Spring 2000

SOWK 300: Human Behavior and the Social Environment

Shirley Huisman-Jezowski

Dordt College

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I. **Rationale**
Human Behavior and the Social Environment is the foundation course in the Human Behavior and the Social Environment sequence to prepare baccalaureate social work students for general practice. It utilizes the person-in-environment perspective to integrate theoretical knowledge and research from the human biological, psychological and social sciences in understanding human behavior. Human development across the life span within the context of family, group, organization and community membership is emphasized. Ethnicity, race, cultural background, gender, social class, and age are specifically addressed as having additional bearing on understanding human behavior. Broad theoretical knowledge is utilized in analyzing human behavior which takes into account intra-personal, interpersonal, family, social and cultural aspects. Social Work 300 provides a conceptual framework and the knowledge necessary for understanding human behavior required for the beginning level social work practitioner.

II. **Educational Outcomes**

By the completion of this course the student should:

1. **Be able to apply knowledge of bio-psycho-social variables that affect individual development and behavior.** Students will use the theoretical frameworks of Social Work to understand the relationships and interactions between individuals and social systems. In doing so the student will identify and assess individual and family developmental stages and tasks and the behavioral implications associated with them. Students also will be able to identify and assess issues of age, gender, class, race, ethnicity, family, group, organizational and cultural factors and their relationship to human behavior. This entire course is built on the content meeting this objective. Students will read content from the main text as well as be involved in discussion and interactive lecture regarding this content. Assessment will involve measuring the student's knowledge of this content through objective and essay testing.

2. **Be able to apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.** The student will write a major paper in which they integrate the major concepts of life span and developmental model of human behavior and the social environment with live interviews. This is with a person of the student’s choosing, with final approval from the instructor. Assessment of this outcome is achieved from the evaluation of this paper on the part of the instructor, based on the integration of the above elements.

3. **Be able to use written communication effectively within the context of practice of social work.** This will be most evident through the assigned written paper where each student conducts extensive interviews with an individual, and produces a written bio-psycho-social report based on those interviews. The student will also be evaluated on their ability to communicate through essay test questions.
4. Be able to practice within the values and ethics of the social work profession and with an understanding of and respect for the positive value of diversity. Students will read material from the main text early on. They will come back to this throughout the semester as they encounter themes of diversity and populations at risk. Values of the profession such as the right to self determination, and dignity and worth of the individual are a major focus. This is assessed through both objective and essay testing throughout the course.

5. To be able to understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply the strategies and skills of change that advance social and economic justice. Based on the readings of the main text covering several different sociological theory regarding social structure, students are asked in a classroom exercise to build a social policy towards the alleviation of a social problem such as poverty. Students will also be asked to analyze the impact of social policies on the development of client systems, workers and agencies. Assessment of this outcome comes through in-class feedback regarding their solution as well as through testing in section three of the course.

6. Be able to make use of supervision appropriate to generalist practice, as well as demonstrate the use of self as a tool of that practice. Through the volunteer assignment, students make observations regarding their interactions with the person with whom they volunteer, recording these in a journal, as well as using them as a basis for discussion in class. Through these journals the student is also given the opportunity to use the instructor as a means of resource and reflection. This objective is assessed by a grade assigned to the journal four times throughout the semester based on the students’ mastery of both use of self and use of supervision.

7. Be able to integrate faith and practice issues in the context of professional social work practice. One of the major reading assignments in the course, Uncommon Decency, guides students as they work to integrate their faith with their developing sense of professional identity. This book addresses the interactions between people of a reformed Christian faith and a diverse and pluralistic world. The reading of this book occurs throughout the semester, and is assessed in each of the four tests of the course by way of objective and essay testing, as well as through the assessment of classroom discussion based on the reading.

8. Be able to investigate social work literature regarding a vulnerable population. The result of this investigation is the course’s first paper, where the student will organize their findings, integrating it into a coherent review paper. The student will respond to their findings with suggestions for further investigation.

III. Course Content

Human Behavior and the Social Environment is organized around the following content areas.

1. Content about social work values and their ethical implications, providing opportunities for students to demonstrate their application in practice. You will be assisted to develop an awareness of you personal values and to clarify conflicting values and ethical dilemmas.
2. Content about differences and similarities in the experiences, needs and beliefs of people. These include but are not limited to groups distinguished by race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age, and national origin.

3. Content about the dynamics and consequences of social and economic injustice, including various forms of human oppression and discrimination. Strategies of intervention for achieving social and economic justice and for combating the causes and effects of institutionalized forms of oppression.

4. Content about theories and knowledge of human bio-psycho-social development, including theories and knowledge about the range of social systems in which individuals live (families, groups, organizations, institutions, and communities). This will include an understanding of the interactions between and among human biological, social, psychological, and cultural systems as they are affected by human behavior. Methods of evaluation of theory and applications to client situations will be presented.

5. As a portion of this course, students will participate in a semester-long volunteer project as a way of observing human behavior and social dynamics. This prepares students for beginning discussions regarding professional practice.

IV. Liberal Arts Perspective

Social Work 300 builds on the liberal arts base students have acquired upon reaching the junior level. Prerequisites for SW 300 are Biology 101, Psychology 201, Sociology 201 and Gen 200. Knowledge gained in the biological, sociological and behavioral sciences, History, English, and Communications will be integrated into a social work framework. Students will use their writing skills in applying new knowledge and in the integration of previous knowledge and concepts. Students will utilize their analytic skills as theoretical concepts and knowledge are examined and applied.

V. Professional Purposes and Values

Social Work 300 provides knowledge which focuses on the presence of social and cultural diversity and the implications involved in understanding human behavior and the process of change. Included in diversity are women issues and issues of racism and ageism. Social work ethical and value assumptions are the foundation of this course. Students will be challenged to analyze social and cultural values as well as their own and to confront ethical dilemmas relative to human behavior and the social environment. They will be challenged to analyze their Christian perspective and integrate it with an understanding of human behavior and the social environment.

VI. Populations at Risk and Diversity

Significant factors such as race, gender, sexual preference, class, age, cultural heritage and ethnicity are analyzed in regard to their social impact and impact on growth and development.
VII. Assignments and Required Texts


The main text and study guide will serve as a basis for meeting educational outcomes 1-5.


This supplemental text will serve as a basis for meeting educational outcome #6.

D. Literature review paper on a vulnerable population.

E. Social History Paper (see attachment following the bibliography).

F. Journal Assignment (see attachment following the bibliography).

VIII. Instruction

A. Lecture and Discussion
B. In-class activities/exercises
C. Speakers
D. Films/Videos

IX. Evaluation

Various small assignments, some of which we will complete in class.

4 tests 100 pts. each = 400 57%
Social History Paper 100 points = 100 29%
Literature Review Paper 100 points = 100 14%
Volunteer Assignment 100 points = 100

TOTAL = 700 points

Grading Scale
90% A 70% C
80% B 60% D

X. Grading Policies

All assignments are expected to be handed in on time. Unless previously negotiated with the instructor, for each day late there will be a half grade reduction in the assigned grade.
Human Behavior and the Social Environment
Social Work 300
Tentative Course Schedule

January 11 -
Introduction to Social Work 300 - Setting the Framework for HBSE and educational outcome #1. Classroom exercise - “This is your life...”

January 13 -
Main Text - Chapter 1 Introduction to Systems Impact Model, including Application of Values and Ethics to Bio-Psycho-Social Systems Assessment. This sets the framework for meeting educational outcome #4, which we continue to discuss throughout the semester. Mini-lecture on Systems Impact Model.

Mouw - Chapter 1 Convicted Civility: Can We Be Faithful and Polite Too? This text will be the resource for discussion and testing for educational outcome #7 throughout the semester.

