Course Description:

This course will examine the biological, psychological, interpersonal, and contextual changes and behaviors that characterize normal adolescent development. Within the context of normal adolescent development, the course content will focus on: 1) the epidemiology and etiology of adolescent problem behaviors; 2) the extent to which these behaviors vary across gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status; 3) the ways in which these behaviors relate to normal adolescent development; and 4) existing programs and policies designed to prevent and, to a lesser extent, treat problem behaviors.

Course Content:

The broad content of this course will focus upon the changes, contexts, and psychosocial development and problems of adolescence. The key changes that occur during adolescence up to the transition to emerging adulthood are biological, cognitive, psychological, and social. The section of this course on biological changes will focus on the pubertal process and its physical, psychological, and social impact, as well as subgroup and generational differences in its onset and timing. The cognitive development portion of this course will examine the changes in adolescent thinking patterns and abilities that occur from pre-adolescence to late adolescence,
theoretical perspectives on adolescent thinking, and within and between group differences and similarities in cognitive development. Finally, this course will examine the social (e.g., economic, legal, political, and interpersonal) changes that occur as adolescents make the transition to emerging adulthood.

The social contexts that are central to the development of most adolescents include family, peers, schools, neighborhoods, work, and leisure environments. The family issues that this course will examine include topics such as different parenting styles and their impact on a variety of adolescent outcomes, the effects of changing family patterns on adolescent development, and the relative and changing influence of the family on adolescents. The peer-related issues that this course will address include the historical origins of adolescent peer groups, the nature and structure of peer groups, and the influence of peers on both pro-social and problem behavior. Course content on schools will focus on the varied purposes of schools, the ways in which their organization influences adolescents' learning, and their direct and indirect influence on adolescents' future life chances. The course will explore neighborhood effects on developmental tasks, transitional outcomes, and behavioral risk and resiliency. Employment issues that will be addressed include changes in the nature of adolescent employment, the long and short term costs and benefits of adolescent employment, and the meaning of work for young people who do not attend college. Content on adolescent leisure activity will examine its role in socializing adolescents for adulthood, its influence on adolescents' academic success and failure, and its economic importance.

The psychosocial development issues that this course will address include adolescent identity, autonomy, achievement, and intimacy. Course material on identity will address the topics of self-esteem, self concept, and the development of sex-role and ethnic identity. The section of this course on adolescent autonomy will include material on the development of various types of autonomy, moral development, and adolescents' religious involvement and beliefs. The achievement segment of this course will explore adolescents' achievement motives, the influence of family and peer environments on adolescent achievement, and the various domains in which adolescents seek achievement. The intimacy section will focus on changes in the nature of friendship during adolescence, same sex versus opposite sex friendships, and dating and romantic relationships.

The final section of this course will focus on adolescent psychosocial problem behaviors, such as alcohol, tobacco, and other substance use, violence, suicide, eating disorders, precocious sex, and delinquency. Particular attention will be given to the epidemiology, etiology, trends, and population distributions of these problems. Considerable attention will also be given to identification of the risk and protective factors for these problems and to policies and programs related to their prevention and treatment, as well as positive youth development.
Course Objectives:

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

1. Specify the key developmental issues, tasks, and conflicts during the stages of adolescent development and how these are influenced by social contexts.

2. Identify and describe biological, psychological, and social changes that characterize normative development specific to the various stages pre-adolescents and adolescence through the onset of emerging adulthood.

3. Critique and evaluate various theories of development and behavior from a multicultural perspective and a social justice perspective.

4. Specify how risks, protective and promotive factors contribute to youth safety, mental and physical health, security and well-being.

5. Describe the transactional relationship between a child or youth’s development, their environment, and any influencing historical or cultural inequities that may be at work.

6. Specify how history, culture, group memberships and social positions within society (ascribed and earned) shape youths' and families' perceptions, attitudes, cognitive processes and actions. Recognize the roles in development and family relationships played by the diverse dimensions: 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.

7. Critically examine the influences of interpersonal, community, governmental, societal, and cultural forces from the perspective of how these forces promote or disrupt privilege, oppression, diversity and social justice for children, youth and their families.

8. Discuss ethical dilemmas that may arise for social workers engaged in working with children and youth and their families at the various levels of practice and across the various stages of development.

Course Design:

This course will use a variety of strategies to promote student understanding of the course material, including lectures, guest speakers, weekly reflective papers, small group discussions, group inquiry, debates, and written assignments. Assignments may include observations of
youth, developing learning portfolios, critical analyses of empirical research, empirical based interventions, and applications of research findings to youth-focused interventions.

Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity:

Multiculturalism and Diversity will be addressed throughout this course. Racial, ethnic, gender, and social class differences in the timing, sequencing, nature, and outcome of adolescent developmental experiences will be central to every facet of this course.

Theme Relation to Social Justice:

Social Justice and Social Change will be addressed through information and discussion on the ways in which social status mediates the experiences of adolescents and the ways in which various programs, practices, and policies help or hinder the successful development of all young people.

Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation:

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation will be central to this course, particularly in the section that focuses on adolescent problem behaviors. General principles of program design, implementation, and evaluation will be presented and examples of successful programs and policies will be discussed.

Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research:

Behavioral and Social Science Research will provide the substantive foundation for this course. Emphasis will be placed on the review, critique, and synthesis of the existing scientific knowledge base as prerequisite to interventions that promote health and well-being, and prevent or treat adolescent problems.

Relationship to SW Ethics and Values:

Human development and behavior throughout the life-course is so profoundly impacted by environmental and social conditions, this course will emphasize the importance of understanding the range of "normal" adolescent development, working with disadvantaged populations, and sensitivity to the possibility of unintended negative consequences of interventions such as promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. Additional emphasis will be on the critique and evaluation of various developmental and behavioral 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 adolescents and
families. The impact of social conditions and social policy and the need for macro and micro intervention to improve the lives of adolescents will also be addressed.

**Intensive Focus on PODS:**

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self knowledge and self awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

**Course Philosophy and Format:**

It is my belief that thorough knowledge of adolescent development is imperative, regardless of social work methodology, when working with or on behalf of this cohort. Key changes in biopsychosocial development during this phase of life are unduplicated in the human lifespan and provide unique adaptive cognitive, behavioral, and emotional manifestations that are easily misperceived and misunderstood by many helping professionals, and society as a whole. Intersections with family and community systems at this stage of development are complex with life long consequences for all. The roles of adolescents have followed a progression from modernism to post modernism in the past decades. With electronic accessibility, adolescent identity formation occurs within a broad, international context. However, the interpersonal and intrapersonal complexity of this stage of development warrants specific knowledge and helping techniques.

The current Council on Social Work Education standards state that the signature pedagogy of our profession is field instruction. In accordance with this policy, this course is designed to enhance the skills necessary to perform the role of social work practitioner with or on behalf of adolescents.
**Course Design and Attendance Expectations**

This course will use a combination of lecture, class discussion, case material, role-plays, group discussion and video material as appropriate. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. **The instructor must be notified in the event of a possible absence due to illness or emergency.**

- More than 2 absences will result in a reduction in the final grade.
- Assignments are expected to be **on time**. Assignments that are turned in late will result in an automatic reduction in the grade for the assignment.
- Class participation is **strongly encouraged** and is worth **10%** of your final grade. If for personal reasons you find class participation to be difficult, please see me.

**Grading:**

The requirements listed below are the **minimal** expectations for class assignments, and if followed precisely will result in a “B+” grade for the assignment. Grades higher than “B+” will be given to work that has gone above and beyond the minimal qualifications. This would reflect more thorough, thoughtful and thought provoking work on your part. This will be discussed in detail in class. Feel free to ask questions about this policy. Grading will be based on:

- Level of clinical thinking or systemic thinking
- Strong analytic skills including:
  - Level of empathy
  - Understanding of the complexity of teen presentations
  - Integration of new ideas, ability to take influence
  - Ability to consider multiple points of view
  - Self-awareness

**Accommodations:**

Any Student who has a disability or condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please feel free to contact me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations for your specific needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, (734) 763-3000.
Writing Assistance:

For further assistance with writing, you may go to the Writing Workshop 1139 Angell Hall 764-0429.

Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:

All academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and misrepresentation will be treated seriously. You will find a discussion of plagiarism and other violations academic integrity. Please consult your Student’s Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program (online).

Class Requirements:

Progress in this course will be assessed by three assignments. The aim of the assignments is to give you an opportunity to focus on the history and current trends in understanding adolescent development and behavior. My hope is that you will draw from your personal experience and enhance your own knowledge, self awareness and skill levels through the in-class experiences and required assignments.

The assignments for this class reflect the above philosophy. All papers are to be typed with page numbers, double spaced, and written in professional, clinical style.

Assignment 1: Group Presentation

You will chose a group of 6 to 7 students and together you will design a multilevel intervention for a particular teen or teen cohort. The focus issue of your presentation can be in interpersonal one, a mezzo or macro level one, but your intervention strategy must include a three levels strategy. You may address a particular naturally occurring, or virtual cohort of teens, or an individual teen. You will have 30 minutes for your in-class presentation. The presentation should include:

- A description of the teen or teen cohort, including relevant demographics, family and/or relational systems.
  - Questions to answer: who is this person(s)? What is their internal experience, and how do they experience their environment? How does their environment experience them?
- Presenting problem: 3 levels
- Current trends or helping philosophy
  - Possible questions: Are helping professionals currently involved with this person(s), and if so, what is their helping philosophy? How is it implemented?
- Proposed intervention: 3 levels
Your presentation should include:

- PowerPoint or Prezi presentation, a copy of which will be turned in to me on the day of the presentation.
- 1-2 page personal reflection submitted on Canvas within 1 week following the presentation that will address:
  - How did this assignment enhance your thinking for this particular teen or cohort?
  - How would working with this teen(s) be difficult for you?
  - What resources would you seek to assist yourself and increase your efficacy?

This assignment is worth 30% of your grade and presentation dates will be chosen during the first two class meetings.

Assignment 2: Book Review

Read and critique a book of your choice on a topic related to course content. Your critique should be 4 to 5 pages in length and should include the following information:

- Your reasons for choosing the book.
- A brief summary of the book, no longer than a paragraph.
- To what readership the book is directed.
- Discuss the book’s strengths: this should include what you liked about the book as a practitioner, and strengths for its readership.
- Discuss the book’s weaknesses: this should include your hesitations about recommending this book to clients, colleagues, or other professionals.
- Discussion of the value of the book as it relates to the four curricular themes:
  - Multiculturalism and Diversity
  - Social Justice
  - Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation
  - Behavioral and Social Science Research

Please do not use long quotations from the book, and do not choose a book designed for children unless it is in conjunction with another book. Required texts for other classes are not permissible for this assignment. I must approve all book selections prior to completing the assignment.

This assignment is worth 20% of your grade and is due on Canvas by 2:00pm on February 23, 2016.

Assignment 3: Case Study
The purpose of this assignment is for you to assess an adolescent from a generalist perspective. This may be someone you work with, someone you know personally, or another adolescent that is willing to be the subject of this assignment. Please protect all information in this paper for confidentiality. Incorporating at least 6 class readings as citations, please address the following elements in a 8-10 page paper:

Interview requirements:
- Family composition, history, demographics, and current dynamics
- Social relationships
- Cultural and ethnic background and practices
- Spiritual beliefs and practices
- Educational attainment and goals
- Financial status and sufficiency
- Employment history
- Leisure/recreational
- Medical/physical/nutritional
- Sexual and gender history: identity, expression
- Coping mechanisms
  - Acting out or risk taking behaviors
  - Acting in behaviors
- Hopes and dreams

Personal reflection:
- What did you learn, personally, from this interaction?
- What are the multilevel influences on this teen?
- Did this assignment change your perspective of being a helping professional for adolescents?

This assignment is worth 40% of your grade and due on Canvas by 2:00pm on April 19, 2016.

Recommended Texts:


Real, Terrence (1997) *I Don’t Want to Talk About It: Overcoming the Secret Legacy of Male Depression*, Scribners, New York, NY


**Class Schedule:**

**Week 1 January 12, 2016**

*Introduction*:

Syllabus
Expectations

Changes in adolescence

**Week 2 January 19, 2016**

*Adolescent development: physiology and brain development*

Arnett, J. “Learning to Stand Alone: The Contemporary American Transition to Adulthood in Cultural and Historical Context.”

Belkin, L. “The Making of a 8-Year Old Woman: How Do We Understand Early Puberty? Through the Prism of Our Times.”

Brooks-Gunn, J. and Reiter, E. “Chapter 2: The Role of the Pubertal Processes.” In Feldman, S. & Elliot, G. (Eds.)

Brownlee, S. “Article 4: Inside the Teen Brain: Behavior Can be Baffling When Young Minds are Taking Shape.”

Brumberg, *The Body Project: Chapters 1,2*

Cornell University, Facts and Findings: Adolescent Brain Development, 2002

**Week 3 January 26, 2016**

**Adolescents and families**


Owens, *Queer Kids*, Ch. 10, “Parental Acceptance”

Pollack, W. “Chapter 5: The Power of Mothers.”

Pollack, W. “Chapter 6: Real Fathers/Real Men: The Empathic Relationships of Fathers and Sons.”


**Week 4 February 2, 2016**

**Adolescents and Peers**


Tatum, B. “Chapter 4: Identity Development in Adolescence ‘Why Are the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?’”

Simmons, *Odd Girl Out*, Chapter 7


**Week 5 February 9, 2016**

*The Culture of Adolescence*


PEW Study, Teens Kindness, Cruelty on Internet Sites, 2011


Week 6 February 16, 2016  Guest: Amy Stern, LMSW

Adolescent development: Gender

Pipher: Ch. 1, 2

Pollack, W. “Introduction: Listening to Boys’ Voices: Rescuing Ophelia’s Brothers.”

Pollack, W. “Chapter 1: Inside the World of Boys: Behind the Mask of Masculinity.”


Week 7 February 23, 2016  Assignment 2 Due

Trauma, oppression and development

Owens Chaps 1-4 (Becoming Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual)


Pipher, Ch. 9


Kennedy and McCarthy, Bridging Worlds: Understanding and Facilitating Adolescent Recovery from the Trauma of Abuse, 63-91.

Steiner and Matthews, “Psychiatric Trauma...” in Treating Adolescents.
Carter, Fortson, Hollist, Altheimer, Schaible, Compounded Risk: The Implications for Delinquency of Coming from a Poor Family that Lives in a Poor Community, in Journal of Youth and Adolescence., pp.593-605


March 1, 2016: No class

Week 8 March 8, 2016

Adolescent behaviors: acting in

Pipher, Ch 8

Owens, Ch. 9


Pollack, Chapter 12: Hamlet’s Curse: Depression and Suicide in Boys.


Allan Tsai (2002) Sacred Cuttings: Self-Mutilation and the Soul, Psychological Perspectives, 43:1, 82-91


Week 9 March 15 and March 22, 2016
Adolescent behaviors: acting out

Pipher: Chapter 10


Powers and Mattano, “Substance Abuse” in Treating Adolescents


Week 10 March 29, 2016

Sexuality and relationships

Pollack: Chapters 7,8


Week 11 April 5, 2016
Spectrum Center

Week 12 April 12, 2016
Schools

Owens Chapter 5, *Queer Kids*, The special problems of Schools

Pollack, W.  Chapter 10: Schools: The Blackboard Jumble


Reys, R., Cholo to ‘Me’: From Peripherality to Practicing Student Success for a Chicano Former Gang Member. The Urban Review, Vol. 38, No.2, June 2006


Week 13 April 19, 2016: Assignment 3 due.

Conclusion