I. COURSE PURPOSE

This course is the first of two Foundation year courses on Human Behavior and the Social Environment. Providing a multidimensional approach, the course examines theory, research, and contemporary challenges that relate to the biopsychosocial-spiritual dimensions of human behavior. Focus is given to particular theories that are used by the social work profession to explain and assess functioning at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of interaction, with the recognition that theory evolves out of a historical and cultural context. Strength and resilience, all forms of diversity and oppression, and the impact of social and economic forces are emphasized as salient influences on human behavior. Required readings, class assignments, and group activities will be used as educational methods.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

At the completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the differences between a “perspective” and a “theory” and the connection between theory, research, and social work practice.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of the multidimensional approach of looking at human behavior through recognizing the complex interconnection of person, environment, and time.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of micro, mezzo, and macro theories used to explain, assess, and intervene at multiple levels of interaction and within a multicultural society.

4. Demonstrate knowledge of the complex and reciprocal interactions among individuals, dyads, families, small groups, organizations, social institutions, and communities.

5. Demonstrate how biological, psychological, socio-cultural, spiritual, and physical forces affect individual, family, group, organizational, and community functioning.

6. Demonstrate an understanding and critique of particular theories using a set of criteria.

7. Demonstrate knowledge of particular theorists and their contributions to theory construction within a socio-historical context.

8. Demonstrate knowledge of the values underlying human behavior theories and their consistence with social work values and principles.

9. Demonstrate knowledge of biases, omissions, and cultural limitations of individual theories.

10. Develop an understanding of cultural differences and similarities in the experiences, needs, and beliefs of people.

11. Demonstrate knowledge of stratification, oppression, and inequality as they relate to sociopolitical contexts and to theoretical perspectives.

12. Demonstrate mastery of reading material and an ability to think critically as evidenced in weekly class discussions and in scholarly writing.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts:


B. Required Readings:

   See course outline for additional required readings. All readings are posted on Blackboard, which is accessed using your CUA email user name and password.

C. Case Study:

Revised 1/04/13
The course will use an emerging Case Study that students will receive in “chapters” throughout the course. These will also be posted on Blackboard.

D. Course Assignments and Weights:

1. **Concept Tests (50% of Final Grade - 10% each Test):**
   There will be 5 Concept Tests designed to assess students’ understanding of the core concepts and principles of the five theoretical approaches presented in the course. There will be a class session following each of these presentations where students will have the opportunity to apply the theoretical concepts to a case and critique the theory. A short, objective test will be administered at the end of these application/critique class sessions as follows:
   - a. Concept Test 1 – Class #4 (on Class Sessions #3 & #4)
   - b. Concept Test 2 – Class #7 (on Class Sessions #5, #6, & #7)
   - c. Concept Test 3 – Class #9 (on Class Sessions #8 & #9)
   - d. Concept Test 4 – Class #11 (on Class Sessions #10 & #11)
   - e. Concept Test 5 – Class #13 (on Class Sessions #12 & #13)

2. **Scholarly Paper (40% of Final Grade - 20% each Part):**
   The scholarly paper assignment is designed to demonstrate students’ ability to integrate theory with knowledge about human behavior and the social environment and apply this knowledge to a case study. The paper will consist of two parts: Students will choose one micro theory for Part 1 (due Class Session #8) and one mezzo or one macro theory for Part 2 (due Class Session #14). Detailed instructions for this assignment will be distributed by the instructor. See end of syllabus for more information.

3. **Class Attendance & Participation (10% of Final Grade):**
   Class participation grade will be determined by the instructor’s perception of the student’s preparation for, and contribution to, class discussion, particularly during the group discussion and application times (See professional conduct grid below). Different students will make different kinds of contributions to class discussion. Some will have an easy time with spontaneous interactions, and others will be most comfortable making a planned statement about a key idea from the readings or other sources. Both types of contributions are valued. Unexcused absences will lower the participation grade. More than three unexcused absences will result in a grade of F for participation.

E. **Late Papers**
   In addition, assignments are to be submitted to the instructor on the date due. *Unless you have prior permission from the instructor, five points will be deducted for each day the assignment is submitted late. Extensions will not be granted the day an assignment is due.* If the paper is due at 9:00 am, a paper turned in at 5:00 pm that same day is still considered late. If you should need an extension, the
student must discuss this with the instructor at least 48 hours ahead of the due date (excluding weekends and/or holidays).

F. Course and Instructor Evaluation:

NCSSS requires electronic evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, the evaluation form may be accessed at the link below using your CUA username and password. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests. [http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations](http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations)

IV. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

A. Scholastic Expectations:

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. All written work should reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA format, and should be carefully proof read by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

B. Academic Honesty:

Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to University Policy and appropriate Program Handbooks.

