

## Social Work 620: Human Behavior in the Social Environment

**Instructor:** Stacey A. Shaw, M.S.W., Ph.D.  
**Class time:** Wednesdays, 8:00-10:40am  
**Location:** B132 JFSB  
**Office:** 2175 JFSB  
**Office hours:** By appointment

**Course overview:** Social work 620 is a graduate M.S.W. course where we integrate and utilize key social work theoretical perspectives towards human experience. Recognizing the complexity of factors that influence human behavior, we draw upon an eco-systemic framework that highlights micro, mezzo, and macro level influences on behavior. We will examine biological, psychological, and spiritual approaches to understanding human experience as well as influence from culture, family, groups, and social structures. We also draw upon the life course perspective to consider the influence of time and development. The overall purpose of this course is to help students learn to apply multidimensional theoretical perspectives to diverse human experiences in ways that deepen your abilities to engage with those you will serve as a social worker. All course components align with the aims of a BYU education, meaning they support the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints while striving to be spiritually strengthening, intellectually enlarging, character building, and conducive to lifelong learning and service.

Course learning outcomes (CSWE social work competencies and dimensions)	Related assignments
1. Engage diversity and difference in practice (competency 2). Dimensions: values, processes	Personal application, Lifespan analysis paper, Exams
2. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (competency 6) Dimensions: knowledge, values	Personal application, Theoretical analysis presentation, Lifespan analysis paper, Exams
3. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (competency 7) Dimensions: knowledge, skills	Personal application, Lifespan analysis paper, Exams

### Grades

A 93  
 A- 90  
 B+ 87  
 B 83  
 B- 80  
 C+ 77  
 C 73  
 C- 70  
 D+ 67  
 D 63  
 D- 60  
 F <=59

## Text

Hutchison, E. D. (2017). *Essentials of human behavior: Integrating person, environment, and the life course* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

## Assignments

### 1) Personal application **25 points**

Due: each week, turn in 4/18

Up to 3 points can be earned *prior to* each class session through the following:

- Read all assigned materials (1 point)
- Describe application of the reading to your social work practice through a post or comment on a peer's post within digital dialogue (1 point)
- Attend an event on campus or in the community that is related to what we are learning in the class. Either describe this in a digital dialogue post or briefly share your experience with the class. Alternately, select outside reading relevant to the week's topic and share what you learned through an hour+ of reading with the class either in the digital dialogue or in class (1 point).

Keep track of your points on the provided rubric and submit this by the final day of class.

### 2) Theoretical analysis presentation **15 points**

Due: sign-up by 1/24, presentations will be from 1/31-3/14

Select a theoretical topic of interest and apply this to an individual, family, group, organization, or community case study. Use theory as well as 4-5 academic sources to enhance understanding of an individual, family, group, organization, or community case. Evaluate how theoretical knowledge: 1) applies across micro/mezzo/macro contexts, 2) guides our approach to engagement, assessment, and intervention, and 3) applies to diverse clients and constituencies. If you share an individual's personal experience ensure confidentiality is protected. Seek to engage the class with your material and process. Presentations should be no more than 10 minutes (see rubric).

### 3) Mid-term **10 points**

3/15- 3/20

The mid-term exam will cover theoretical perspectives addressed in class and emphasize practical application. The closed book exam will be available on learning suite.

### 4) Lifespan analysis paper **20 points**

Due: 4/10

Select an adult to interview regarding their experiences across the lifespan. Family members or community members who are willing to share their experiences may be suitable choices. In your paper, analyze major life course events, interdependence, risk and protective factors, and key theoretical perspectives that contribute to understanding of the individual's life experience (see rubric).

### 5) Participation **10 points**

Due: 4/18

One absence does not involve a loss of points. Each absence beyond one constitutes a loss of two points. Missing 1-10 minutes of class three times constitutes one absence. Keep track of your points on the provided rubric and submit by the final day of class.

**6) Final Exam** **20 points**  
 April 20-25

The exam will be comprehensive, covering theoretical perspectives addressed in class and the text, and will emphasize practical application. The closed book exam can be taken on learning suite during finals week.

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Week 1			
W Jan 10	No class: SSWR		
Week 2			
W Jan 17	Introduction to theory and the person-in-environment approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce class &amp; build group norms</li> <li>• Define theory</li> <li>• Apply eco-systems framework</li> <li>• Know mechanisms of oppression</li> </ul>	Hutchison Chapter 1: A multidimensional approach to human behavior	
Week 3			
W Jan 24	Overview of 8 theoretical perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and apply each perspective</li> <li>• Recognize own biases</li> </ul>	Hutchison Chapter 2: Theoretical perspectives on human behavior (Systems, Conflict, Exchange & choice, Social constructionist, Psychodynamic, Developmental, Social behavioral, humanistic)	Personal application, Sign up for theoretical analysis presentation
Week 4			
W Jan 31	Biology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know interior health systems</li> <li>• Understand health disparities</li> <li>• Apply public health interventions: HIV prevention example</li> </ul>	Hutchison Chapter 3: The biological person (Nervous, Endocrine, Immune, Cardiovascular, Musculoskeletal, Reproductive systems)	Personal application, theoretical presentations
Week 5			
W Feb 7	Psychology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know major cognitive, moral, emotional, and relational theories</li> <li>• Understand concepts of stress and coping</li> <li>• Assess stress through person-in-environment classification</li> </ul>	Hutchison Chapter 4: The psychological person (Theories of cognition and emotion, stress)	Personal application, theoretical presentations
Week 6			
W Feb 14	Spirituality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know trends in religion and spirituality</li> <li>• Apply transpersonal concepts</li> <li>• Assess spirituality</li> </ul>	Hutchison Chapter 5: The spiritual person (Transpersonal theories)	Personal application, theoretical presentations
Week 7			

