

Department **SOWK** Course Number **210** Course Name: **Human Behavior in the Social Environment**

Submission Checklist

Proposal ☒ Syllabus ☒ UCC Proposal for new course ☐

Check box for Honors course consideration ☐

AREA OF INQUIRY

IDENTITY, INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIETIES

This form must be submitted to the Liberal Learning Council as part of the submission process.

Please attach a proposed syllabus for this course and the Undergraduate Curriculum Course Proposal Form, if new course.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: 1 October 2007

Please answer the following questions:

Check Only One:

☒ This course is an existing course (in the current curriculum) that we are now proposing for this Area of Inquiry.

☐ This is a new course that we are now proposing for this Area of Inquiry.

1. Name and contact information of the curriculum point person for the department administering this course.

Professor Cheryl Mathews

594-7111, cmathews@cnu.edu

2. In any given semester, how many sections of this course is your department willing to offer?

2

3. Why is this course being offered/what is it designed to achieve (Course purpose/goal)? **An existing social work course, SOWK 210 addresses the primary issues in the inquiry area of Identity, Institutions, and Societies. It accomplishes this without modification to the existing course. This course will examine major theories which seek to explain the origin, development and motivational basis of human behavior in the context of the social environment. It utilizes a social systems perspective to provide a unified framework for the study of behavior. The course combines knowledge derived from anthropology, psychology, sociology, political science, economics, biology, etc., to build a framework for relating theory to real life situations. The course of growth and development will be traced from birth through early childhood with emphasis on forces which impact the developing human and the systems within which he/she operates. Students will be provided the opportunity to learn a number of theoretical approaches to understanding human behavior and assess their**

application to current issues existing in practice, society and their own lives.

4. Check the learner objectives below that the course will address. The first objective is required and every proposal must include at least two more objectives from the list below.

☒ a.) Identify concepts, patterns, and issues that affect the organization of societies, shape individual thought, or shape social mores (**required**)

☒ b.) Compare and contrast the effects of these concepts, patterns and issues on individuals, cultural institutions, or societies

☐ c.) Identify an institutional or societal structure (or structures) and its (or their) influence on individuals

☐ d.) Explain the fluid role of the individual within society (reflecting the multiple and sometimes contradictory roles of individuals within society)

☒ e.) Recognize the influence of societal or cultural context on self and others as individuals

☐ f.) Objectively and critically evaluate concepts of self and individuality

5. Briefly explain how this class addresses the objectives checked in #4. Be sure to indicate the objective by its letter. (e.g. Objective a: xxxx) A course may cover more than two objectives.

Objective **a**: (objective) This objective is consistent with the purpose of the course which is to teach students theories and factors that are relevant to the development of all members of society at the micro (individual), mezzo (family and small group) and macro (community, organizational, political and international) levels.

Objective **b**: (objective) Theoretical perspectives and related research will be examined that enlightened us about these concepts, patterns and issues. Students will need to think critically about these ideas and apply them to their own lives as well as think about how others in society are affected.

Objective **e**: (objective) The course will take a developmental perspective of human growth but will emphasize the context within which that development takes place. A major emphasis is placed on cultural and political factors that affect people and the societies within which they reside.

Objective **_____**: (objective)

Objective **_____**: (objective)

Objective **_____**: (objective)

6. Course Assessment: Check below how this course will accomplish the objectives in #5 (choose at least one).

☒ Participating in class discussion and debate

☒ Engaging in teamwork and other collaborative exercises

☒ Writing analytical or evaluative papers, perhaps incorporating original research

☒ Making oral presentations

☐ Creating an artistic product or a performance

☐ Participating in fieldwork



Other means – please identify

7. Attach a proposed syllabus, which includes a statement of purpose, course objectives, and how these objectives will be accomplished.
8. Explain how this course connects to Vision 2010 – the CNU Strategic Plan (<http://www.cnu.edu/Vision2010> The links are down the left side of the page.)

This is a course that synthesises much of the best that liberal learning has to offer. Human behavior on an individual level through a societal level is affected by so many factors-social, psychological, economic, political, biological, spiritual and more (Priority 1,Goal A). This course will provide the opportunity for the student to critically think (Priority 1, Goal B) about the importance of all these factors and how they are interrelated. A real understanding of the factors that affect others fosters the development of ethical responsibility (Priority 1, Goal D).

