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.

| 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. |
| 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

A. 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/2013/) 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.

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.

B. Assignments:

DUE: Weekly. Attendance is necessary for participation to occur but attendance alone is not enough – you have to actively engage – ask and answer questions, make comments. Each week you can earn your participation points and of course without participation you lose 25% of your grade.

Typically each week we’ll have some combination of lecture, 5-person small group discussion and full class discussion. Lecture outline will be posted on the class web page before night of lecture. Each week there will be core readings and for those with particular interest in the area, further suggested readings. Each week, in discussion you will be asked about the core concepts and relevant implications of these concepts. Core concepts should link from one week to the next in the sense that you should be asking yourself (and me) how the current week’s content relates to what we already learned. The goal of the discussions is to create an active learning context in which each week’s content is actively linked to prior content so that by the end of the semester, students will have a linked memory structure, facilitating later recall and use of the material in class and in the field. To facilitate this process, have a look at the list of core competencies (above). This is what we are working on each week.

Have a look in advance at the readings so you have a sense of what is in store, some weeks it looks like a lot, some weeks it will seem like a little bit of work. You will get credit for participating (not just showing up) because active participation facilitates both learning and memory. You should consider yourself not only learning but also earning credit for learning each week. This class serves as the foundation of your practice as a social worker!!

Brief paper (25% of grade)
DUE: Oct 1 -- load onto Ctools before class and bring hard copy to class
Paper Topic: Using the readings to make sense and make meaning

In the first four weeks you have read, heard, and thought about 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 until this point on social context effects. A successful paper contains three elements: a brief sketch of the experience, a summary of the relevant points from the readings you chose, and 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 (re-) interpretation 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 social science theories we are learning and can (re) interpret your own experiences in light of these lenses.
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, can integrate what you have read, and can apply it to a new situation, so choose an experience that can be interpreted with readings across more than one week. It can happen that your initial attempt is not yet ‘A-quality' work. You can rewrite this paper if you hand it in on time. The rationale for the invitation to rewrite is that you and I will both see your ‘A-quality' work. Make sure you check your spelling and grammar before turning in your paper, auto check is not enough.

**Quiz (25% of grade)**

**DUE: Nov 5**

This is an in class assignment, you will not have a chance to redo.

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 will be presented with a scenario. You will (1) make a prediction based in the relevant readings (2) explain your reasoning, using the relevant core readings. You will have some choice as to which scenarios 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 format of the quiz and the use of short essays will apply all of the core competencies and require 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.

**Resource Guide (length depends on your judgment of appropriateness; 25% of grade)**

**DUE: December 10**

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).

C. 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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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A+</td>
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<td>77</td>
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D. 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.
E. COURSE CALENDAR AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

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

**September 3: Introduction and Overview: Review of Syllabus**


**September 10: Multidimensional Framework**


**September 17: The Biophysical Dimension**


- Epigenetics. NOVA [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/body/epigenetics.html]

**September 24: Psychological Development and Functioning**


October 1: Social Systems and Human Development  (Brief paper due).

Ashford, José B. & LeCroy, Craig Winston (2012). The social dimension for assessing social functioning." Chapter 4.


October 8: Preconception, Pregnancy, Birth, and the Newborn


- The mystery of Black-White difference in infant mortality. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INc1a6u8yP4&list=UUt1Df8qkClmfBpctQM0FffA&index=6&feature=plcp](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INc1a6u8yP4&list=UUt1Df8qkClmfBpctQM0FffA&index=6&feature=plcp)

October 15 FALL STUDY BREAK

October 22: Infancy & Early Childhood


**October 29: Middle Childhood**


• 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 5: Adolescence** (Quiz in class)


**November 12: Young Adulthood**


**November 19: Middle Adulthood**


**November 26: Older Adulthood I**


**December 3: Older Adulthood II**


• 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)


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