

Valdosta State University, Division of Social Work
SOWK 6201-B Fall 2013 (3 Credit Hours)
Human Behavior in the Social Environment
Web Hybrid Cohort

Instructor: Dr. Michael Sanger
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Office: Pine Hall 209
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Credit hours: 3
Location: 113 Pine Hall

Class Dates:
August 16th 5:15—9:15
Sept. 6th 5:15—9:15
Sept. 27th 5:15—9:15
Oct 18th 5:15—9:15
Nov. 15th 5:15—9:15

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Presents a multi-theory perspective on human behavior of individuals and families across the life span within the context of the social environment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this introductory course, theories are defined and explained and students begin to learn how to apply the theories in generalist social work practice. Social constructionist, psychodynamic, behavioral, cognitive behavioral and developmental theories are covered using a strength-based ecological perspective as a guiding framework. Self-reflective critical thinking is emphasized as a prerequisite to understanding, critiquing and applying these theories. All theories and perspectives in this course are discussed within the context of social work ethics and values.

PREREQUISITE

Admission to the program.

RELATION TO OTHER COURSES

This is the first "theory" course in your foundation sequence of courses. It focuses on work with individuals and families. The course material builds on the liberal arts base in undergraduate work and in combination with the introductory practice courses (SOWK 6301 and 6303) provides an excellent base for your first practicum. This course leads directly to the macro theory course and lays the foundation for all subsequent courses.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Weekly reading assignments from BlazeView, academic journals and web sites.

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

BlazeView will be used as a tool for course enhancement. Your documents will reside in the BlazeView course site, where you will find all handouts, and links to Internet sites. I want to encourage you to access the online course materials in Blazeview as soon as possible. Begin **with the Home Page and the top left link entitled "Getting Started," and then** explore the rest of the course.

COURSE OUTCOMES

This course is organized by outcomes that will provide focus, consistency, and clear evaluation criteria. Skills and knowledge that support achievement of the course outcomes will receive the majority of class time. These course outcomes are derived from the MSW program objectives, and will help you build toward achievement of those objectives. Lessons, materials, methods and assignments are organized toward your achievement of the objectives and toward what you as a student will be able to do differently, as a direct result of participating in the course:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Articulate the importance of using accepted social work knowledge as a basis of assessing clients.
2. Recognize and discuss issues concerning the nature of professional social work knowledge and explain how those issues impact social work practice.
3. Recognize and discuss instances where the student's personal values and beliefs conflict with the values and beliefs of the profession.
4. Use essential elements of critical thinking as applied to social work practice, especially in determining what knowledge base (personal or professional) to use when assessing clients and their situations.
5. Identify personal values, biases and knowledge deficits that limit one's ability to practice with different populations.
6. Discuss clients and your understanding of clients in a professional manner, using appropriate knowledge, theories and frameworks.
7. Apply appropriate theories and knowledge to selected practice situations.
8. Explain clients using a strength-based eco-systems framework.
9. Display research based knowledge of human development and its relationship to the ecosystem over the lifespan.
10. Demonstrate use and limits of theories that address biological, psychological, spiritual, sociological, and cultural development across the life span.
11. Identify various concepts of deviant behavior and how they impact our view of clients.

The entire course is about increasing your competency in those 11. The course assignments all help us (you and me) gauge how you are coming along, where you might explore further and where you might need to put in a little more effort.

ASSIGNMENTS

This is the list of things that will be graded. You might *frame* these solely as “what determines my grade” and while that is true, their more important functions are 1) opportunities to learn, and 2) ways to become aware of your strengths and short-comings.

1. On-line discussions: up to 15 entries@15 points each = 225 points
2. Weekly check-in: 15 @4 points each = 60 points
3. Continual exam questions: up to 10 entries@15-20 points each = 200 points.
 - a. The continual exam questions always consist of two parts – one an application part and one a self-reflection part. You are graded on each part separately

Those “assignments” are the basis for most of your learning in this class. They are equivalent to coming to class and taking part in what goes on in the classroom. Thus failure to take part in any one of these three in a given week will be seen as being “absent” from class, and will be treated as such when final grades for the course are calculated.