Christopher Newport University

Social Work Program

Fall 2007

**Human Behavior in the Social
Environment
SOWK 210**

Dr. Carolyn Bartick Ericson

e-mail: carolyn.ericson@cnu.edu

phone: 757-594-8483

Human Behavior in the Social Environment I – 3 credits

SYLLABUS

Prerequisites: **SOCL 201, 205 or ANTH 203 and
BIOL 1xx (any 100 level biology course), and
PSYC 201
or permission of instructor**

Course Description

This course takes a social systems approach to presenting, unifying and integrating concepts and knowledge from biology, anthropology, sociology, and psychology about human behavior. The course explores development from pregnancy and infancy through early childhood with attention to how individuals, families, organizations and communities are shaped by life events, and, in turn, shape them. The course includes applications to professional practice from the social work literature.

Course Rationale

This course will examine major theories which seek to explain the origin, development and motivational basis of human behavior in the context of the social environment. It utilizes a social systems perspective to provide a unified framework for the study of behavior. The course combines knowledge derived from anthropology, psychology, sociology, political science, economics, biology, etc., to build a framework for relating theory to real life situations. The course of growth and development will be traced from birth through early childhood with emphasis on forces which impact the developing human and the systems within which he/she operates. Students will be provided the opportunity to learn a number of theoretical approaches to understanding human behavior and assess their application to current issues existing in practice.

General Expectations

Students are expected to adhere to the University's academic policies and honor system.

Consistent attendance is necessary to successfully complete this course.

Good writing skills are crucial for social workers. Being able to organize thoughts in clear sentences, using proper standard English, is essential in agency recording. All written materials submitted in this class will be evaluated on content as well as construction, grammar, spelling and usage.

Assignments are expected to be completed on the due date. Assignments submitted thereafter will not be accepted.

Students are expected to read and understand the material in the text. Lecture material may not parallel the text and is intended to supplement the required readings.

Disability Statement: In order to receive an accommodation, your disability must be on record in the Academic Advising Center (594-8763 – Student Union 3125). Once you have this accommodation letter in hand, please make an appointment to see me, and we can discuss your specific needs.

The policy on internet resources is as follows: In conducting research for an assignment students are expected to use a combination of library and internet resources. When using an internet source you must cite the origin of the material.

Cellular phones, beepers, and pagers are to be turned off or placed on silent mode during class time. They are disruptive to other students and to the instructor, and compromise the concentration needed for successful learning.

Students are expected to demonstrate proper behavior in the classroom in order to not impact other students in a negative manner. Students who disrupt the classroom will be asked to meet with the Professor.

.

Required Texts/Manuals

Ashford, J. Lecroy, Lortie, K. (2006). *Human behavior in the social environment, Third edition.* United States: Brooks/Cole.

Mission Statement of the Social Work Program

The mission of the Christopher Newport University Social Work Program is to provide an undergraduate social work program of excellence designed to educate the social work major for baccalaureate level generalist practice. Built on a strong liberal arts base, the Bachelor of Arts degree in social work also prepares students for graduate studies. In its educational mission, the

Social Work Program promotes scientific and intellectual inquiry and fosters qualities of leadership. Finally, the program advocates service to community and Commonwealth and commitment to the values of the social work profession.

The social work faculty is dedicated to excellence in teaching, to scholarship and research supportive of the profession, and to service to the University, the community, and social service organizations.

The Social Work Program Goals are to produce:

1. excellent practitioners prepared as liberal arts based baccalaureate level generalist social workers.
2. social science scholars who are prepared for scientific inquiry, technologically competent and knowledgeable of diverse and special populations.
3. citizens of the community and Commonwealth who are informed about the world around them, and ready advocates for social and economic justice.
4. communicators who are capable of collaboration across disciplines, client populations, and communities.
5. professionals imbued with the social work strengths perspective and able to use self-as-instrument in practice that includes biological, psychological, sociological and spiritual views of person-situation-interaction.
6. leaders dedicated to service and prepared with an understanding of the value base of the social work profession and its ethical standards and principles.

