THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE  
Master Syllabus

SW 730 Human Behavior in the Social Environment

Semester, Year  
Instructor Name  
Phone #  
Office Hours

Prerequisite: Foundation level MSW student  
Credit Hours: 3

I. COURSE RATIONALE

Social work professionals need to understand human behavior at multiple social system levels, including individual, family, group, organization, community, national, and international. Therefore, this Human Behavior in the Social Environment course provides Masters’ students with basic concepts, theories, and empirical findings about human behavior in multiple system levels, taking into account biological, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects of human behavior and experience. In this way, it makes its distinctive contribution to a foundation for generalist professional perspective as preparation for advanced coursework in a specialized area. In keeping with the mission of the University of Kansas, School of Social Welfare, this course provides theoretical perspectives as relevant to an approach to social work practice that advances personal and collective strengths and resources, honors human diversity, promotes empowerment and justice, and reflects critical and creative thinking.

Theoretical perspectives on well-being, strengths, resiliency, empowerment, dysfunction, oppression, and developmental processes are analyzed critically, especially concerning applicability to social work practice that supports client strengths, appreciates diversity, and promotes social justice. The course includes examination of crises, transformational events, and expectable changes for individuals and social systems throughout individuals’ life spans and development of social systems.

The number and range of theories presented are limited so that they provide contrast while allowing sufficient depth of learning on each one. The instructor selects a range and number of theories such that micro, meso, and macro systems are addressed.

This course is complementary with and most closely related to the Practice and Practicum Foundation courses. It complements these courses with the theoretical understanding and analytical skills necessary for the formulation, monitoring, and evaluation of social work practice. Whereas this course presents theories at a relatively high level of abstraction as relevant to practice, the practice courses and practicum focus on applied level theories and conceptual frameworks in connection with skills and particular practice settings. The course assists the Social Policy Course by providing students with information and theoretical understanding about the fit between human behavior and the political conditions and meso and macro-environmental resources in our society. It supports the Research Course by providing theoretical, historical, and
empirical material derived from a wide range of qualitative and quantitative ways of inquiry. It promotes students' ability to engage in critical reflection about human behavior theory and research, including the ethical, philosophical, political, and scientific implications.

The rationale in individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

II. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES
By the conclusion of SW 730, Master students will demonstrate an ability to:

1. Analyze the transaction between individuals and their social and natural environment within a holistic framework.
2. Describe and analyze the complex interactions between biological, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects of human behavior and development.
3. Describe and analyze the harmful impacts of discrimination and oppression on people and their environments.
4. Understand the use of moral and cognitive theory in the process of ethical decision making.
5. Critically analyze theories of human behavior, attending to client strengths, social and economic justice, cultural competence, and critical reflection, as applied to social work practice in various settings.
6. Identify, describe and critically analyze selected theoretical perspectives that are relevant to human behavior in contemporary society.
7. Identify and critically analyze theories of human behavior for their utilization of strengths and resources that promote individual, collective, and global well-being as well as social and economic justice in accordance with social work values and ethics.
8. Identify and describe practice implications of human behavior theories for assessment and helping of people in various settings.
10. Develop an understanding of the evolving nature of human behavior theory and the need for career long advancement of theoretical knowledge.

The educational outcomes in individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

III. CURRICULUM THEMES
The four themes that are foundational to the total curriculum of the School of Social Welfare are integrated throughout a practice-centered approach to secure the students’ understanding of the concepts of empowerment and well-being. This course sets the foundation of theory for a generalist social work perspective as the basis for further advanced level coursework. Each selected theory is examined for its utility for practice at a variety of system levels, including work
with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and the global context. Each theory is critiqued regarding its consistency with social work values, purposes, and settings for practice. Practical implications of choosing and combining theories of human behavior within a holistic bio-psycho-social-spiritual conceptual framework for practice are discussed. The four themes of the School are defined as:

1. **Strengths perspective.** Theories are critiqued regarding the extent to which they are excessively problem and pathology focused. Theories selected for detailed presentation include significant attention to human strengths and resources and ways these can be mobilized in practice. For example, theories and empirical research about strengths, resilience, and creativity in individual and family development are presented. In addition, the dynamic processes of creative change, leadership, and conflict mediation in groups, organizations, and communities are examined. For example, patterns of group formation, development, and termination are analyzed.

2. **Diversity.** Understanding, valuing and engaging the broad range of differences and commonalities that are brought to the interaction between social workers, clients and the social environment and that are reflective of clients’ culture, ethnicity, race, geography, gender, age, religion, social class, sexual orientation, and physical and mental abilities, particularly when those differences are the cause for discrimination.

3. **Social Justice.** Theories are critiqued for the extent to which they perpetuate patterns of personal and collective oppression and discrimination. Theories that emphasize empowerment and social justice are selected for detailed presentation. For example, various standards for assessing individual and family well being and dysfunction are considered. This includes examining personal and environmental strengths and resources that facilitate creativity, adaptation, effective coping with distress and conflict, and empowerment.

4. **Critical Perspective.** Theories are compared and contrasted in terms of their advantages and limitations regarding empirical support; methodological, philosophical, and conceptual clarity; and relevance to the profession. Theories are also considered as alternative paradigms for understanding person and environment in order to support creative and innovative approaches to practice.

   Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

**IV. THE LIBERAL ARTS PERSPECTIVE**

Students in this course are expected to have a liberal arts background, especially in the behavioral, social, and biological sciences as well as history. In classroom discussion, students are encouraged to draw upon their liberal arts perspective as well as their life experience.

The course intends to open students and educators' minds to new ideas and possibilities for understanding human behavior. It challenges conventional thinking and contributes to personal and professional growth. It attempts to preserve and develop knowledge that liberates and to examine critically theories and practices that oppress or marginalize people.
Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

V. PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES AND VALUES
All theories and social work practices contain implicit or explicit values and goals for behavior. This course critically examines these inherent values and goals, and helps the student to reflect on their congruence with both personal commitments and professional ethics and values. Possible value conflicts and ethical dilemmas that may emerge in the application of theories and research findings to practice are discussed.

