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, and families and small groups, and individual and small system change. Students will consider the process 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:

SW 500 is a foundational course, which means that it is to provide knowledge on which more advanced coursework later in your MSW career can build. Our goal is for you to learn concepts and behaviors that stick with you in your professional life, long after your brief stay with the UM-SSW is over.

As a school we are focused on the CSWE articulated ten core competencies, the 500 addresses five of these directly. These are (as numbered by CSWE): (1) **Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly** (3) **Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments** (6) **Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research** (7) **Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment** and (9) **Respond to contexts that shape practice using empirical research to inform thinking and practice**, understanding perspectives other than our own, understanding how our prior knowledge creates a biased lens for perceiving others and situations, the effects of social structures at the individual and group level.

- **Multiculturalism and 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.

- **Social Justice and Social Change**: 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.

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

- **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.

4. Course Design:

In addition to the assigned readings, the instructor may include a range of pedagogical methods, such as participatory discussions, films, written assignments, and experiential exercises related to the course materials. Guest speakers may be invited to address special topics.
5. Special Supports  
**Accommodations for students with disabilities**  
If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities and the way that the course is taught can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester.

For additional information and resources, you can also take advantage of the following: Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, (G664 Haven Hall, 763-3000 and the Adaptive Technology Computing Site.

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

**Electronic Devices**  
In consideration of your classmates and your own learning, please turn off all cell phones during class. I prefer that you receive no messages during class time, if you must be on call for an emergency, please let your home or office know that you are only available for emergencies that no one else can handle. If on emergency call, please set your phone to vibrate and exit class immediately and inconspicuously when answering a call. Some of you may want to take notes on laptops during class. This is acceptable. However, it is **not** acceptable for you to surf the internet, text, or otherwise not engaged in the classroom and class activities.

7. Course Materials  
There is no required textbook for this section. All required readings are available on our course’s website in CTools. Other media such as film and reputable media outlets via email may be required and made accessible on the course’s CTools site as well.

8. Class Information and Expectations  
**Submission Instructions**  
All written assignments are due at the beginning of class. Students should submit an electronic file copy of the assignment via C-Tools on the respective due date or earlier unless otherwise directed.

**Extensions**  
Requests for extensions are rarely granted, but will be considered for a valid reason (e.g. funerals, illness). These are to be made at least 48 hours in advance of the assignment due date. A rationale for the request is to be provided.

**Late Assignments**  
Work that is late (i.e., an extension was not negotiated in advance) will have 5% (from 100%) deducted each day the assignment is past the due date, including weekends.
Incomplete Grades
Students should not request incomplete grades unless they face very serious circumstances, since an incomplete can imperil their academic standing at the School of Social Work. A grade of incomplete will not be granted unless it can be demonstrated that it would be unfair to hold you accountable to the normal expectations of the course. If a grade of incomplete is to be requested, you must do so prior to the final week of classes.

General Evaluation Guidelines
Written assignments will be evaluated on both content and style. You should demonstrate your ability to apply and integrate course material and to communicate using a professional style. Professional communication is coherent, concise, and comprehensive, and includes correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence construction, paragraph construction and referencing. In particular, you are strongly urged to proofread your papers, and not just rely on spell-checking. Assignments are to be typed. Social work publications generally follow the referencing format specified by the American Psychological Association (APA); therefore you are expected to follow this referencing style. Beyond the use of APA’s referencing style, no other aspect of the APA style guide is required.

The offices below are also helpful for students desiring to improve their professional writing:
• Sweetland Writing Center 1139 Angell Hall 764-0429: swcinfo@umich.edu
• SSW Office of Student Services: ssw.msw.info@umich.edu

Intellectual Honesty and Plagiarism
It is your responsibility to be familiar with and abide by the School of Social Work’s standards regarding intellectual honesty and plagiarism. These can be found in the MSW Student Handbook. For your convenience, standards relevant to this course can be reviewed at http://www.ssw.umich.edu/studentGuide/2007/

