policies, Evaluation & Grading

1. Students are expected to respect the opinions and feelings of others, even when they differ from their own.
2. Plagiarism or any sort of academic dishonest is prohibited by University policy. See the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association for guidelines concerning in-text references.
3. In accordance with the Indiana University School of Social Work grading policy, students must earn at least a "C" to pass this course.

Course grades will be determined by the following grading scale:

A = 90 - 100%

B = 80 - 89%

C = 70 - 79%

The first two and last two scores in each category will be assigned "+" or "-" (e.g. 99 and 100% = "A+" and 90 and 91% = "A-").

S510 Human Behavior and the Social Environment
McGuire and Shelly

Course Outline

- Aug. 27: Welcome and review syllabus
- Sept. 3: Paradigms
- Sept. 10: Critical thinking, theory and the relationship between these to practice.
- Sept. 17: Perspectives for Social Work Practice: Systems theory, Strengths perspective and Life Model.
Preferences for alternative presentations.
- Sept. 24: Traditional theories on individual development.
Assign groups for alternative presentations and meet for the first time.
- Oct. 1: Traditions theories on individuals continued.
Group presentation meetings
- Oct. 8: Quiz #1
Meetings for group presentations
- Oct. 15: Presentations #1 and #2
- Oct. 22: Presentations #3 and #4
Summary on alternate theories on individuals - Dual perspective.
- Oct. 29: Small group theories.
- Nov. 5: Small group theory continued.
- Nov. 12: Family theories.
- Nov. 19: Oppression theory, empowerment and feminism
- Nov. 26: Quiz #2
- Dec. 3: Final class!! Transtheoretical change model
Discuss book reviews.
Class evaluation, discuss final paper.
- Dec. 12: Final paper due.

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Final Paper

This assignment is basically the same as your first assignment for this course, with a few modifications and clarifications. In five to seven typewritten pages, describe the theoretical foundation of your future social work practice. Please review the first paper you wrote for the class and make sure you attach it with this paper. Feel free to identify your own areas of growth during this past semester and areas you identify for continued growth in knowledge.

Reflect upon the theories about human behavior (individuals, groups and families) which we have discussed during this semester as well as your undergraduate education, other social work courses and personal experiences and identify theories which influence your thinking about working with people. Provide specific examples of how these theories might impact what you actually will be doing in practice. Use the outline below:

Note: This course focuses on human behavior with individuals, families and groups, so your practice (For the purposes of this paper ONLY) should focus on individual, family and groupwork practice.

I. Brief description of future practice: use your upcoming practicum placement, possible Concentration placement or first post-MSW practice situation (please note private practice is NOT an option here) and describe what kinds of client and social problems your practice may address. (3 points)

II. Identification of theories with rationale for their choice: briefly describe what theories seem of major importance and which are of less importance but still useful in this kind of practice. It may make sense to describe which theories you would definitely NOT use! (7 points)

III. Practice examples of theory application: Give specific examples of how the underlying theory would lead you to pursue a certain practice intervention. (7 points)

IV. Bibliography: Please include citations from your text or other readings when you quote or cite, using APA format. (3 points)

The paper is worth a total of 20 points. Don't forget to attach the initial paper!

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Book Report Outline

For this assignment, read a book from the attached list. This book should be about an population who regularly experiences oppression with which you are NOT strongly identified yourself. After you read the book, write a 3 to 5 page "book report" following the outline below. Bring this to class and be prepared to read your quote and discuss your book with your classmates.

Part I: Brief Summary 3 points

Briefly summarize the major plot and characters of the book, making sure you fully identify the oppression issues addressed.

Part II: Quote 5 points

Identify a quote which illuminates the oppression experienced by the characters in the book in a meaningful and emotionally evocative way.

Part III: Character's Behavior 6 points

Identify the behavior of the characters in the book that has been impacted by the oppression those characters experienced. You should give a minimum of three examples of behavior.

Part IV: Theoretical Analysis 6 points

Use one theory of human behavior discussed in class or in the text/readings and use that theory to analyze/explain the client behaviors you identified above. Also, provide a rationale for the choice of this theory over others.

TOTAL: 20 points

Be prepared to discuss how this book impacted your views about the oppressed population and how this experience may impact your social work practice.