Description of Course: Study of the patterns and dynamics of families, groups, organizations, and communities from a social work and a systems perspective.

Theoretical perspectives on social behavior are analyzed critically in relation to strengths, prevention, and empowerment at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. The course also explores the unique social work framework, values, and theories as they pertain to human behavior in the context of human systems.

Course Objectives: By the conclusion of SOW 5106, students will demonstrate an ability to:
1. Use systems concepts in professional assessments of families, small groups, organizations, and communities.
2. Apply a generalist perspective and problem solving procedures of systematic problems, and strength identification, and data collection to human system assessments.
3. Analyze the transaction between people in families, groups, organizations, and communities and the contextual environment within a systemic conceptual framework to prepare them for community-based clinical social work practice.
4. Identify and understand interactions between personal, political, and socio-cultural influences on family, group, organizational, and community behavior.
5. Assess the impact of discrimination and oppression on human behavior at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
6. Identify implications of human behavior theories for utilization of strengths and resources of families, groups, organizations, and communities to promote well-being, social justice, and prevention in accordance with social work values and ethics.
7. Critically analyze family, group, organizational, and community behavior, including consideration of the themes of client strengths, oppression and justice, critical reflection, and relevance to community-based social work practice.
8. Understand, compare, and critically evaluate various theoretical perspectives on human functioning, change, and development in families, groups, organizations, and communities.
9. Analyze and assess specific families, groups, organizations, and communities in terms of their structure, functions, socialization and social control activities, adaptiveness to change, and responsiveness to diverse populations.
10. Determine the practice implications of micro, mezzo, and macro theories for ethical, professional social work practice.

Teaching Methods: This course will incorporate a variety of teaching methods. These methods may consist of lecture, discussion, audiovisual materials, small group exercises, and guest speakers. A variety of case examples will be used to exemplify theories and developmental stages discussed. Students are expected to be active in the learning process. This implies substantive class participation: **quality of participation will be judged over quantity.** Not all readings will be reviewed directly in class. Students are expected to demonstrate their mastery of course content, including reading material, through class discussion, written assignments, and examinations.
Required Readings:
2. Reserve readings in the library and electronically scanned. Reserve readings are from NASW Social Work Journals and are current research and practice issues in the field of social work.

Evaluation of Learning and Grading: The final course grade will be based on the following assignments:

1. **Family Interview and Genogram**: The instructor will provide specific guidelines for the interview and genogram during the first week of class. This assignment is worth 15 points.

2. **Mid-term Examination**: The mid-term exam will be given on February 23rd and will cover discussions, readings, and lectures. The exam may contain multiple choice, matching, true/false, or essay questions. The mid-term is worth 25 points.

3. **Civic/Organizational/Community Meeting Analysis and Paper**: The instructor will provide specific guidelines for the paper during the first week of class. This paper is worth 25 points.

4. **Final Examination**: A final examination will be given during finals week on April 26th and will cover discussions, readings, and lectures. The exam may contain multiple choice, matching, true/false, or essay questions. The final exam is worth 25 points.

4. **Attendance and Participation**: Prompt attendance, participation, and classroom behavior will all be taken into consideration in determining the student’s score for Attendance and Participation. Additionally, unscheduled quizzes may be given at the instructor’s discretion to ensure students are coming to class prepared for discussion by completing assigned readings prior to class. Excessive absences (more than three), regardless of the reason, will result in a forfeiture of all points for attendance and participation. Students who experience chronic medical or personal problems that prevent them from attending class regularly are encouraged to review policies relating to securing a leave of absence from their university studies. Attendance and participation are worth 10 points.

Grades: Achievement of learning objectives will be measured as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Lower Score</th>
<th>Higher Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-66</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-63</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 or less</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course and Classroom Policies: In addition to the information below, please see the School of Work Student Handbook and The Golden Rule Handbook for UCF Students for policies for all Social Work classes.

**Attendance and Participation**: Student attendance and participation are integral parts of this course. Students are expected to attend each class, arrive on time, and remain for the duration of the class. Students are also expected to assume responsibility for their own learning and to actively involve themselves in class discussions and exercises. Students must be prepared for class (i.e., complete readings and other assignments prior to class); it is also expected that students will be attentive and respectful in class (e.g., no off-task behavior, no talking among themselves). Prompt attendance, participation, and classroom behavior will all be taken into consideration in determining the student’s score for Attendance/Class Participation (see Evaluation of Learning and Grading). Furthermore, make-up exams will be
given **ONLY** in extreme circumstances. These circumstances include exceptional health EMERGENCIES (that require that the student bring in medical documentation), and the make up exam will be an essay exam. Out-of-town vacations, trips, mild colds, and other similar circumstances do not qualify as extreme.

