Human Differences, Social Relationships, Well-Being and Change
Through the Life Course

Fall 2014

| COURSE NUMBER: | SW 500-005 |
| MEETING DATES/TIME: | Tuesdays 2-5pm (September 2—December 9, 2014) |
| ROOM: | 2752 SSWB |
| INSTRUCTOR: | Colleen E. Crane MSW, LMSW |
| Email: | kennac@umich.edu, Emergency: 248-330-3585 |
| OFFICE HOUR: | Tuesday 12:15-1:15pm |
| | Tuesday 5:15-6:15pm or by appointment |
| Office: | 2740 SSWB |

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 Chapter 12: 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) 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. This includes using work from other courses in this course and presenting it as new material for completion of assignments.

Writing Assistance
I take reviewing and grading your written work very seriously. I ask that you take pride in your written work and ask for help if needed. I am available to review assignments for feedback and editing, if there is time. However, if you need additional assistance, the SSW has a resource for you. Please check out: https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/ssw-writing-help/. The School of Social
Work Writing Assistance is located in career services. They are also available for assistance in writing your resume, cover letter, and goal statement if needed. There is also a link to OWL Purdue on Ctools. OWL Purdue is a great resource for everything related to APA format and style. Here is the link as well: https://owlenglish.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
If you need accommodation for a disability or other special need, please let me 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 in the SSW offers support to students with disabilities, as well as students with other issues such as emotional, health, family, and financial problems. Please see Chapter 19: Students with Disabilities-Relevant Policies in the Student Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program (http://www.ssw.umich.edu/studentGuide) for additional resources.

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:

Attendance is necessary for participation to occur but attendance alone is not enough – you have to actively engage – ask and answer questions, make comments. Participation counts for 10% of your overall grade. If you are to miss more than 2 classes during the semester, you will need to speak with me, as an additional writing assignment will be required of you.

Typically each week we’ll have some combination of lecture, 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 assigned readings. As we progress through the semester, I will begin to highlight readings based on our class discussions. 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.

Please note that if you are more than 15 minutes late to class, your participation for that day will be marked accordingly. Class begins promptly at 2:10pm; a sign in sheet will be passed around and collected shortly after. As social workers it is important that we value the time of the clients and families we work with, by arriving on time and participating in class we are working to instill those values from the beginning of our practice. This class serves as the foundation of your practice as a social worker!!
Assignment 1: Reflection on Readings (25% of grade)
DUE: Oct 7 – Please bring a hard copy to class. All papers will be collected at the beginning of class.

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 6-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 at least 3 readings from class, and your interpretation of the experience in light of these readings. A successful paper is structured with APA format for references, includes proper sentence structure, and no grammatical errors.

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. Please alter any confidential information to protect the identities of those that you are writing about.

Rubric for Reflection on Readings:

Introduction and description of meaningful social experience: 5 points
Reading 1 (summary, description, findings as related to your social experience): 5 points
Reading 2 (summary, description, findings as related to your social experience): 5 points
Reading 3 (summary, description, findings as related to your social experience): 5 points
Conclusion: Thoughts, questions, what would you like to learn more about that we have not covered yet in class as related to your meaningful experience: 5 points

Assignment 2: Case Analysis and Biopsychosocial Assessment (30% of grade)
Case will be distributed after October 7th.
DUE: Nov 4th. A hard copy is due at the beginning of class.

The point of this take home case analysis is to show me that you can complete a biopsychosocial assessment when working with a complex case. The format of this case analysis will be that I will present a case, you will be asked several questions regarding the case as well as you will be asked to complete a biopsychosocial assessment on each person involved in the case. I ask in your case analysis that you refer back to the book or assigned readings to support why you recommended what you did.

Rubric will be distributed with the assignment.
Assignment 3: Resource Guide (length depends on your judgment of appropriateness; 30% of grade)
DUE: On the day of your presentation. Your identified group leader will upload your resource guide to Ctools before your presentation. No hard copy needed.

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 (for example: vets, homeless population, foster care youth, HIV/AIDS). I want you to be able to give this resource guide to an agency or organization that might benefit from having these resources together all in one place. In addition to it being a working document for an agency, I would like you to also include a section in which you discuss how the readings and/or class materials reflect your focus for the resource guide. For example, did our discussion on infant maternal health encourage you to look at what resources we have in Washtenaw County for this particular population? If so, what specific resources would be important for women, children and families to have access too, as related to the assigned 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).

Presentation: 5% of grade

Your group will present your resource guide to the class in a 10-15 minute presentation. In your presentation you will need to give an overview of resource guide, and recommendations for resources that are needed but currently not available. Please identify in your presentation which group members were responsible for which sections of the resource guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation/Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection on Readings</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Analysis</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Guide</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of Resource Guide</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A+ (100)</th>
<th>B+ (87)</th>
<th>C+ (77)</th>
<th>D+ (67)</th>
<th>E (50 or lower)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>(95)</td>
<td>B (83)</td>
<td>C (73)</td>
<td>D (63)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>(90)</td>
<td>B- (80)</td>
<td>C- (70)</td>
<td>D- (60)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.
E. COURSE CALENDAR AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

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

September 2: Introduction and Overview; Review of Syllabus


September 9: Multidimensional Framework


September 16: The Biophysical Dimension


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


September 23: Psychological Development and Functioning


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

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


October 7:  Preconception, Pregnancy, Birth, and the Newborn (Paper Due)


The mystery of Black-White difference in infant mortality. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INc1a6u8yP4&list=UUt1DfBqkCmƤBpctQMoFFfA&index=6&feature=plcp


October 14: FALL STUDY BREAK

October 21:  Infancy & Early Childhood


**October 28: Middle Childhood**


**November 4: Adolescence (Take home due)**


**November 11: Young Adulthood**


**November 18: Middle Adulthood**


**November 25: Older Adulthood I**


**December 2: Older Adulthood II**

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


**December 9: End-of-Life Issues**