January 18 -

January 20 -
Main Text - Chapter 3 Psychological Systems and Their Impact on Infancy and Childhood. Educational Outcome #1. We will spend today at the Dordt Library with Sheryl Taylor in preparation for the Literature Review paper. (Educational outcome #8)

January 25 -
Mouw Chapter 2 What Christian Civility is Not Educational Outcome #7. Class discussion on the Mouw book as well as class exercise relating to Main text Ch. 3 -Psychological Systems and Their Impact on Infancy and Childhood - “To See or Not to See”.

January 27 -
Main Text - Chapter 4 Social Systems and Their Impact On Infancy and Childhood. Educational Outcome #1. Mini-lecture. Film - Seasons of Life - part 1.

February 1 -
TEST #1 This test will contain objective and essay mechanisms of measuring the student’s understanding and ability regarding educational outcomes 1, 3, 4 &7.

February 3 -
Main Text - Chapter 5 Ethnocentrism and Racism. This chapter will present students with content and classroom exercises which will meet educational outcomes #1, 4 and 5. Mini-lecture. Film - True Colors.

February 8 -
Mouw Chapter 4 Speaking In God’s Presence - The Importance of Civil Speech. Educational outcome #7. Class discussion.
March 21
Main Text Chapter 10  Biological Systems and Their Impact On Middle Adulthood. Educational Outcome #1. Classroom exercise - “AIDS Questionnaire”, and “AIDS Policy Quiz”.

Mouw chapter 8  The Challenge Of Other Religions. Educational Outcome #7. Classroom discussion.

March 23-
Main Text Chapter 11  Psychological Systems and Their Impact on Middle Adulthood. Educational Outcome #1. Film - “Seasons of Life” - Part 3.

March 28
NO CLASS - CAMPUS WIDE ASSESSMENT DAY


April 4-
Main Text Chapter 12  Social Systems and Their Impact On Middle Adulthood. This chapter will acquaint students with major theories of social structure, mechanisms of oppression, and discrimination, forms of social policy dealing with poverty, and the ways in which policy impacts clients, workers, and agencies. Mini-lecture. Classroom exercise - “Functionalism Vs. Conflict Theory”. Educational Outcome#5.

April 6-
TEST #3  This test will assess the student’s abilities regarding Educational Outcomes 11, 3, 4, 5, and 6 by means of objective and essay testing.

April 11-
Main Text Chapter 13  Sexual Orientation. Through this section students will deal with reading, lecture and classroom exercises regarding the nature of sexual orientation, and the manner in which they will be confronted by the diversity which this represents in their practice of the profession. The values and ethics of the profession are strongly considered in this section. This chapter specifically relates to educational outcomes #1 and 4. Mini-lecture. Classroom exercise - “My Friend Is Coming To Visit.”

Mouw Chapter 10  When There Is No “On The Other Hand”: The Limits of Civility. Educational Outcome #7. Class discussion.

April 13-

April 18  Mouw Chapter 11  Is Hell Uncivil? Educational outcome #7. Class discussion.

Social History Papers due.
Educational Outcomes 2 and 3.
Social Work 300
Human Behavior and the
Social Environment
Bibliography


Once you have set up your volunteer experience with the Community Outreach Program (or continue the one you had from last semester) you need to keep a journal concerning your time spent with your person/people.

In each entry, you need to address the following:

1. **Time Spent** (Example: Monday, January 20, 2 hours)

2. **Activity**
   The activity at which you and your person spent time together. This will vary by your assignment, and the person and his or her needs. Why was the activity chosen? How does the activity relate to the needs and developmental level of your volunteer?

3. **Events/Incidents**
   What events of special notice occurred during this visit? What specific interactions did you have with your person or people during this visit? Do these relate to the biological, psychological, or social functioning of the person?

4. **Connections**
   Connections you see to the material you are reading about and the material we cover in class. Does what you are observing match up to what you are reading about? For instance, focus on the assigned reading of that week and make connections to your experience.

5. **Personal Growth and Reactions**
   Observations regarding your own reactions or feelings towards things that occurred or the person with whom you are working. Any strong reactions you may have had are important to observe. Or perhaps a LACK of reaction may be notable. Take time to reflect on YOUR THOUGHTS AND ATTITUDES THAT YOUR HAVE OBSERVED DURING THIS VISIT.

6. **Questions**
   What issues or questions does this visit raise for you concerning professional practice issues, as well as your own developing professional identity and growth?

I will collect these journals from you approximately four times throughout the semester and will assign a grade each quarter term based on how well you have attended to your entries in the above areas. I will also respond either personally or in writing to you regarding the journals. We will also try to allow for some in-class time in order to deal with questions or issues as they come up for you. Again, enjoy your volunteer experience - remember, the time and energy you invest in this will determine the quality of the assignment for you.
You will be selecting a particular area of social work practice or vulnerable population on which to base your review paper. You will be reviewing material already published. By organizing, integrating, and evaluating previously published material, you will consider the progress of current research toward clarifying, and offering possible alternatives to a problem. In your literature review paper, you will:

1. Define and clarify the problem.

2. Summarize previous investigations in order to inform the reader of the current state of research in this area.

3. Identify relations, contradictions, gaps, and inconsistencies in the literature.

4. Suggest the next step or steps in addressing to problem or possible areas for further investigation.

Finished length of this assignment should be 10-15 pages. Your instructor and college librarian are available to help in the search process. Due date for this assignment is Tuesday, March 7.
Psycho-Social History
Consent Form

I am a Dordt College student enrolled in “Human Behavior in the Social Environment”, Social Work 300, with Professor Shirley Huisman Jezowskii. As a part of our class assignments I am required to complete a psycho-social history paper, based on my interviews with an adult.

The intent of this assignment is to learn and to practice my skills of developing a psycho-social history, a skill I will use in daily practice as a social worker. This is not an evaluation of you, your development or your life choices, but rather a learning opportunity for myself. The information which you choose to share in this process is used strictly for the purpose of this assignment. All information which you share with me will be handled confidentially and I will respect your right to privacy. I will also respect your decision to refuse to answer questions which may be uncomfortable for you or more personal than you care to answer for whatever reason.

Your signature on this form indicates that I have explained the nature and content of this assignment to you and that you are granting me permission to conduct the interviews with you for the purpose of this assignment. Thank you for your cooperation!

In the event that you wish your anonymity to be protected, arrangements have been made for me to hand this release in to the Dean of Social Sciences, Dr. Lesage. Upon your request, I will change all necessary information in my paper in order to protect your privacy.

Signature ___________________________________ Date __________________
Dordt Student ____________________________________________
SOCIAL HISTORY OUTLINE

I. Basic Data

Client: (Legal name plus nickname)  Date of Birth:
Chronological Age:  Race:
Nominated Religion:  School and Grade:
Place of Employment: (if appropriate)  Address:
Telephone Number:

II. Individual Client Profile

A. Brief Physical Description - Personality Picture

1. Describe the person's physical appearance, (e.g., tall; dark; handsome). You might include information about dress, posture, and facial expression.

2. Mention anything that's striking about the individual.

3. Describe your impression of the person's personality (e.g., outgoing; soft-spoken; nervous).

4. Mention specific behaviors, if appropriate, that describe exactly what you mean (e.g., She seemed nervous, as she constantly fidgeted in her chair and rapped her knuckles on the desk). This might include information about motor activity, unusual mannerisms, and the client's reactions to you, the interviewer.

5. Be brief, clear, and specific.

B. Developmental History

1. Pregnancy
   a. Was your mother's pregnancy normal; uneventful; problematic?
   b. Describe any problems or unusual circumstances.

2. Delivery
   a. Was the delivery normal; routine; difficult/problematic?
b. Identify difficulties, problems, or unusual circumstances.

c. Provide APGAR score, if available.

d. Type of delivery—e.g., vertex, breech?

e. Were you born at full term or prematurely? If premature, by how many months?

f. Where were you born?

3. Medical Problems

a. Did you experience any significant medical problems as a child that were out of the ordinary?

b. If so, please describe the problems and any treatment you might have received.

4. Developmental Milestones

a. Sat alone

b. Walked

c. First words

d. Toilet trained

5. Parental Care

a. Do you think that your parents found it difficult or easy to care for you as a child? Explain.

