

**BRADLEY UNIVERSITY**  
**SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**  
**SW 358 - Human Behavior in the Social Environment II**  
**Spring 2008**

**Instructor:** Wayne C. Evens, MSW, Ph.D.

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**Office Hours:** MW 1:00 to 3:00; TTH 1:00 to 3:00; and by appointment

**Class Hours:** TTH 10:30 - 11:45; Bradley 050

**Accommodation:** Any student with a disability or special need who requires accommodation should inform the instructor at the beginning of this course.

**Non-discrimination Statement:** Students will be expected to display respect of fellow students' and potential clients' unique characteristics including race, color, religion, creed, ethnic or national origin, age, veteran status, disability, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, appearance, and political orientation. All written assignments will use non-discriminatory language.

**Confidentiality:** Any information shared in this course, which is protected under legal codes or the NASW Code of Ethics must be treated ethically.

**Intercollegiate Competition:** Any student representing Bradley University in an intercollegiate competition may be excused from class for a scheduled event if she/he discusses this with the instructor in advance and with the proper documentation. Students will be allowed to make up any work; however, the student has the responsibility to arrange this with the instructor.

**Creation of a Proper Learning Environment:** The instructor encourages students to ask questions and to critically evaluate class material. However, this must be done while still creating a proper learning environment. While the instructor understands that some students process learning verbally, any behavior which disturbs the learning of others such as talking with peers during a lecture or presentation by a peer will not be allowed and the student will be asked to leave class. Students are encouraged to discuss with the instructor any concerns or suggestions for improvement for the class as soon as possible and not to wait until the end of the course. This allows the

instructor to modify the course to meet student needs as much as possible (see attached classroom rules).

**Generalist Practice Principles:** The following eight, generalist practice principles support all courses in the social work curriculum:

1. A systems approach provides the basic framework for understanding the generalist practice perspective and planning interventions with multiple systems.
2. Problems in living are presented from a person-in-environment perspective, with focus on the transactions between individuals and the environment.
3. Assessments and interventions must address both intrapsychic and environmental strengths and stressors.
4. 4. Generalist practice involves assessments and interventions at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
5. 5. Practice is based on the problem-solving process and the knowledge, skills, and values, which are applicable across settings with diverse populations and in a variety of problem areas.
6. 6. Critical analysis of social problems is inherent in and results in both practice and policy responses.
7. 7. Empirical research provides a solid foundation for both education and practice, and generalist practitioners are expected to participate in practice evaluation activities.
8. 8. Generalist practice often requires the social worker to function in multiple roles depending on the needs of the client system.

#### **Relationship to Other Courses in the Social Work**

**Curriculum:** This course is a continuation of SW 354. In SW 358, the relationship between the environment and human behavior in large and small groups is examined. It provides the theoretical framework on which social work skills for use with families, small groups, and communities are based.

**Course Description:** This course will study the theories relevant to working with small groups, families, and large groups including organizations and communities from a generalist perspective. There will be particular emphasis placed on the influence of diversity issues in the development of theory and how practice interventions are derived from these theories. Students will learn about the deconstruction of theory as relevant to inclusion of

diversity. Social work ethics will be examined as they relate to mezzo and macro groups. Students will be asked to examine how their own learning and values will impact their understanding of and practice at the mezzo and macro levels. Learning methods will include assigned readings, lectures posted on Blackboard, class discussion, the writing of a paper about a non-dominant group and exercises applying theories to actual situations.

### **Course Objectives:**

#### Knowledge

Students will gain knowledge of:

1. The epistemological and ontological assumptions and biases of current theories of human behavior in mezzo and macro environments;
2. How individuals and larger systems interact and shape each other;
3. Specific theories of family, group, organizational, institutional and community development;
4. The role of diversity and multi-culturality in shaping systems and in creating oppression with an emphasis on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, differences in physical abilities, age and socioeconomic status on gaining social and economic justice;
5. The importance of these issues for social work practice;
6. The role of systematic inquiry in shaping and testing theories of social interaction.

#### Skills

Students will develop the ability to:

1. Apply and critically analyze theories related to mezzo and macro systems;
2. Analyze the interactions of multiple levels of systems;
3. Explain complex systems of multiple levels in holistic ways and explain how these complex interactions affect their social work practice.

#### Values

Students will learn social work values with regard to:

1. Diversity;
2. The NASW Code of Ethics;
3. Practice with diverse populations and complex systems;

#### 4. Self-understanding and life long learning.

##### **Resources:**

Required:

Hutchison, E.D. (1999). Dimensions of Human Behavior - Person and Environment, Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press.

Loewen, James W. (1995). Lies my teacher told me. New York: Touchstone.

NASW Code of Ethics.

##### **Learning Evaluation:**

The final grade will be based on points earned by successfully completing the assignments. A total of 250 points are possible. Written assignments should be typed and double-spaced. Papers should be grammatically clear, correct, and properly documented using APA style and free from any bias. Assignments that are turned in past the due date without the prior approval of the instructor will have the grade lowered 1 point per day. Points will be earned as follows:

A. Reflection papers, 5 at 10 points each, total 50 points

Students will write five reflection papers integrating material from the text, Blackboard lecture notes and class discussion. In these papers, students are expected to relate these materials to some current event on the news. These will be due on **Feb 5, Feb. 19, Mar. 4, Mar. 18 and Apr. 1**. The grading guide for these papers is posted under Course Assignments on the Blackboard site.