C. Accommodations:

Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability. If you have documented such a disability to DSS that requires accommodations or an academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

D. Policies On The Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom:

**No laptops or other electronic devices are permitted in the classroom,** unless you have a specific documented learning disability. Please turn off all cell phones or other devices that would disrupt the learning environment of the classroom and put them away and removed from the classroom environment.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Class   Topics, Readings, and Assignments

1  Course Introduction: Overview of Human Behavior Theory

Overview of course
The purpose of social work
The multidimensionality of human behavior
The importance of viewing human behavior grounded in SW values and ethics and through the lens of diversity, social justice, and a global perspective
Scientific knowledge and critical thinking
The role of theory for generalist social work

Required Readings

2  Understanding and Utilizing Theories for Generalist Social Work Practice

Key terminology: assumptions, paradigms, perspectives, theories, models, interventions
General types of social science theory: explanatory (human behavior) and change (practice) theories
The relationship between theory, research, and practice
The “social construction” and critical analysis of theories: criteria for critiquing theory

Required Readings

3  Psychodynamic Theory I: Historical/Conceptual Underpinnings and Contemporary Development through Attachment and Relational Theories

Required Readings:
• Walsh, J. (2010). Psychodynamic theories II: Object relations theory. In Theories for direct social work practice (2nd ed.) (pp. 62-89). Belmont,
CA: Wadsworth.


**Recommended Readings:**

**4 Psychodynamic Theory II: Application and Critique of Psychodynamic Theories/Attachment and Relational Theories**

**Required Readings:**
- Emerging Case Study #1: “Juan, Maria & the Rodriguez Family”

*** 1st Concept Test

**5 Behavior Theory and Cognitive Theory I: Historical/Conceptual Underpinnings**

**Required Readings:**

**6 Behavior Theory and Cognitive Theory II: Contemporary Development through Cognitive Behavioral Practice Theory**

**Required Readings:**
7 Behaviorism and Cognitive Theory III: Application and Critique of Cognitive and Behavior Theories/Cognitive Behavior Practice Theory

Required Readings:
- Emerging Case Study #2: “Juan, Maria, & Blackwell High School”

*** 2nd Concept Test

8 General Systems Theory I: Conceptual/Historical Underpinnings and Contemporary Development through Family Emotional Systems and Structural Family Systems Theories

Required Readings

Recommended Readings

*** Scholarly Paper: Part 1 DUE


Required Readings:
- Emerging Case Study #3: “The Rodriguez Family & Langley Heights”

*** 3rd Concept Test
10 Organizational Theory I: Historical/Conceptual Underpinnings and Contemporary Development through Contingency Theory

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings

11 Organizational Theory II: Application and Critique of Organizational Theory/Contingency Theory

Required Readings:
- Emerging Case Study #4: “The Rodriguez Family & the La Rosa Family & Community Services Organization”

*** 4th Concept Test

12 Conflict/Critical Theory I: Historical/Conceptual Underpinnings and Contemporary Development through Empowerment Theory

Required Readings

Recommended Readings

13 Conflict/Critical Theory II: Application and Critique of Conflict/Critical Theory and Empowerment Theory

**Required Readings:**
- Emerging Case Study #5: “The Latino(a) Community & the United States”

***5th Concept Test***

14 Bringing it All Together: Use of Theory for Generalist Social Work Practice

**Required Readings:**
- Integrated Case Study (Previous 5 Case Study Readings): The Individual-in-Family-in-Community-in-Organizations-in-Society

***Scholarly Paper: Part 2 DUE***
Scholarly Paper Description

Objective: To have students apply a theory to explain a set of behaviors.

Description: The purpose of this course is to introduce students to different theories that are used to explain a particular phenomenon, either on a micro, mezzo or macro level. The concepts tests are designed to help students identify and define the concepts within the theories, and this paper is designed to help students practice applying the concepts to a case. There are two papers in this course, but the assignment is the same. For the first paper, students are required to use a micro theory and in the second paper the students are required to use a mezzo or macro theory. In both papers, the students are to introduce the theory, demonstrate their understanding of key concepts and then apply those concepts to a case. Scholarly and graduate-level writing should be used, with students submitting a paper with no writing errors, appropriately using APA formatting and using at least 3 references outside of assigned class readings. Below is a detailed description of the point distribution.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Criteria</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction: A brief opening paragraph about the focus and purpose of the paper. The introduction should give the reader a clear sense of what you are going to address. Be sure to identify the theory you will be discussing. (1/2 page)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Literature Review: Using the literature, discuss: a) the underlying assumptions and basic premises of the theory regarding the nature of human behavior; and b) identify the key concepts and propositions of the theory. (3 pages)</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Application: Apply key concepts and propositions from your selected theory to the attached case study. You must apply a minimum of three concepts/propositions that help explain the human behavior described in the case. Be sure to clearly define each concept, citing appropriately, and clarify how its application to the case is useful for understanding or assessing the case. (3 pages)</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critique: Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your selected theory as a lens for understanding the human behavior described in the case study using the 5 criteria for evaluating theory presented in your Hutchinson textbook. Be sure to provide a rationale for your conclusions. (1 to 1½ pages)</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Organization, clarity, and demonstration of graduate-level writing</td>
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<td>Appropriate number of sources were used – at least three beyond your textbook and required supplemental readings</td>
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<td>Correct grammar, spelling, and no writing errors</td>
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<td>Correct APA formatting using the 6th edition of APA Manual</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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