The four curricular themes and practice-focused mission of the school help to orient the examination of personal and professional value issues. For example, the strengths perspective highlights individual, family, and community qualities of resilience, creativity, self-determination, and empowerment. The political and value implications of human behavior theories and practice models are considered for their contribution to the relief of oppression and the promotion of social and economic justice. The variety of theories and practice models are subjected to critical reflection through comparison and analysis, including consideration of their congruence with professional mission, values, and ethics. Theories and practice approaches are examined for their applicability to diverse peoples. Finally, theories and concepts are examined for their relevance to social work practice in various settings in accordance with the school’s mission.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

VI. PREPARATION FOR PRACTICE WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS
Diversity of human behavior and experience in the context of the socio-cultural and natural environment is considered in all content areas of the course. This may include diversity issues relevant to gender, social class, ethnicity and culture, age, sexual orientation, family structure, religious and spiritual perspective, and physical or mental ability. For example, standards for understanding mental health and disorder vary widely in diverse cultural contexts. Gender is a significant factor affecting differences in developmental themes, communication patterns, values, and life experiences. A wide variety of family structures and developmental possibilities exist, such as single parent, nuclear, multigenerational, re-married, and gay and lesbian. Individual and family experiences are strongly influenced by the political context of discrimination and oppression. Standards for normality and well being vary widely in diverse cultural contexts. Values inherent in organizational cultures determine equity and justice issues, such as equal opportunity employment, accessibility to people with disabilities, and participatory versus authoritarian decision-making. Further, experiences of people in groups, organizations, and communities are strongly influenced by the political context of discrimination and oppression, such as institutional racism and environmental racism. Therefore, perspectives on empowering people and furthering social justice through social group work, social welfare administration, community organizing and development, and international peace efforts are examined.

The course addresses theoretical understanding of constraints and challenges imposed by societal discrimination and oppression. Such issues include racist, sexist, and other oppressive behaviors
as well as effective strategies for empowering people and working toward social and economic justice. However, the negative aspects of discrimination and oppression are not considered alone. Diversity is considered a positive personal and collective resource in a multicultural society and world. Similarly, discussion of dysfunctional behavior and psychopathology need to consider the types of stress and oppression encountered by various populations and the differing concepts of dysfunction, creativity, and well being in different cultures and social groups.

**Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.**

**VII. TOPICS**

**Required Topics**

1. Systems Theory
2. Critique of systems theory and attention to power dynamics, e.g.
   a. Feminist Theory
   b. Conflict Theory
   c. Identity Development and Cultural theories (race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, etc.)
3. Empowerment Theories, e.g.
   a. Resiliency
   b. Feminist Theory
   c. Strengths
4. Psychodynamic Theory, e.g.
   a. Object Relations and Attachment theory
   b. Basic structure of psychoanalytic theory with emphasis on the use of the unconscious, defense mechanisms, and transference
5. Life Span Development, e.g.
   a. Psychosocial Theory – Erikson
   b. Moral Development – Kohlberg/Gilligan
   c. Cognitive Development – Piaget
   d. Spiritual Development – Fowler
6. Behaviorism and Social Learning Theory
7. Family Life Cycle, e.g.
   a. Symbolic Interactionism
   b. Structural Functionalism

**Additional Topics**

Additional topics such as transpersonal theory and social constructivism may be included at the discretion and interest of the instructor.

**Individual instructors’ syllabi should provide a topical outline for the course and provide adequate information to determine where and when the required topics are being covered.**
VIII. RECOMMENDED READINGS

**Recommended Textbooks (use most current edition)**


A set of recommended articles is available on the SSW’s S Drive for instructor use. In addition individual syllabi need to specify which readings are required and which are recommended.

IX. RECOMMENDED AND REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are designed to (1) provide a broad look at theoretical perspectives that provide the groundwork for a generalist social work perspective, (2) develop a critical perspective on these theoretical perspectives, including issues related to social work values and ethics, social and economic justice, and diversity, and (3) provide students with the knowledge conduct a bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment of client systems.

**Required Assignment**

Do not include this language in the course syllabus:

For this course, one assignment is required and serves as a signature assignment which attempts to measure student attainment of EPAS competencies and practice behaviors established for the course. This assignment (included as Attachment One) must be used exactly as outlined. Instructors must evaluate each student on this assignment using the scoring guide that is included with the assignment. However, do not include the scoring guide in the syllabus. This evaluation is not shared with the student, as it is gathered only for the purposes of evaluating program data and is aggregated with other student’s data—no scores on the embedded measures will be shared with anyone other than those working on the outcome data. Instead, instructors provide the student with feedback as you would on any other assignment. They must also provide this confidential data for each student enrolled in the class to the MSW Program Director by the end of the semester. A form to submit this information will be given to each SW 730 instructor. The remaining assignments are suggested assignments; these are “grouped” and the instructor should select and adapt these suggested assignments so that they cover all of the learning objectives for the course.

**Suggested Assignments**
#1 ASSIGNMENT – Two Options (Reflects course objectives, 2, 6)

**Options 1:** Write a 7-8 page paper specifically describing your personal views on human behavior. Base this assignment on your work with people, your personal family experiences, and/or background. Describe and critically analyze your observations/thoughts about the following questions:

A. What variables impact human behavior?

B. What are your assumptions about the nature of people in general?

C. How do you make a differentiation between “normal/appropriate” and “abnormal/inappropriate” behavior?

D. How might cultural identity (being a male vs. female, being white vs. a person of color being poor vs. wealthy, being able-bodied vs. disabled, being mentally ill vs. not being mentally ill etc.) impact one’s behavior?

E. What are your thoughts about the discrimination and oppression that certain populations have experienced? How might these experiences impact individuals?

F. What specific factors are critical for healthy human development?

G. How might your personal views (listed above) influence your work with clients?”

H. How consistent are social work values and ethics with your views?

**Option 2:** All students are expected to write a 4-5 page (typewritten and doubled spaced) paper describing your cultural heritage and analyze how these factors influence your “world view.” According to Saleebey (2001, p. 42)¹ “(c)ulture depends on shared meanings of all kinds. They may come in the form of values, ideologies, beliefs, myths, and rituals… It is our participation in culture that gives us the symbolic resources and tools (language, story, etc.) and direction for developing meaning.”

Select one “truth” that you hold related to human behavior

1. Start your paper by stating this “truth” (i.e., Marriage should only be between one man and one woman; Early childhood deprivation causes psychological problems that are impossible to repair; Older adults withdraw from participation in society as part of the aging process).

2. Analyze where this “truth” came from based on your own culture. Elements for analysis may come from your beliefs (i.e., about gender roles, the causes of poverty or mental illness), your values (i.e., how we treat other), rituals (i.e., around such events as naming, marriage or death), or ideologies (i.e., religious or political). Where did you learn that this was a “truth” about human behavior?

3. Find two articles in refereed social work journals that relate to your “truth” and briefly summarize the articles (please attach a copy of the articles with your paper). points

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4. Discuss how these articles support, refute or modify your “truth.”
5. How consistent are social work values with your views

#2 ASSIGNMENT  (Reflects course objectives 1, 2, 5, 6)

Two Options

Option 1: Human Life Cycle Observation & Presentation
In groups of 3-4 students select one of the options below for an observation experience and class presentation/discussion for about 40-50 minutes. Each option can only be selected once by a group. Each group must observe the same people at the same time. This group observation should be at least 30 minutes. After your group observation each member must prepare an oral presentation with a one page typed outline indicating the key themes of your observational experience. Individually address all 6 of the observation points listed below in your outline and oral presentation, Please make at least 22 copies of your outline for your classmates and the instructor. As a group compare and contrast the similarities, differences, and various perceptions of the observation across the group. During your group presentation/discussion please be prepared to share these similarities, differences, and impressions with the class in a very clear and concise group manner.

Observation Stance and Role
Please attempt to observe your life cycle population as a “clean slate” and from a very “sensory” mode rather than primarily cognitive—judgmental stance. In order to be more sensory you will need to observe beyond your sight----connect to sound, tone, pace, and feeling as well. You are still a part of the environment. Therefore, assume a “participant-observer “role, which means to be a natural human in the environment, but also very focused on sensory observation---not interaction or talking unless it is absolutely necessary. Please refrain from talking to your group members during the observation. Think about getting quiet, slowing down, sensing, and becoming mindful of those details that might typically be unacknowledged, ignored, or overlooked.

Six Observation Points to Address in Individual Outline and Oral Group Presentation

A. Clearly and specifically describe what you observed (life cycle population, environment, tone, pace, appearance, minor details, behavior, including verbal and non-verbal communication of your life cycle population)

B. Reflect upon your personal perceptions of this observational experience (How did you feel about it? How did you perceive this experience?)

C. Analyze this observation and apply one of the theories of life span development, cognitive-moral development, and/or other human behavior theory. Consider the developmental needs, tasks, challenges, struggles, & mastery issues of your selected life cycle. Please include the impact of biology & the environment on development.

D. Specifically state what you have learned about your selected life cycle during your observational experience
E. Reflect upon how your observations and insights might help you have a greater understanding of human behavior

F. Integrate relevant research literature to support observations about this life cycle population

G. As a group address the similarities and differences in perception across the group

**Group Observations (Each group will select one of the following):**

1. Observe one or multiple infants/young children (ages 1-4) in a natural environment (home, daycare, playground, video arcade, school cafeteria, mall, public lobby, etc.) where adults are not or only minimally directing them. DO NOT OBSERVE YOUR OWN CHILD(REN) AND KEEP YOUR INTERACTION WITH THE CHILD(REN) TO A MINIMUM. (Your role is to observe and analyze, not interact).

2. Observe one or multiple older children (ages 5-12) in a natural environment (home, daycare, playground, video arcade, school cafeteria, mall, public lobby, park, etc.) where adults are not or only minimally directing them. DO NOT OBSERVE YOUR OWN CHILD(REN) AND KEEP YOUR INTERACTION WITH THE CHILD(REN) TO A MINIMUM. (Your role is to observe and analyze, not interact).

3. Observe one or multiple adolescents in a natural environment (school, video arcade, school cafeteria, mall, group/club, public lobby, park, etc.) where adults are not or only minimally directing them. DO NOT OBSERVE YOUR OWN CHILD(REN) AND KEEP YOUR INTERACTION WITH THE ADOLESCENT TO A MINIMUM. (Your role is to observe and analyze, not interact).

4. Observe one or multiple young adults (age: 20s-39) in a natural environment (school, church, mall, group/club, public lobby, park, etc.). (Your role is to observe and analyze, not interact).

5. Observe one or multiple middle-aged adult(s) (ages of 40-59) in a natural environment (public place, park, lobby). DO NOT OBSERVE YOUR OWN PARENT(S) OR RELATIVE(S) AND KEEP YOUR OWN INTERACTION WITH THE PERSON(S) TO A MINIMUM.

6. Observe one or multiple elder adults (over age 60) in a natural environment (grocery store, restaurant, lobby of assisted living facility, senior citizens organization). DO NOT OBSERVE YOUR OWN PARENT(S) OR RELATIVE(S) AND KEEP YOUR OWN INTERACTION WITH THE ELDER(S) TO A MINIMUM.

**Option 2:** Apply two theories covered in class to a personal experience. Use the following outline. Please note that essay must use two different theories from those chosen used previously. Note: The total text length for this paper must not exceed 6 pages.

A. Introduction (1 page)
   Describe a personal experience. Briefly summarize the details of the experience including the implications the event has had for you personally, how it has affected those around you and your environment. Describe your reactions to the experience.
B. Comparative analysis of the event (3 pages)
Pick two theories of individual and/or family behavior from the course. Choose three or more theoretical concepts to describe how each theory would (1) explain why the personal experience occurred and why you and others reacted as you did; (2) predict consequences for yourself and others; (3) describe actions you took in response to the situation and alternative actions you might have taken.

