

**UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE**  
**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

**SW 513 Lifespan and Neurophysiologic Development in a Cultural, Ecological, and  
Transactional Framework**

**(4 cr.)**

**Tuesdays 4:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**

Instructor:	Dr. Egan
Office Hours:	Mondays: 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Tuesdays: 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. & by appointment
Office phone with voice mail:	901-448-4480
Email:	<a href="mailto:megan@utk.edu">megan@utk.edu</a>

**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.csw.utk.edu](http://www.csw.utk.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, 2009).

**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 2222 Dunford (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 neuro-developmental 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, 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.*)

**Required text:**

Hutchison, E. (2008). *Dimensions of human behavior: The changing life course* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

**Required readings:****BB: Readings are posted on our Blackboard site.**

The literature on the topics of this course grows exponentially; thus, new empirical studies will be posted as they may emerge throughout the semester.

**\*\*\* Readings NOT posted on our Blackboard site are available at UT Hodges Library @ utk.lib under Electronic Reserves for this course and instructor.**

🕒 **Details of Course grading criteria, point distribution, and points and details of**

**assignment, quizzes, & discussion boards** can be found at end of Course Sessions section of this course outline & on our course Blackboard website

**COURSE SESSIONS**

**August 25: in the classroom**

**Topics:** Introduction to the course, assignments, & quizzes  
 Grading criteria & policies & required readings  
 A cross-cultural, transactional perspective  
 Critical thinking: What is it and what is it not, and why do we use it?  
 What do genes have to do with it, anyway?

**Terms & concepts of the week:**

Biopsychosocial perspective	Culture	Ecological systems
Epigenetic	Genes	Life course perspective
Neuroscience	Normality	Social construction
Transactional model		

**Required Readings:**

Hutchison: Chapter 1: p. 9-22 (bottom), & 27-37

**BB:**

Farmer: Chapter 3: The transactional model

Freud: The social construction of normality

**August 31: Online**

**Discussion Board #1 Open August 31 and Closed September 8 @ 9:00 a.m.**

**Topics:** Introduction to genetics & human development

**Terms & concepts of the week:**

Apoptosis	Differentiation	Disability(ies)	Epigenesis
Gene expression & regulation		Genotype	Homeostasis
Human genome	Migration	Morphology	Neurogenesis
Phenotype			

**Online Activity resources & details on Blackboard**

**Required Readings:**

**BB:**

The brain: Images and development

Now - The Rest of the Genome - NYTimes.com

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/11/science/11gene.html?8dp>

The Human Genome Project:

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

Watters: The new science of epigenetics: DNA is not destiny

**September 8: in the classroom****Topics:**

Genetics and human development  
 Structures and functions of the brain  
 Stress & trauma effects on brain development in the first three years of life

**Terms & concepts of the week:**

Allele	Chromosome	Collectivism	Cultural variation
DNA	Ecological	Environment	Gene expression
Human genome	Individualism		Nature
Neurotransmitters	Nurture	Protective factors	Resilience
Risk factors	Stress	Synapse	

**Required Readings:**

Hutchison: Chapter 2: p. 54-58

**BB:**

Genetics and the Brain - slides

Neurons - slides

Harper, L. (2005). Epigenetic inheritance and the intergenerational transfer of experience.

*Psychological Bulletin*, 131(3), 340–360.

National Scientific Institute on the Developing Child: Excessive stress and the developing brain.

Sandhu, J. (2006). Nature vs. nurture: A case report. *Delaware Medical Journal*, 413-417.

Viding, E. (2004). On the nature and nurture of antisocial behavior and violence. *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*, 1036, 267-277.

**September 15: Online****CTE #1: DUE by September 18 @ 12:00 p.m./noon****Topics:**

Functions of the brain & human behavior  
 Influences on prenatal brain development  
 Nervous system development

**Terms & concepts of the week:**

Agonist/antagonists	Central NS	Cerebral	Cerebellum	Cortex	Cortisol
Epigenesis	Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS)			Frontal lobe	
Fetal alcohol effects (FAE)		Glial cell	Hypothalamus		Kindling
Medulla	Myelin/ation	Neural membrane		Neuron	
Neurotransmitter	Occipital lobe	Ontogenesis		Parietal lobe	
Peripheral NS	Pituitary	Synapse		Temporal lobe	
Thalamus					

**Online Activity Resources & details on Blackboard**

The Brain, neurons, & synapses:

<http://www.msnbc.com/modules/brain/brainmap.swf>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-NgGKSNiNw&feature=related>

**Required readings:**

**BB:**

Shonkoff, J., & Phillips, D. (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods*. Washington, D.C.: Institute of Medicine, National Academy Press.

