

York College
The City University of New York

Social Work Program

SOCIAL WORK 360:HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

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Bulletin Description

Social Work 360: Human Behavior and the Social Environment. 3 hrs., 3 cr., Prerequisite: Social Work 300. Prerequisite or Corequisite: Two Group II courses and Social Work 350. Not open to students with credit in Social Work 323. Integration of social science knowledge with the generalist model of practice to support intervention. Emphasis on human diversity and oppression.

Course Overview

This course provides an integrative ecosystems framework for the Social Work support courses, the Human Diversity (Group II) requirements, and the other aspects of the liberal arts foundation that will enable the students to apply a holistic perspective in using the Generalist Model of practice. It will focus on the ways that the ecosystems model is used in assessment and intervention with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester the student will be able to:

1. Describe the ways in which the liberal arts foundation is integrated into social work education and practice;
2. Show the ways in which the knowledge drawn from philosophy, literature, behavioral sciences, other liberal arts content, natural sciences, and life experience is used by the social worker in practice;
3. Use ecosystems concepts in assessment;

4. Show how various practice theories are related to specific assumptions about human behavior;
5. Describe major practice theories from an historical perspective and relate them to the intellectual and political climates in which they developed;
6. Use library resources to secure data that are needed in practice;
7. Use basic professional norms of communication in presenting written and oral assignments;
8. Identify the bio-social-psychological-cultural sources of human behavior;
9. Use the scientific method and basic research skills in evaluating assigned readings;
10. Think critically about human behavior;
11. Explain the way the values of the social work profession have points of harmony and dissonance with the dominant beliefs in Western society;
12. Describe the ways that values influence social philosophy, individual behavior, and the ways in which social welfare programs are operated;
13. Discuss the way stages of the life-cycle impact on human behavior;
14. Show familiarity with the problems of the major at-risk populations in New York City: homeless, addicted people, recent immigrants, pregnant teenagers, persons with HIV/AIDS, etc.
15. Use a global perspective to consider the problems of geographic movement of populations, nationally and internationally;
16. Identify the common impact of oppression on various groups and relate oppression to issues of economic and social justice;
17. Recognize the necessity of making a life-long commitment to study.

Required Reading:

Berger, R.L., McBreen, J.T., & Rifkin, M.J. (4th ed.). (1996). Human behavior: A perspective for the helping professions. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Code of ethics (1999). Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.

Longres, J.F. (2000). Human behavior in the social environment. Itsaka, IL: Peacock.

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association. (5th ed.). (2001). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Rauch, J.B. (Ed.) (1993). Assessment: A source book for social work practice. Milwaukee, WI: Families International.

Instructional Methods:

Lecture
Discussion
Written and reading assignments
Role-play
Student presentations

Grading:

Exam # 1 (approximately fifth week of semester)	20%
Exam # 2 (approximately tenth week of semester)	20%
Assessment paper	25%
Final exam	25%
Attendance & participation	10%

- **Lateness for class will be incorporated into the final grade.**
- **Papers submitted late will be graded down by _ grade for each day late (including lateness for class on the day due).**

Course Outline

1.0 Introduction (1 hour)

- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Structure of the course
- 1.3 Grading
- 1.4 Discussion of course requirements

2.0 Relationship of Human Behavior Course to Social Work Curriculum (3 hours)

- 2.1 Generalist practice
- 2.2 Program mission, goals and objectives
- 2.3 The five foundation areas of social work education: Practice, research, field, policy, and human behavior
- 2.4 Components of human behavior and components of the course: Biology, psychology, social structure and culture
- 2.5 Liberal arts base of social work education
- 2.6 General knowledge derived from daily living

Reading: Berger, chapter 1 and chapter 3 (p.96+)
Longres, chapter 1

3.0 Basic Philosophical Considerations That Influence Society and Social Work (4 hours)

- 3.1 Major values of social work
- 3.2 Issues of caring
- 3.3 Free Will and Determinism
- 3.4 Positivism
- 3.5 Humanism
- 3.6 Religious and spiritual beliefs

Reading: Berger, chapter 2
Longres, chapter 2 (p. 22-23)
Longres, chapter 4 (p. 85-89)
Longres, chapter 12 (p. 361)

4.0 History of Social Work Theory (1 hour)

- 4.1 Social and political philosophies and their impact on social work:
Laissez-faire economics, Social Darwinism, Judeo-Christian values
- 4.2 Early moralistic thinking
- 4.3 The Charity Organization Society and friendly visitors
- 4.4 Social diagnosis
- 4.5 The Settlement House movement
- 4.6 Social surveys
- 4.7 Early models of reform
- 4.8 Early sociological contributions
- 4.9 Influence of psychoanalysis

Reading: Longres, chapter 15 (pp. 427-433)

5.0 Vocabulary for Thinking About Human Behavior and Practice (1 hour)

- 5.1 Basic concepts of human inquiry: Causal and probabilistic thinking, the appeal of tradition and authority
- 5.2 Logical errors to avoid: Inaccurate observation, overgeneralization, selective observation, illogical reasoning, law of parsimony, linear causation, etc.

Reading: Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (1993). Research methods for social work. Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole. (chapter 1-on reserve)

*****EXAM # 1 (Units 1-5)*****

6.0 Using Ecosystems in Assessment (6 hours)

- 6.1 The value of the systems approach
- 6.2 Basic vocabulary in the ecosystems approach
(steady state, homeostasis, system, boundary, niche, holon, etc.)
- 6.3 Systematic integration of biological, psychological, social-structural and cultural components

Reading: Berger, chapter 2 (to page 47)
Longres, chapters 2 and 3
Rauch, part 1 (recommended)

7.0 Assessment (9 hours)

- 7.1 Integrating components of biology, culture, psychology and social structure
- 7.2 Library research on individual and social problems
- 7.3 Developing policy issues from direct practice
- 7.4 Developing patterns of critical thinking about research on human behavior
- 7.5 Using ecosystems in assessment
- 7.6 Using a strengths perspective
- 7.7 Using skills in the process of assessment
- 7.8 Writing the assessment report

Reading: Berger, chapter 3

McMillen, C. (1999). Better for it: How people benefit from adversity. Social Work, 44 (5), 455-467.

Rauch, part 4 (recommended)

*****EXAM #2 (Units 6 and 7)*****

8.0 Major Theories (12 hours)

- 8.1 Difference in general systems and ecological models
- 8.2 Use of Freudian-based concepts
- 8.3 Adler's value for social work
- 8.4 Psychodynamic theories
- 8.5 Developmental theories
- 8.6 Cognitive theories
- 8.7 Learning and behavioral theories
- 8.8 Humanistic theories
- 8.9 Family systems theory
- 8.10 Oppression theory
- 8.11 Eclectic approach

Reading: Berger, chapters 3 and 4
Longres, chapters 8 and 15

Rauch, part 2 (recommended)

9.0 Human Diversity, Groups At-Risk and Oppression (4 hours)

- 9.1 Human diversity
- 9.2 The impact of oppression
- 9.3 Major oppressed groups
- 9.4 Counteracting the forces of oppression
- 9.5 Theoretical basis of macro change
- 9.6 Using knowledge of human diversity in intervention and assessment

Reading: Longres, chapters 4, 7, 9

*****FINAL EXAM (Units 1-9)*****

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