In addition to those quasi-weekly assignments, there are three case studies (and one “critique” of a case study) that are equivalent to the major papers or big tests you might have in other classes. These are where you get to show off what you have learned by applying the concepts we have covered to case studies. Or in the case of the critique, by critiquing how well somebody else has applied those concepts.

1. Case study one (Systems and Eco-systems-Module One):
The purpose of this assignment is to give you some productive experience in applying particular theories to practice situations in order to understand them and suggest treatment possibilities. This assignment is broken into 3 or possibly 4 parts. Taking a single case study, it requires the student to use the concepts and ideas from systemic theories, as they are introduced weekly (ecological theory, systemic strengths perspectives, and systems theory) and apply them by answering specific questions in short essay form. The questions for each week will be questions that refer to the material from that week that can be used to understand and explain the system dynamics of the case. Rubrics will be provided later.
 - a. Part one = 50 points
 - b. Part two = 50 points
 - c. Part three = 50 points
 - d. Part four = 21 points
2. Case study two (Biological, Neuro-psych, Learning theory-Module Two):
The purpose of this assignment is to give you some productive experience in applying particular theories to practice situations in order to understand them and suggest treatment possibilities. You will be expected to apply knowledge from those theories and ideas covered in module two and apply them by answering specific questions in short essay form. Rubrics will be provided later. 100 points

3. Critique of case study two:
The purpose of this assignment is to give you some productive experience in critiquing a case study assessment created by one of your colleagues. You will examine your **colleague's assessment, note the strengths and shortcomings of that assessment, and share those in writing with your colleague.** Rubrics will be provided later. 50 points
4. Case study three (Cognitive, Psychodynamic, Attachment-Modules Three and Four):
The purpose of this assignment is to give you some productive experience in applying particular theories to practice situations in order to understand them and suggest treatment possibilities. You will be expected to apply knowledge from those theories and ideas covered in modules three and four and apply them by answering specific questions in short essay form. Rubrics will be provided later. 100 points

ASSESSMENT ISSUES

All written assignments (including on-line discussions and continual exams) are expected to be **"well written."** See the **"grading scale for written assignments"** for the rubric that explains what is meant by **"well written."**

Any form of plagiarism may result in your receiving reduced or no credit for a given assignment, a failing grade for the entire course, or removal from the program.

Failure to complete any "non-weekly" assignment may lead to reducing your course grade by one letter.

Late assignments of any type will lose 10% of the points possible for that assignment for each day after the due date it is submitted.

When completing an assignment, make sure to complete the entire assignment. Do not leave **off one section thinking "the rest is really good and will cover this."**

GRADING SCALE

Your final grade will be based on the points you earn divided by the approximately the highest point total of anybody in the class. Thus if somebody was perfect (and I guarantee you that nobody is perfect) they would have 675 points. And if you got a total of 600 points you'd have a 88%. Which is a B.

- A** 90-100%
- B** 80-89%
- C** 70-79% (a "C" involves one deficiency point—See Student Handbook, p. 21)
- D** 60-69% (a "D" involves two deficiency points—See Student Handbook, p. 21)
- F** Less than 60% (an "F" involves three deficiency points and you must retake the course— See Student Handbook, p. 21)

I will need to inform your Advisor if your final grade falls below a "B."

Please Note: Students should be aware of various issues that may adversely affect their grades and even their participation in the program. These regulations arise from legal codes, The Georgia Board of Regents, Valdosta State University, or the Valdosta State University Division of Social Work. All of them are listed in the Student Handbook at <http://www.valdosta.edu/sowk/documents/StudentHandbook07-08.pdf> IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO READ AND UNDERSTAND ALL OF THE STUDENT HANDBOOK. *Remember the "STATEMENET OF UNDERSTANDING" signed by all students* (see pages 20-24).

Please contact me with any special needs or developing problems. I will help you all I can.

COURSE SCHEDULE

**The date printed for each week is the day the week starts.
All supplemental readings are required and will be found in the in the course shell.**

Module Zero

Unit One: Starting August 19th F2F meeting August 16th

Introduction and professional knowledge.

- Human behavior and the social environment – some basic assumptions
- Limits of any viewpoint (Horizons and Fusion of Horizons)
- The framing effect – personal values, assumptions and theories
- Theories as professional framing
- Ecosystems as the preferred perspective

Supplemental readings:

1. Awareness of self: a critical tool.
CE #1 assigned on 8/26, due on 9/1.

Module One

Unit Two: Starting August 26th

Ecosystems and assessment

- Eco-systems major elements
- Person, social environment context and inseparability – the micro, mezzo macro
- Adaptability and constraints

Case study one part 1 assigned

CE #2 assigned on 9/2 due 9/8.

Supplemental readings:

1. Logical Theory Origin from Natural to Social Science or Vice Versa? A Brief Conceptual History for Social Work.
2. Autopoiesis, culture and society.
- 3 Ecological theory chapter. 1 (Germaine)

Unit Three: Starting September 2nd Face to Face meeting: Sept. 6th

Eco-strengths

- Positive adaptations to hazardous environments – strengths or dangers
- Strengths inside and outside the person
- Noble and Base Rhetoric (points to SCR)
- Strengths – favorable environmental contexts
- Strengths – forging multi-level connections

Case study one part 1 assigned on 9/9 due on 9/15.

Case study one part 2 assigned

Supplemental readings:

1. TBA

Unit Four: Starting September 9th**General Systems and Family Systems**

Closed and open systems and change

Functions of the problem

Persons' function within the system

Entropy and homeostasis

Positive feedback and problem amplification – runaway interactions

Negative feedback and constraints

Case study one part 2 assigned on September 16th due on September 22nd

Supplemental readings:

1. Systems and family structure (Patricia Minuchin).
2. Chapter 2 social systems perspective: foundations of SST.

Unit Five: Starting September 16th**Complex systems**

Butterfly effect

Intertwined systems

Non-predictability

Case study one part 3 assigned on September 23rd due on September 29th**Case study one part 4 – in class or on-line activity**

Supplemental readings:

1. Eco-systems theory as applied to family caregivers of aging adults

Module Two**Unit Six: Starting September 23rd Face to face meeting: Sept. 27th****Biological physical realm**

Essentialism –what chemistry and biology can tell us about human behavior.

Adaptation and selection

Structure and function

Principle of parsimony

Application of biological factors in diverse Social Work settings

CE #3 assigned on September 30th due in dropbox Oct 6th

Supplemental readings:

1. The principle of parsimony in empirical science.
2. Developing a social neuroscientific understanding of youth behaviors.
3. Evolutionary psychology and the emotions.
4. Strengthening the bio in the bio-psycho-social paradigm
5. Chapter 12:Genetics, environment and development

Unit Seven: Starting September 30th**Neuro-psychology**

Attachment and right brain development

The wonder chemicals (norepinephrine, dopamine, serotonin, GABA)

Intro to social psychology

Supplemental readings:

1. Integrating neuroscience knowledge into social work education” a case-based approach.
 2. Neuroscience and empathy.
 3. Relational trauma and the developing right brain. Shore.
 4. Modern attachment theory: the central role of affect regulation. Shore and Shore
- CE #5 assigned on October 7th due in dropbox Oct 13th**

Unit Eight: Starting October 7th

Learning theory

Classical and operant learning
 Behaviorism
 Classical conditioning and context
 Social psychology and learning

Case study two assigned

Supplemental readings.

1. Chapter 7. social learning and role theories.
2. Social learning theory and the health belief model

CE #6 assigned on October 14th due in dropbox October 20th at 11:30 P.M.

Module three

Unit Nine: Starting October 14th Face to Face meeting: Oct 18th

Social Construction of Reality

Symbolic Interaction
 Dramatalurgical Approach
 Uses and abuse of SCR
 The meaning of deviance; labeling and pathology

Supplemental readings.

1. Therapy social construction chp 3.
2. Using social constructioist theory to practice (Dybicz)

CE #7 assigned on October 21st due in dropbox October 27th at 11:56 P.M.

Unit Ten: Starting October 21st

Cognitive theory and cognitive developmental theory

The tripartite system of experience
 How cognition affect behavior and emotion
 How faulty thinking leads to faulty behavior
 The cognitive development of the child and meaning making

Case study two assigned on October 21st due in dropbox: November 3rd 11:57

Module Four

Unit Eleven: Starting October 28th

Psycho-dynamic

Basic principles
 The nature of self-protection and unmet needs
 The relational template and self awareness

Exercise (practice application)

Critique of Case Study Two assigned on xxx due in dropbox Nov 14th 11:30 P.M.

CE #8 assigned on November 4th due in dropbox November 10th at 11:58 P.M.

Supplemental readings:

1. Relational trauma and the developing right brain: an interface of self-psychology and neuroscience

Unit Twelve: Starting November 4th

Attachment and self development

Biological vulnerability and attachment
 The nature of secure attachments
 Time line of attachment development
 Insecure attachments
 The cycle of attachment

Supplemental readings:

1. Modern attachment theory: the central role of affect regulation. Shore and Shore (redux).
2. Advances in neuro-psycho-analysis, attachment theory and trauma research (shore).
3. Origins of attachment theory (bretherton).
4. Attachment theory and clinical practice

CE #9 assigned on November 11th due in dropbox November 17th at 11:59 P.M

Unit Thirteen: Starting November 11th

Adult Attachment

Review and Practice applications

CE #10 assigned on November 18th due in dropbox November 24th at 11:54 P.M.

Unit Fourteen: Starting November 18th Face to Face meeting: Nov. 15th

Review and Practice Application con't

Case study three assigned on November 18th due December 2nd at 11:30 P.M..

Unit Fifteen: Starting November 25th

Last Day of Classes: December 2nd

Grades Due to Registrar: December 9th

COURSE POLICIES PARTICULARLY RELEVANT TO THIS COURSE (*Other, general policies are listed at the end of the syllabus in Grading Issues*)

Written Work & Submission of Assignments

- Your written work should show thoroughness, accuracy and professionalism. All work must be carefully proofread and corrected. Papers should be free of errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. If you do not proofread carefully, you run the risk of having your paper rejected for re-write, with penalty for lateness.
- All assignments will lose one full letter grade (10%) for every 24-hour period they are late (including weekends).
- No revisions of assignments will be allowed without explicit permission—However, please feel free to meet with me (face-to-face, online, or by phone) to discuss your papers before the final due dates.

DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK and UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The goal of the Division of Social Work is to prepare students for the professional practice of social work. The Division requires students to adhere to professional practices and standards in all classes and practicum. These practices and standards are outlined in the MSW Student Code of Conduct which can be found on pages 23-27 of the current *MSW Student Handbook*. The Code of Conduct must be signed by all students beginning MSW students.

The following standards are not negotiable: Students may depend on well-planned classes and knowledgeable instructors. Professors are committed to the facilitation of student success. Learning is a complex phenomenon for which BOTH instructors and students are responsible. Evaluation criteria are stated clearly in the **syllabus**. **However, if students have questions about grading, it is the students'** responsibility to discuss these matters with their instructors. The course syllabus represents a contract between students and the instructor. Professors reserve the right to modify syllabi, and students will be notified in writing when such changes are made. Likewise, students are responsible for reading and following instructions on the syllabi.