Grading
Grades are earned by successfully completing the work on the assignments and by attending and participating in class. A 100 point system is used. At the end of the term, the numerical grades earned for each written assignment will be translated into letter grades according to the following formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>99-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-80</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>&lt;69 (no credit)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<69 (no credit)
Class Assignment Schedule and Percentage (Point) Value and Detailed Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Value for Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Class Attendance Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Discussion Leader Reflection Post</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Within a week of class facilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Brief Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>October 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Quiz</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>November 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Resource Guide</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>December 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1. Class attendance and participation:**

Attendance and participation are extremely important. I will begin the semester by assuming that everyone will faithfully and earnestly do the readings, attend, participate, discuss, listen, and interact respectfully during class, and thus you will all earn the full 15% of the class participation grade. If you do things like arrive late, leave early, read the newspaper, take phone calls, surf the web, chat on facebook, sit quietly during group activities, stare out the window constantly, or offer no opinions during class discussions, your participation grade will begin to drop. I understand that some people are more talkative and outgoing than others. Be assured that speaking out is only one of the ways that your class participation will be evident!

If an emergency comes up that prevents your attendance, let me know as soon as is reasonably possible why you were not able to attend. Missing more than one class period without a documented reason (e.g., a doctor’s note) will lower your participation grade.

**2. Discussion leader and reflection essay**

a) Two students will work together to lead a discussion on the articles assigned for the weeks between Oct. 2 and Dec. 11. The discussion leaders’ job is to (a) stimulate interest in the topic, (b) present a summary and critique of the article, (c) share your insights and learning points, and (d) provide at least two questions for class discussion. You may, if you choose, use audio-visual aids (e.g., power point slides, short videos, cartoons) and exercises (e.g., role play, opinion survey) to assist in your presentations. You will have a maximum of 30 minutes to lead this discussion.
b) The reflection writing exercise is an individual assignment (due within the 48 hours following your presentation). Your writing should be posted in the forum section of the course’s C-tools site. The C-tools posting should include: (a) what you have learned from this assignment and discussion in class (including from the reading, analysis, and presentation) that you didn’t know or haven’t done before, and (b) what might you use from this experience in your future social work practice.

3. Brief Paper - Submit your paper online through Ctools (Brief Paper will appear under Assignments) before class. Papers submitted after 8am (when class starts) are late.

In the weeks prior to this assignment, you will have read, heard, and thought about traditional/nontraditional paradigms, multidimensional/level assessment, and social context effects on self, identity, health and well-being. In this assignment, you will write a 4-page paper in which you first describe a meaningful experience you or someone close to you had and then (re)interpret it in light of the readings and lectures thus far.

A successful paper contains three elements: 1) a brief sketch of the experience, 2) a summary of the relevant points from the readings you chose, and 3) your interpretation of the experience in light of these readings. A successful paper is structured with APA format for references and includes references from each week (to show that you can integrate across weeks).

Any meaningful social experience (e.g., school, family, neighborhood friendships or close relationships) is fine. I am asking for you to choose something with which you have personal experience so that you can get a sense of the difference between your initial interpretation when you had the experience and your reinterpretation in light of the readings. I am not asking you to share something you find too personal to share but rather something that you experienced and can think about.

This paper applies to the all of the core competencies by showing me that you read and understood and can apply the social science theories we are learning and can (re)interpret your own experiences in light of these perspectives.

The brief paper gives you a chance to use the readings (not simply to summarize them) to make sense of real world experiences. The paper is meant to be brief. The 4-page limit means you may need to edit your writing so that you cover both the personal experience and the core points in the readings that provide a lens to make sense of why the experience was meaningful. Your goal is to show me that you have read and can integrate, so choose an experience that can be interpreted with readings across more than one week.
3. Quiz- This is an in-class assignment

The point of the quiz is to demonstrate that you have read and can apply the readings to social situations. In each question on the quiz, you may be presented a scenario or case study. You will (1) make a prediction based on the relevant readings and (2) explain your reasoning, using the relevant core readings. You may have some choice as to which scenarios/case study to write about and your goal is to show that you have read and can use the core readings from the class up to this date. The quiz applies all of the core competencies and requires that you think and respond in real time with a prediction and course of action, as a professional social worker is often asked to do.