Social Work Program Objectives

1. Apply critical thinking skills as well as ability to use self as instrument within the context of professional social work practice.
2. Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practice accordingly.
3. Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, spirituality, sex and sexual orientation.
4. Recognizing and being aware of a global context of social work practice, graduates will understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice.
5. Understand and interpret the history of the social work profession and its contemporary structures and issues.
6. Using a strengths perspective, apply the knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice with systems of all sizes.
7. Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence including biological, psychological, sociological and spiritual views of person-situation interaction to understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among

- individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Analyze, formulate, and influence social policies.
 9. Evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own interventions.
 10. Use communications skills differentially across client populations, colleagues and disciplines, and communities.
 11. Use supervision and consultation appropriate to social work practice.
 12. Function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems and seek necessary organizational change.
 13. Attain skills of leadership to be used for service to clients, the community and the profession.

Course Objectives:

At the conclusion of this semester the student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of key concepts identified in the social systems approach. **[See Program Objectives # 4,7,]**
2. Identify and critically analyze a variety of theories which seek to explain human behavior. **[See Program Objectives #3, 7]**
3. Identify critical periods which occur at varying points of the life cycle and their impact on human behavior. **[See Program Objectives 7]**
4. Utilize professional value systems to resolve ethical dilemmas as they impact social work practice. **[See Program Objectives # 2]**
5. Identify ethical and value issues inherent in theoretical approaches to studying human behavior. **[See Program Objectives #2]**
6. Translate specific theoretical content into practical applications in addressing current social problems. **[See Program Objectives #3,4,9]**
7. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in the analysis of research and theories of human behavior. **[See Program Objectives #1,9]**
8. Identify the role and functions of disciplines outside of social work and their approach to the study of human behavior. **[See Program Objectives #7, 10, 12]**
9. Gather evidence to support or refute theoretical notions about human behavior. **[See Program objective # 9]**

10. Analyze research studies to assess their value in understanding human behavior. [See **Program Objective #9**]
11. Communicate knowledge of human behavior and its application using good oral and written skills. [See **Program Objective # 10**]
12. Demonstrate a knowledge of factors which oppress vulnerable populations and impact on the individual and the environmental system. [See **Program Objectives #3,4**]
13. Utilize research skills and the use of technology to support increased understanding of human behavior and human development. [see **Program Objectives #2, 5, 7**]
14. Apply social work intervention strategies appropriate to diverse and oppressed client systems [See **Program Objectives # 3,4**]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and participation in class are requirements of the class. For every two unexcused absences, your grade will be reduced by one full letter grade.

Assignments and their weight toward your grade are:

7 quizzes worth 10 points apiece. Quizzes are objective in nature and will include multiple choice, true/false or short answer. Students are expected to demonstrate comprehension and mastery of course content through quizzes. Quizzes will be given every two weeks of the course.

For one of the last three quizzes you will substitute an observation or an interview (see instructions attached to syllabus). This includes an oral presentation to the class of your observation.

Final exam: 20 points. This will be a cumulative exam.

1 reflective piece for a total of 10 points(see instructions attached to syllabus)

COURSE CONTENT

This course utilizes **developmental and systems perspectives**. Knowledge of normal developmental patterns over the life cycle is essential for social work practitioners. A diversity of

ways exists for people to meet and express their needs. The concept of functioning will be examined across the life cycle. Human behavior is complex and there must be knowledge of biopsychosocial factors as they impact on the individual. There must also be concern for cultural and ethnic diversity as it is manifested in clients and as it impacts human behavior.

This course examines **social science research**. Research taken from the fields of sociology, psychology, political science, social work, etc., will be utilized to expand the student's knowledge of contemporary findings which might have a bearing on practice behavior. Research provides an important contribution to the knowledge base of the profession. The application of research results can be valuable in assisting the practitioner in working with clientele. Students must be competent in analyzing critical research studies and determining their implications for understanding human behavior.

This course examines **social policy**. One of the critical roles of policy makers is to identify and assess specific community/societal needs and to explore methods for addressing the needs of clientele. Rational policy must derive from a sound knowledge of theoretical constructs and practical applications.