W Feb 21	<b>Culture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know cultural characteristics and processes</li> <li>• Understand physical environment theories and accessibility</li> <li>• Understand immigration trends: Refugee resettlement</li> </ul>	Hutchison Chapter 6: Culture and the physical environment	Personal application, theoretical presentations
Week 8			
W Feb 28	<b>Family</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine trends and definitions of family alongside values</li> <li>• Apply family perspectives to a case</li> <li>• Apply multi-media interventions: Intimate partner violence</li> </ul>	Hutchison Chapter 7: Families	Personal application, theoretical presentations
Week 9			
W Mar 7	<b>Groups</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know theories related to groups, organizations, and communities</li> <li>• Assess social capital and conflict</li> </ul>	Hutchison Chapter 8: Small groups, formal organizations, and communities	Personal application, theoretical presentations
Week 10			
W Mar 14	<b>Social structures and movements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know social institutions and understand major trends</li> <li>• Apply social movement perspectives</li> </ul>	Hutchison Chapter 9: Social structure, social institutions, and social movements: global and national	Personal application, theoretical presentations
Week 11			
W Mar 21	<b>Lifespan perspective</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know life course concepts and themes</li> <li>• Understand risk and protection</li> </ul>	Hutchison Chapter 10: The human life journey, a life course perspective	Mid-term exam (3/15-3/20), Personal application, theoretical presentations
Week 12			
W Mar 28	<b>Early development and childhood</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine values regarding conception</li> <li>• Assess physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and moral development</li> <li>• Understand parenting styles</li> <li>• Examine effects of risk factors</li> </ul>	Hutchison Chapter 11 & 12: Conception, pregnancy, childbirth, and infancy; Toddlerhood and early childhood	Personal application
Week 13			
W Apr 4	<b>Youth</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine perspectives on adolescence</li> <li>• Understand physical, cognitive, cultural, emotional, and social moral development</li> <li>• Understand diversity/sensitivity in assessing development</li> </ul>	Hutchison Chapter 13- 14: Middle childhood; Adolescence	Personal application
Week 14			
W Apr 11	<b>Adulthood</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under theoretical approaches to adulthood</li> <li>• Develop stage model</li> </ul>	Hutchison Chapter 15: Young & middle adulthood	Lifespan Analysis paper due 4/10, Personal application
Week 15			

W Apr 18	Later adulthood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know theoretical perspectives and grief models</li> <li>• Examine intervention approaches: complicated grief</li> <li>• Reflect on lifespan research</li> <li>• Wrap up class and exam preparation</li> </ul>	Hutchison Chapter 16: Late adulthood Final topics and review	Personal application, turn in personal application points and participation points
Week 16			
	Final exam: learning suite April 20-25		

The instructor reserves the right to revise the course at any time and for any reason.

## University Policies

### Honor Code

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation, and every instructor's expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

### Sexual Misconduct

As required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the university prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in its education programs or activities. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment-including sexual violence-committed by or against students, university employees, and visitors to campus. As outlined in university policy, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are considered forms of "Sexual Misconduct" prohibited by the university. University policy requires any university employee in a teaching, managerial, or supervisory role to report incidents of sexual misconduct that come to their attention through various forms including face-to-face conversation, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. If you encounter Sexual Misconduct, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at [t9coordinator@byu.edu](mailto:t9coordinator@byu.edu) or 801-422-2130 or Ethics Point at <https://titleix.byu.edu/report> or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours). Additional information about Title IX and resources available to you can be found at <http://titleix.byu.edu>.

### Student Disability

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (UAC), 2170 WSC or 422-2767. Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. The UAC can also assess students for learning, attention, and emotional concerns. Services are coordinated with the

student and instructor by the UAC. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures by contacting the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-285 ASB.

### **Academic Honesty**

The first injunction of the Honor Code is the call to "be honest." Students come to the university not only to improve their minds, gain knowledge, and develop skills that will assist them in their life's work, but also to build character. "President David O. McKay taught that character is the highest aim of education" (The Aims of a BYU Education, p.6). It is the purpose of the BYU Academic Honesty Policy to assist in fulfilling that aim. BYU students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct.