Course Description:

This course will examine the individual, interpersonal and contextual changes and behaviors that are part of normal adolescent development. Within the context of normal adolescent development, the course will focus on: (1) the epidemiology and etiology of adolescent problem behaviors; (2) the extent to which these behaviors vary across gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status; (3) the ways in which these behaviors relate to normal adolescent development; and (4) existing programs and policies designed to prevent, and, to a lesser extent treat problem behaviors.

Course Content:

The broad content of this course will focus upon the changes, contexts, and psychosocial development and problems of adolescence. The key changes that occur during adolescence are biological, cognitive, and social. The section of this course on biological changes will focus on the pubertal process and its physical, psychological, and social impact, as well as subgroup and generational differences in its onset and timing. The cognitive development portion of this course will examine the theoretical perspectives on adolescent thinking, and changes in adolescent thinking patterns and abilities that occur from pre-adolescence to late adolescence. Finally, this course will examine the social (e.g., economic, legal, political, and interpersonal) changes that occur as adolescents make the transition to adulthood.

The social contexts that are central to the development of most adolescents include family, peers, schools, work, and leisure environments. The family issues that this course will examine include different parenting styles and their impact on a variety of adolescent outcomes, the effects of changing family patterns on adolescent development, and reciprocal relationships between the family and adolescents. The peer-related issues that this course will address include the historical origins of adolescent peer groups, the nature and structure of peer groups, and the influence of peers on both pro-social and problem behavior. Course content on schools will focus on the varied purposes of schools, the ways in which their organization influences adolescents’ learning, and their direct and indirect influence on adolescents’ future life chances.

Employment issues that will be addressed include changes in the nature of adolescent employment, the long and short term costs and benefits of adolescent employment, and the meaning of work for young people who do not attend college. Content on adolescent leisure activity will examine its role in socializing adolescents for adulthood, its influence on adolescents' academic success and failure, and its economic importance.
The final section of this course will focus on adolescent psychosocial problem behaviors, such as alcohol, and other substance use, violence, suicide, eating disorder, precocious sex, and delinquency. Particular attention will be given to the epidemiology, etiology, trends and population distributions of these problems. Considerable attention will also be given to identification of the risk and protective factors for these problems and the policies and programs related to their prevention and treatment.

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the biological, psychological, and social changes that characterize normal adolescence.
2. Identify and describe the primary interpersonal and contextual influences on adolescent behavior.
3. Identify and describe the ways in which the individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors common to adolescence intersect and relate to adolescent problem behaviors.
4. Identify what social workers and other professionals can do to promote adolescent health and well being and prevent and treat adolescent problem behaviors.
5. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to adolescent development and behavior

**Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:**

*Multiculturalism and Diversity* will be addressed throughout this course. Racial, ethnic, gender, and social class differences in the timing, sequencing, nature, and outcome of adolescent developmental experiences will be central to every facet of this course.

*Social Justice and Social Change* will be addressed through information and discussion on the ways in which social status mediates the experiences of adolescents and the ways in which various programs, practices, and policies help or hinder the successful development of all young people.

*Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation* will be central to this course, particularly in the section that focuses on adolescent problem behaviors. General principles of program design, implementation, and evaluation will be presented and examples of successful programs and policies will be discussed.

*Behavioral and Social Science Research* will provide the substantive foundation for this course. Emphasis will be placed on the review, critique, and synthesis of the existing scientific knowledge base as prerequisite to interventions that promote health and well being, and prevent or treat adolescent problems.

**Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values**

Values and ethics will be addressed as they relate to working with young people. This course will emphasize the importance of understanding the range of normal adolescent development, working with disadvantaged populations, and sensitivity to the possibility of unintended negative consequences of interventions such as promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

**Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (PODS):**

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectional and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self knowledge and self awareness to facilitate PODS learning.
**Recommended Journals:**

- Adolescence
- American Journal of Public Health
- American Psychologist
- Child and Youth Care Quarterly
- Child and Youth Services
- Child Development
- International Journal of Adolescence
- Journal of Adolescent Health
- Journal of Adolescent Health Care
- Journal of Adolescent Research
- Journal of Early Adolescence
- Merrill Palmer Quarterly

**Required Texts:**


**Strongly Recommended:** Addams, Jane. *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets.*

**C. Recommended Texts and Articles:**

**Required and some recommended texts will be on reserve at the Social Work Library**

**B. Suggestions of Popular Fiction/ Videos Highlighting Adolescent Characters:**

- White Oleander
- Girl, Interrupted
- This Boy’s Life
- October Sky
- The Virgin Suicides
- Welcome to the Dollhouse
- Boy's Don't Cry
- The Best Little Girl in the World
- What's Eating Gilbert Grape?
- The Ice Storm
- Basketball Diaries
- Thirteen
- The Incredible True Story of Two Girls in Love

**TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE**

(All readings appear in the schedule on the date they will be discussed in class)

**Mon./Jan. 10**

I. *Introduction /Class Expectations/Setting Learning Goals/ Looking at Adolescence as a Social Construct*

**Readings**

Arnett, J. “Learning to Stand Alone: The Contemporary American Transition to Adulthood in Cultural and Historical Context.”


**Jan. 18**

MLK Birthday

**Mon./Jan. 24**

II. *Theories of Adolescent Development I: Issues of Gender and Ethnicity*

**Readings**


Belkin, L. “The Making of a 8-Year Old Woman: How Do We Understand Early Puberty? Through the Prism of Our Times.”

Brooks-Gunn, J. and Reiter, E. “Chapter 2: The Role of the Pubertal Processes.” In Feldman, S. & Elliot, G. (Eds.)
Brownlee, S. “Article 4: Inside the Teen Brain: Behavior Can be Baffling When Young Minds are Taking Shape.”


---

### Mon., Jan. 31

#### III. *Theories of Adolescent Development II: Identity Construction*

**Readings:**

Pipher, Ch. 1, 2

Tatum, B. “Chapter 4: Identity Development in Adolescence ‘Why Are the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?’”


Pollack, W. “Introduction: Listening to Boys’ Voices: Rescuing Ophelia’s Brothers.”

Pollack, W. “Chapter 1: Inside the World of Boys: Behind the Mask of Masculinity.”


IV. Adolescent Development and Families

Readings


Owens, Queer Kids, Ch. 10, “Parental Acceptance”

Pollack, W. “Chapter 5: The Power of Mothers.”

Pollack, W. “Chapter 6: Real Fathers/Real Men: The Empathic Relationships of Fathers and Sons.”


Mon/Feb. 14 V. Adolescent Sexuality

Paper 1 is due

Readings

Owens Chaps 1-4 (Becoming Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual)


Presentation: Laura Wernick and Riot Youth
Mon., Feb. 21

VI. Looking at Psychosocial Stressors: Trauma, Poverty

Student Public Presentation 1

Readings

Pipher, Ch. 9

PDF Kennedy and McCarthy, Bridging Worlds: Understanding and Facilitating Adolescent Recovery from the Trauma of Abuse, 63-91.

PDF Steiner and Matthews, “Psychiatric Trauma…” in Treating Adolescents.

PDF Traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents, Psychiatric Times, March 2009

PDF Carter, Fortson, Hollist, Altheimer, Schaible, Compounded Risk: The Implications for Delinquency of Coming from a Poor Family that Lives in a Poor Community, in Journal of Youth and Adolescence, pp. 593-605


Mon. March 7

VII. Youth Development and Empowerment!!! The dangers of pathologizing Youth

Student Public Presentation 2

Readings


Mohajer, Nicole, Earnest, Jaya, Youth empowerment for the most Vulnerable: A Model based on the Pedagogy of Freire and Experiences in the Field, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Australia, 2009


Meet for class at the Neutral Zone

Mon., March 14  VIII. *Internalizing Behaviors in Adolescence: Eating disorders.*

*Student Public Presentation 3*

*Paper II Due*

*Readings*


Mon., March 21  IX. *Internalizing Behaviors in Adolescence: Depression*

*Student Public Presentation 4*

*Readings:*

Pollack, W. “Chapter 12: Hamlet’s Curse: Depression and Suicide in Boys.”


