

**WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY
EBERLY COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**SOWK 520: HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT
FALL**

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: MSW Standing or Permission of Instructor

Class Days/Time: TBA

Class Location: TBA

Instructor: TBA

Office: TBA

Office Hours: TBA

Contact Information:

Phone: TBA

Email: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Theories underlying human behavior within the social environment, including human development as well as behavior within families, groups, organizations, and communities. Special attention is given to issues of human diversity and the challenges and opportunities offered by rural environments.

COURSE FORMAT/METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

A variety of instructional methods are used in this course including, but not limited to, lectures, videos, and class/case exercises. This course also incorporates content through eCampus access.

LEARNING OUTCOMES*

Upon completion of this course, students are able to:

1. Utilize a multi-theoretical framework for guiding social work practice with various systems (individuals, groups, organizations, communities).
2. Critically evaluate, apply, and communicate various theories and empirical research to understanding the person and the environment.
3. Explain human development in terms of biological, psychological, social, and spiritual processes and influences across the life course.
4. Analyze the impact of diversity and difference on the behavior and development of and within individuals, groups, organizations and communities.

5. Describe the unique challenges and opportunities offered by the rural environment.

*The learning outcomes for this course address CSWE EPAS 2015 generalist competencies 2 and 6.

REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS

Required: Hutchison, E. D. (2016). *Essentials of human behavior (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA Sage.

View the student resources for this text at: <https://edge.sagepub.com/hutchisoness2e>

Supplemental readings (listed under each week) for this course are available on the library's course E-reserve page. To access this site:

Go to <https://reserves.lib.wvu.edu>

Click on the "Login" button on the left hand column.

Use your standard library login to access a list of your courses with e-reserve materials.

Click on this course to access the additional readings.

For problems with e-reserve access, contact ereserves@mail.wvu.edu or (304) 293-2640

Also, additional reading materials will be posted under eCampus.

This course also has a library resource guide that can be accessed at:

<http://libguides.wvu.edu/hbse>

GRADING CRITERIA

Your grade for this course will be based on the required assignments and point values listed below:

- Quizzes 20 pts.
- Theoretical Discussion Paper 40 pts.
- Community Assessment 40 pts.

The maximum number of possible points is 100. The grading scale for this course is as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| A (Excellent, 90%) | 90-100+ pts. |
| B (Good, 80%) | 80-89 pts. |
| C (Fair, 70%) | 70-79 pts. |
| D (Poor, 60%) | 60-69 pts. |
| F (Failure ≤60%) | <60 pts. |

**Plagiarized material in any assignment automatically results in a grade of "F" for the assignment. It is the student's responsibility to inform him/herself on the definition of

plagiarism. Not knowing the definition cannot excuse instances of plagiarism. See academic integrity policy below for further information.

INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangement with the Office of Accessibility Services (304-293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the West Virginia University Academic Catalog at <http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification/#academicintegritytext>. Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to complete reading assignments prior to the sessions for which they are assigned and be able to discuss these readings in the class. Active participation in class sessions is central to learning in this course. You are expected to contribute in positive ways (that is, adding to the discussion in a relevant, concise, and reflective manner), which also requires that you be present in class. More than 3 absences will result in a reduction of one letter grade for the course. The instructor does not discriminate between excused and unexcused absences. Please avoid coming to class late and leaving early. All electronic devices should be put away during class sessions. If you have on your schedule an Authorized University Activity that conflicts with class sometime during the semester, you are expected to apply your "free" absences to meeting that commitment. If you encounter a genuine crisis you should talk to me as soon as possible.

Authorized University Activities: Students are responsible for making faculty members aware of anticipated absences due to Authorized University Activities as soon as possible to help facilitate the make-up process. Students must provide instructors a copy of the University documentation for the anticipated absences from class. Students are also encouraged to meet with their instructors at the beginning of the semester to discuss these anticipated absences. Students who fail to inform their instructors of their absence due to participation in a University Authorized Activity shall not be excused for that absence by the instructor.

If you are called for emergency military service, please check the [Graduate Catalog](#) for University policy. Students will inform faculty about their participation in such activities via an official letter or document.

Days of Religious Observance: WVU recognizes the diversity of its students, many of whom must be absent from class to participate in religious observances. Students are responsible for informing the instructor of anticipated absences due to days of religious observance as soon as possible to help facilitate the make-up process. Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor as early as possible in the semester to discuss these anticipated absences and they should anticipate using their “free” absences to the extent possible for days of religious observance.

ADVERSE WEATHER

In the event of inclement or threatening weather, everyone should use his or her best judgment regarding travel to and from campus. Safety should be the main concern. If you cannot get to class because of adverse weather conditions, you should contact the instructor as soon as possible. Similarly, if the instructor is unable to reach the class location, the instructor will notify the class of cancellation or changes as soon as possible (at least two hours before class starts), using email notification, to prevent students from embarking on unnecessary travel. If you cannot get to class because of weather conditions, the instructor will make allowances relative to the required attendance policy, as well any scheduled tests, quizzes, or other assessments.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

Please see the [Graduate Catalog](#) to determine if you qualify for a grade of Incomplete at the end of the term.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

West Virginia University (WVU) does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or relationship violence [BOG Policy 44]. It is important for you to know that there are resources available if you or someone you know needs assistance. You may speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff, but keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator. If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the Carruth Center, 304-293-9355 or 304-293-4431 (24-hour hotline), and locally within the community at the Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center (RDVIC), 304292-5100 or 304-292-4431 (24-hour hotline).

ASSIGNMENTS

Quizzes (CSWE EPAS Competency 6)

20 points

Description: Quizzes are given most weeks of the semester. The quizzes are based upon course readings. You must complete the quiz for each week by Monday at 9:00AM on the day of class.

Quizzes are closed-notes/book assessments of your individual learning. It is not intended for students to take quizzes together or to use any other assistance (e.g., notes, electronic devices) when taking quizzes. Quizzes are timed to eliminate use of such assistance. If a student requires other arrangements to take a quiz, it is the student's responsibility to take the quiz within the week. This will necessitate students making such arrangements prior to the quiz week and the student must have a letter from the WVU Office of Accessibility Services to confirm the need for special arrangements. Although time restrictions may be removed to accommodate special needs of a student, the quiz will remain closed-notes/book.

Theoretical Discussion Paper (CSWE EPAS Competencies 2 & 6) 40 points

Description: You are going to be provided with a choice of case studies. The cases involve multigenerational families and issues of diversity. Choose one case and prepare an 8-10 page paper (including reference page) in which you discuss the case study from **Lifespan/Developmental Theory** as well as **two other theories** discussed in this course including: systems, psychodynamic, behavioral, cognitive, role, conflict, humanistic, exchange, symbolic interactionism, etc. For each theory:

- ✓ Begin with a discussion of each theory by discussing its basic tenets (i.e., principles), assumptions and concepts.
- ✓ Describe how the case study could be understood and interpreted through the lens of each theoretical perspective and how a social worker might intervene by using this perspective
- ✓ Provide a critique of the theory by noting its limitations in addressing the issues involved in the case
- ✓ Include a reference page in APA style

In seeking sources, see suggested library databases and journals listed in the syllabus as well as the WVU Libraries resource page for HBSE at <http://libguides.wvu.edu/hbse>. You are expected to obtain (retrieve from library, download, etc) all sources included in your reference list. Also see and follow the document, Guidelines for Submitting Papers.

Your paper is graded on the following criteria:

- ✓ Extent to which each specific component of the assignment is addressed (10 points)
- ✓ Appropriate use of references to support ideas and perspectives presented; including APA style (10 points)
- ✓ Demonstration of analytic and critical thinking (10 points)
- ✓ Quality of writing, including spelling, grammar, organization, and clarity (10 points)

Community Assessment Group Presentation or Individual Paper (CSWE EPAS Competencies 2 & 6) 40 points

Description: Students form groups early in the semester to complete a community assessment. Presentations of this completed work are given at the end of the semester. The community chosen must be a geographic community. In choosing a community, focus on one or more of the following: rural areas, ethnic populations, vulnerable or underserved populations and

communities. The assessments include the following components: a community observation, analysis of census materials, interviews with key informants, summary analysis (including assets and needs), and “giving something back.” See assignment handout for specific guidelines for the community profile assignment. The presentation must be professional in delivery and each group must make use of Powerpoint slides or other presentation software. Photographs or video of the community must also be included in the presentation. Students must also use photomapping as part of the summary analysis. This assignment is worth 35 points and group members receive one grade for the presentation. Students will also submit parts of the assignment during the course of the semester for instructor feedback. Classmates as well as the instructor provide feedback on the presentation.

Each group’s grade is based on the following criteria:

- ✓ Knowledge of the community and its issues (10 points)
- ✓ Ability to answer the assignment questions (10 points)
- ✓ Quality of the presentation, including clarity, organization, style, and creativity (10 points)
- ✓ Professionalism and group use of time and ability to work as a group (5 points)

Each individual is expected to provide anonymous and constructive feedback on the presentations of their peers. Evaluations count for 5 points total. Students should not complete evaluations for presentations in which they are involved or presentations they did not attend.

The assignment can also be completed individually as a paper. A presentation is not required for those choosing to do a paper. The paper should include all aspects of the assignment and is due on the first day of scheduled presentations. Persons choosing this option must also attend and complete evaluations for the presentations. Papers are graded based upon the following criteria:

- ✓ Knowledge of the community and its issues (10 points)
- ✓ Ability to answer the assignment questions (10 points)
- ✓ Quality of the paper, including clarity, spelling and grammar, organization, and style (15 points)

COURSE SCHEDULE

For dates and deadlines that pertain to the University, go to:
http://provost.wvu.edu/academic_calendar

Unit I: Introduction (CSWE EPAS Competencies 2 & 6)

Week 1

Topic(s): Introduction and Course Overview

- Orientation to SOWK 520
- Why is the study of human behavior in the social environment important?
- What is HBSE? a theory? a Paradigm? a Perspective? a Framework?

- Critiquing a theory, the multiple dimensions of human behavior, diversity and social justice
- Demonstration of course technology: eCampus, MIX, Library resources

Readings:

- Hutchison-- Chapter 1: Human Behavior: A Multidimensional Approach
- Robbins, S. P., Chatterjee, P., & Canda, E. R. (2011). *Contemporary human behavior theory: A critical perspective for social work (2nd ed.)*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon
Chapter 1: The nature of theories.

Assignments:

- None

Week 2

Topic(s): Theoretical Perspective on Human Behavior

- Introduction to general systems theory, conflict, rational choice, constructionist, psychodynamic, developmental, social-behavioral, and humanistic perspectives and their application in social work practice
- Overview of the community assessment assignment

Readings:

- Hutchison-- Chapter 2: Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior
- Hash, K. M., Chase, P.A., & Rishel, C. W. (2012). The community assessment: Students discovering needs and assets in rural areas. *Contemporary Rural Social Work, 4*, 39-49.

Assignments:

- None

Unit II: Multiple Dimensions of the Person (Competencies 2 & 6)**Week 3**

Topic(s): The Biological and Psychological Person

- Biological health and illness
- The biological systems;
- Theories of emotion and cognition
- The self; stress, coping, and adaptation

Readings:

- Hutchison-Chapter 3: The Biological Person; Chapter 4: The Psychological Person.
- Broussard, C., Joseph, A., & Thompson, M. (2012). Stressors and coping strategies used by single mothers living in poverty. *AFFILIA: Journal of Women and Social Work, 27*(2), 190-204.

Assignments:

- None

Week 4

Topic(s): The Spiritual Person

- Spirituality and spiritual development and theories
- The role of spirituality in social work
- Diverse spiritual beliefs

Readings:

- Hutchison—Chapter 5: The Spiritual Person
- Nelson-Becker, H., Nakashima, M., and Canda, E. (2007). Spiritual assessment in aging: A framework for clinicians. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 48(3-4), 331–347.

