

**UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

**SW 513 Lifespan and Neurophysiologic Development in a  
Cultural,  
Ecological, and Transactional Framework  
(4 credit hours)**

**Instructor: Terri Combs-Orme, Ph.D., Professor  
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**Code of Conduct**

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct Code that is in the College of Social Work MSSW Handbook ([www.utk.csw.edu](http://www.utk.csw.edu)).

**The Honor Statement**

An essential feature of The University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. (*Hilltopics*, 2007).

**Disability**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact The University of Tennessee Office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library (865-974-6087). This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

**Course Description**

This is a required Foundation course. Theories, frameworks, and research that address culturally sensitive understanding of human development and behavior. Effects of risk/protective factors, culture, and other environmental effects, such as poverty, on developmental milestones. Includes neurophysiologic development across the lifespan, starting with early childhood; the profound influence of the environment on these processes; and implications for early prevention, treatment, policies, and services. Includes identification, assessment, and treatment of developmental delays and neurodevelopmental disorders. Processes critical to understanding human behavior and community risk and resilience for vulnerable populations are emphasized.

This course examines frameworks, theories, and research that address a culturally sensitive understanding of human development and behavior. Lifespan and neurophysiologic development in an ecological and transactional framework provides a foundation for understanding the processes of human development and how these processes are influenced by culture and the environment. The course examines the effects of risk and protective factors at various ecological levels, such as attachment, poverty, and culture on developmental milestones. It includes neurophysiologic development across the lifespan, starting with early childhood; the profound influence of the environment on these processes; and implications for early prevention, treatment, policies, and services. Typical development will be covered as well as atypical developmental patterns that are consistent with neurodevelopmental disorders. Processes critical to human behavior and risk and resilience for vulnerable populations are emphasized to understand individual or family behavior.

Content in this course will be illustrated and centered around a case study approach in which students read case studies that are paired with theoretical and research material. Class discussion about the theoretical and research material will be linked to case studies, and students will use theory and research to construct hypotheses about individual or family adaptation to the environment. In addition, students will practice forming research questions and going to the literature to assess what is known about their questions.

### **Course Rationale**

To practice accountably and effectively, social workers must be able to understand their clients and their presenting issues within their clients' environmental, cultural, and developmental contexts. In supportive environments, individuals flourish as they progress through developmental stages and stage-salient tasks. Other environments, because of risk factors associated with them, are less supportive of wellbeing. Even so, brain plasticity provides humans with an amazing capacity to adapt to these less supportive and sometimes frankly maladaptive environments, although sometimes at great cost to themselves. Especially for young children, the costs to the developing brain of less adaptive environments are profound because their brains actually become organized around repeated experiences within these less adaptive environments. Neurophysiological changes and behaviors resulting from these earlier less adaptive environments are often conceptualized by clinicians as psychopathology or presenting problems of clients. Understanding human development as a series of processes mediated by the brain within an environment-dependent context profoundly

reframes not only our understanding of our clients and their presenting problems, but also how to intervene appropriately with clients and their environments. This different understanding of human development also suggests the critical importance of effective prevention programs and social policies that promote wellbeing, as well as interventions directed at changing the larger environments of individuals. Thus, knowledge gained in this course will allow social workers not only to better understand, contextualize, and assess clients and their presenting problems, but also to develop more appropriate interventions, prevention programs, or policies for working with or for the benefit of clients and for the necessary environments to support human wellbeing.

### **Course Competencies:**

By the completion of this course, the students are expected to be able to demonstrate (through course activities, assignments, and/or exams):

1. Articulate, critically analyze, and apply an ecological, transactional (risk and resilience) and developmental perspective of adaptive and maladaptive human development and behavior across the lifespan to the understanding and assessment of client systems and to reciprocal relations among individuals and families. (HBSE-F.1, Pops at-risk & SJ-F.1; Diversity-F.3, F.4; CT/EBP-F.1). *(content: attachment theory and neurophysiology as the major foundations with brief comparisons and contrasts to others; risk and resilience; cultural similarities and differences in development and behavior.)*
2. Assess the validity of historically significant theories of human behavior and development for current social issues and problems that clients experience. (HBSE-F.2; Diversity-F.3, F.4; CT/EBP-F.1, F.2, F.3). *(content: brief comparisons and contrasts of major historical theories as appropriate, including psychoanalytic theory, Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson, Vygotsky, and others).*
3. Evaluate and apply [selected] evidence-based theories of human development and behavior that are sensitive to gender, class, age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, family structure, disability status, and worldview. (HBSE-F.3; Pops at-risk & SJ-F.4; Values/ethics-F.1; Diversity-F.3, F.4; CT/EBP-F.1, F.3, F.4) *(content: evidence for application of attachment theory and neurophysiology with specific attention to gender, class, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, family structure, disability status, and worldview).*

