1. Course Statement

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. Course objectives and competencies
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. (Practice Behaviors 4.IP, 4.CO, 4.SPE, 4.MHS, 7.IP, 7.SPE, 7.CO, 7.MHS) 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. (Practice Behaviors 7.IP, 7.SPE, 7.CO, 7.MHS) 3. Critique and evaluate various theories of development and behavior from a multicultural perspective and a social justice perspective. (Practice Behaviors 5.IP, 5.SPE, 5.CO, 5.MHS) 4. Specify how risks, protective and promotive factors contribute to youth safety, mental and physical health, security and well-being. (Practice Behaviors 7.IP, 7.SPE, 7.CO, 7.MHS) 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. (Practice Behaviors 5.IP, 5.SPE, 5.CO, 5.MHS) 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. (Practice Behaviors 4.IP, 4.SPE, 4.CO, 4.MHS, 5.IP, 5.SPE, 5.CO, 5.MHS) 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. (Practice Behaviors 4.IP, 4.SPE, 4.CO, 4.MHS, 5.IP, 5.SPE, 5.CO, 5.MHS) 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. (Practice Behaviors 2.IP, 2.SPE, 2.CO, 2.MHS)

d. 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.

e. Curricular themes

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.

f. Relationship to social work 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.

g. 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.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

There is no required textbook for this course. All readings, videos, and other digital materials will be posted to Canvas, or hyperlinks will be provided.

- To fully engage in the course topic and become a competent and skilled social work practitioner, it is expected that students will complete all required readings. However, if you are unable to complete the readings word-for-word, please come prepared to discuss the broad strokes.
- The readings will be discussed and debriefed in class. Students will take turns developing discussion questions for the readings.

b. Class schedule

Course topics and readings are subject to change. Notice of any revisions will be posted to Canvas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Required Readings &amp; Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 14</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>Group project worktime - No class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>Spring Break - No class</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 9</th>
<th>March 10</th>
<th>Out-of-School Time &amp; Leisure Activities</th>
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<tr>
<th>Week 10</th>
<th>March 17</th>
<th>Mental Health &amp; Wellness: What Encourages Optimal Functioning</th>
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<tr>
<th>Week 11</th>
<th>March 24</th>
<th>Mental Health &amp; Maladaptive Functioning</th>
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Marshal, M. P., Friedman, M. S., Stall, R., King, K. M., Miles, J., Gold, M. A., ... & Morse, J. Q. (2008). Sexual orientation and

**Week 12**  
**March 31**  
**Risk Behaviors**


**Week 13**  
**April 7**  
**Emergent Issues & Innovative Interventions**


**Week 14**  
**April 14**  
**Course Review**

DUE: Group Presentations

**Week 15**  
**April 21**  
**Final Class**

DUE: Group Presentations  
Papers due April 28 by 2:00PM

c. Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canvas discussions</td>
<td>April 7</td>
<td>30% (25 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative project</td>
<td>March 17</td>
<td>30% (50 points)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Group project       | Presentation: April 14 or April 21  
                      | Paper: April 28           | 30% (50 points)          |
| Participation       | April 21                      | 10% (30 points)          |
Submission of Assignments

All assignments must be submitted online via Canvas at or before the time it is due as indicated on the syllabus. If you are unable to submit online for any reason, email the instructor your assignment directly. If you do not contact the professor to explain that Canvas is not working, and do not email the assignment, your assignment will be considered late.

Canvas discussions (5) (30%)

Students will write five (5) Canvas discussion posts containing a synopsis of the readings and discussion questions during five different weeks throughout the semester. Each post is worth five points. The particular topics you engage with are entirely up to you. These posts will contain a synopsis and discussion questions. These questions will be used to stimulate discussion. To receive full credit, responses should include the following:

- A synthesis of the key points of each assigned reading. Each synopsis should be reasonably in depth (4-5 sentences). Please paraphrase the main ideas in lieu of including direct quotations.
- One discussion question pertaining to each reading. Tying the questions to other relevant issues not explored in the reading is encouraged.

DUE: Any five sessions between January 21 (week 2) and April 7 (week 13), by class time on those particular dates. The thread will lock on the due date at 2:00pm.

Creative project (30%)

You will develop a creative project on a topic of your choice related to adolescent development and behavior that has not been covered extensively in class. Some examples include gender transitioning during adolescence, the developmental context of immigrant/refugee youth, the needs and perspectives of teen fathers. Options for the project include: a podcast, video, zine, infographic, or digital digest—however, if you have another idea, please let the instructor know. A description of your planned project will be due on Canvas in early February. A rubric will be posted to Canvas.

Required content: in-depth information on the topic, including relevant statistics and demographics; a connection to a theoretical framework discussed in class; the relationship to adolescent behavior; some attention to PODS (privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice); and practical implications for policy and practice.
DUE: March 18 (proposal due February 4)

Group project (30%)

In groups of 3-5, students will have the option to complete a case study or an observation project. There will be no class session on February 18 so groups can work on their projects. Each group will present their project in a 20-minute presentation at the end of the semester. A rubric for each option will be posted to Canvas.

Observation

Group members should observe a group of adolescents, ideally in a public environment (for 30 minutes). Examples include, the mall, a high school classroom, an after-school program, a social gathering, church youth group, the bus station, a sports event, a school assembly, a community activity etc. The observation will be written up in 4-6 pages that describe what happened, offer an analysis of the observation, and provide recommendations for how the observations can be used to inform policy and/or practice.

Paper (4-6 pages)

1. Detailed notes on exactly what you observed, with little to no editorializing (i.e. personal opinion or interpretation; not to exceed 1.5 double-spaced pages).

2. Offer an analysis of what you observed. Does it seem to confirm current research and practice guidelines on adolescent development and behavior? How are those behaviors/interactions understood in the context of development? Did anything surprise you?

3. Offer recommendations for how the exhibited behaviors can be used to inform policy and practice.

Case study

Group members should choose an adolescent from the media as the subject of their case study experiencing some sort of disruption or maladaptive outcome. This adolescent can be someone in the news media (i.e. real) or someone from fictional, scripted content (i.e. a film or TV show). The case study should be written as a 4-6 page paper that includes a description of the youth’s behavior, an analysis, and recommendations for potential policy and/or interventions that might be useful.

Paper (4-6 pages)

1. Description: What is the youth’s environment? Who is their family? What is the youth’s behavior?
2. Analysis: Based on the evidence, why is this youth doing what they are doing? What is their attachment style? What are the youth’s schemas about the world/themselves, and others? What role has trauma played, if any? What other relevant psychosocial information can be used to understand the adolescent’s behavior?

3. Recommendations: What inventions might be useful for this youth? Identify interventions at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Macro level interventions may also be suggestions for new policy or revisions to relevant existing policy.

DUE
Presentation: April 14 or April 21
Paper: April 28 at 2:00PM

d. Participation (10%)

Participation is broadly defined. Participation refers showing up to class (in a timely manner), asking questions, applying course concepts to questions about your own experiences, contributing to the learning of others, participating in online discussions, providing accurate and respectful feedback to others, identifying any unique learning needs or problems to the professor, and utilizing office hours/email communication when necessary to ask for clarification or assistance in fulfilling course expectations and assignments. Class contributions should focus on relevant course concepts and professional practice experiences. Monopolizing space or contributing off-topic is not considered participation. Simply attending class alone is not enough for a successful participation grade. The rubric is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary Performance</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency of participation in class</strong></td>
<td>Student initiates contributions more than once in each class session/online discussion, however, quality of comments is weighted over quantity. Student responds actively when invited by the professor to contribute, in person or online. Student does not comment overzealously or to the exclusion of other learners.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of comments</strong></td>
<td>Comments in person and online are always insightful &amp; constructive. Student uses appropriate terminology when referring to individuals, communities, and cultural contexts. Comments are balanced between general impressions, opinions &amp; specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions. Evidence is used to support arguments when possible. Comments are informative and relevant to the discussion at hand.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening Skills</td>
<td>Student listens attentively when others present materials and perspectives, and contribute comments that build on others’ remarks. Student expresses disagreement in a professional and respectful manner.</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
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e. Grading

Here is a link to the MSW student guide policies on Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction as well as Student Grievance procedures and the policy for grading in special circumstances.

**Grading Scale (by percentage)**

- 97-100 = A+
- 93-96.9 = A
- 90-92.9 = A-
- 87-89.9 = B+
- 83-86.9 = B
- 80-82.9 = B-
- 77-79.9 = C+
- 73-76.9 = C
- 70-72.9 = C-
- 67-69.9 = D+
- 63-66.9 = D
- 60-62.9 = D-

Incomplete grades will be given in extremely rare and extraordinary circumstances. Students are expected to plan ahead in starting assignments and to keep up with the coursework throughout the term. *Any unusual circumstances that may impede a student’s progress in the course should be discussed with the instructors in a timely manner.*

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated; confirmation of these behaviors will be reported to the Associate Dean for Educational Programs’ office and will likely result in a failing grade for the course. We expect you to do your own original work.

**Late assignments**
Life happens and sometimes, we miss deadlines. Late assignments will incur a 5% reduction on the final grade for every day that it is late. This is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Missing a deadline is a stressful experience. Sometimes it’s just the result of a one-off timing issue, but sometimes it’s the result of a more persistent issue such as struggling with material, life, or other personal circumstances not always visible to the instructor. Students in this situation often blame themselves, or delay speaking to the instructor due to fear, shame, anxiety, etc. The stress snowballs as penalties and other coursework piles up. If you are in this situation, I can help.

If you are going to miss a deadline:

1. Email me whatever you have before the deadline. If I get something from you, no matter how incomplete, the first day’s late penalty will be halved.
2. Stay in contact with me until you finish. We will make a plan to get you back on track.

3. Other Policies

a. Attendance

We do not have a mandated attendance policy; I do ask that you let me know if you will not be attending a session so that I can plan for groups and in-class activities, but there is no specific point value attached to attendance. However, not attending several class sessions may impact your participation grade if the individual does not engage with their peers in other ways.

Students are expected to arrive on time; excessive lateness (over 30 minutes late) without speaking to the instructor ahead of time will result in a loss of participation points.

Please notify the instructor if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

If students are scheduled to present material on the day of an absence, documentation will be required to prove the necessity of an absence before the student will be allowed to make up that presentation opportunity for points. Please consult the Policy on Class Attendance found in the MSW Student Guide for the SSW’s official attendance guidelines.
b. Electronics Policy

Laptops may be used for legitimate classroom purposes only, such as taking notes or looking up readings on Canvas. Using social media, online shopping, surfing the Internet, playing games, and completing work for other class and personal obligations are not considered legitimate classroom purposes. Such use is distracting to those seated around you, and if I see you using your computer for these purposes, you will lose participation points. Excessive use of this kind will be addressed by the instructor.

Cell phones should be silent and out of sight. Please be respectful of your classmates and the instructor.

c. Inclusivity Policy

Social and economic justice is one of the key themes of social work practice, research, and education. As a social work community, we must encourage each other to critically examine issues related to power, privilege, and oppression. As a result, there will be class discussions, activities, or assignments that may be difficult or challenging. In order to have the most supportive environment possible, we must all commit ourselves to fostering an inclusive, anti-oppressive space in which each person takes responsibility for their own language, actions and interactions. It is important that we actively listen to each other about how our words and actions are affecting one another and the learning environment, knowing the impact is more important than intent. It can be difficult to navigate the dual priorities of supporting authentic free speech and being open to diverse perspectives and ideas. Slurs of any kind should never be used. Threatening or using aggressive language towards the instructor or classmates will result in you being asked to leave the class and losing participation points for that day. Throughout the course, we will negotiate other guidelines about class discussions. Please bring your best selves to our classroom space.

d. Classroom and Taking Care

If you have suggestions for how I can improve our classroom space, activities, and/or assignments to be more accessible now or in the future, please do not hesitate to let me know! This also means that you are encouraged to take care of yourself by eating in our class, taking breaks/moving your body as needed, choosing where to sit, etc.

We will sometimes discuss difficult topics, and you should expect that. However, if you find we come across material that is personally triggering, please don’t hesitate to step out of the room if necessary.
e. Parenting/Children

I recognize that many of the students in this class may be parents and/or caretakers for children. While this class is not designed to act as a space for childcare, I understand that life happens and do not want you to have to choose between parenting/caretaking and learning. If your childcare fall through or cancels, you are welcome to bring your child(ren) to class as needed on occasion, as long as they are able to sit quietly in the corner or the hall. I’d ask that if they are crying, you move out with them into the hall. Please recognize that some members of our community are immuno-compromised, and so I asked that you not bring children if they are sick. Additionally, topics covered in class may be more mature in content; please assess this when deciding whether or not to include headphones when you set them up prior to class.

f. Accommodations for Disabilities

If you are in need of any accommodations, please do let me know as soon as possible. Please make sure to provide documentation if any extensions or alterations will be needed for coursework.

g. Mental Health and Wellness

I am always mindful that students could be experiencing distress caused by a mental health issue and/or external stressors. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact:

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312
- University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320
- Additional campus health and wellness resources

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources. They include:

- Safety and emergency preparedness
- Teaching evaluations
- Proper use of names and pronouns
- Accommodations for students with disabilities
- Religious/spiritual observances
- Military deployment
- Writing skills and expectations
- Academic integrity and plagiarism

**Land Acknowledgement**
I would like to acknowledge that the University of Michigan resides on the ancestral and traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg - Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa and Bodewadmi peoples, who were forcibly removed from their Homelands. As we work, live, and play on these territories we must keep in mind the ongoing effects of colonization, the struggle for self-determination, and colonial state violence. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, I affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold University of Michigan more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.