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.

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.

Course Competencies and Practice Behaviors

This course addresses the following competencies and practice behaviors:
COMPETENCY 2—Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers

2.4 apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions

COMPETENCY 3—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers

3.1 distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom

COMPETENCY 4—Engage diversity and difference in practice.

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate 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

4.1 recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power

4.3 recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences

COMPETENCY 5—Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers

5.1 understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;

COMPETENCY 6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers

6.2 use research evidence to inform practice.

COMPETENCY 7—Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers

7.1 utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and

7.2 critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to begin 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. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 4.1, 5.1)

2. Articulate the concepts of risk and protective factors and give examples at the individual, group, and family levels. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 7.2)

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. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 4.1, 4.3, 5.1)
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. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 7.1, 7.2)

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. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 4.1, 4.3, 6.2)

6. Conceptualize how individual and small system factors and processes can either promote multicultural human well-being or recreate inequities and problems. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 5.1, 7.2)

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. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 7.1, 7.2)

8. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to human differences, social relationships, well-being, and change through the life course. (Practice Behaviors 2.4)

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.

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<th>Theme Relation to Multiculturalism &amp; Diversity:</th>
<th>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.</th>
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<td>Theme Relation to Social Justice:</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment &amp; Rehabilitation:</td>
<td>Students will learn about social problems, as well as the spectrum of interventions and supportive rehabilitation currently used to alleviate these problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme Relation to</td>
<td>Students will critically analyze relevant theories of human behavior, human</td>
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Behavioral and Social Science Research:
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.

Relationship to SW Ethics and Values:
As human development throughout the lifecourse 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 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.

Faculty Approved: October 17, 2012

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you need accommodation for a disability or other special need, please let the instructor know as early as possible (by the third week of class) so that we can work out the necessary arrangements. Also note that Office of Student Services at the SSW offers support to students with disabilities, as well as students with other issues such as emotional, health, family, and financial problems.

Religious Observances

Please notify me (by the third week of class) if religious observances conflict with class or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Attendance

Arriving on time and staying throughout the entire class time are required. If you have to miss a class, please notify your instructor at your earliest convenience. Missing more than two classes session may result in points deducted from your final grade, depending on the circumstances and your ongoing performance as judged by the instructor. In consideration of your classmates, please turn off cell phones and all other potentially distracting devices during class. If you are on call, please set your device to vibrate. Likewise, use of laptop computers should be kept to the minimum so that we can all focus on what’s happening in the classroom. Please refrain from surfing the internet and checking emails except when it is part of class activities.

Academic Conduct and Integrity

Please see the Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct in the Student Guide to the Master's in Social Work Degree Program (http://www.ssw.umich.edu/studentGuide/2010/) for a discussion of student responsibilities for academic conduct and integrity. In particular, please pay attention to issues related to plagiarism. 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.

Assignments
All written assignments should be sent to the instructor by email at williamcabin@yahoo.com or wcabin@umich.edu or submitted in class by the due date. Please bring a hard copy to class. All assignments should be typed, double-spaced and proofread before submission. APA style is preferred but you can use other styles as long as it is consistent. This is a link to APA citation style—http://guides.lib.umich.edu/social-work [click “APA style” tab on top]). Students may submit (by email or in class hardcopy) one or more drafts of written assignments (partial or whole) to the instructor for ungraded feedback no later than two weeks before the assignment due date. All such drafts should be marked “DRAFT” on the cover page.

(1) **Group presentation of articles (20%).** You have one article presentation. you and another student work as a team to share your understanding of a topic with the class, based on the assigned readings by topic and class selected. Your job includes:

(a) stimulate interest in the topic;
(b) present a clear summary of the articles (note: most of your classmates have not read them carefully);
(c) most importantly, share your insights and learning points from the articles in relation to (i) what you see as core messages in the articles as a whole, (ii) is the information conveyed in the articles consistent with your prior knowledge—what is and what is not, (iii) what you see as the most interesting or intriguing information and how do you make sense of it, (iv) how social workers can use the information, i.e., what implications for social work; and
(d) provide one question for class discussion.

Previous students have used a variety of audio-visual aids (e.g., power point slides, short videos, cartoons) and activities (e.g., role play, opinion survey) to assist their presentations. If you use power point slides, please get it ready to open before the class begins (e.g., save it in the desktop of the classroom computer). You have at least 30 minutes for the presentation, including expected time for Q & A or other interactive exercises with the class. **Effective interactive involvement of the class will enhance your grade. Presentations may exceed 30 minutes depending on the nature of the presentation.**

Grading criteria for article presentation: (a) clarity, accuracy and conciseness of the summary; (b) extent of effort to engage the audience; (c) demonstrated understanding of the assigned
readings, ability to extract core messages, and critical thinking; (d) demonstrated ability to integrate the readings to personal experience and social work practice.

(2) **Resource Guide** (length depends on your judgment of appropriateness; 25%)—**Due November 18.**

This is a common assignment given to all sections of SW500 so as to evaluate students’ levels of competency. The core competencies reflected in this assignment are using social science theory and knowledge 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. This group assignment (4-5 members) asks you to translate core ideas into pointers to improve health and social functioning of a target group. In the past, students groups have focused their Resource Guide on needs of students, needs of social workers or needs of particular client populations (applying PODS). Your goal is to show that you understand and can apply the readings from the class to novel situations that may arise in your professional career. 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. 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 that you have read and can apply class readings.

Grading criteria for resource guide: (a) Extent to which the assignment is fully and consistently completed (i.e., follows the guidelines described above). (b) Content (relevance, appropriateness, originality, and comprehensiveness) (c) Style and format (creativity, friendliness and attractiveness). (d) Clarity, organization, conciseness and quality of writing. (e) Demonstrated understanding and application of class readings. (f) Technical detail (e.g., spelling, grammar, syntax, reference format).

(3) **Term paper**—choose one of the three options below (about 2000 words; 35%. Detailed instruction in a separate handout.)—**Progress report due Oct. 28. Final paper due December 9.**

a. Write a paper in which you apply a multidimensional framework to evaluate the social functioning of a current or former client.

b. Investigate a topic/an issue relevant to adulthood through literature review and primary data collection.

   a. Use a cross-cultural perspective to address a salient issue in older adulthood.

Grading criteria for term paper: (a) Extent to which the assignment is fully and consistently completed (i.e., follows the instruction provided). (b) Demonstrated understanding of class readings and content. (c) Originality, accuracy, and comprehensiveness of content. (d) Clarity, analysis, organization, conciseness, and quality of writing. (e) Technical detail (e.g., spelling, grammar, syntax, reference format).
Class Participation (20%). This will include degree of regular attendance and participation; paper and class discussion on the UnNatural Causes film segment on “In sickness and in Wealth” (due second class); and other small assignments, as may be made.

Grading

Points you earn from each assignment are summed to form the basis of final grade which ranges from "A" to "E." "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. This table presents the minimum percentage required for each grade.

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<th>A+ (100)</th>
<th>B+ (87)</th>
<th>C+ (77)</th>
<th>D+ (67)</th>
<th>E (50 or lower)</th>
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<td>A (95)</td>
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<td>D- (60)</td>
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REQUIRED TEXT AND ARTICLES


Required articles are available on our CTools course website.

Other readings, in addition to those listed in this syllabus, may be assigned. They will be announced and posted on CTools prior to the corresponding class session.
COURSE CALENDAR AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

(This schedule is preliminary; any changes will be announced in class and on CTools.)

September 9: Introduction and Overview; A Multidimensional Framework

Syllabus Review, including all assignments

Dyad formation and article selection for article assignments

“In Sickness and In Wealth” film segment of UnNatural Causes for assignment & class discussion 9/16 (see assignment description at end of syllabus)


September 16: The Biophysical Dimension


- Epigenetics. NOVA (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/body/epigenetics.html)

September 23: Psychological Development and Functioning (Charlie Rose 5/23/07 Segment on The Legacy of Sigmund Freud)


**September 30: Social Systems and Human Development**


• Podcast of Sir Michael Marmot Interview. Unnatural causes. 


**October 7: Preconception, Pregnancy, Birth, & the Newborn (Secret Life of the Brain Baby & Child episodes)**


• The mystery of Black-White difference in infant mortality. 
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOn1a6u8yP4&list=UUt1Df8qkClmfBpcetQMFFfA&index=6&feature=plcp](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOn1a6u8yP4&list=UUt1Df8qkClmfBpcetQMFFfA&index=6&feature=plcp)


**October 14 FALL STUDY BREAK (NO CLASS)**

**October 21: Infancy & Early Childhood**


**October 28: Middle Childhood (Due: progress report of term paper)**


• Burns, S., Cross, D., & Brown, G. (2012). The power of peers: Why some students bully others to conform. *Qualitative Health Research, 18*(12), 1704-16.

• Rachel C. Vreeman, MD; Aaron E. Carroll (2007). A systematic review of school-based interventions to prevent bullying. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, 161*, 78-88


**November 4: Adolescence**


Inside the teenage brain (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain/view/)


**November 11: Young Adulthood (Secret Life of the Brain Adulthood episode)**


**November 18: Middle Adulthood (Resource Guide Due)**


**November 25 (NO CLASS)**

**December 2: Older Adulthood (Last In-person Class)**


*Secret Life of the Brain Aging segment*


• An age for justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=-eaJXBj87to](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=-eaJXBj87to)


**End-of-Life Issues**


• NY Times: Why do Americans balk at euthanasia laws?


**December 9 (Final Paper Due by email; no class)**
UnNatural Causes Film Assignment

Prepare at least a two-three page paper to submit in the second class, addressing the following issues related to the In Sickness and in Wealth” film segment viewed in-class 9/9/13:

• Summarize the film.

• Describe the multidimensional (or biopsychosocial) framework described in the textbook (with citation) and specifically, with multiple supporting examples, how the film’s evidence supports or does not support the multidimensional framework described in the first chapter of the textbook.

• State whether you agree with the multidimensional framework given the evidence presented in the film as an adequate explanation of factors associated with predicting individuals’ health status.

• State at least two areas where you feel the film was weak and could be strengthened.

• State at least one new piece of information you learned from the film.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Infancy and Children


Gender Issues


**Theoretical Approaches**


Multicultural Issues


Cultural Competence Standards for Social Work Practice

http://www.socialworkers.org/sections/credentials/cultural_comp.asp


Middle Childhood


Adolescence


Young Adulthood


**Middle Adulthood**


Wingert, P and Kantrowitz, B. (2006). Is it hot in here or is it me? In *The complete guide to*

Families


Older Adults