4. Explain the roles of neurophysiology, adaptive and maladaptive environments, and experiences, including the effects of trauma and chronic stress, on brain development and the role of genetics and epigenesis in development during the sensitive period of the first three years of life and across the life span. (HBSE-F.4; CT/EBP-F.3, F.4, F.5). *(content: basic introduction to Mendelian genetics and the Human Genome Project; epigenesis and gene expression; effects of stress and trauma on hormones, brain development, and gene expression; effects of early deprivation and parenting on brain development and gene expression; Hobfoll's conservation of resources theory; major developmental disabilities across the life span).*
5. Conduct a scientific review of empirical evidence and theory to address questions about human development and behavior across the lifespan. (Values/ethics-F.3; HBSE-F.7; CT/EBP-F.3, F.4, F.5). *(content: construction and use of theories; how theories are tested; examples and meaning of testing of attachment, neurophysiological theories, and other theories across the lifespan; comparisons and contrast to non-evidence-based theories).*

### **Textbooks:**

#### ***Required***

*Lives Across Cultures. Cross-Cultural Human Development*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2008. ed. Harry W. Gardiner, Corinne Kosmitzki. Allyn & Bacon.

*Writing with Style: APA Style for Social Work*. Lenore T. Szuchman & Barbara Thomlison. Wadsworth Publishing; 2nd edition.

*Other readings are posted on the BlackBoard class website.*

**PLEASE NOTE THAT I AM STILL MAKING CHANGES ON THE LATTER UNITS. DO NOT DOWNLOAD AND PRINT REFERENCES UNTIL BLACKBOARD INDICATES THAT THE UNIT IS FINALIZED.**

## **Class Schedule and Required Readings:**

### **August 27: Unit I: Frameworks & Paradigms**

***Note that readings should be completed before the first class.***

- *Lives Across Cultures*, Chapter 2, pp. 19-52
- Freud, S. (1999). The social construction of normality. *Families in Society*, 80(4), 333-339.
- García Coll et al. (1996). An integrative model for the study of developmental competencies in minority children. *Child Development*. 67(5), 1891-1914.
- Hobfoll, S.E. (2002). Social and psychological resources and adaptation. *Review of General Psychology*, 6(4), 307-324.

### **September 10: Unit II: Genetics and human development/behavior.**

- Harper, L.V. (2005). Epigenetic inheritance and the intergenerational transfer of experience. *Psychological Bulletin*, 131, 340-360.
- NASW Code of Ethics. (Use NASW web link.)
- Sandhu, J.S. (2006). Nature vs. nurture: A case report. *Delaware Medical Journal*, 78(11), 413-417. [case study]
- Scarr, S. (1996). How people make their own environments: Implications for parents and policy makers. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 2, 204-228.
- Strohman, R.C. (2003). Genetic determinism as a failing paradigm in biology and medicine: Implications for health and wellness. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 39(2), 169-191.
- Viding, E. (2004). On the nature and nurture of antisocial behavior and violence. *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*, 1036, 267-277.

- [http://www.ornl.gov/sci/techresources/Human\\_Genome/project/about.shtml](http://www.ornl.gov/sci/techresources/Human_Genome/project/about.shtml)

### **September 17: Unit III: Brain and Behavior**

- Cicchetti, D. & Cannon, T.D. (1999). Neurodevelopmental processes in the ontogenesis and epigenesis of psychopathology. *Development and Psychopathology*, 11, 375-393.
- Davies, M. (2002). A few thoughts about the mind, the brain, and a child with early deprivation. *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 47, 421-435.
- DiPietro, J.A. (2000). Baby and the brain: Advances in child development. *Annual Review Public Health*, 21, 455-471.
- Schore. A.N. (2000). Attachment and the regulation of the right brain. *Attachment & Human Development*, 2(1), 23-47.
- Siegel, D.L. (2006). An interpersonal neurobiology approach to psychotherapy: Awareness, mirror neurons, and neural plasticity in the development of well-being. *Psychiatric Annals*, 38(4), 248-256.
- Waller, R.J. (2003). Application of the kindling hypothesis to the long-term effects of racism. *Social Work in Mental Health*, 3(3), 81-89.

### **September 24: Unit IV: Stress, trauma, and hormones**

- Carroll, G. (1998). Mundane extreme environmental stress and African American families: A case for recognizing different realities. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 29(2), 271-284.
- McEwen BS. (1998) Protective and damaging effects of stress mediators. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 338,171-9.
- Talge, N.M. Neal, C., Glover, V. & the Early Stress, Translational Research and Prevention Science Network: Fetal and Neonatal Experience on Child and Adolescent Mental Health (2007). Antenatal maternal stress and long-term effects on child

neurodevelopment: how and why? *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 48(3/4), 245–261.

- Taylor, S.E. et al. (2000). Biobehavioral responses to stress in females: Tend-and-befriend, not fight-or-flight. *Psychological Review* 107(3), 411-429.

Optional value-added:

Boyce, W.T. & Bruce, J.E. (2005). Biological sensitivity to context: I. An evolutionary–developmental theory of the origins and functions of stress reactivity. *Development and Psychopathology*, 17, 271–301

### **October 1: Unit V: Pregnancy & Birth**

- Gardiner & Kosmitzki – pp. 79-84, 219, 227-240
- Azmitia, E.C. (2001). Impact of drugs and alcohol on the brain through the life cycle: Knowledge for social workers. *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions* 1(3), 41-63.
- Coussons-Read, M., Okun, M., & Simms, S. (2003). The psychoimmunology of pregnancy. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 21(2), 103-112.
- Domian, E.W. (2001). Cultural practices and social support of pregnant women in a Northern New Mexico Community. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33(4), 331-336.
- Nguyen, H.T., Clark, M. & Ruiz, R.J. (2007). Effects of acculturation on the reporting of depressive symptoms among Hispanic pregnant women. *Nursing Research*, 56(3):217-223.
- Rich-Edwards, J.W. & Grizzard, T.A. (2005). Psychosocial stress and neuroendocrine mechanisms in preterm delivery. *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 192, S30-35.
- Sesma, H.W. & Georgieff, M.K. (2003). The effect of adverse intrauterine and newborn environments on cognitive development: The experience of premature delivery and diabetes during pregnancy. *Development and Psychopathology*, 15, 991-1015.

### **October 8: Unit VI: Infancy**

- Gardiner & Kosmitzki – pp. 51-63, 125-131, 185-195, 265-268
- Balbernie, R. (2002). An infant in context: Multiple risks, and a relationship. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 23(3), 329-341.
- Perry, B.D. (2002). Childhood experience and the expression of genetic potential: What childhood neglect tells us about nature and nurture. *Brain and Mind*, 3(1), 79-100.
- Siegel, D.J. (2000). Toward an interpersonal neurobiology of the developing mind: Attachment relationships, "mindsight," and neural integration. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 22(1-2), 67-94.
- Weatherston, D. (2001). Infant mental health: A review of relevant literature. *Psychoanalytic Social Work*, 8(1), 39-69.
- Optional Value-Added: Combs-Orme, T., Wilson, E., Cain, D., Page, T. & Kirby, L. (2003). Context-based parenting of infants. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 20(6), 437-472.

### **October 15: Unit VII: Early Childhood**

- Gardiner & Kosmitzki – pp. 84-91, 101-110, 131-143, 155-174
- Fish, B. & Chapman, B. (2004). Mental Health risks to infants and toddlers in foster care. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 32, 121-140.
- Johnson, D.J., Jaegar, E., Randolph, S.M., Cauce, A.M., Ward, J., & National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network. (2003). Studying the effects of early child care experiences on the development of children of color in the United States: Toward a more inclusive research agenda. *Child Development*, 74, 1227-1244.
- Logue, M. E. (2007) Early childhood learning standards: Tools for promoting social and academic success in kindergarten. *Children & Schools*, 29, 35-43.
- Masten, A. S., & Coatsworth, J. D. (1998). The development of competence in favorable and unfavorable environments: Lessons from research on successful children. *American Psychologist*, 53, 205-220.

### **October 22: Unit VIII: Middle Childhood**

- Gardiner & Kosmitzki – pp. 63-68, 91-95, 110-116, 195-207
- Brooks, J. E. (2006). Strengthening resilience in children and youths: Maximizing opportunities through the schools. *Children & Schools, 28*, 69-76.
- Fraser, M. W., Kirby, L. D., Smokowski, P. R. (2004). Risk and resilience in childhood. In M. W. Fraser (Ed.), *Risk and resilience in childhood: An ecological perspective*, (pp. 13-66) (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: NASW Press.
- Iwaniec, D., Larkin, E., & Higgins, S. (2005). Research review: Risk and resilience in cases of emotional abuse. *Child and Family Social Work, 11*, 73-82.
- Levy-Wasser, N. & Katz, S. (2004). The relationship between attachment style, birth order, and adjustment in children who grow up with a sibling with mental retardation. *The British Journal of Developmental Disabilities, 50*, 89-98.
- Miller, K. M. (2006). The impact of parental incarceration on children: an emerging need for effective interventions. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 23*, 472-486.

### **October 29: Unit IX: Adolescence**

- Gardiner & Kosmitzki – pp. 68-72, 144-148, 174-176, 207-211, 240-244, 268-277
- Barrow, F.H., Armstrong, M.I., Vargo, A. & Boothroyd, R.A. (2007). Understanding the findings of resilience-related research for fostering the development of African-American adolescents. *child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 16*, 393-413.
- Cicchetti, D. & Rogosch, F.A. (2002). A developmental psychopathology perspective on adolescence. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 70*, 6-20.

- Eccles, J.S., Wong, C.A. & Peck, S.C. (2006). Ethnicity as a social context for the development of African-American adolescents. *Journal of School Psychology, (44)*, 407–426
- Holleran, L. K. & Waller, M. A. (2003). Sources of resilience among Chicano/a youth: Forging identities in the borderlands. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 20*, 335-350.
- Krahnstover Davison, K. & Susman, E.J. (2001). Are hormone levels and cognitive ability related during early adolescence? *International Journal of Behavioral Development 25(5)*, 416-428.
- Millstein, S.G. & Halpern-Felsher, B.L. (2001). Perceptions of risk and vulnerability. *Journal of Adolescent Health 31S*, 10-27.
- Ramirez, J.M. (2003). Hormones and aggression in childhood and adolescence. *Aggression & Violent Behavior 8*, 621-644.
- Saltzburg, S. (2004). Learning that an adolescent child is gay or lesbian. *Social Work, 49*, 109-118.
- Stanton, B., Cuthill, S. & Amador, C. (2001). Adolescence and poverty. *Adolescent Medicine: State-of-the-Art Reviews 12(3)*, 525-538.
- Walker, E.F. (2002). Adolescent neurodevelopment and psychopathology. *Current Directions in Psychological Science 11(1)*, 24-28.

### **November 5: Unit X: Transition to young adulthood: 18-25**

- Gardiner & Kosmitzki – 116-119, 176-181, 220-227, 277-281
- Arnett, J.J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist, 55 (5)*, 469-480.
- Bynner, J. (2005). Rethinking the youth phase of the life-course. The case for emerging adulthood? *Journal of Youth Studies, 8(4)*, 367-384.
- Jordan, B. & Dunlap, G. (2001). Construction of adulthood and disability. *Mental Retardation, 39*, 286-296.

- Irwin, C. E., & Rickert, V. I. (2005). Editorial: Coercive sexual experiences during adolescence and young adulthood: A public health problem. *Journal of Adolescent Health (36)5*, 359-361.
- Kenny, M. E., Barton, C. E. (2003). Attachment theory and research: Contributions for understanding late adolescent and young adult development. In Demick, J., & Andreoletti, C (Eds.), *Handbook of adult development* (pp. 371-389). New York, NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Luecken, L. J., & Appelhans, B. M. (2006). Early parental loss and salivary cortisone in young adulthood: The moderating role of family development. *Development and Psychopathology, 18*, 295-308.

### **November 12: Unit XI: Middle Adulthood: 35 - 65**

- Gardiner & Kosmitzki – pp. 72-75, 119-123, 148-153, 211-217,
- Stewart, A. J., & Torges, C. M. (2006). Social, historical, and developmental influences on the psychology of the baby boomer at midlife. In S. K. Whitbourne, & S. L. Willis Eds.), *The baby boomers grow up: Contemporary perspectives in midlife* (pp. 23 – 43). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Lang, F. R., & Heckhausen, J. (2006). Motivation and interpersonal regulation across adulthood: Managing the challenges and constraints of social contexts. In C. Hoare (Ed.), *Handbook of adult development and learning* (pp. 149 – 167). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Irwin, R. R. (2006). Spiritual development in adulthood: Key concepts and models. In C. Hoare (Ed.), *Handbook of adult development and learning* (pp. 307 – 325). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Hequembourg, A., & Brallier, S. (2005). Gendered stories of parental caregiving among siblings. *Journal of Aging Studies, 19(1)*, 53-71.
- Howell, L. C., & Beth, A. (2002). Midlife myths and realities: Women reflect on their experiences. *Journal of Women & Aging, 14(3/4)*, 189-204.

### **November 19: Unit XII: Late Middle Adulthood, cont.**

- Gardiner & Kosmitzki – pp. 95-96, 244-250

- Hayslip, Jr., B. & Kaminski, P. L. (2005). Grandparents raising their grandchildren: A review of literature and suggestions for practice. *The Gerontologist*, 45, 262-269.
- Piercy, K. W., & Cheek, C. (2004). Tending and befriending: The intertwined relationships of quilters. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 16(1/2), 17-33.
- Ryff, C.D., & Seltzer, M.M. (1996). The uncharted years of midlife parenting. In C.D. Ryff & M.M. Seltzer (Eds.), *The parental experience in midlife* (pp. 3-23). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

### **November 26: Unit XIII: Ageing**

- Gardiner & Kosmitzki – pp. 75-77, 97-100, 181-183, 250-255, 281-285
- Burke, D., Hickie, I., Breakspear, M., & Gotz, J. (2007). Possibilities for the prevention and treatment of cognitive impairments and dementia. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 190, 371-372.
- Greene, R. R. & Cohen, H. L. (2005). Social work with older adults and their families: Changing practice paradigms. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 86, 367-373.
- Hinterlong, J., Morrow-Howell, N., & Sherraden, M. (2001) Productive aging: Principles and perspectives. In N. Morrow-Howell, J. Hinterlong, & M. Sherraden (Eds.), *Productive aging: Concepts and challenges* (pp. 3-18). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Reichstadt, J., Depp, C. A., Palinkas, L. A., Folsom, D. P., & Jeste, D. V. (2007). Building blocks of successful aging: A focus group study of older adults' perceived contributors to successful aging. *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 15, 194-201.
- Silverstone, B. (2005). Social Work with the older people of tomorrow: Restoring the person-in-situation. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 86, 309-319.

### **December 3: Unit XIV: The "old-old"**

- Berg, A. I., Hassing, L. B., McClearn, G. E., & Johansson, B. (2006). What matters for life-satisfaction in the oldest old? *Aging & Mental Health, 10*, 257-264.
- Keller-Cohen, D., Fiori, K., Toller, A., & Bybee, D. (2006). Social relations, language, and cognition in the 'oldest old'. *Aging & Society, 26*, 585-605

### **Grades and Assignments:**

This course provides information that is crucial to the rest of your MSSW studies. You can expect to devote about 10-12 hours per week to the class, including in-class time, readings, preparation of papers, and communication with the professor and your fellow students. There is no short-cut; class attendance and readings are necessary for you to learn this material, which is truly a foundation for the rest of your studies.

Your grade in this class is based on:

- \*\* Weekly critical thinking exercises (60%);
- \*\* Special project (30%)
- \*\* Attendance and participation (10%)

The good news: There is no final exam.

See the appropriate BlackBoard link for instructions about each of the above.

My grading values:

- A = 94-100
- B+ = 90-93
- B = 84-89
- C+ = 80-83
- C = 73-79
- D = 66-72
- F = <66