

SS5212: HUMAN BEHAVIOUR AND DIVERSITY

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Human Behaviour and Diversity

Subject Code

SS - Social and Behavioural Sciences

Course Number

5212

Academic Unit

Social and Behavioural Sciences (SS)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course provides knowledge and understanding, and its application to practice issues of human development and social functioning at the individual, small group, and community/organizational/societal levels through an inter-disciplinary team.

Through the use of both developmental theory and research findings, students explore the complex interrelatedness of individuals and the various systems that comprise their social environment. Particular emphasis is placed on understanding how human diversity, such as race, ethnicity, culture, gender, and socioeconomic factors contribute to and influence personal development and the social functioning of individuals and family systems across life span. Implications for social work practice, and especially for relationship building, are drawn from the process.

This course introduces students to:

- a. explain both the traditional and alternative theoretical perspectives and empirical foundations used to understand human development and behaviour;
- b. identify the biological, psychological, and social systems that influence development for each age group;
- c. describe normal developmental tasks and milestones for each age group;
- d. understand and describe the interaction between the predisposition' s of the individual and the constraints and/or support of the social environment as an essential element in the human development process;
- e. discuss, as appropriate, the differential effects of class, ethnicity, gender, culture, and sexual orientation in the human development process, particularly as it influences our understanding of both the traditional and alternative theoretical perspectives for social work practice.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Explain human growth and development taking into account the interactions of biological, psychological, emotional, and social factors;	20	x	x	
2	Apply concepts of growth and development within the context of a multi-layered, dynamic environment;	25	x	x	x
3	Demonstrate an explicit understanding of principles of critical thoughts, and the ability to reflect on issues and/or theories systematically;	25	x	x	x
4	Evaluate an ethical issue and present a solution in a systematic way;	15	x	x	x
5	Recognize the importance of human diversity and its implications for social work practice	15	x		x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	LTA1: Lecture	Lectures are primarily used to highlight the basic concepts, theories, and empirical findings about human behaviour in individuals and families taking into account biological, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects of human behaviour and experience, which serves as a foundation for generalist social work practice. Providing core information on human behaviour is useful and applicable to knowledge-guided efforts in practice on groups, communities and organizations, and the practicum.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2	LTA2: Experiential Learning Activities	A variety of activities are employed to enhance students' understanding of the themes on various human behaviour theories issues, and the interdisciplinary perspectives of concerns through lifespan. These activities include group project, mutual feedback, and class discussions.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
3	LTA3: Video Illustration	To stimulate students' interest to further understanding the link between person and environment in an ecological way, audio visual materials including television series and movie scripts are used in lectures to demonstrate some unique features of social work values, ethics and other theoretical concepts. Case demonstrations and stories are also used to stimulate students' interest in lectures.	1, 2, 3, 5

4	LTA4: Student Presentation	Student presentations allow students to work as a group to deliver findings of their research project and to share their opinions and thoughts about a chosen related issue across lifespan with the class for deliberation. The aims of this peer-directed activity enhance the students to develop competence in applying knowledge in practice, working as a team, evaluating an ethical issue and presenting a solution in a systematic way, and providing constructive feedback to other groups through cooperative learning.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
---	----------------------------	--	---------------	--

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
<p>1</p> <p>AT1 Individual Paper</p> <p>This individual paper requires students to apply relevant developmental theories and research findings to reflect upon their own developmental stories. In this paper, students will choose 3-5 age points in their lives and 2-3 specific topics from this course, encompassing at least 2 domains from the 3 domains of physical, cognitive, and emotional development. Suggested outline as below:</p> <p>(1) State your developmental stories and life challenges (3-4 pages)</p> <p>(2) Investigate factors that support or affect healthy development in your experiences by applying relevant developmental theories and research findings (3-4 pages)</p> <p>(3) Reflection and insight from your personal experiences (3 pages)</p> <p>The total text</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</p>	<p>40</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>No</p>

2	<p>AT2 Group Presentation</p> <p>Students are required to work in small groups and make a 30-minute presentation with power-point slides. Each group will present on critical developmental needs, contemporary issues and/or life challenges in one of the following stages in the life span: infancy and toddlerhood, early childhood, middle childhood, adolescence, emerging adulthood, young adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood.</p> <p>Students will also lead the discussion and stimulate other students' reflections on various chosen issues. The presentation should critically assess human developmental needs, problems and hazards in different life stages with social work implications, the influence of social environment on human behavior in the Hong Kong context and demonstrate an understanding of how diversity may affect human behavior and development.</p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	30	Allow AI use to brainstorm initial ideas for the group project. Details about the guideline of responsible use of AI is specified in the course outline.	Yes
---	--	---------------	----	--	-----

3	AT 3 Quiz Quiz is designed to strengthen students' knowledge and understanding of the core concepts and theories being covered. It is composed of multiple-choice questions and short questions. Materials covered in lecture notes, textbook and supplementary readings are reviewed.	1, 2	30	-	No
---	---	------	----	---	----