6. Social/Emotional Aspects

a. What were your peer relationships like during childhood?

b. How would you have described yourself as a child (e.g., outgoing; shy; bright)?

c. What types of play, activities, and hobbies did you participate in as a child?

d. How would you describe your childhood (e.g., happy; uneventful; turbulent)? Explain.
e. Were there any events that occurred during childhood which you feel significantly affected you? If so, please describe the events and their effects.

7. Other

Is there any other information about your childhood that is important?

C. School History

1. Schools attended (names, dates and locations)
2. Current school status (e.g., high school graduate; college sophomore)
3. Academic progress in schools (Was school difficult for you?)
4. Attendance
5. Courses taken
6. Participation in school related activities
7. Peer relationships (e.g., did you have friends in school, did you feel liked by your classmates?)
8. Parental involvement with schools
9. Vocational history (special non-college job training)--type of training, dates, jobs, work record

D. Military Service

If applicable, describe the branch, rank, dates of service, duties, and type of discharge.

E. Employment History

1. Place, types, and dates of employment
2. Primary job responsibilities
3. Likes and dislikes about each job
4. Attendance record
5. Are you happy with your current employment? Explain.
F. Current Social/Emotional Elements

1. What are your social relationships like now? Would you say you were the type of person who had many friends or only a select few? Would you call yourself a lonely person?

2. Do you have any special relationships (e.g., girl/boyfriend; spouse)? If so, describe them. If married, elaborate under the following section, "Family History."

3. What are your major interests, activities, and hobbies? Please describe them.

4. In summary, how would you describe your overall "fit" into a social context (e.g., generally popular; shy except with close friends)?

G. Self Description

1. What do you like about yourself? What are your strengths?

2. What do you dislike about yourself?

3. Describe your current fears or worries.

4. What do you see as your personal accomplishments?

5. What is the most difficult thing you've accomplished? Why do you think this is so?

6. Describe the most painful event that ever happened in your life.

7. What things would you like to change in your life and about yourself?

III. Family History

A. Family of Origin

1. Describe each family member in your family of origin. Include the following information:
   a. Relationship and name
   b. Date of birth and age
   c. Occupation
d. Education

e. Vocation and employment

f. Current marital status

g. Any major medical/psychological problems

h. Brief description of physical appearance, personality, and how the person relates to other family members.

2. Use the following format:

Mother - (continue with above information)

Father -  "  "  

Sister -  "  "  

Brother -  "  "  

etc.

3. Family Function

a. What are marriage dates and current status (e.g. married; divorced)?

b. Describe the parents' relationship.

c. What types of family planning/birth control were used?

d. How does each other family member feel toward you?

e. How do you get along with and relate to each other family member?

f. Are there any problems currently operating within the family? Were there any in the past? If so, explain.

h. Did you have any special care situations during childhood (e.g., adoption; foster care)? If so, when did they occur and what were they like?
i. Did any significant stressful event occur in your family during childhood? These might include deaths, domestic violence, drug/alcohol abuse, physical abuse, job loss, or other traumas. If so, explain.

j. How would you summarize the quality of your family life during childhood?

k. Is there anything else about your family life during childhood that you'd like to add?

4. **Extended Family**

a. Give brief descriptions of all people living or dead who are related to the client. Include more detail for those relatives who are especially meaningful or significant to the client.

b. Use the following format:
   
   Maternal Grandmother -
   Maternal Grandfather -
   Paternal Aunt -
   etc.

B. **Current Family Relationships**

1. **Marital Status**

a. Married, separated, single, widow/widower, divorced

b. Length of present marriage

c. How would you describe the quality of the present marriage (e.g., communication; enjoyment; conflict)?

d. Were you or your spouse married before?

e. If so, what were the dates, lengths of marriages, and reasons for divorce?

f. What are the socioeconomic (overall financial/living) conditions currently like?

2. **Children**

a. Names
b. Ages

c. Grade in school

d. Brief description of physical appearance and personality

e. How would you describe this child's behavior? How easy or difficult is the child to manage?

f. Relationships with peers and siblings.

IV. Summary Impression

In a few words, summarize the essentials of this history. If you had to describe this person and his/her life in a few words, what would you say?

V. Research Applications

This is not part of a regular social history. Please refer to Step #2 in the Procedures for instructions about completing this section.

4. Ask students to write a paper which summarizes the information they've gathered. The paper should be typewritten, double-spaced, and 8 to 12 pages in length. Students should include all information referred to in the "Social History Outline." They should use an outline form for topic headings followed by a narrative presentation of information for each heading. Make sure each underlined topic heading is included in their paper.

5. The following provides an example of what their final social history might look like:
SOCIAL HISTORY EXAMPLE

I. Basic Data:
   Client: Prudence Dill
   Nickname: Pickles
   Chronological Age: 18
   Date of Birth: August 31, 1964
   Race: White Caucasian
   Nominated Religion: Roman Catholic
   School: University of Wisconsin-Madison
   Grade: Freshman
   Place of Employment: Alice's Burger Palace
   Address: 709 95th Street, Nomansland, Wisconsin
   Telephone: (414) 208-0009

II. Individual Client Profile:
   A. Brief Physical-Personality Picture:
      Prudence is a tall, thin, attractive young woman who has an energetic and responsive manner. She seemed interested in the interview and eager to provide information.

   B. Gestation, Delivery, and Post-natal Period:
      Prudence is the third born in a family of five children. To her knowledge, her delivery was without any complications. She had no physical problems at birth or shortly thereafter. As far as she knows her parents had planned for her. Both parents had indicated they always wanted a large family. She felt they were very happy with her when she was born.
C. Development:

1. Medical:

Prudence was a consistently healthy child. She never had any serious diseases, allergies, accidents or broken bones. She is up-to-date on her immunizations and has no sensory impairments. She avoids engaging in health hazards such as smoking, drugs, or unhealthy eating habits. However, she does engage in some moderate drinking. She also lifts weights three times a week in addition to participating in other sports. These sports include wrestling and ice hockey. In summary, Prudence appears to be a healthy individual.

6. The following are some suggestions students might consider for improving the writing of professional reports such as social histories. They are in no particular order of importance or priority.

Use paragraphs to divide content into different topics/points/issues (avoid one-sentence paragraphs).

Avoid slang. Slang doesn't sound very professional. Don't use "guys." Use "young men" or "boys." Don't use "mom." Use "mother." Don't use "fizzled out." Use "didn't succeed" or something similar.

Avoid using words such as "always," "average," "perfect," or "all." (Who is "average"? Are you? What is perfect? Is someone "always" a happy person even after getting a D- on a Human Behavior exam?)
Avoid sexist language. Use "Ms." instead of "Mrs." Use "woman" instead of "lady." Use "homemaker" or "woman who does not work outside of the home" instead of "housewife." Don't call adult women "girls."

Avoid using abbreviations. Some people may not understand them. You can spell the term out the first time used and put the abbreviation in parentheses right after it. Thereafter, you can just use the abbreviation. For example, "The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the major professional organization for social work practitioners. NASW is a good organization to join." (Little commercial there, eh?)

Be as concise as possible. Look at a sentence and see if it could be said using fewer words. Consider dividing giant sentences into two or more smaller ones.

Distinguish between fact and your impression of what's going on. Ways to phrase your impressions include "My impression is....," "It appears that....," or "It seems that...." in addition to many others.

Use apostrophes to indicate possession. For example, "Ronald's pet monkey is named Bonzo," or "Freddy's girlfriend jilted him when he was age 11."

It's shorter to state ages by saying, "Matilda, age 108,..." instead of "Matilda was a woman who was 108 years old."

Spell correctly.

Avoid labelling people with terms like "low-life dirtball," "mongoloid," "sleazy," or "abnormal."

Stress confidentiality. Don't use real names. Change some minor facts such as the specific community the client comes from if it's too revealing of her/his identity.

If you take notes during the interview, ask the client's permission first.

When you begin the interview, review its purpose and generally what you plan to do.