Sluzki, Carlos, “Migration and Disruption of Social Networks,” in Revisioning Family Therapy. (Referred to as “Acculturation PDF”)

Nguyen, Peter V, Perceptions of Vietnamese Fathers' Acculturation Levels, Parenting Styles, and Mental Health Outcomes in Vietnamese American Adolescent Immigrants, Social work, New York: Oct. 2008 Vol. 53, Iss. 4; pg. 337, 10 pgs

Podcast: Concerns of Gays and Lesbians: An Interview with Cynthia Conley, Ph.D.


Pipher, Ch 8

Owens, Ch. 9

Mon., March 28

Externalizing Risk Behaviors: Substance Use, Sensation Seeking, AIDS, Conduct and Oppositionality Disorders

Student Public Presentation 5

Readings:


Pardidni, Dennis, Phd., Symptoms of Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, and Callous-Unemotional Traits as Unique Predictors of Psychosocial Maladjustment in Boys: Advancing an Evidence Base for DSM-V, 2 2010.


Powers and Mattano, “Substance Abuse” in Treating Adolescents


Visit from Bruce Thomson on Substance Abuse

Mon., April 4

XI. Schools and Achievement/Violence in Schools and Community/Suicidality

Student Public Presentation 6

Readings

Owens Chapter 5, Queer Kids, The special problems of Schools


Seung-yeon Lee, Jun Sung Hong and Dorothy L. Espelage, An ecological understanding of Youth Suicide in South Korea, School Psychology International 2010 31: 531

Mon, April 11

XII. Ecological Contexts of Adolescence: Peers, Leisure, and Work

Student Public Presentation 7

Readings:


Bradford Brown, B. “Chapter 7: Peer Groups and Peer Cultures.” In Feldman, S. & Elliot, G. (Eds.)


**Presentation: Corner Health Center**

**Mon., April 18**  
**XIII. Thinking about Prevention and Interventions**

**Readings**


Rew, Lynn (2005), Chapter 7-8, Adolescent Health: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Theory, Research, and Intervention.

Pipher, Ch 12,13 & 14

Owen, Chs. 11, 12

**Paper 3 due on Mon., April 18**

**Format of Course**

**General Overview**

This course will approach adolescent behavior and development from the three following perspectives:

1. **The current research** – students will be asked to read about and consider the latest research about adolescence. Most of the articles are research-oriented and provide extensive references to other current research into adolescence.
2. **The experiential**- students will be asked to explore their professional and personal experiences in working/living/interacting with adolescents. Reviving Ophelia and Real Boys, and Queer Kids incorporate many case histories and the authors’ experiences of the adolescents with whom they work.
3. **The personal** – students will be asked to reflect on their own adolescent development to facilitate deeper understanding of the issues. This personal exploration is meant to help students integrate their personal stories with their actual experience of adolescents and with the insights delineated in the research.

**Grades**

Your grade for this course will be based on the following:

- **10% = Class Participation**
- **20% = Paper 1**
- **40% = Paper 2**
- **30% = Paper 3**

The fine print is for problems that hopefully won’t arise. But just in case, here are the rules: If more than two sessions are missed—whatever the reason—the grade will be lowered five points for each session over two unless the session is made up. To make up a session find out from other students what was covered in the missed sessions and develop a make-up plan to be submitted via email for my approval. The plan should focus on the topic of the missed session, and should involve three or more hours of effort.

**Small Group Public Presentations**

Each small group will be responsible for:

1. Identifying a one or more of the readings that you will address in your presentation.
2. Deciding on your “setting” and your “audience” and your “occasion” (why you are presenting)

*Example: Setting = school, Audience = teaching staff, Occasion = weekly in-service*

3. Preparing a brief “character” sketch for your audience: how do you want us to act? Are we frustrated, curious, happy to be at the presentation, unhappy, etc. etc. This could simply be READ to us.
4. Presenting material that is specifically designed for your chosen audience. You may want to “script” some questions for audience members to ask you.
5. Facilitating a discussion (using discussion questions) which deepens the presentation.

Each presentation should be no longer than 30 minutes. During the 2nd class, you will be assigned a date for your presentation.

Your presentation should have specific learning objectives that include:

- a. “terms” (actual terms from the readings);
- b. “facts” (important facts you feel the class should remember); and
- c. “principles of practice” actual practice principles revealed either in the video or in the readings.

*(example: “treatment utilizing a multi-disciplinary approach works best with Eating Disorders”)*

At the time of your presentation, I would like to get a copy of your hand-out(s) attached to a note from the group (signed by each individual) which states clearly what each individual did in preparation for the presentation.

If this presentation WERE to be graded, grades would be based upon the following:
33% - Were “terms” from the readings effectively brought out in the presentation?
33% - Were “facts” from the readings effectively brought out in the presentation?
33% - Were principles of practice clearly brought out in the readings?
1% - Did the presenters bring something good to eat and did I like it?

The Papers

The grading for each individual paper is spelled out in detail in the next section.

ALL papers will be marked down by 5% for every day late. The paper is due at the beginning of class on the due date. Any paper turned in later than this will be considered one day late. In order to be fair to all class members, this policy needs to be uniform. If you are unhappy with your feedback and/or grade on a paper, the paper may be rewritten and turned in no later than 1 week after it has been returned to you.

The average of the two grades will then be your grade for the actual paper. The second 
paper should be turned in with the changes highlighted and any deletions crossed out. It will not be possible to rewrite the final paper.

“B” papers meet all the criteria for the assignment but do not demonstrate thinking beyond the criteria. An “A” paper will take the information being discussed and help the reader to see that information in a new light. In other words, an “A” paper is a paper which incorporates YOUR wisdom and one in which you have drawn your OWN conclusions.

Paper # 1 (personal perspective in relation to the readings): Due on and Mon., Feb. 14 – No more than 5 typed pages, 20% of total grade

This paper should be a personal exploration of your own experiences as an adolescent in light of your responses/reaction to at least two of the Readings. Although it is certainly not required that you read ahead, you are welcome to use ANY of the readings from the Course. It would be best to choose Readings which moved you in some way and which inspired some kind of response – whether it be agreement, disagreement, anger, frustration, sadness, etc.

This paper will be assessed on the following criteria:
1. Did the writer clearly respond to the Readings and provide concrete examples from her/his own adolescence? (30%)  
2. Did the writer connect her/his personal stories and examples to both the readings and the larger themes that the paper addresses? 30% 
3. Did the writer establish some kind of structure to the paper? Did the structure allow for pertinent conclusions to be drawn – 30% 
4. Form: Is the writing professional? Is the grammar correct? Are the sentences clear? Are there typographical errors – 10%

Paper # 2 (research-based perspective): Due on Monday, March 14 - – no more than 8-10 typed pages, 30% of total grade

The goal of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to explore the current research
on a topic of your choice related to Adolescent Development and Behavior. There is so much to cover in this course that justice cannot possibly be done to all of the topics that I would like to include. Given that, this paper is an opportunity for you to do some reading and thinking in an area of interest to you. You may pick any topic as long as it’s related to this developmental period. The paper can also examine either treatment approaches or public policy as related to this age group. My MAIN hope is that you pick a topic that you are interested in.

You are required to read at least six scholarly articles on your topic, summarize the research, outline the salient issues/findings and then analyze what you have discovered. An original intervention should then be designed to address the shortcomings of the previous interventions that have been proposed. Your proposed intervention should demonstrate knowledge of important developmental, gender, and race/ethnicity concerns; and components of the new intervention should be supported by relevant literature

This paper will be assessed on the following criteria:
1. Content: Did the writer clearly meet the objectives of the assignment – is there a central question, is there a review of the relevant literature, is there a suggested intervention, a logical summary and conclusion? - 50%
2. Organization: Is the paper logically organized? Is information presented in a systematic and readable manner? - 20%
3. Form: Is the grammar correct? Are there typographical errors – 10%
4. Depth (more than just summarizing), Creativity (Have YOU put together information in a personal and innovative way?) –20%

Paper #3 (experiential perspective): Due on Mon., April 18, 6-8 typed pages, 30% of total grade

- The goal of this assignment is for you to go outside of the classroom, have an experience of interviewing an adolescent and than compare/contrast the “research” with the “real world.” It is important to identify a teen population with whom you are unfamiliar and 3-5 areas of concern that the research-literature emphasizes for this population. (For the purposes of this assignment an adolescent is defined as someone between the ages of 13-18).