4. Resource Guide—hard copy to class and loaded onto Ctools This is a group assignment (groups of 3 or 4).

Your final project is to create a resource guide for a population of your choice. The resource guide will translate core ideas from class into pointers to improve health and well-being by creating contexts that reduce the chances that people will fail to work on their goals, procrastinate, or make choices that harm rather than promote well-being. The core competencies reflected in this project are using social science theories critically as a basis for evidence-based practice, considering the continuum from prevention to rehabilitation, and taking on a professional identity as a social worker to communicate clearly. In the past, student groups have focused their handbooks on needs of students, needs of social workers, or needs of particular client populations.

Your goal is to show me that you understand and can apply the readings to novel situations that may arise in your professional career. Since this is a class assignment, concentrate on readings from the second half of the semester after the quiz. Since this will be a product you can use in your professional portfolio, include any readings from the first half of the semester that you find useful. Use readings from each week. The format of the Resource Guide can be in the form of pointers, frequently asked questions, an outline for planning, or whatever appeals to you. Your Resource Guide should be visually appealing, but keep in mind that the sophisticated inclusion of course content is the primary goal of this assignment.

A successful Resource Guide contains three elements: (1) vivid and brief sketches of questions, concerns or situations relevant (likely to come up, or important to consider) for your target group, (2) a summary of the relevant points from the readings you chose, and (3) application of the readings -interpretation of implications in light of these readings for your target audience. References inside the Guide can be positioned as foot or end notes so that they are easy to access. While references other than those from our class can be used, remember that your goal is to show me you have read and can apply class readings. Use APA format for your bibliography.
CLASS OUTLINE (subject to change at instructor’s discretion)

Week 1 Sept 4   Introduction to Course and Each Other
We will get to know one another, go over the syllabus, class structure and assignments, noting the core competencies and our mutual goals for the class.

Lecture: Dimensions of Traditional and Alternative paradigms: Part 1

Week 2 Sept 11
Lecture: Dimensions of Traditional and Alternative paradigms: Part 2
Multidimensional Approach to Assessing Understanding Human Behavior & Wellbeing

Discussion/Reading Themes: Well-being, happiness and longevity:
This week the readings focus on well-being and happiness. Along with exploring how wellbeing is defined and realized, we explore how it relates to health, long life and other contextual circumstances.

Required Readings


Supplemental readings:


John, O.P. The "Big Five" factor taxonomy: Dimensions of personality in the natural language and in questionnaires.

Week 3 Sept 18
Lecture: Social Work Theories of Practice in enhancing Human Behavior/Wellbeing
Reading/Discussion Theme: SELF: esteem, concept, identity and motivation

This week we focus in on the self, asking what self-concept is and what it does, especially how thinking about the self over time influences motivation and action. You should start with Synder overview, and then go to the long chapter on self-concept (Oyserman, Elmore and Smith), then the readings on self-esteem and reasoning about the future

Required readings:


Supplemental readings:


Week 4 Sept 25
Lecture: Perspectives/Paradigms on People of Color

Reading and Discussion Theme: OTHERS: stereotypes & stereotype malleability

We are a country that is becoming increasingly diverse yet we are still grappling with how to get along and how we make sense of others. This week we consider social psychological theorizing on intergroup processes (Fiske and Pettigrew readings) and show that people are surprisingly attuned to context and shift easily in expression of stereotypes (Sinclair & Lun), which may result in stereotypical behavior or not (Pager & Quillian).

Required readings:


Supplemental Readings:


**Week 5  Oct  2**

**Lecture: Perspectives/Paradigms on Gender (Women )**

**Reading and Discussion Theme: SELF AND OTHERS: Fitting in and belonging**

Last week we focused on how people judge and perceive others and other groups. This week’s readings focus on the interface between identity development and motivation to fit in and feel connected.

**Required readings:**


**Supplemental Readings:**


**Week 6 Oct 9**

**BRIEF PAPER DUE TODAY by start of class: Please post on C-Tools**

**Lecture: Perspectives/Paradigms on Gender (Men)**

**Reading/Discuss Theme: Culture in the mind and in the world: What happiness means, what is important, how we think, what we see and do**

What is “culture”? To reduce the risk that the term culture would become so broad as to become essentially meaningless, cultural psychologists have developed a number of potentially useful basic organizing constructs to describe and distinguish cultural ‘syndromes’. Today’s readings
will introduce simplifying models, which are not meant to provide detailed descriptions of any particular culture, but rather to highlight systematic patterns that characterize clusters of cultures. Such models are useful to the extent that they set the stage for specific and testable predictions about culture’s consequences.