Class Attendance: Because the MSW Program is a professional program, class attendance is **MANDATORY**. The Attendance Policy is extremely important and can be found in the current *MSW Student Handbook* on page 19. Students are expected to be on time for class and to return from breaks in a timely manner. Likewise, students are expected to participate in class discussions and activities.

Submission of Assignments: All assignments must be submitted ON TIME and IN THE MANNER directed by the faculty (e.g., brought to class, sent to an assignment drop box, etc). Deadlines are extremely important for professional social workers. Additional information about assignment submission is found in the Attendance Policy.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not acceptable in a professional social work program. Students who engage in this type behavior risk failure on specific assignments, in the course, and possible dismissal from the MSW Program. Academic dishonesty is prohibited by the university as well as the Division of Social Work. The following link outlines [VSU's Academic Honesty Policies](#). The Academic Dishonesty Policy for the Division of Social Work is found in the *MSW Student Handbook* found as a link of the [Division of Social Work website](#).

I reserve the right to check student submissions/assignments for plagiarism. By taking this course, you agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to SafeAssign, a tool within BlazeVIEW. For more information on the use of SafeAssign at VSU see [SafeAssign for Students \(http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml\)](http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml).

Incompletes: Incomplete grades are given only in cases of extreme emergency with proper documentation, and are granted only with the prior approval of the instructor. Policies governing Incompletes are found in the *MSW Student Handbook*.

Academic Performance: Students are expected to maintain a 3.00 grade point average in the MSW Program. A discussion of all academic expectations and grading can be found in the *MSW Student Handbook*, including the Division's policy of **Academic Deficiency Points given for grades lower than C.**

Cancellation of Classes: The University President may cancel classes under specific emergency conditions. The most frequent cause of cancellation is inclement weather. Please check the main page of the VSU web site if you have concerns about inclement weather or an emergency situation: <http://www.valdosta.edu>

ADDITIONAL STUDENT INFORMATION THIS NEEDS TO BE UPDATED and copied into 7890.

Technology Assistance: Students having technology problems may contact the [Help Desk](#) (phone 229-245-4357) or e-mail a question at helpdesk@valdosta.edu. The Help Desk is located on the 2nd floor of the Odum Library. Their hours are 8:00 AM – 9:00 PM, Mondays – Thursdays; 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Fridays; 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Saturdays; and 1:00 PM – 9:00 PM, Sundays. If students are having problems with VISTA, they may seek link to [Common Questions & Solutions](#) or use the [Vista Contact Form](#).

Students may also visit or call the Hub at 229-245-6490. The Hub is located in 2616 Odom Library and is available to help students with problems in VISTA courses. Students also should talk with their instructors if the technology problems are not easily resolved.

Specific Learning Needs: Students requiring classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability should discuss their needs with the professor at the beginning of the semester. Students who are not registered with the Access Office for Students with Disabilities should contact [VSU's Access Office](#) or call 229-245-2498 (229-219-1348 for TTY). The office is located in Room 1115 Nevins Hall.

Students Experiencing Academic Difficulties. Students with academic concerns are strongly encouraged to contact the staff of the [Student Success Center](#) or call them at 229-333-7570. The Student Success Center is located on first floor of Langdale Hall on the main VSU campus. Services provided by the Success Center include tutoring, writing assistance, and help with time management. Students are encouraged to make appointments with Center Staff through the web link or by telephone. The Center is available to all VSU students, and evening appointments are available.

Additional services include the [Counseling Center](#) (phone 229-333-5940; e-mail pjraynor@valdosta.edu). Services are free of charge to students with emotional/mental, social, substance abuse and other problems. The [Farber Health Services](#) provides physical health services (phone 229-333-5886).