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Individual Paper (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

- a. Ability to identify and summarize personal experiences that related to own developmental trajectories in own life;
- b. Ability to demonstrate self-reflective in learning and to strive for professional competence
- c. Ability to discuss how developmental trajectories influence own life in different areas
- d. Apply developmental theories and research findings appropriately

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B, B-) Significant

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

2. Group Presentation (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

- a. Ability to assess human developmental needs in the given stage in the lifespan;
- b. Ability to assess contemporary issues and life challenges with social work implications;
- c. Ability to demonstrate the influence of social environment on human behavior in the Hong Kong context;
- d. Ability to demonstrate a clear understanding of how diversity (such as culture, race, gender and socioeconomic factors) may affect human behavior and development;

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B, B-) Significant

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

3. Quiz (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

- a. Ability to acquire a good knowledge of concepts

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B, B-) Significant

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

1. Individual Paper (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

- a. Ability to identify and summarize personal experiences that related to own developmental trajectories in own life;
- b. Ability to demonstrate self-reflective in learning and to strive for professional competence
- c. Ability to discuss how developmental trajectories influence own life in different areas
- d. Apply developmental theories and research findings appropriately

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B) Significant

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Moderate

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

2. Group Presentation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

- a. Ability to assess human developmental needs in the given stage in the lifespan;
- b. Ability to assess contemporary issues and life challenges with social work implications;
- c. Ability to demonstrate the influence of social environment on human behavior in the Hong Kong context;
- d. Ability to demonstrate a clear understanding of how diversity (such as culture, race, gender and socioeconomic factors) may affect human behavior and development;

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B) Significant

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Moderate

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

3. Quiz (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

- a. Ability to acquire a good knowledge of concepts

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B) Significant

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Moderate

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

1.1 Traditional paradigm on human growth and development

Life course perspective; systems theory framework; bio-psycho-social-spiritual and cultural theories; human development across the life course: conception, pregnancy, childbirth, infancy, toddlerhood, early childhood, middle childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle adulthood, late life, very late life; end of life care issues;

1.2 Understanding of multi-layered, dynamic environment contexts

social contexts of family, organizational and community systems; human diversity and populations-at-risk; characteristics, structures, and dynamic functioning of individuals and families; assessment of human well-being; importance of human diversity and the impact of discrimination and oppression.

1.3 Shifting paradigms in essential knowledge for social work practice

Social work core competence; theoretical perspectives on well-being, strengths, resiliency, empowerment, dysfunction, oppression, and developmental processes are analyzed critically, especially concerning applicability to a social work practice that supports client strengths, appreciates diversity, and promotes social justice.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Feldman R. S. (2014) Development Across the Life Span, Global Edition. Pearson. ISBN: 9781292157962 8th ed. E-book; 9781292157955(pb)
2	Zastrow, C., & Kirst-Ashman K.K. Understanding human behavior and the social environment (11th edition). International edition. CA Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning. ISBN: 9780495603740 8th ed. and ISBN:9781337556477 11th ed. E-book
3	Arnett, J.J., & Jensen, L.A. (2018). Human development: A cultural approach (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. ISBN-13: 9780134700595

Additional Readings

Title	
1	American Psychological Association (2001). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.). Washington, DC: APA.
2	Ashford, J. B., & Lecroy, C. W. (2010). Human behavior in the social environment: A multidimensional perspective (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning.
3	Hutchison, E. D. (2003). Dimensions of human behavior: The changing life course. Sage Publications, Inc.
4	Kirst-Ashman, K. K. (2008). Human behavior, communities organizations, and groups in the macro social environment: An empowerment approach (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

5	Koenig, T., & Spano, R. (2004). Sex, supervision and boundary violations: Pressing problems and possible solutions, <i>Clinical Supervisor</i> , 22, 3-19.
6	Longres, J. (2000). <i>Human behavior in the social environment</i> (3rd ed.). Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock.
7	Lesser, J. G., & Pope, D. S. (2007). <i>Human behavior and the social environment: Theory and practice</i> . Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
8	McGoldrick, M., Carter, B., & Preto, N. G. (2011). <i>The expanded family life cycle: Individual, family, and social perspectives</i> (4th ed.). New York: Allyn & Bacon
9	Rogers, A. T. (2010). <i>Human behavior in the social environment</i> (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
10	Sheafor, B. W. (Eds.) (2010). <i>Social work: A profession of many faces</i> (12th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
11	Urdang, E. (2008). <i>Human behavior in the social environment: Interweaving the inner and outer worlds</i> (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
12	Walsh, F. (2003). <i>Normal family processes</i> (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.
13	Zastrow, C., & Kirst-Ashman, K. K. (2010). <i>Understanding human behavior and the social environment</i> (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education.