C. Preference (1 page)
Explain your preference for one of these theories or a combination in relation to your personal experience.

#3 Assignment: (Reflects course objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
Three Options

Option 1: This essay requires students to apply two theories covered in class to a contemporary social welfare related event, i.e. school violence, poverty, racism, family disruption due to illness or divorce, violence against women, discrimination against gays and lesbians. This paper will determine ___% of your grade and should be typed, double spaced and when appropriate use APA citations. The social welfare event should be identified from a popular media source (e.g., newspaper, news magazine, internet). One to two pages from the article should be attached with the essay. Use the following outline:

A. State your topic (the social welfare issue or event) with reference to the attached article. 
Description of the event (1 page)
Briefly summarize the details of the event, including social welfare and social justice implications for individuals and/or families. Describe the situation and people’s reactions to it.

B. Comparative analysis of the event (3 pages)
Pick two theories of individual and/or family behavior from the course. Choose three or more theoretical concepts to describe how each theory would (1) explain why the event occurred and why people reacted as they did; (2) predict what will be the consequences for individuals and/or families; (3) describe actions a social worker might take to respond to the situation.

C. Preference (1/2 page)
Explain your preference for one of these theories or a combination, in relation to this event.

Note: The total text length must not exceed 6 pages. Grading criteria includes the following: (1) appropriate use of grammar and sentence structure including the use of APA standards; (2) ability to describe the experience/social event from a person-in-environment perspective; (3) ability to summarize each theory; and, (4) ability to apply each theory to the experience/social event.

Option 2: According to Saleebey (2001, p 174) “A theory, then, is a set of interconnected
propositions, usually abstract – a systematic formulation that seems to account for the relationship between recognized specific social uniformities (empirical generalizations or clusters of facts).” Einstein once said (source unknown) something like “that theory determines the data you collect.” In other words, theory is used to both understand a situation and to predict the occurrence of an event.

The purpose of this assignment is to help students develop an understanding of how theory is applied to a contemporary social welfare related event (i.e., school violence, poverty, racism, family disruption due to illness or divorce, violence against women, discrimination against gays and lesbians). The social welfare event should be identified from a popular media source (e.g., newspaper, news magazine, and internet). A copy of the article should be submitted with the paper. Select a theory of interest to you that focuses on micro-level understanding of human behavior and write a 8-10 page paper in which you discuss how you would analyze the selected event – both how you would understand the problem as well as approaches to prevention.

1. Statement of topic: In no more than one brief paragraph state the social welfare issue or event you will be analyzing, and briefly summarize the aspect of the event that you will be using for your analysis. (No more than brief paragraph)

2. Introduction: Briefly describe the theory you have selected and specify the important theoretical constructs that you will be using in your analysis. (2-3 pages)

3. Analysis 1: Using the theoretical constructs described in the introduction analyze how you would understand the client’s situation. (2-3 pages)

4. Analysis 2: Using the theoretical constructs described in the introduction analyze how you would prevent this problem from happening to future clients. (2-3 pages)

5. Critique: Using the material presented in class what is missing from the theoretical perspective you selected and what other perspectives would you want to include in your analysis. What would these perspectives add? (2-3 pages)

In addition to the information provided in class readings and lecture, a minimum of five additional scholarly resources should be used in completing this assignment (specifically in the analysis of the event). ____ points are assigned for evaluation of the style and organization of the paper.

Option 3: Analyzing a Human Behavior Problem
Considering the theories presented in this course, write a 10-12 page paper. Specifically, address the following points and questions:

1) Select and identify a specific problematic micro or macro human behavior of interest (i.e. school violence, child abuse prejudice, sexism, poverty, hording, aggressiveness, poverty, suicide, homicide, alcoholism, homophobia, eating disorders, etc.)

2) Explore the research literature on your topic to discover what how researchers view your selected social problem from a human behavior standpoint and its causes.
3) Describe how 2 different human behavior theories covered in this course would explain this specific problem and how change might occur if applicable

4) What specific human behavior aspects do these theories emphasize (biological, psychological, social, and/or spiritual)

5) Compare and contrast the perspectives of each theory

6) What are the strengths and limitations, or downsides of using these theories? Which biases might you “inherit” by using them? How consistent are these theories with social work values and ethics?

7) Have any of your views about human behavior shifted or expanded since the beginning of the semester? If so, how have they changed?

8) What did you learn about human behavior from reviewing these theories?

#4 Assignment (Reflects course objectives 1, 2, 4, 6, 7)

Three Options:

Option 1: RESEARCH PAPER

The library research paper is an opportunity for the student to explore a topic related to the course in more depth. The student can choose any theory or theoretical issue related to individual and family behavior. This theory must be connected to the student’s interest in social work practice. The basic ideas of the theory should be presented in relation to a chosen practice interest. (One way to write about a theory is to briefly summarize it and discuss key concepts in the theory. Then, use the key concepts you find most applicable to your practice area and apply them to what you might do as a social worker in working with your client.)

Examples of chosen practice interests include:

1) Life span theory in working with teenagers who are dealing with coming out as a gay or lesbian person;

2) Family resilience or symbolic interaction theory to explore social work practice with families facing divorce or an ill or disabled family member;

3) Behavioral, moral or cognitive development theory to explore how to work with teens involved in school violence or aggressive behavior;

4) Strengths-based case management (based on empowerment theory) to work with adults dealing with a mental illness such as depression, bipolar disorder, or traumatic events; and

5) Transpersonal theory to work with caregivers providing care for a frail elder or a dying person.

The theory should be critiqued from the standpoint of its usefulness for application to the chosen practice interest. Use criteria given in class for evaluating theories, i.e., theory analysis papers. Be certain to include at least three components of the theory analysis papers in your critique. The student should consider the congruence between the theory and the student’s own values and professional commitments, i.e., discuss at least three social work values from the NASW code of ethics. The paper must be typed, double-spaced with APA style citations. In addition to relevant
course readings and the text, at least ten other SOCIAL WORK scholarly articles or book chapters must be used. References found in the Social Work Abstracts database are appropriate. Note that you will need to obtain articles from the library, request through interlibrary loan or obtain from on-line sources.

