1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will employ multicultural and critical perspectives to understand individuals, families, and their interpersonal and group relationships, life span development, and theories of well-being, stress, coping, and adaptation. This course will emphasize knowledge about individuals and small social systems and the implications of this knowledge for all domains of social work practice. Students will be introduced to the concepts of risk and protective factors, with relevant examples at the individual and small system levels. Students will also consider the implications of this knowledge for intervening in social problems and supporting rehabilitation once problems have developed. Major components of the course will be concerned with the processes of oppression, privilege, and discrimination and factors that help people and small social systems to change. The knowledge presented will include the interrelationships between smaller and larger social systems, and in particular, how biological factors and the larger social and physical environments shape and influence individual and family well-being.

2. COURSE CONTENT

Content will include selected theories of human behavior, human development, families and small groups, and individual and small system change. Students will consider the processes through which relevant concepts have been developed, the types of knowledge and data that inform different theories, and the current gaps and controversies in biological, behavioral, and social science knowledge and theory. Emphasis will be placed on similarities and differences related to human diversity and dynamics of oppression and privilege, including ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation. In addition, this course will focus on how individual-level and small system-level factors and processes can facilitate attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, family characteristics, and group processes that either promote multicultural human well-being and social justice or help to recreate inequities and problems.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

1. Demonstrate knowledge about and be able to critically analyze relevant theories of human behavior, human development, families and small groups, and individual and small system change through the life course emphasizing similarities and differences and the effects of oppression and privilege.

2. Articulate the concepts of risk and protective factors and give examples at the individual, group, and family levels.
3. Describe the impact of diverse dimensions such as ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation on risk and protective factors, human development, human interactions, and the structures of small social systems.

4. Identify the interrelations among smaller and larger social systems and describe how biological factors and larger social and physical environments interact to influence individual and family well-being.

5. Describe how relevant concepts have been socially constructed, what knowledge and empirical evidence support selected theories, some current gaps in knowledge, and key controversies about these theories and related knowledge.

6. Conceptualize how individual and small system factors and processes can either promote multicultural human well-being or recreate inequities and problems.

7. Examine theories of individual, family, and group change and their relevance for all types of social work practice towards a multicultural and socially just world.

8. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to human differences, social relationships, well-being, and change through the life course.

4. COURSE DESIGN

The instructor for this course will select required and recommended readings. In addition, the instructor will include a range of pedagogical methods, such as participatory discussions, films, written assignments, and experiential exercises related to course materials. Guest speakers may be invited to address special topics.

5. RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO CURRICULAR THEMES

Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity:
Students will examine the ways in which the diverse dimensions affect individuals and small social systems. Emphasis will also be placed on the processes of oppression, privilege, and discrimination, as well as the factors that help people and small social systems to change.

Theme Relation to Social Justice:
Students will analyze selected theories in terms of the factors and processes that either promote social justice and change or help to perpetuate inequities and problems.

Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation:
Students will learn about social problems, as well as the spectrum of interventions and supportive rehabilitation currently used to alleviate these problems.

Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research:
Students will critically analyze relevant theories of human behavior, human development, families and small groups, and individual and small system change through the life course. The research supporting these theories will provide a foundation for the content in this course.

6. RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO SOCIAL WORK ETHICS AND VALUES
As human development throughout the life course is so profoundly impacted by environmental and social conditions, this course will emphasize the critique and evaluation of various developmental theories from a multicultural perspective and a social justice perspective. This course will also consider potential ethical dilemmas that may arise for social workers working with individuals, families, and small groups. The impact of social conditions and social policy and the need for macro and micro intervention to improve the lives of clients will also be addressed.

7. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Academic Conduct and Integrity

Please see the Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct in the current Student Guide to the Master's in Social Work Degree Program for a discussion of student responsibilities for academic conduct and integrity. Students who are found responsible for academic misconduct are subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the School of Social Work, revocation of degree, or any other sanction deemed appropriate to address the violation.

B. Attendance and Participation

Class participation, as evidenced by your regular attendance and active participation in class discussions, exercises, and other activities, will count for 5% of your grade. Attendance at all classes is required. Please let me know in advance if there is an urgent situation and you must miss a class or part of a class. Unexcused absences from a class or part of a class may result in a lower grade. You are responsible for obtaining lecture notes and handouts from your classmates if a class is missed. If you miss an exam due to an excused absence, a make-up session will be held during exam week at the end of the term. You are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to class each week and to be prepared to discuss them in class. In consideration of your classmates, please arrive on time and remember to turn off your cell phone. Please do not text-message, read your e-mail, surf the Internet, etc. during class.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
If you need accommodation for a disability or other special need, please let me know so that we can work out the necessary arrangements. This information will be kept strictly confidential. For more information and resources, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities at G664 Haven Hall (734-763-3000).

Religious Observances
Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

C. Assignments

Brief Essay Exams. Three brief essay exams will be held on October 11, November 15, and December 13. Each brief exam will consist of questions based on course content from the preceding weeks. The questions will require you to apply course content to written or videotaped case material. Each exam will count for 15% of the course grade.

Research Paper or Multidimensional Assessment. For this class you will be asked to write a 10-12 page paper (the page requirement does not include the references). The paper should focus on a concept or issue relevant to the course that you would like to investigate in greater depth. Alternatively, you can write a paper in which you apply a multidimensional framework to evaluate the social functioning of a
Composite client (details will be provided). Detailed instructions for each alternative will be provided in a separate handout and posted on CTools. A brief proposal for your research paper or multidimensional assessment will be due on September 27 (5% of grade). The proposal will allow me to determine the relevance of your topic to the course content and to review the appropriateness of your preliminary bibliography. You will also be asked to make a brief presentation of your proposal to the class (5% of course grade). The final paper will be due on November 29 (40% of course grade). The paper must be typewritten and double-spaced using a 12-point font and one inch margins. APA style should be used (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association Sixth Edition (2010). Washington, D.C.: Author). Detailed instructions for the proposal, brief presentation, and final paper will be provided in separate handouts and posted on CTools.

D. Grading

Letter grades from "A" through "E" are given for class performance. "A" grades are given for exceptional individual performance and mastery of the material. The use of "A+-", "A", and "A-" distinguish the degree of superiority. "B" grades are given to students who demonstrate mastery of the material. "B+" is used for students who perform just above the mastery level but not in an exceptional manner. "B-" is used for students just below the mastery level. "C" grades are given when mastery of the material is minimal. A "C-" is the lowest grade which carries credit. "D" grades indicate deficiency and carry no credit. "E" grades indicate failure and carry no credit.

8. REQUIRED TEXT AND ARTICLES


Required articles are available through the University Library's Electronic Journals (http://www.lib.umich.edu/ejournals/) and on our course website in CTools.

9. COURSE CALENDAR AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

This schedule is preliminary; any changes in the topics or reading assignments will be announced in class and on CTools.

September 6: Introduction and Overview

September 13: Multidimensional Approach to Assessment in Social Work


September 20: Biophysical Development and Functioning


**September 27: Psychological Development and Functioning**


**October 4: Social Systems and Human Development**


**October 11: Preconception, Pregnancy, Birth, and the Newborn**


**October 18: Study Break--NO CLASS**

**October 25: Infancy and Early Childhood**


**November 1: Middle Childhood**


**November 8: Adolescence**


**November 15: Young Adulthood**


**November 22: Middle Adulthood**


**November 29: Late Adulthood**


**December 6: Death and Dying**


Integrative session.