Waller, R. (2003). Application of the kindling hypothesis to the long-term effects of racism. *Social Work in Mental Health*, 3(3), 81-89.

**September 22: in the classroom**

**Discussion Board #2: Open September 23 and closed October 1 @ 9:00 a.m.**

**Topics:**

Resilience & risk  
The brain & emotions & cognitions

**Terms & concepts of the week:**

Adaptivity	Aggression	Amygdala
Health disparities	Hormones	Hypothalamus
Immunity	Protective factors	Resilience
Risk factors	Stress	Sympathetic
Stress response		

**Online Activity resources & details on Blackboard:**

Video online: *Unnatural causes: When the bough breaks*

**Required readings:**

**BB:**

Boyce, W., & Ellis, B. (2005). Biological sensitivity to context: An evolutionary-developmental theory of the origins and functions of stress reactivity. *Development and Psychopathology* 17, 271–301.

Cicchetti, D., & Cannon, T. (1999). Neurodevelopmental processes in the ontogenesis and epigenesis of psychopathology. *Development and Psychopathology* 11, 375-393.

Hobfoll, S.E. (2002). Social and psychological resources and adaptation. *Review of General Psychology*, 6(4), 307-324.

**September 29: online**

**Topics:**

Conception, fetal development, & pregnancy  
Cultural variations, worldviews, and health beliefs regarding reproductive & infant well-being

**Terms & concepts of the week:**

Disparities	Fetal	Infant morbidity	Infant mortality	Neonatal
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Pica                      Prenatal                      Trimester

### **Online Activity resources and details on Blackboard**

#### **Required readings:**

Hutchison: Chapter 2: p. 41-93

#### **BB:**

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.

David, R. & Collins, J. (2007). Disparities in infant mortality: What's genetics got to do with it? *American Journal of Public Health*, 97, 1191-1197.

Lu, M., & Halfon, N. (2007). Racial and ethnic disparities in birth outcomes: A life-course perspective. *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 7(1), 13-30.

Rich-Edwards, J., & Grizzard, T. (2005). Psychosocial stress and neuroendocrine mechanism in preterm delivery. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 192, S30-35.

Talge et al. (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.

### **October 6: in the classroom**

#### **Topics**

Attachment theory  
 Infancy & parenting  
 Cultural variation & worldviews

#### **Terms & concepts of the week:**

Attachment	Bonding	Co-sleeping	Cognition	Developmental niche
Goodness of fit	Infancy	Object permanence		Parenting worldviews
Scaffolding				

### **Online Activity resources and details on Blackboard**

#### **Required Readings:**

Hutchison: Chapter 3: Infancy and Toddlerhood

#### **BB:**

DiPietro, J. (2000). Baby and the brain: Advances in child development. *Annals Review Public Health*, 21, 455-471.

Schore, A. (2000). Attachment and the regulation of the right brain\*. *Attachment & Human Development* 2(1), 23-47.

Shonkoff, J. P. & Phillips, D. A. (2000). Rethinking nature and nurture. From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development, (pp. 39-56). Washington, DC: The National Academic Press.

### **October 13: online**

**Quiz #1 Online covering content/concepts/terms from beginning of the semester to this week.. Opens October 13 @ 8:00 p.m. and closes October 19 @ 9:00 a.m.**

#### **Topics:**

Early childhood—Part I  
 Language acquisition  
 Gender roles  
 Cultural variations in gender role attribution

#### **Terms & concepts of the week:**

Cognitive development	Environmental hazards	Gender
Language development	Piaget	Socialization

#### **Online Activity resources and details on Blackboard**

*The whole child: It's the little things.*

[http://www.learner.org/vod/vod\\_window.html?pid=753](http://www.learner.org/vod/vod_window.html?pid=753)

#### **Required Readings:**

Hutchison Chapter 4: Early Childhood

#### **BB:**

Garcia Coll, C. et al. (1996). An integrative model for the study of developmental competencies in minority children. *Child Development* 67(5), 1891-1914.