Required readings

Supplemental Readings:

Week 7: OCT 15-16 STUDY BREAK

Week 8 Oct 23

Lecture: Paradigms/Perspectives on Children/Youth

Reading/Discussion Theme: Poverty, stress, discrimination and unfair treatment: Effects on health and well-being

Poverty is associated with stressful life conditions including exposure to violence. Minority status including sexual minority status is associated with additional stress of exposure to discrimination. Stress, unfair treatment and discrimination all occur over the lifespan, beginning in early years of life. There is evidence that taken together, these events increase allostatic load, or psychophysiological hyperactivity – the extent that the body is chronically in a state of
preparation, and that this chronic state can have negative effects on health and well-being, including capacity to focus and concentrate.

**Required readings**


**Supplemental readings:**


Week 9 Oct. 3

Lecture: Paradigms/Perspectives on Family/Small Groups

Reading/Discussion Theme: Poverty - Effects on Health
This week we continue to look at the ways that contexts, including social networks, family and neighborhood poverty can produce adverse effects on health, mental health and well-being.
Rather than blame and victimization, our focus is on larger structural conditions, collective problem solving and policy change. Other useful questions might include: who benefits from particular actions and decisions, who bears the cost, and who has the power to make decisions about how resources are allocated?

Required Readings:


Supplemental readings:


Week 10  Nov 6  Money: Effects on health and happiness

*IN CLASS QUIZ* (covers concepts from sessions 1-8)

**Lecture: Money and Happiness**

Session nine focuses on explicitly on happiness: what it is, how we measure it, what it is and is not related to. Our discussion focus is on how this applies both to clients and our own thinking.

*Required readings:*


*Supplemental Readings:*


Week 11  Nov 13

Lecture: Paradigms/Perspectives on other Marginalized Groups

Readings/Discussion Theme: Optimism and positive thinking
This week we focus on optimism and the impact of the positive. The readings focus on the role of optimism and positive thinking plays in people’s sense of wellbeing. Should we be focusing ourselves and our clients on the positive? Is there any evidence that optimism helps? What about the reverse, is there evidence that pessimism hurts?

**Required readings:**


**Supplemental readings:**


Week 12 Nov 20

Lecture: Paradigm/Perspectives on Early and Middle Adulthood

Readings/ Discussion Themes: Rumination vs. Reflection

In the next three sessions, we focus on thinking and memory. As a social worker, can you help yourself and your clients to improve well-being, physical and mental health by how you think about your experiences?). Our focus today is on examining which ways of processing negative and positive experiences are most beneficial and examining why this might be the case.

Required readings:


Supplemental Readings:

Week 13 Nov 27

Lecture: Late Adulthood –Guest Lecture

Readings/Discussion Themes: Framing & Decision Making

Last week we focused on positive thinking. This week’s session focuses on understanding how to frame choices in order to reduce the negative consequences of procrastination on consequential choices that social workers and their clients make.

Required Readings:


Supplemental Readings:


Week 14 Dec 4
Lecture: Paradigms/Perspectives on Community (Macro)

Reading/Discussion Theme: Healthy lessons from social cognition The subjective experience of ease and difficulty

Work with clients can be difficult. A topic of interest for social workers is burn out and how to deal with negative feelings about the meaning of one’s life and work in the face of stress and difficulty. Today’s session focuses on what the field has learned about thinking as it relates to promoting a sense of meaning and well-being.

Required readings:


Supplemental readings


Week 15 Dec 11

Resource Guides Due in Class

Lecture/Group Presentations

Readings/Discussion Theme  Metacognitive experiences in judgment

Today’s session focuses on the role of metacognitive experiences in judgment and decision making and explores their implications for debiasing strategies and public information campaigns.

Required readings:


Additional readings: