



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SW 630-001

Contexts of Life-course Development: Childhood, Adolescence, and Early Adulthood

Winter 2023

Mondays 2 to 5 p.m.

3 Credits

Online

Prof. Julie Ribaudo

(She, her, hers)

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(I typically reply within 2 business days)

Office: 2710

Office Hours:

Office hours by appointment (which I gladly offer – please email me!)

Required Text

Davies D. & Troy, M.F. (2020). *Child Development: A Practitioner's Guide: 4th Edition*. New York: Guilford.

“If a community values its children, it must cherish their parents.”

~John Bowlby

Course Statement

Course Description

This course will examine the development of life course in stages, from conception to early childhood (0-6), middle childhood (7-12), adolescence (13-18), and emerging adulthood (18+). Students will explore how development unfolds, with a particular emphasis on how adversity shapes the experiences of children from a young age. Key theories used to understand human development and behavior include those focused on attachment, trauma, and resilience. Special attention will be given to the relationships between critical life conditions (i.e., race,

ethnicity, gender, socio-economic class, sexual orientation), life events (i.e., separation, loss, illness, the transition to school, transition to adulthood), and psychological and physical functioning. Course material on identity will address self-esteem, self-concept, and the development of gender, race, and ethnic identity.

Course Design

The course will use multiple pedagogical methods: short lectures, videos, participatory discussions, written assignments, student presentations, and exercises. We will meet synchronously from 2 to 5 on the first day and in the following weeks from 3:00 to 5:00. You will be assigned asynchronous material to cover from 2 pm to 3 pm every session or on your own time.

Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity, and Social Justice (PODS)

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a particular emphasis on the identification of theories, practices, 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 in developing a vision of social justice, learning to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, working toward social justice processes, applying intersectionality and intercultural frameworks, and strengthening critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a particular emphasis on the identification of developmental and life-course theories that will help students explore the connections between race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, and psychological and physical functioning and well-being. Through the use of various instructional methods, this course will provide students with tools to understand and apply theories to practice with diverse populations.

Course Objective and Competencies

Effective social work practice requires knowledge, skills, value, and cognitive and affective processes in order to understand and respond to clients. In this course, the competencies you will build include:

1. Understand individual development within the context of human relationships and particular social environments. (Competency 7)
2. Understand how caregiving and peer relationships, culture, and biology interact to promote and inhibit adaptation and coping at particular life stages. (Competency 7)
3. Explore the role of adversity (such as abuse, neglect, poverty, exposure to violence, medical trauma, and bullying) in shaping development. (Competency 7)
4. Explore critical life conditions (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic class, sexual orientation) in relation to developmental patterns and outcomes. (Competency 2)
5. Identify individual, social, and environmental factors that promote and sustain resilience. (Competency 6)

6. Develop cognitive self-awareness and affective self-regulation in response to the influence of personal biases and values in working inclusively with clients. (Competency 2)
7. Critically examine and apply knowledge of human behavior to practice and policy decisions focused on wellness and prevention. (Competency 5)

Course Design

This course will include a series of readings, lectures, class discussions, videotapes, guest speakers, and experiential exercises.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values

This course will engage the NASW'S Code of Ethics, specifically content pertaining to our belief in the dignity and worth of the person, in this instance, infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school-aged children, adolescents, and young adults. The unique needs and rights of children will be discussed. Additionally, because children thrive best in supportive relationships, this course will emphasize the social work value and ethical principle of recognizing the central importance of human relationships.

Anti-Oppression Statement

As a community, we encourage each other to critically examine issues related to power, privilege, and oppression. These issues are integrated into each classroom experience. As a result, there will be class discussions that may be difficult or challenging. In order to have the most supportive environment possible, we must all commit ourselves to foster an inclusive, anti-oppressive space in which each person takes responsibility for their language, actions, and interactions. *It is vital that we listen to each other about how our words and actions are affecting one another and the learning environment.* We share the task of negotiating the dual priorities of authentic free speech and active regard for one another, being open to diverse perspectives and ideas. We recognize that microaggressions happen; however, overt slurs in relation to race, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion/world view, immigration status, size, nationality, dis/ability, marital status, political affiliation, or any other identities, will be addressed directly. Throughout the course, we will negotiate other guidelines for class discussions.

Course Requirements

Required Text

Davies D. & Troy, M.F. (2020). *Child Development: A Practitioner's Guide: 4th Edition*
New York: Guilford.

All other reading and video-based material will be found in Canvas Modules

We will discuss aspects of the assigned reading for the first 20 minutes of each class, so please be prepared with questions, comments, or observations. Your preparation and contributions to the discussion will be part of your participation grade.

SEMESTER OUTLINE

See Modules in Canvas for all assigned readings/videos

Course Requirements

Assignments

Assignment	Due date	% of overall grade
Take-home Quiz covering weeks 1 - 5	Sunday 2/17	10%
Development History	Sunday 3/12 at midnight Uploaded as a doc or Docx (NO PDFs) through Canvas	40%
Exploring Children's Identities in Books OR Group Brochure Development (20%) and Presentation (10%)	Sunday 4/2 (upload as a doc or docx – no PDFs) through Canvas	30%
Attendance and Participation	No submission	20%

Papers

NOTE: There are sample papers in Canvas resources but only for the quality of content, not for the format. I change the assignment parameters every couple of years, and the sample may not be solely emblematic of what you need to cover.

Papers are expected on time; however, life happens. I give a 3-day grace period; no explanation is necessary. If you must submit past the 3rd-day grace, let me know. I reserve the option to deduct 5% if turned in within five days. Paper submitted more than five days late will not receive any feedback and will be subject to a deduction of 10%. I will not accept any papers more than seven days late.

Developmental History

(Competencies 1, 2, 5, 6, 7)

~No more than 8 - 10 pages, double-spaced

Identifying Information

Names (Disguised):

Parent(s) and age

Child

Age - either months or years, ex. 9.5 months or 12.3 years

Siblings

Age(s)

How do you know this family?

History

Current Family Constellation/Background

Presenting Concerns (if any – can just say none if a volunteer family)

Pregnancy or Adoption History

Birth and Early Medical History

Early Infancy Patterns of sleep, wake, ability to be consoled, eating, etc. (especially if there are any current difficulties with self-regulation)

Current patterns of self-regulation (if the family has concerns)

Developmental Milestones –History and Current (for each domain of development)

If you are taking a history on a school-aged child or adolescent, make sure you note how their current development is proceeding (i.e., peers, educational progress, cognitive skills, play skills, language, hobbies, etc.), as well as their past development. **Use the Davies and Troy text to consider what you may need to ask about for the particular age group (i.e., preschool, middle childhood) of the child you are writing about (you may have to read ahead).**

Any concerns particular to any domain of development.

Relationships

- With parents (use subset of the Working Model of the Child Interview) - I suggest at least using "5 words to describe your child" and the follow-up asking for a story to illustrate why they chose that word, as well as if there have been any setbacks that they think have affected the child. You can use other questions but these two are often helpful.
- Siblings
- Other caregivers
- Peers (if older than a toddler) and romantic relationships (if a teen)

Any cultural challenges or strengths (i.e., immigrant families, isolation, etc., or particularly strong family system of support and involvement)

Analysis Section:

After you have finished with the “objective history” write a summary of your impressions of the child’s development. Using the Davies & Troy text and other readings as guides, what are the areas of particular strength? Any particular concerns? What questions did you have about their developmental progress? Note your interpretation of what you heard re: security, parental awareness of development, whether you have any concerns about the child’s previous or current development, etc. Did you have any concerns about the parent or the relationship between parent and child? Address how you understand the responses to the WMCI questions and if the responses seem balanced, distorted, or disengaged (you MUST use Zeanah and Benoit article as a guide). What did you note that informs your impression? Make sure to contemplate if you understand *the child*...i.e., some parents become self-focused, and you learn about their issues more than you hear about the child.

This is not a section to give your opinion (i.e., “this is clearly a great mom”) but to practice using professional language to share what you learned about the child and the parent/child relationship. Please note - professional use of language includes using complete sentences, being grammatically correct, having few or no typographical errors (spell check is often not sufficient), and referring to clients respectfully (referring to the child by name, Mr. or Mrs. XXX or Debra, not "mom reports or dad reports"...that is depersonalizing). Referring to a group of children as "kids" is less dehumanizing than referring to a child as "the kid." Do not refer to a child in your report as “the kid” unless you are quoting a parent.

Reflection Section:

1. Your reactions to actually interviewing the parent(s) and asking, at times, personal questions.
2. Describe any ethnic, racial, or cultural similarities or differences with the parent you interviewed and how that impacted your interview or how you interpreted what you heard.
3. Did you have any reactions to what you heard from the parent? Again, this is not a place to make vague statements but to ponder how and why you reacted as you did (even if positive reactions). It might be that you share similar values, and that was reassuring to you, or you could write about negative reactions and how your own values or triggers might have played into your reactions.
4. What you learned about child development or the development of the parent (i.e., becoming a parent is a process) through this exercise.
5. Any other comments you wish to make.
6. Could this assignment have been made more meaningful for you? If so, how?

GRADING will be based on:

15 points - Analysis of child’s development (i.e., accurately notes areas of precociousness or struggle); thoroughness of analysis and use of text and readings to anchor analysis).

8 points - Thoroughness of history or explanation of information not obtained

7 points - Awareness and beginning accuracy in interpreting parental representations about their child (you must show evidence of reading the Zeanah and Benoit article)

5 points - Reflective capacity (your ability to reflect on your reactions, your point of view (informed by your lived experiences, identity, culture, etc., and to imagine the experience of your "client")

5 points - Professional writing (descriptive vs. evaluative), grammar, and clarity

EXPLORING IDENTITIES IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS (Option 1)

(Competencies 4, 5, 7)

For this assignment, students will have the opportunity to examine who is portrayed in children's books. Students will visit a public library (Ann Arbor Public Library, Ypsilanti Public Library, or another location of their choice) or bookstore (i.e., Barnes and Noble, Nicola's Books) to look at and review books in the children's section. If you do not feel safe in a retail or library setting, you can look at an online book outlet. To complete this activity, students are expected to review at least 20 books (you can choose to work in a group of other students to gather and review books, but the analysis will be your own) and are highly encouraged to choose books at random (i.e., start with a random shelf in the library or bookstore and pick every 7th book until you have 20 or more books).

In this assignment, students will consider the age, gender, heritage, race or ethnicity, gender identity, sexual identity, familial status, economic background, mental health, religion, etc. of the character(s) in the books. Students will write a reflection (3- to 5-page reflection) about the books they reviewed, describing at least the following:

- How the identities of characters in children's books are portrayed (make sure to address developmental differences in your analysis of the characters – i.e., what is portrayed for a 5-year-old reader may be less complex than for an 8-year-old).
- Whether the books, as a collective, help children learn about one group over another,
- Whether the books introduce any type of bias through their content,
- The degree to which the books could be used as tools to begin conversations with children about diversity in identity/social categories. For instance, are any of the books on your list useful for discussing differences in race? Or do the books ignore race by depicting every character as belonging to the same group? As another example, if you find books that depict individuals of various abilities (some abled, some physically disabled) children could be invited to talk about differences in physical abilities that they see. Be sure to include your ideas about how you would use the book(s) specifically if one or more is helpful in developing conversation
- What themes are introduced in the books, and do you have any thoughts about identity and particular themes intersect (i.e., belonging, loss, separation, responsibility, family ties, friendship themes, etc.)
- After you have collected your books and reflected on them, review the blog, journal article and YouTube clip that go with this assignment and address how any one of these fits with your findings or help you to more critically examine your findings.

- In addition to the narrative reflection, also include a simple table (sample below, not counted in the total pages allowed) with the title of each book and what identity/social category was portrayed.

If students work in groups to collect the books, the names of each student should be listed on the table of books and a description of how the work was divided should be included in the written reflection.

Title	Age	Gender	Race/Ethnicity/Species (if animals are depicted)	Familial Status	Language	Economic Background	Sexual Orientation	Ability Status (Physical and Mental Health)	Gender Identity	Religion

Below is the rubric used to grade this assignment:

GRADING will be based on:

10 pts. - Analysis section (Thorough and thoughtful summary of the impact of identities/social categories, including the identities portrayed, helping children to learn about groups, bias introduction, and conversation starters)

10 pts. - Subjective reaction (thoughtful analysis and exploration of your reactions to your findings)

5 pts. - Evidence of use of reading and blog to inform/deepen your response

2.5 pts. - Table of Books

2.5pts. - Writing, grammar, and clarity

YouTube Clip:

<https://bookriot.com/watch/seeing-myself-in-literature/>

Blog:

<http://www.hbook.com/2015/08/blogs/out-of-the-box/seeing-yourself-in-literature/>

Journal article:

[Reading, writing, arithmetic and racism.pdf](#)

Papers are expected on time; however, life happens. I give a 3-day grace period; no explanation is necessary. If you must submit past the 3rd-day grace, let me know. I reserve the option to deduct 5% if turned in within five days. Paper submitted more than five days late will not receive any feedback and will be subject to a deduction of 10%. I will not accept any papers more than seven days late.

If students work in groups to collect the books, the names of each student should be listed on the table of books, and a description of how the work was divided should be included in the written reflection.

OR

BROCHURE DEVELOPMENT and PRESENTATION (Option 2)

(Competencies 2, 4, 5)

Individually or in groups of up to 4 people, pick a topic related to human development that was not already covered in class (or you can explore a topic from a different angle). You will develop a brochure that classmates can use in the future. In structuring your brochure, think about your target audience (e.g., parents, teachers, social workers, policymakers?) and provide information accordingly. This is your opportunity to explore a topic of your interest with some depth while also considering the perspective of the “digester” of the material.

You can form a group based on interest using the discussion tab. Please let me know the topic and group membership by week 4 of the class. **If a group hits a snag with a member not contributing equally, please let me know so we can problem-solve together.** During weeks 10 - 12 of class, each individual or group will have 10 minutes to briefly share their brochure and the contents. Please do not just read your brochure – just provide the class with an overview of the topic and what can be found in the brochure.

Each person will upload a copy of the brochure in Canvas and submit an individually written brief write-up of the process, including how the labor for the project was divided. The brief write-up is due no later than 4/16/23 at midnight. Individuals will be graded on the quality of the information they provide in the brochure and during the presentation. If it is clear that a group member did not participate equally or carried a heavier load than other group members, their grade may differ from the rest of the group.

Attendance and class participation

I will consider both your attendance and your participation. Participation includes a balance of speaking, **careful attention to others (i.e., limiting distractions)**, and listening for themes/reflecting on what you have heard others say to deepen dialogue. There is no pressure to speak to get "points" (talking a lot doesn't always constitute strong participation), but we can all learn from each other. Your active participation includes listening well to others and contributing at least occasionally. Please be mindful of contributing too much or too little.

As noted in the course intro, I expect that your cameras will be on for the entirety of the class, with occasional exceptions allowed if you let me know ahead of time that your camera can't be on for the class session.

Predictability, reliability, and consistency are core to any strong relationship. “Being there” is incredibly important to clients, so it is important in this class.

Typically, missing one class will not affect your overall grade if you have been a steady participant. I will deduct 5 points for every absence past one **and** require a 3-page written paper reviewing and synthesizing the assigned material for the week, due and emailed to me before the next class session unless you make alternate arrangements with me. You cannot pass the course with more than three absences. More than occasional tardiness will also negatively affect your grade.

Please refrain from texting, web surfing, emailing, etc., in class. It is distracting to others, including me. I may not say anything to you directly, but I notice, and it will significantly affect your grade

Points will be assigned by the instructor - no need to upload anything.

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*
- *Mental health and well-being*
- *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*

The United States Department of Education requires that academic institutions develop a written credit hour policy that conforms to the definition of a credit hour. More recently the University of Michigan has instructed us that our School must create such a policy. The School of Social Work definition of a credit hour formalizes compliance with federal expectations and assists with consistency through the School of Social Work. As such, the School of Social Work utilizes a ratio of one hour of classroom instruction to two hours of out-of-class activity. Specifically: Three credit hours is equal to approximately 135 hours of total work over the semester. That is equivalent to ~10 hours per week of out of class work over the course of 13 weeks.