B. Analysis of diversity on Bradley's campus 50 points

Using the theories covered in class students will discuss how at least three theories would explain the current status of diversity issues on campus, how this affects various groups, and critically analyze how effective the theories are. The grading guide for this exercise is posted on the website under course assignments. **Due Apr. 22**

C. Analysis of a macro interaction 50 points

Students will use Loewen's criticism of how history is taught as a macro interaction (a society educating its children). They will examine how three theories would explain this phenomenon. They will compare and contrast the explanations of these theories. They will then select one theory and explain how this theory would predict the effects of teaching history this way. Finally, they will discuss how the selected theory would construct an intervention to change the situation. **Due May 1.**

D. Final exam: **The final is scheduled Thursday, May 8, 12:00 to 2:00 PM. The final is comprehensive. It will be on Blackboard May 7 and must be completed by 2:00 PM May 8.**

225 - 250 = A  
200 - 224 = B  
175 - 199 = c  
150 - 174 = D  
149 = F

**Class Schedule:**

**Week 1:** January 24 *Introduction to the Course*

Bio-psycho-social systems: review of human behavior

**Week 2:** January 28, 31 *How social systems shape beliefs*

***Critical Use of Theory and Research***

This section will review the basis of theorizing and begin to examine some of the theories of mezzo and macro systems.

Assignment: Hutchison, Chapter 1 & Loewen, Introduction & Chapter 1

**First reflection paper due on Blackboard Feb.5**

**Weeks 3 and 4:** February 5, 7, 12, 14 *Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior*

In this section, the class will study theories relevant to mezzo and macro groups. Four basic paradigms will be introduced along with an understanding of social structure.

Included will be Systems Theory, Conflict Theories, Rational Choice Perspective, Social Construction Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Social Behavioral Perspective among others. Students will also look at how to evaluate theories and how to select a theoretical perspective to guide social work practice.

Assignment: Hutchison - Chapter 2 & Loewen Chapter 2 & 3

**Second reflection paper due on Blackboard Feb. 19**

**Week 5:** February 19, 21 *The Family as a Social Institution*

*The Role of Culture in Families*

This section will explore the role of the family in society. Included will be discussions of the functions that families serve, the various definitions of family including sociological vs. legal, roles, and variations in family structure. Consideration will be given to the influence of culture and to the changes in family structure across time. Students will be expected to discuss how their individual definitions of "family" developed and changed.

Assignment: Hutchison - Chapters 8 and 9 & Loewen Chapter 4

**Weeks 6 and 7:** February 26, 28 March 4, 6 *Identifying Family Well-Being*

This section will explore ways in which theorists have defined well-being in families. Included will be learning about the family life cycle models, role theory, ecological models, conflict theories, and the psychodynamic perspective. The strengths perspective will be reviewed and students will be expected to assess how the theories of family well-being are useful in assessing diverse families. The class will also look at common problems in families such as divorce and remarriage and their theoretical perspectives.

Assignment: Hutchison - Chapter 14 & Loewen Chapter 5 & 6

**Third reflection paper due on Blackboard Mar. 4**

**Weeks 8:** March 11, 13

*Social Interaction in Communities*

This section looks at communities as macro organizations. Issues of social policy will be emphasized including immigration policies. Models of community development will be explained and their relationship to social work practice examined.

Assignment: Hutchison - Chapter 11 & Loewen Chapters 7

**Fourth reflection paper due on Blackboard on Mar. 18**

**March 18, 20 Spring Break, have fun, but don't let me see you on MTV!**

**Weeks 9 and 10: March 25, 27, April 1, 3, *Social Interaction in Organizations***

This section will look at theoretical models for understanding organizational behavior. In addition to the required readings and class lectures, the students will develop a simulated social service agency and will use critical thinking to decide the implications for various theoretical choices.

Assignment: Hutchison - Chapter 10 & Loewen Chapters 8 & 9

**Fifth reflection paper due on Blackboard Apr. 1**

**Weeks 11 and 12: April 8, 10, 15, 17 *Issues in Diversity in Mezzo and Macro Groups***

This section will focus on the issues of diversity, prejudice, and discrimination as they influence family development and functioning and social work practice. Theories about the development of prejudice and discrimination will be studied as well as the effect of both on family development. Institutionalized racism, ageism, and sexism, will be explored and theories of ways to combat them discussed.

Assignment: Loewen Chapters 10 & 11

**Diversity on Bradley's campus paper due on Blackboard Apr. 22**

**Week 13: April 22, 24 *Identifying Special Concerns in Mezzo and Macro Groups***

This section will look at certain special issues. Groupthink will be explained. Students will also study managed care as a theoretical concept.

Assignment: Loewen Chapter 12

**Week 14:** Apr. 29, May 1 ***Ethics as Related to Mezzo and Macro Groups***

This section looks at the ethical requirements for work with mezzo and macro groups including the ethical responsibilities of supervisors and administrators in social work agencies and of individual social workers to mezzo and macro communities.

Assignment: Review your copy of the NASW Code of Ethics. Bring a copy to class.

**Macro interaction paper due on Blackboard May 1**

**Week 15:** May 6 ***Review and wrap up***

**FINAL EXAM: Must be completed on Blackboard by 2:00 PM May 8**

### **CLASSROOM RULES**

1. Acknowledge that oppression exists. People experience life differently because of race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation and disabilities.
2. Acknowledge that oppression derives in part from misinformation.
3. Do not blame yourself or others for having misinformation.
4. Do not blame the victims and survivors of oppressive social conditions.
5. Assume people are always doing their best.
6. Actively seek and share information about culture and its effects with the goals of understanding other cultures and eliminating false information about cultures.
7. Accept others' experiences as valid.

8. Create a safe and confidential environment where discussion of cultural issues can be conducted. Allow others to teach you about their experiences.

(Adapted from: Cannon, L. W. (1990). Fostering positive race, class and gender dynamics in the classroom. Women's Studies Quarterly, 18, 126-134.