This course examines **practice methods**. The specific techniques and application of knowledge have to be translated into social work practice. Empirically grounded practice methods will be explored as they have relevance to particular parts of the life span. The social systems model will provide the framework for analyzing key practice areas.

COURSE FORMAT

The course will be taught in a lecture/discussion format. Small group discussion projects will be utilized and allow students the opportunity to dialogue about critical issues in the field. Speakers will be utilized where appropriate and available. The course text is extensive and students will be expected to keep up with readings. The instructor will not cover all of the content in class; however, students will be expected to complete readings on course outline. Content from these readings is legitimate quiz material.

COURSE OUTLINE

Weeks 1 and 2: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR

UNIT 1 – Multidimensional Framework for Assessing Social Functioning (Two weeks)

- What is social functioning?
- Social competence
- Strengths Perspective
- Person in Environment System
- Life Course Perspective
- Stress and Coping

Text, Chapter 1

Assignment: Paradigms Statement: [Work in groups to discuss paradigms.](#)

Test 1

Weeks 3 and 4: The Biological Dimension for Assessing Social Functioning (Two weeks)

- **Biological Theories**
Importance for the study of human behavior
- **Biophysical Growth and Development**
- **Implications for Practice**

Readings: Text, Chapter 2

Note: There will be a guest speaker on September 13 discussing spirituality and human behavior.

Weeks 5 and 6: The Psychological Dimension for Assessing Social Functioning (Two weeks)

- Psychodynamic Theory
- Attachment Theory
- Psychosocial Development
- Cognitive Theory
- Social Learning Theory
- Attitudes and Emotions
- Psychological Strengths and Hazards
- Implications for Practice

Readings: Text, Chapter 3

Karen, R. Becoming Attached. Found at www.JohnBolwby.com (look under online articles).

Test 2

Weeks 7 and 8: The Social Dimension for Assessing Social Functioning (Two weeks)

- Sociological Theories
- Families
- Family Life Cycle
- Groups
- Intergenerational Perspectives
- Multiculturalism
- Communities
- Organizations and Social Institutions
- Impact of Diversity
- Implications for practice

Readings: Text, Chapter 4

Diversity Exercises in Teams

Weeks 9 and 10: Pregnancy, Birth, and the Newborn (Two weeks)

- Labor and Delivery
- Developmental Issues
- Biophysical Development
- Pre Natal Assessment
- High Risk Infants
- Psychological Development
- Social Cognition
- Families and Support Systems
- Social Hazards of Substance Abuse
- Special Concerns
- Implications for Practice

Test 3

Readings: Text, Chapter 5

Weeks 11 and 12: INFANCY (Two weeks)

- Biophysical Dimension
- Psychological Dimension
- Cognition
- Attitudes and Emotions
- Family and Support Systems
- Multicultural Issues
- Attachment Theory

Test 4

Readings: Text, Chapter 6

Weeks 13 and 14: EARLY CHILDHOOD (Two weeks)

- Biophysical Development of Motor Skills
- Communication
- Aggression and Altruism
- Diagnostic Issues
- Parenting Styles
- Effects of TV
- Preschool Programming
- Child Abuse

CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is an essential element of social work practice. It involves recognizing assumptions and values, evaluating arguments and evidence, drawing inferences and altering judgments when justified. In order to accomplish these skills effectively, the student must understand logical inquiry and reasoning as a means for solving problems. In addition, values and consequences must be incorporated in the development of these skills. To the practitioner, critical thinking means reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do. (McMillan, 1987).

McMillan, J. (1987). Enhancing college students' critical thinking: A review of studies. *Research in higher education*, 26, 3-10.

During this course students will have multiple opportunities to develop critical thinking skills. Many of the topics and issues discussed involve students being able to review the research and theoretical knowledge base and then apply this to practice. Instructional strategies such as small group discussion, case studies, and other guided discussion projects will assist students in developing the necessary skills. Critical writing and critical speaking are also ways to demonstrate the thinking processes necessary for practice.

Additional readings: As assigned

Note: It may be necessary or desirable to make some modifications to this syllabus during the course of the summer session.

REFLECTION

*** This handout is to assist you in writing your reflective statement.**

What is reflection? It is simply an opportunity through which one can learn from experience. It does not matter whether the experience was reading a book, counseling a client, writing a poem or receiving feedback from a supervisor, the experience can inspire, create learning or inspiration, thought and/or action. On a regular basis we learn from our experiences. Donald Schon in his book entitled The **Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action**, calls for professionals to better understand their actions by thinking about their actions. Reflection involves the ability to step outside of the experience and look at it from multiple perspectives. Then it is necessary to “step” back into the experience and examine it from the personal and subjective perspective. Being a reflective practitioner means learning how to think about your thinking.

Have you ever been asked how you learned to complete a specific task and you had to think hard about how you learned the task? Completing the task had become so routine, you did it without really thinking about it. Reflection requires you think about your feelings, thoughts and reaction. Schon (1988) suggests that as practice becomes more routine and repetitive, it is natural to stop thinking about what you are actually doing. You simply engage in a process of acting without thinking. Professionals however must become more introspective about our lives and the people and experiences which cross our paths.

Effective reflection requires an open minded attitude. It is a learning opportunity which has been made available. The student must consider the impact of this opportunity on himself as an intricate part of reflection. Reflection has many possible outcomes. Reading a journal article may be enlightening, confusing, upsetting or confirming. You alone can describe your feelings about the experience of reading the material.

Reflection can enhance self-understanding. Being thoughtful about your experiences helps you to understand your motives, perspectives, biases and thought processes. When compared with the reactions of others it is clear that each of us is truly different. Your values and ethics are reflected in your response to the experiences in your life.

Reflection allows us to pause and using the analogy of a tape recorder, rewind, fast forward, or slow the tape. As you think about your practice or experience, there is the opportunity to place concerted emphasis on the experience and examine its impact on your learning. Reflection is a bridge between experience and learning.

The following questions might be helpful to you as you prepare to write your reflective statement.

- ☐ What is your goal in seeking the experience (reading, viewing video, talking to someone, writing a piece)? How does the item/experience relate to the course learning objectives?
- ☐ What reaction did you have to the item/ experience?
- ☐ What did you learn related to this course and specifically what did you learn about yourself.
- ☐ How will this experience assist you in becoming the person you desire to be? If you desire to be a professional social worker, how did this help or hurt?
- ☐ What was your emotional reaction to the item/ experience?

As you write your reflective statement it should represent your thoughts about how the item has impacted you as a learner. Did it change your thinking or values? Did it cause a strong emotional reaction? Did you learn something which corrected past beliefs?

SOWK 210

Dr. Carolyn Bartick Ericson

Instructions for observation and interview.

If you are observing an infant or young child you should carefully watch what they are doing for approximately 30 minutes. Write down everything you observe. Save your notes as you will need to turn them in. Make sure that you read the appropriate chapter before the observation so you will have an idea what to look for. Write up what you have observed, incorporating information on what you see that reflects or doesn't reflect what you know about that developmental period.

In an interview, prepare questions ahead of time although you can adapt your questions to the responses you get. You want to get a good understanding of the person's experience of the stage that they are in, including challenges and benefits. Your paper should be in narrative form and reflect your understanding of the developmental period and your interviewee's experience of it. You will do a brief presentation of your observation/interview in class. You will not be required to take the quiz for that developmental period as you will incorporate your understanding of the text material into your paper.

Important:

Get permission of parent and any other significant person (for example, a day care director) before doing any observations.

Make sure that all persons involved understand that this is a class assignment and will be presented in class as well as a paper given to the instructor.

Make sure that all persons involved are assured of confidentiality. Do not include any names or specific identifying information in your report.

Life Development Assignment

SOWK 210

Dr. Carolyn Bartick Ericson

Deleted! This assignment is not given until second semester for SOWK 211.

For this assignment, you will need to think about the course of your own life development. For some of you, you will need to think back over more years than others.

Based on what you can remember or learn from people who knew you, describe yourself within

your social context (family, community, etc.) during:

1. Infancy
2. Early Childhood
3. Middle Childhood

Use the knowledge that you have gained from this course to think about what factors affected you during this time period-biological, psychological, social, and spiritual. Include theories of human development that assist you in your thinking about your development.

This assignment is worth 20% of your grade and will be due on _____.