Emergency Campus Policy: The Police Contact Number is **229-259-5555**. The Campus Police Division is located in Pine Hall. Officers will escort students on campus, and emergency phones are placed across campus. Students are **strongly encouraged to program the campus emergency number, 911** (for local police) **and *447** (GA State Highway Patrol) **into their cell phone.**

HBSE I Course POCO Fall 2011

FPO 1. Conduct multi-level generalist practice based on the planned intervention process.

6201-CO5. Identify personal values, biases and knowledge deficits that limit one's ability to practice with different populations (Part two of all CEs).

6201-CO7. Apply appropriate theories and knowledge to selected practice situations (Three case studies).

FPO 2. Demonstrate the ability to apply critical thinking within the context of professional social work practice.

6201-CO1. Articulate the importance of using accepted social work knowledge as a basis of assessing clients (CE-2)

6201-CO2. Recognize and discuss issues concerning the nature of professional social work knowledge and explain how those issues impact social work practice (XXX)
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6201-CO3. Recognize and discuss instances in which the student's personal values and beliefs conflict with the values and beliefs of the profession (Part two of all CEs).

6201-CO4. Articulate and use essential elements of critical thinking as applied to social work practice, especially in determining what knowledge base (personal or professional) to use when assessing clients and their situations. (YYYY).
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6201-CO7. Apply appropriate theories and knowledge to selected practice situations (Three case studies).

FPO 3. Analyze and apply the values and ethics of the social work profession.

6201-CO1. Articulate the importance of using accepted social work knowledge as a basis of assessing clients (CE-2).
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6201-CO3. Recognize and discuss instances where the student's personal values and beliefs conflict with the values and beliefs of the profession (XXXX).

FPO 4. Using the strengths perspective, practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills that are appropriate for the range of human differences.

6201-CO3. Recognize and discuss instances where the student's personal values and beliefs conflict with the values and beliefs of the profession (Part two of all CEs).
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6201-CO8. Explain clients using a strength-based eco-systems framework (Case study one, part two).

FPO 7. Understand and interpret the history, development, and current trends of the profession.

6201-CO1. Articulate the importance of using accepted social work knowledge as a basis of assessing clients **(CE 2)**

6201-CO2. Recognize and discuss issues concerning the nature of professional social work knowledge and explain how those issues impact social work practice **(CXXXXE)**.

FPO 8. Select and apply human behavior theory and evidence to inform practice using the ecosystems perspective as an organizing framework.

6201-CO7. Apply appropriate theories and knowledge to selected practice situations **(Three case studies)**.

6201-CO6. Discuss clients and your understanding of clients in a professional manner, using appropriate knowledge, theories and frameworks **(Criterion number one on all case studies)**.

6201-CO8. Explain clients using a strength-based eco-systems framework **(Case study one, part two)**.

6201-CO9. Display research based knowledge of human development and its relationship to the ecosystem over the lifespan **(Not formally measured)**.

6201-CO10. Demonstrate use and limits of theories that address biological, psychological, spiritual, sociological, and cultural development across the life span **(Case studies two and three: use and limits questions)**.

6201-CO11. Identify various concepts of deviant behavior and how this impacts our clients **(CE-14)**.

FPO 10. Evaluate and apply research findings to practice and evaluate individual practice interventions at multi levels appropriately.

6201-CO9. Display research based knowledge of human development and its relationship to the ecosystem over the lifespan **(Not formally measured)**.

FPO 11. Demonstrate the ability to communicate across client populations, colleagues and communities, in both written and verbal form.

6201-CO6. Discuss clients and your understanding of clients in a professional manner, using appropriate knowledge, theories and frameworks **(Criterion number one on all case studies)**

FPO 14. Identify with the social work profession and behave professionally.

6201-CO1. Articulate the importance of using accepted social work knowledge as a basis of assessing clients **(CE-2)**.

6201-CO3. Recognize and discuss instances where the student's personal values and beliefs conflict with the values and beliefs of the profession **(Part two of all CEs)**.

6201-CO8. Explain clients using a strength-based eco-systems framework **(Case study one, part two)**.