The following outline for the research paper must be used. The page numbers are approximate.

A. Introduction (1/2 page)
State your practice interest and the theory chosen to connect with it.

B. Overview of the Theory in Relation to the Practice Interest (5/6 pages)
Give a detailed description of the theory and its concepts as relevant to the practice interest. For example, if the topic is strengths-based case management for persons with chronic mental illness, one could explore how principles of empowerment theory can be applied to help clients gain self-confidence, a critical consciousness, and take effective action in coping with their illness.

C. Critique of the Theory (2-3 pages)
Adapt the criteria for theory evaluation (at least three components from theory analysis papers) given in class to your own topic. Include any scholarly evaluations of the theory in relation to the practice interest. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using this theory for your practice interest.

D. Personal Reflections (1-2 pages)
Briefly discuss your own values and professional commitments and how this theory relates with them (Refer to the Social Work Code of Ethics, which is online at the NASW website, and the introduction to Robbins et al for a discussion of social work values. Be sure to discuss at least three values). Is this theory congruent with your values? Why or why not? Are your personal values consistent with professional values and insights from this theory? Specify the implications for your personal and professional growth and the actions you will take to support this growth.

Option 2: Analyzing Human Behavior and Development
A. All students should select this option unless you are not in direct/ongoing practice w/ clients
Select a client from your practicum experience to complete a biopsychosocial-spiritual assessment that analyzes behaviors, struggles and growth/development. Also, apply human behavior theories to assist in understanding the client system’s issues, needs, struggles, and development.

For this option please apply two different theoretical approaches learned in this course to understand and analyze the client’s behavior and development. Please include relevant human behavior research literature. This paper should be 10-12 pages (see below for the format)
B. This option is only open to students who do not have practicum placements or other direct practice opportunities

Watch one of the following movies “The Color Purple,” or “Boys Don’t Cry,” “Million Dollar Baby,” “The Shawshank Redemption,” “Antwone Fisher,” “Seabiscuit” “Good Will Hunting,” “Born on the 4th of July,” “Philadelphia,” Something about Amelia,” “Rudy,” Ordinary People,” The Burning Bed,” “Call Me Anna,” Message in a Bottle,” or “One Flew Over the Coo Coo’s Nest.” and write a 8-12 page paper in which you complete a clear and concise biopsychosocial assessment that analyzes behaviors, struggles and growth/development. Use 2 different theoretical approaches learned in this course to understand and analyze one of the movie’s central character’s behavior and biopsychosocial-spiritual development. Please include at least 3 relevant citations from the literature. (see below for the format)

Regardless of the option you choose for this assignment, the purpose is for you to demonstrate your understanding and ability to apply traditional theories in the assessment of an individual client system or character.

The term biopsychosocial-spiritual assessment is another way of stating that a comprehensive assessment includes multiple perspectives that are brought together in order to fully understand the client and the context in which he/she is living.

- The biological includes the important physical factors that must be taken into consideration in understanding the client. For example, an adolescent boy who is very small for his age may be the target of harassment; the person who was in a car accident that results in him/her being a quadriplegic; the alcoholic client who has a genetic predisposition to alcohol as you look at their family history; or the parents who are struggling with the fact that their child died of a disease that was passed on genetically. (Clearly the biological aspect of assessment is an area that we have spent less time discussing and is not integral to the material presented in the book. Therefore, the biological aspect of the "focal system" needs to be addressed, but at a much more superficial level than will be expected in the following two sections.)

- The psychological includes the intra-personal functioning of the individual and draws heavily on the theories of individual development as discussed in class and readings. The impact of the family on intra-personal development should also be considered here, as well as the roles that the individual plays within the family.

- The social includes the context in which the individual is embedded, including how this context responds to the characteristics of the individual and the supports and resources provided. This would include family as the context for daily living, along with the demands placed on the individual by the environment.

- The spiritual includes our highest aspirations and potentials as human beings. How we express our need for love, meaning, creativity, community, higher power, religion, and the universe. Finally, the task is to put these all together and to think about how you can use the
material studied in this course to better understand the character in the movie or the client with whom you have been working. This includes understanding not only the problems they are confronting, but also the resources they have to cope with these demands.

For this assignment please use the following format:

A. Introduction: describe the character or client that you selected and specifically describe the character’s or client’s significant identifying factors (age, race/culture, gender, family experience, and other personal background information)

B. Describe the character/client’s significant biopsychosocial issues, milestones, life cycle issues, strengths, life experiences, struggles, experiences of oppression, cultural issues, and developmental issues.

C. Describe each of the theoretical approaches selected. Include key concepts and why you selected these theories.

D. Critically analyze how the character’s/client’s strengths, struggles, issue, and/or growth/developmental issues would be viewed and explained through each of the selected theoretical perspectives. Clearly describe how these theoretical perspectives are similar or different.

E. Integrate relevant citations from the human behavior research literature

G. Specifically describe what you have learned about human behavior from this analysis

NOTE: A few students may be able to present this assignment orally during class #14 or #15. Let the instructor know if you are interested in this option. This will require a formal powerpoint presentation with a written outline of the major themes as a class handout (make __ copies) and discussion of the same points as listed above.

Option 3  This option is similar to Option 2, with the student using either a client or a character from a book/movie as the basis for a bio-psycho-social-spiritual analysis.