Assignments:

- None

Unit III: The Changing Life Course (Competencies 2 & 6)**Week 5:**

Topic(s): Life Course Perspective and the Life Journey Begins

- Major themes of the life course perspective
- Conception, pregnancy, childbirth, & infancy
- Issues of diversity; implications for social work practice
- Challenges and opportunities of living in small towns and rural areas

Readings:

- Hutchison- Chapter 10: The Human Life Journey, Chapter 11: The Journey Begins
- Howard, H. (2015). Reducing stigma: Lessons from opioid-dependent women. *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions*, 15(4), 418-443.

Assignments:

- Deadline for signing up for presentation groups on eCampus

Week 6

Topic(s): Childhood and Adolescence

- Development in childhood and adolescence
- Issues of diversity
- Implications for social work practice

Readings:

- Hutchison-- Chapter 12: Toddlerhood and Early Childhood; Chapter 13: Middle Childhood; Chapter 14: Adolescence

- Larkin, H., Felitti, V., & Anda, R. (2014). Social work and adverse childhood experiences research: Implications for practice and health policy. *Social Work in Public Health, 29*(1), 1-16.

Assignments:

- None

Week 7

Topic(s): Adulthood and Late Adulthood

- Development in adulthood and older adulthood
- Issues of diversity
- Implications for social work practice

Readings:

- Hutchison-- Chapter 15: Young and Middle Adulthood; Chapter 16: Late Adulthood
- Hash, K. M., & Rogers, A. (2013). Clinical practice with older LGBT clients: Overcoming lifelong stigma through strength and resilience. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 41* (3), 249-257.

Assignments:

- Complete course mid-semester evaluation on the course eCampus page (eval is anonymous)

Unit IV: The Multiple Dimensions of the Environment (Competencies 2 & 6)

Week 8

Topic(s): Culture and the Physical Environment

- Defining culture
- Relationship between the physical environment and human behavior
- Homelessness and disability
- Implications for social work practice
- Rural culture

Readings:

- Hutchison-- Chapter 6: Culture and the Physical Environment
- Yen, I.H., & Anderson, L. A. (2012). Built environment and mobility of older adults: Important policy and practice efforts. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, 60*(5), 951-6.

Assignments:

- Theoretical Discussion Paper Due on eCampus

Week 9

Topic(s): Families

- Defining family
- Theoretical perspectives on families
- Diversity and challenges in family life

Readings:

- Hutchison-- Chapter 7: Families
- Doley, R., Bell, R., Watt, B., & Simpson, H. (2015). Grandparents raising grandchildren: Investigating factors associated with distress among custodial grandparent. *Journal of Family Studies, 21* (2), 101-119.

Assignments:

- None

Week 10

Topic(s): Small Groups, Formal Organizations, and Communities

- Theories of small groups and group processes
- Perspectives on formal organizations
- Theoretical approaches to communities
- Rural communities

Readings:

Hutchison—Chapter 8: Small Groups, Formal Organizations, & Communities

- Krout, J. A., & Hash, K. M. (2014). What is rural? In K. M. Hash, E. T. Jurkowski, & J. A. Krout (Eds.), *Aging in rural places: Programs, policies, and professional practice*. New York: Springer Publishing.
- Wike, T., Bledsoe, S., Manuel, J., Despard, M., Johnson, L., Bellamy, J., & Killian-Farrell, C. (2014). Evidence-based practice in social work: Challenges and opportunities for clinicians and organizations. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 42*(2), 161-170.

Assignments:

- None

Week 11

Topic(s): Meetings for Community Assessment Projects

Readings:

- See readings listed on ecampus related to communities

Assignments:

- None

Week 12

Topic(s): Social Structure, Social Institutions, and Social Movements

- Theories of social inequity
- Trends in U.S. and global institutions
- Social movements

Readings:

- Hutchison-- Chapter 9: Social Structure, Social Institutions, and Social Movements
- Kidd, D., & McIntosh, K. (2016). Social media and social movements. *Sociology Compass*, 10(9), 785-794.

Assignments

- None

Week 13

THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS

Week 14

Topic(s): Community Assessment Presentations

Readings:

- None

Assignments:

- None

Week 15

Topic(s): Community Assessment Presentations, Wrap up Evaluations

Readings:

- None

Assignments

- Complete final course evaluation on eCampus (eval is anonymous)