**Written Assignments:** Effective written communication skills are essential to professional social work practice. Thus, students are expected to present their ideas clearly and properly and to adhere to accepted standards of writing. *Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are to be correct in all written materials submitted and will be considered in grading written assignments.* All written assignments must be typed in a 12-font print, and all margins must be one inch. The cover page of a paper is not considered to be a page of text. Work not conforming to these standards or demonstrating serious deficiencies in common English usage will be returned ungraded. When required, references should be included in the APA documentation style. Students are encouraged to use the University Writing Center (UWC) for assistance in preparing written assignments. The UWC is located in MOD 608 (near the Communications Building). UWC staff may be reached Monday-Thursday 9am-4pm, Friday 8am-3pm and Sunday 2-6pm at (407) 823-2197 or [http://www.uwc.ucf.edu/](http://www.uwc.ucf.edu/).

**Late Assignments:** All assignments must be turned in to the instructor at the beginning of the class period or delivered to the instructor’s mailbox before class starts on the due date. *It is the student’s responsibility to see to it that her or his assignment is stamped with the date by the social work staff member who then places the assignment in the instructor’s mailbox.* No assignments will be accepted by fax or email unless the instructor has given explicit prior approval. *Late assignments will lose 5 points for each week that they are late unless the student gained prior approval from the instructor.* No assignment will be accepted after the last day of class. It is the student’s responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor regarding late assignments.

**Incomplete Grades:** In exceptional circumstances, an incomplete grade may be given per School and University policies. Individual arrangements must be made with the instructor for the completion of the course requirements, but in no case will the date set extend beyond the end of the following semester. Students who experience chronic medical or personal problems that prevent them from attending class regularly are encouraged to review policies relating to securing a leave of absence from their university studies.

**Academic Integrity:** Social workers must demonstrate high standards of integrity. Every student is expected to do his or her own work and all of the work produced will be expected to be completed in its entirety by the student who turns it in. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any acts of plagiarism, *including not acknowledging sources of information appropriately and in accordance with APA guidelines,* may result in a failing grade in the course. School and University policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced. Students found to have cheated or plagiarized will receive no credit for the exam or assignment and may also receive a failing grade for the course. Students who observe others violate this policy are expected to report this to the instructor.

**Student Disability Services:** UCF and the School of Social Work are committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the instructor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the instructor.
Instructor Office Hours:  The instructor is available to meet with students during the office hours listed on this syllabus (also posted on the instructor's door) and by appointment. The instructor can be contacted by phone or email with the contacts listed at the top of the syllabus. Please include “SOW 5106” in the message line of your email, as I do not open emails from addresses I do not recognize.  It is the student’s responsibility to initiate contact with the instructor about due date extensions or other concerns.

This syllabus is not a legal document.  Typographical and other errors may be present. In addition, the instructor reserves the right to adjust reading requirements, assignment due dates, and other expectations at her discretion. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class and/or via email.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The UCF Creed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrity, scholarship, community, creativity, and excellence are the core values that guide our conduct, performance, and decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Outline and Schedule

Week 1 – 1/5/04
Discussion of course expectations, syllabus, and assignments

Week 2 – 1/12/04
Introduction to Strengths Perspective, Empowerment Approach, Ecological Approach, Systems Theory

Readings:
1. Kirst-Ashman, Chapters 1 and 2.

Week 3 – 1/19/04 – MLK Jr. Day – NO CLASS

Week 4 – 1/26/04
Assessing Family Systems With Emphasis Upon Family Diversity

Readings:

Week 5 – 2/2/04
Assessing Family Systems with Emphasis upon Family Diversity

Readings:

**Week 6 – 2/9/04**  
Assessing Groups as Systems  
**Readings:**  

**Week 7 – 2/16/04**  
Assessing Groups as Systems  
**Readings:**  
1. Kirst-Ashman, Chapter 11.  

**Week 8 – 2/23/04**  
Midterm Exam

**Week 9 – 3/1/04**  
Assessing Organizational Systems  
**Readings:**  
1. Kirst-Ashman, Chapters 5 and 12.  

**Week 10 – 3/8/04 – NO CLASS – ENJOY SPRING BREAK!**

**Week 11 – 3/15/04**  
Assessing Organizational Systems  
**Readings:**  

**Week 12 – 3/22/04**  
Assessing Organizational Systems  
**Readings:**  
1. Kirst-Ashman, Chapters 7 and 8.  

**Week 13 – 3/28/04**  
Assessing Community Systems  
**Readings:**  
1. Kirst-Ashman, Chapter 3.  
Week 14 – 4/5/04
Assessing Community Systems
Readings:
1. Kirst-Ashman, Chapter 4.

Week 15 – 4/12/04
Assessing Community Systems
Readings:

FINAL EXAM – 4/26/04