A. Write a 13-15 page paper (typewritten and double-spaced) including the following:
   • Select an individual that you are working with in practicum, your job, or who you know well and write a brief description of the individual and the context of services where the individual is seeking services (1 page).
   • Describe a specific event in this person's life and the person’s response to this event, or a characteristic of this person that will be used as the basis of the analysis. For example, a child who is unable to attend in class, an adolescent who is chronically absent, a person diagnosed as SPMI who wants to maintain steady employment, a woman who has sought services in a shelter and then returns to her abuser, an elderly person who is severely depressed, a family who is at risk for having their children removed, etc. In other words, what is the “presenting problem?” (1-2 pages)
   • Complete a Biopsychosocial assessment on the person, gathering information in each of the person’s life domains. (2-4 pages)
• Select one of the traditional/dominant theories discussed in class and analyze the person's response to the event or the development of the characteristic. Be specific about the concepts in the theory that are being used for the analysis. What are the implications of this analysis for developing an intervention strategy? (5-6 pages)

• Critique your analysis using information discussed in the class, as well as information discussed in the text and additional readings. What other theories are needed in order to understand this person? Be specific about the other theories you are using and the concepts you would apply. What are the implications for developing an intervention strategy when your analysis is broadened beyond the individual? (5-6 pages)

In addition to the information provided in class readings and lecture, at least 7 scholarly resources (articles, books or book chapters) will be used in completing this assignment. (See attached guidelines for further clarification of this assignment). ___ points will be assigned for style and organization of the paper.

B. Write a 13-15 page paper (typewritten and double-spaced) including the following:

Select one of the characters in the book/movie and describe the context in which they are living (1 page).

• Describe a specific event in this character’s life and the character’s response to this event, or a characteristic of this character that will be used as the basis of the analysis. For example, Celia who is abused by her husband, the adolescent who is struggling to find their identity, the African American child who compares herself to the white majority, etc. In other words, what is the “presenting issue?” (1-2 pages)

• Complete a Biopsychosocial assessment on the person, detailing information about the character in each of the life domains. (2-4 pages)

• Select one of the traditional/dominant theories discussed in class and analyze the character's response to the event or the development of the characteristic. Be specific about the concepts in the theory that are being used for the analysis. What are the implications of this analysis for developing an intervention strategy? (5-6 pages)

• Critique your analysis using information discussed in the class, as well as information discussed in the text and additional readings. What other theories are needed in order to understand this person? Be specific about the other theories you are using and the concepts you would apply. What are the implications for developing an intervention strategy when your analysis is broadened beyond the individual? (5-6 pages;)

In addition to the information provided in class readings and lecture, at least 7 scholarly resources (articles, books or book chapters) will be used in completing this assignment. (See attached guidelines for further clarification of this assignment). ___ points will be assigned for style and organization of the paper.

#5 Assignment: Review Sheets
Every student is expected to complete a review sheet on 10 of the theories we will be discussing throughout the semester. The theories are listed on the topical outline and
reading list. If more than one theory is listed on any given topic, one theory should be selected for review.

Review Sheets includes the following ten elements:
1. Summary:
2. Key concepts:
3. To what extent does the theory account for biological, psychological and spiritual factors (person focus)?
4. To what extent does the theory account for social, cultural and economic forces (environment focus)?
5. What is the theory’s relevance and application to individuals, families, groups, organizations, institutions and communities (system relevance)?
6. How consistent is the theory with social work values and ethics?
7. What are the theory’s assumptions or philosophical underpinnings?
8. What are the methodological issues and evidence for empirical support?
9. Do you think this theory would be useful in your social work practice? Why or why not?
10. What would the social worker and client’s role be? What kind of relationship would the social worker have with the client?

Timeliness
Late papers without a notice will be reduced 20% of the total score for each day late. Late papers, with explicit permission of the instructor, will be reduced 5% of the total score for each day late. If a paper will be late for an emergency, the student must notify the instructor in advance, or as soon as possible, to make an arrangement.

Suggestion for Return of Written Assignments at End of Semester
In order to have the last writing assignments returned by mail, the student must supply a correct size, self-adhesive, self-addressed, stamped envelope. The student must be listed as both sender and receiver.

Suggested Statement About Self-Disclosure and Confidentiality
Personal self-disclosure of the student in class and written assignments is voluntary, except for reflections of personal and professional growth as relevant to course assignments. The student needs to clarify one's own comfort level and sense of privacy regarding self-disclosure. At no time should the confidentiality of clients be violated in class or in written assignments.

For individual syllabus, remove the word “RECOMMENDED.” Assignments on individual syllabus should be selected to cover the course outcome objectives

X. GRADING
A. What Grades Mean (plus and minuses are assigned at instructors’ discretion)
A = Exceptional work: outstanding: this grade will be assigned to work that shows extensive use of the literature as well as wide use of concrete examples from practice.

B = Fully meets graduate standards: this grade will be assigned to work in which all aspects of assignments are completed satisfactorily, showing a combination of accurate use of theory and principles, and precise descriptions of practice.

C = Overall performance is unsatisfactory, below graduate standards, although all aspects of assignments were completed.

F = Failure: overall quality of work is unsatisfactory, or some aspect of assignments not done.

Incomplete grades. A temporary grade of Incomplete may be assigned to a student who, for a reason beyond the student’s control, has been unable to complete the required work in a course on time. It is the student’s responsibility to request an Incomplete from the instructor. A request signed by the student and the faculty member must be on file when grades are submitted. A student may not enroll in a course sequential to one in which he or she has an I or F letter grade. An incomplete not removed by the end of the next semester will be changed to an F.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance will affect grades in this course. (Instructors: Be specific about how many points will be deducted from student grades for missing class, tardiness, leaving early, etc.) Any student missing more than two classes, or more than one blended class, will need to contact the instructor to discuss implications regardless of the circumstances that led to these absences. Students who miss more than three classes, or more than two blended classes, may be assigned a failing grade in this course. If this rare circumstance should occur, the instructor will consult with the MSW Program Director regarding failing the student on the basis of excessive absences. The decision of the instructor in consultation with the MSW Program Director shall be final.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should specify the following:

A. The weighting of each assignment in the course and the dates by which they are done.

B. For every assignment, explain the standards used for grading.

C. If class participation is part of the grade indicate what this means. For example, if 10 points are awarded for class participation, one point will be deducted for every class missed.

D. Indicate the policy on late assignments, e.g., they are not accepted and treated as an “F” grade or the grade is reduced by ___ for each day, week, etc.

E. Indicate how final grades will be determined

XI. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS
a. Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him/her from satisfactorily completing course requirements should contact the KU’s Academic Achievement and Access Center (AAAC) as soon as possible in order to begin the process of determining reasonable and appropriate accommodations. This process must be initiated by the student. University regulations do not require that accommodations be offered retroactively, so it is important that students begin this process as early as possible. Information on how to contact AAAC can be found at http://www.disability.ku.edu/~disability/students/guidelines.shtml

b. Please notify the instructor in advance if your religious observances conflict with class or due dates for class assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements, including alternative assignments to cover missed classroom content if necessary.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

XII. RECORDING AND SHARING RECORDINGS OF LECTURES

Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the instructor are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. On request, the instructor will usually grant permission for students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

XIII. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY CONSIDERATIONS

The NASW Code of Ethics requires that social workers protect client confidentiality and privacy. Various state and federal regulations, including the HIPPA Privacy Rule, may also protect the confidentiality of client information in settings where social work students are engaged in practicum placements. In order to safeguard these client rights:

- Always disguise the name and other personal identifying information when you speak or write about a client.
- If writing in great detail about a client, ask permission from that client.
- Share nothing discussed in class about specific clients, agencies, or other students outside of this classroom.
- Any information shared with the instructor will be confidential, within the limits defined by the NASW Code of Ethics and relevant legal guidelines.
- Information regarding your performance or behavior as a student is protected by the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act. However, student information can be shared between
KU faculty, staff, administration, or field instructors when there is a compelling educational or safety reason to do so.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

XIV. INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY
Provide students with information on how to see and/or reach you.

XV. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY
In the event of inclement weather students should call to determine if classes have been cancelled. In Lawrence you may contact the University at (785) 864-SNOW, or if hearing impaired and have TTY/TDD equipment, at (800) 766-3777. For the Edwards Campus you may call (913) 897-8499, and for the KCKCC Campus the number is (913) 334-1100. Classes will be held if classes have not been cancelled, and students should contact the instructor if weather or driving conditions make it impossible for them to get to class.

XVI. EPAS COMPETENCY TABLE
A table must be included in the class syllabus which links EPAS Competencies, practice behaviors, and course educational outcomes with their coverage in specific sessions and in specific assignments. The table is included as the final Appendix of this document. Instructors must customize the columns which focus on the location of content and relevant assignments to their own syllabi. However the content of the first three columns and the signature assignments must be included in the table as stated in this document.
Attachment One:

Embedded Measure for EPAS Competency 2.1.7: Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

Purpose: This assignment is intended to help you apply conceptual knowledge in practice as a professional, master’s level social worker. This assignment is an opportunity for you to explore selected theories in more depth and to consider application of theory to guide assessment, intervention, and evaluation, as well as its ability to consider both person and environment. There are two options to fulfill this assignment.

Option 1

Instructions: Option 1. Critical Comparison of Theories for Practice. This research paper gives students an opportunity to explore a topic of personal and professional interest in depth by comparing and contrasting theoretical perspectives on the topic in relation to social work practice. The student identifies a topic of interest and then applies 2 contrasting theories to understanding of the topic. The theories used must be relevant to course content but do not need to be theories covered in class. All papers must critically reflect on theories and identify their relevance to social work practice. The design of the paper follows the instructor’s rubric, and is included below.

Sample topics might include: Broad Theoretical Comparison: e.g. Erikson's ego psychosocial development theory compared with Wilber's integral spectrum model in order to support positive preparation for dying in hospice or palliative care practice. Theoretical Concept Comparison: e.g. Marxian dialectical conflict compared with dynamic systems/deep ecological homeokinesis and mutual benefit in order to address environmental racism through community action. Practice Approach Comparison: Narrative social constructionist therapy compared with Bowen Family Systems therapy in working with intrafamilial violence. Practice Population Focused Comparison: Jungian archetypal theory compared with Indigenous medicine wheel teachings applied to practice with Indigenous peoples.

All relevant required readings and course materials must be utilized, including guidelines for theory comparison and critique. Beyond these, at least 12 scholarly sources total must be used, including any combination of refereed articles, books, and separately authored book chapters (e.g. chapters within an edited collection). These additional readings must include at least 4 social work sources (i.e. written by a social work affiliated scholar or appearing in a social work journal) and at least one original writing by a leading theorist for each of the 2 theories used (e.g. if discussing Piaget’s theory, read Piaget). Allow enough time to identify these readings, obtain them through the library or interlibrary loan, and read them thoroughly.

For this paper: (1) APA style must be used correctly, (2) All required relevant course readings and materials must be used, (3) At least 12 scholarly sources used (beyond course materials), (4) You must include at least 4 social work sources, (5) You must include at least 2 original writings by leading theorist. The paper must be clear, well organized, and should be 13-15 pages plus references and attachments.
Consistent with the grading rubric for this paper, format as follows:

A. Introduction (1 page): 8 points

- Statement of the topic, rationale, and plan for the paper
  (including 2 theories chosen)

B. Theoretical Perspective 1 (4-5 pages): 30 points

- Presentation of major ideas relevant to topic (10 pts)
- Social work practice implications regarding your topic (10 pts)
- Strengths of the theory (5 pts)*
- Weaknesses of the theory (5 pts)*

C. Theoretical Perspective 2 (4-5 pages): 30 points

- Presentation of major ideas relevant to topic (10 pts)
- Social work practice implications regarding your topic (10 pts)
- Strengths of the theory (5 pts)*
- Weaknesses of the theory (5 pts)*

D. Similarities and Differences between the theories (2 pages): 15 points

- Compare their similarities and differences regarding
  - approaches to practice (5 pts)
  - relative strengths (5 pts)
  - and weaknesses (5 pts)

E. Preference (1-2 pages): 8 points

Explanation of preference (either or integration) based on scholarly support.

*When you evaluate the theories, use at least one each of formal, empirical, and professional related criteria for each theory, as explained early in the course

**Option 2**

Instructions: Option 2. In-Depth Exploration of One Theory for Practice. This option is an opportunity for you to explore a topic and single theory related to the course in more depth. The structure is similar to the theory critique essays for online sessions, but it is much more in-depth and must be supported by scholarly literature. The student can choose any theory or theoretical issue related to individual and family behavior. This theory must be connected to the student’s interest in social work practice. The basic ideas of the theory should be presented in relation to a chosen practice interest (for example, briefly summarize it and discuss key concepts). Then, use the key concepts you find most applicable to your practice area and apply them to what you might do as a social worker in working with your client. You need to decide whether to focus on one particular theorist within a school of theory (e.g. Piaget within Cognitive Theory) or a broad school of theory (e.g. Cognitive Theory).

Examples of chosen practice interests might include (1) Life span theory in working with teenagers who are dealing with coming out as a gay or lesbian person; (2) Family resilience or
symbolic interaction theory to explore social work practice with families facing divorce; (3) Behavioral, moral or cognitive development theory to explore how to work with teens involved in school violence or aggressive behavior; (4) Empowerment theory applied to people with disabilities addressing discrimination, oppression, and power blocks; (5) Transpersonal theory to work with caregivers providing care for a frail elder or a dying person.

The theory should be evaluated from the standpoint of its usefulness for application to the chosen practice interest. Use criteria given in class at the beginning of the semester for evaluating theories. The design of the paper follows the instructor’s rubric, and is included below. Note that when you discuss your decision whether to use a theory, you need to explain whether you prefer one theory over the other or whether you can integrate insights from both in relation to your topic and practice interest. This should not be merely a matter of personal opinion. Your preference must be supported and explained by considering the scholarly literature, evidence of effectiveness, and congruence with professional values and ethics. Connect to the evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the theory in previous sections of the paper.

For this paper: (1) APA style must be used correctly, (2) All required relevant course readings and materials must be used, (3) At least 12 scholarly sources used (beyond course materials), (4) You must include at least 4 social work sources, (5) You must include at least 2 original writings by leading theorist. The paper must be clear, well organized, and should be 13-15 pages plus references and attachments.

Consistent with the grading rubric for this paper, format as follows:

A. Introduction (1 page): 8 points
   - Identify an issue
   - Identify the theory, theorist, or major concept
   - Explain relevance

B. Theoretical Insight at the Micro Level and/or Macro Level (4-5 pages): 30 points
   - Explain any biological, psychological, spiritual, family, or group dynamic aspects relevant to the issue
   And/or
   - Explain any organizational, social, cultural, economic, political, or natural environmental aspects relevant to the issue

C. Implications for the Helping Relationship and/or Specific Helping Practices (4-5 pages): 30 points
   - Apply this theory to the style of your interaction (i.e. role, relationship qualities, communication style) (15 pts)
   - What therapeutic practices, social change techniques, or other specific helping actions would you use? (15 pts)

D. Evaluation of the Theory (2-3 pages): 15 points
   - Use at least 2 of the formal criteria (5 pts)
   - Discuss at least 2 of the empirical criteria (5 pts)
• Use at least 2 of the social work **professional criteria** (5 pts)

E. Conclusion (1 page): 8 points
   • Decision about whether you would use this theory in practice, based on the previously presented knowledge and evaluation

**Instructor Scoring Guide for Embedded Assignment for PC 2.1.1**
5=Excellent understanding of practice behavior
4=Adequate understanding of practice behavior
3=Partial understanding of practice behavior
2=Very limited understanding of practice behavior
1=No clear understanding of practice behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention and evaluation.</td>
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<td>Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment</td>
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Attachment 2:

EPAS Competency Table for use in Class Syllabus. (Note that you must include as provided here but insert session numbers and assignments specific to your class. If the Master Syllabus includes a signature assignment for this course, that assignment must appear in column 5 exactly as stated in the Master Syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPAS Competency</th>
<th>KUSSW Foundation Level Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Related Educational Objectives</th>
<th>Session number of Content Coverage</th>
<th>Related Assignments</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly</td>
<td>Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development.</td>
<td>Develop self-awareness regarding one’s selection and utilization of theories in practice.</td>
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<td>2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.</td>
<td>Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.</td>
<td>Understand the use of moral and cognitive theory in the process of ethical decision making.</td>
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<td>2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and</td>
<td>Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge,</td>
<td>Critically analyze theories of human behavior, attending to client strengths, social and</td>
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<td>communicate professional judgments</td>
<td>including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom.</td>
<td>economic justice, cultural competence, and critical reflection, as applied to social work practice in various settings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation.</td>
<td>Critically analyze theories of human behavior, attending to client strengths, social and economic justice, cultural competence, and critical reflection, as applied to social work practice in various settings.</td>
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<td>Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.</td>
<td>Critically analyze theories of human behavior, attending to client strengths, social and economic justice, cultural competence, and critical reflection, as applied to social work practice in various settings.</td>
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<td><strong>2.1.4 Engage in diversity and difference in practice</strong></td>
<td>Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power.</td>
<td>Describe and analyze the harmful impacts of discrimination and oppression on people and their environments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate</td>
<td>Describe and analyze the harmful impacts of</td>
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<td>2.1.5 Advocate human rights and social and economic justice</td>
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<td>Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination.</td>
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<td>Describe and analyze the harmful impacts of discrimination and oppression on people and their environments.</td>
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<tr>
<th>2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research</th>
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<tr>
<td>Use research evidence to inform practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critically analyze theories of human behavior, attending to client strengths, social and economic justice, cultural competence, and critical reflection, as applied to social work practice in various settings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Signature Assignment on Theory Exploration or Theory Comparsion</td>
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<th>2.1.7 Apply knowledge</th>
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<tr>
<td>Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide</td>
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<td>Identify and describe practice implications of human</td>
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<td>of human behavior and the social environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.</td>
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