- Please assure who ever you interview that all information will be kept completely confidential and that all identifying information will be changed in the paper you turn into me. I do not want to know the person’s name or the names of other people in her/his life. You can make up names or just give initials.

- If you do not know of an adolescent you can interview, you can interview someone who is in their early/mid 20’s – someone as close to “adolescence” as possible,

- Another goal of this assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to work with a “bio-psycho-social” assessment tool when you conduct the interview. The SNAP
“Strengths, Needs, Abilities and Preferences” Assessment Tool is described in the article, Essentials of Interviewing (found in the Resource section of Ctools) and MAY be utilized when you write up the “interview” section of the paper. It is not a requirement that you use this tool.

- The following information should be included in your interview (all this info. will not necessarily be in the paper):
  - Current family history and dynamics
  - Social relationships
  - Cultural and Ethnic Background and Practices
  - Spiritual and Religious Beliefs and Practices
  - Any history of legal entanglement
  - Middle and High school
  - Employment
  - Leisure and Recreational
  - Medical, Physical/Sexual
  - Nutritional habits
  - Medication
  - Alcohol and Chemical use history
  - Any history or current issues with mental health, e.g. suicidality, eating disorders, self-mutilations, etc…

- The sequence COULD look something like this:
  1. Conduct the interview keeping the “SNAP Assessment” and the above assessment areas in mind.
  2. Research the particular teen population and ask: How does what you learned in the interview either compare or contrast with what the research says about this particular teen?
  3. What conclusions do you make based on these comparisons/contrasts? What possible treatments or policy changes (if any) may be needed to more fully assist this young person in her/his transition to adulthood.

This paper will be assessed on the following criteria:

1. Content: Did the writer include each of the paper’s required steps as listed above? Did the writer draw conclusions from comparing/contrasting her/his interviews with the findings in the research - 40%
2. Organization: Is the paper logically organized? Is information presented in a systematic and readable manner – 20%
3. Form: Is the grammar correct? Are there typographical errors - 10%
4. Depth (more than just summarizing), Creativity (Have YOU put together information in a personal and innovative way?) – 20%

Alternative to Paper 3

As an alternative to Assignment 3 (The Experiential Perspective paper), 4-5 students will have
the opportunity to do a group presentation that is ALSO experiential in nature. There are 5 steps:

**Step 1:** I would like you to interview 5 different teens (or young adults who were recently teens) and interview them about the specific kinds of media they are viewing/hearing/ingesting. You can ask any questions you like, but I would also like you to address the following:

1. How much time is spent with media?

2. What are the specific games, programs, websites, music...viewed, listened to, played...?

3. Is the teen aware of any shifts in mood, attitude after the ingestion of the media?

4. Has media input increased/decreased over the past few years?

5. Is media monitored and/or limited by parent involvement? If so, are the teens then NOT viewing media that they would otherwise view if parents were NOT involved?

**Step 2:** Combine interview notes and develop a presentation around salient themes. I do not want to detail these themes for you because I am more interested in what you actually SEE/HEAR in the actual interviews.

**Step 3:** Do a brief literature review (with current articles) about the impact of media on adolescents - 4 to 6 articles.

**Step 4:** Compare/contrast your findings from the research with your actual data from your teen interviews.

**Step 5:** Prepare a 30-45 minute presentation (leaving time for questions) with your findings. If you do a powerpoint presentation, you do not need to turn anything in to me but a copy of the powerpoint. If you do not, please send me a brief paper which simply outlines your major points, your documented sources, etc., etc. If appropriate, please incorporate (as much as possible) some of the actual media into the presentation.