Klennert, M., Kaugars, A., Strand, M., & Veira, L. (2008). Family psychological factors in relation to children's asthma status and behavioral adjustment at age 4. *Family Process*, 47, 41-61.

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.

### **October 20: in the classroom**

**Reminder: Discussion Board # 3;** open October 23 and closed October 30 @ 9:00 a.m.

#### **Topics:**

Early childhood – Part II  
 Middle childhood

**In-class activity:** Applying concepts to case scenarios (10 points; no make-up)

#### **Terms & concepts of the week:**

Academic success	Competence	Formal learning	Informal learning
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Kohlberg	Moral development	Obesity
Pediatric asthma	Poverty	Risk factors
Self-concept	Self-efficacy	Self-esteem

**Required Readings:**

Hutchison Chapter 5: Middle Childhood

**BB:**

Levine, M., Ringham, R., Kalarchian, M., Wisniewski, L., & Marcus, M. (2001). Is family-based behavioral weight control appropriate for severe pediatric obesity? *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 30, 318-328.

Miller, K. (2006). The impact of parental incarceration on children: An emerging need for effective interventions. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal* 23(4), 472-486.

Urban Center for Urban Child Policy. (February 2009). Advancing public policy to improve the well-being of children.

**October 27: online**

**Discussion Board #3: Open October 23 and closed October 30 @ 12 noon/p.m.**

**Topics:**

Psychosocial & environmental stressors & influences  
Transactional perspective & cultural salience

**Terms and concepts of the week:**

Cultural salience Iatrogenic Stressors Teratogenic

**Online Activity resources and details on Blackboard**

The YES program: [http://www.pbs.org/unnaturalcauses/hour\\_03.htm](http://www.pbs.org/unnaturalcauses/hour_03.htm)

**Required Readings:****BB:**

Marsac, J., Funk, J., & Nelson, L. (2006). Coping styles, psychological functioning and quality of life in children with asthma. *Child Care, Health and Development*, 33(4), 360-267.

Ramirez, J. (2003). Hormones and aggression in childhood and adolescence. *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 8, 621-644.

**November 3: in the classroom**

**CTE #2: DUE @ 12:00 p.m./noon November 9**

**Topics:**

Adolescence  
Brain development in adolescence

**Terms & concepts of the week:**

Gender identity Puberty Sexual maturation Sexual orientation

**Required Readings:**

Hutchinson: Chapter 6: Adolescence

**BB:**

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. (2002). A developmental psychopathology perspective on adolescence. *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology* 70, 6-21.

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.

**November 10: Online:**

**Discussion Board #4: Open November 9 and closed November 16 @ 5:00 p.m.**

**Topics:** Young adult development (~18-24 years of age)

**Terms & concepts:**

Depression    Schizophrenia                  Sexual orientation                  Somatization

**Online Activity resources and details on Blackboard:**

The teenage brain. (60 minutes) <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain/view/>

**Required Readings:**

Hutchison: Chapter 7 Young Adulthood

**BB:**

Arnett, J.J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469-480.

**November 17: in the classroom**

**CTE #3: DUE NO later than November 24th @ 12:00 p.m./noon**

**Topics:** Middle Adulthood (~25-44 years of age)  
Cultural variations, beliefs and roles

**Terms & concepts of the week:**

Caregiver    Caregiver burden                  Racial socialization                  Post-formal thought  
Social identity

**Required Readings:**

Hutchison: Chapter 8: Middle Adulthood

**BB:**

Hayslip, Jr., B. & Kaminski, P. L. (2005). Grandparents raising their grandchildren: A review of literature and suggestions for practice. *The Gerontologist*, 45, 262-269.

Greene, R., & Cohen, H. (2005). Social work with older adults and their families: Changing practice paradigms. *Families in Society* 86(3), 367-373.

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 24: online**

**Online Quiz #2:** Open November 23 @ 5:00 p.m. & closed November 30 @ 12:00 p.m.; based on terms/concepts since Quiz #1 **through** this week's readings.

**Topics:** Late adulthood  
Older adulthood  
The brain and memory & cognition  
Stress & resilience in older adults  
Caregiving & caregiver burden

**Terms and concepts:**

Caregiver	Caregiver burden	Cognition	Cultural variation	Language
Resilience	Stressors			

**Required readings:**

Hutchison: Chapter 9: Late Adulthood  
Chapter 10: Very Late Adulthood

**BB:**

The story of telomeres (slides)

Gallagher-Thompson, D., & Coon, D. (2007). Evidence-based psychological treatments for distress in family caregivers of older adults. *Psychology and Aging* 22(1), 37-51.

Koenig, T. (2005). Caregivers' use of spirituality in ethnical decision-making. *Gerontological Social Work* 45(1/2), 155-172.

Pinquart, M., & Sorenson, S. (2006). Gender differences in caregiver stressors, social resources and health: An updated meta-analysis. *Journals of Gerontology*, 61B(1), P33-P45.

**December 1: in the classroom**

**Topics:** Older adults: the oldest old  
Caregiving and caregiver burden

Video: *Living old in America*

**In class:** Small groups (Discussion Board Groups) implement Discussion Board #5: Critical analysis of ethical conflicts in social work with older adults. No make-ups.

**Required Readings:**

**BB:**

Keller-Cohen, D., Fiori, K., Toller, a., & Bybee, D. (2006). Social relations, language, and cognition in the "oldest old." *Aging & Society*, 26, 585-605.

Nelson-Becker, H. (2005). Religion and coping in older adults: A social work perspective.

*Journal of Gerontological Social Work* 45(1/2), 51-67

*Reference sources:*

Ethical choices in long-term care: What does justice require? World Health Organization.

\* The societal perspective

\* The role of the family

A national Alzheimer's Strategic Plan: The report of the Alzheimer's Study Group. (2009).

Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute & The American Enterprise Institute.

### **COURSE EXPECTATIONS and GRADING POLICY**

1. Students are expected to participate fully in all online activities and in all classroom sessions.
2. Students are expected to read all assigned readings thoroughly before coming to class.
3. Students are expected to complete and submit out of class written assignments on time & in response to the questions of each assignment as provided and to meet the following criteria:
  - a) Of graduate level quality in writing and organization.
    - (1) Errors in spelling and grammar in a paper written outside of the classroom will result in reductions of ½ point for each error in the overall score for an assignment (does not apply to Discussion Boards)
  - b) Properly citing sources in accordance with the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5<sup>th</sup> edition) in textual citations & reference lists, and
    - (1) Use 12 fonts, double-spacing, 1" margins on all 4 sides, and inclusive non-sexist language.
4. An automatic 48 hour extension is allowed for submission of outside the classroom written papers/assignments (does NOT apply to online/Blackboard Discussion Board activities).
  - \* The professor MUST be notified via a message on voicemail OR email AT LEAST 1 HOUR PRIOR TO THE DUE DATE & TIME of the assignment.

<b>Total Point Distribution for Final Course grade; total points for course grades are <u>not</u> rounded— e.g., 81.999 = 81.0 (= C+)</b>	<b>Points for Course Assignments, Quizzes, &amp; Activities</b>
100 – 95                      A	5 Discussion Boards (4 points each)                      20 points
94 – 88                        B+	3 Critical thinking exercises (10 points each)                      30 points
87 – 82                        B	In-class activity (scenarios)    6 points
81 – 76                        C+	Quiz #1    20 points
75 – 70                        C	Quiz #2    20 points
69 & Below                    F	Pop quiz(zes)    ~ 4 points
	<b>Total points achievable in this course                      100 points</b>

**The instructor reserves the right to implement a Pop Quiz or Pop Quizzes if it appears that students are not reading required readings or participating in classroom discussions.**

## Details of course assignments & activities

### Discussion Boards & Critical Thinking Essays:

The overall purpose of both Discussion Boards and of Critical Thinking Essays is for students to demonstrate skills and understanding of course topics, concepts, and issues, and the use of critical thinking through analysis of specific course readings, resources, and/or applications to case studies.

#### Discussion Boards:

**Discussion Board Grading:** These five Discussion Board activities are worth 4 points each.

Grading of each Discussion Board is as follows:

- 0-1.0 point = inadequate participation & inadequate content in response to discussions;
- 1.1-2.0 points = partially adequate participation & partially adequate content in responses to discussions;
- 2.1-3.0 points = adequate participation & adequate content in response to discussions;
- 3.1-4.0 points = adequate participation & adequate content in response to discussions ± evidence of critical analysis and critical thinking in responses to discussion.

### Discussion Board general descriptions:

**Note:** *additional details will be posted for each Discussion Board Group's conversation on the following:*

**Discussion Board #1:** Discussion & critical thinking about genetics utilizing identified website(s) (e.g., Human Genome Project) in regard to a specific genetic disorder (which will be assigned to each group) of relevance to the first 3 years of life & the psychosocial challenges it presents.

**Discussion Board #2:** Discussion & critical thinking about stressors/trauma such as social deprivation, poverty, or natural disasters from an ecological & transactional framework linking readings on risk and resilience to your discussion.

**Discussion Board #3:** Discussion of a case study assigned to each group concerning environmental/iatrogenic elements on brain development & neurophysiology, and critical thinking of the psychosocial and societal challenges presented.

**Discussion Board #4:** Critical analysis and discussion of gender roles, gender identity, attribution, family structure, and sexual orientation during early and middle adulthood in reference to theories and concepts of development (e.g., attachment, Erikson, Piaget, Vygotsky).

**Discussion Board #5:** Discussion concerning older adults and family caregivers, regarding cognition & memory & ethical considerations of professional practice. This DBd occurs in the classroom only; no make up.

#### Critical thinking essays (CTEs)

**Critical thinking essays (CTE):** These written essays involve the critical analysis of one or more research study/ies, a reading/s, and/or a case study concerning a topic of the course.

**CTE #1:** Critical analysis of the nature versus nurture dichotomy in light of your learning about genetics and brain development, its advantages/disadvantages, applicability, and utility in social work practice.

**CTE #2:** Critical analysis of the social influences, brain development, & behavior in adolescence utilizing course reading/s & the ethnographic film series (online) "Country Boys."

**CTE #3:** Critical analysis of risk, and protective and cultural factors applied to the developmental tasks, challenges, & resilience of adulthood.

**CTE Grading Criteria:**

There are four CT essays; each is worth 10 points. Completion of each essay demonstrates that you are learning, and is a learning activity in itself.

Each CT essay is to be NO MORE than 3 pages (double-spaced) maximum length plus a Reference List. This is not a suggestion! It is a MAXIMUM limit. Grading occurs at the end of the third page—anything after that point is not read—and not included in assigning points.

**NOTE:** Remember to adhere to the grammar/spelling/punctuation/sentence structure requirements of graduate level writing, citations, and reference list.

**INSTRUCTIONS: Incorporate each of the following (a, b, c, d) in your response to each CTE**

a) Integration of readings: It is expected that your paper will integrate and utilize at least 3 readings (all from the course or 2 from the course + one you find through library search [website **not** acceptable]), including appropriate textual and reference list citation---citing readings is NOT in and of itself sufficient—using and incorporating the material in your answer. (3 points).

b) Synthesis of material: Summarize/synthesize the readings you use and MOST importantly link them together; merely discussing each separately is insufficient. How are the readings different and how are they the same? (2 points)

c) Critical thinking: Specifically what points in the readings are clearly supported by evidence? Which are culturally salient/relevant? Merely stating, "I agree with X" is not acceptable. (2 points)

d) Application to social work practice: Lastly, link your discussion/analysis to psychosocial problem/s and social work practice. (2 point).

e) graduate level writing, grammar, sentence structure, verb tense, verb-noun matching & organization of the paper (1 point).

**Quiz #1:**

The quiz is a 20 multi-response item (1 point each) quiz covering the terms/concepts (e.g., ecological, transactional, historical theories, genes/genetics, human genome, adaptivity, cultural variations in regard to gender, class, race/ethnicity, family structure, and worldviews, niche, risk and resilience) of the first 6 weeks of the course. The terms/concepts appearing in the quiz are selected from the terms/concepts identified with each course session delineated above in this outline, course readings, powerpoints, and class discussions for the first six weeks.

**Quiz #2:**

The quiz is a 20 multi-response item (1 point each) quiz covering the terms/concepts since Quiz #1 until mid-November, covering terms/concepts from those weeks of the course, such as historical theories, psychosocial challenges and milestones for middle, late and older adults and impact of population trends in aging and diversity across the globe. The terms/concepts appearing in the quiz are selected from the terms/concepts identified with each course session delineated above in this outline, course readings, powerpoints, and class discussions for the weeks following Quiz #1.

**In-class activity**

Case scenarios from our text will be assigned to each small group (3-4 students each) in class. Each group will critically analyze the scenario incorporating developmental tasks, stages, and psychosocial stressors, barriers and challenges. Each group will present their findings in class.

### Additional Readings and Resources

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