



**COURSE TITLE/SECTION:** SOCW 7397 (21198)  
COMPARATIVE HUMAN BEHAVIOR THEORY

**TIME:** Arranged/Internet

SPRING 2011

**FACULTY:**  
Susan P. Robbins

**OFFICE HOURS:**  
Tuesday 12:30- 1:30 PM by appt.  
Tuesday 4-5:30 PM  
Other hours by appointment

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Phone: 713/ 743-8103

FAX: 713/520-8901

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## I. Course

### A. Catalog Description

Cr. 3. (3-0). Prerequisite: Completion of the foundation curriculum or permission of the instructor. Theoretical knowledge of human behavior in the social environment for social work practice.

### B. Purpose

This course focuses on theoretical knowledge of human behavior in the social environment. A person-and-environment perspective is used to compare and contrast biological, social and psychological theories used in social work practice.

## II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Critically compare and contrast selected biological, social and psychological theories of human behavior that are used in social work practice;
2. Discuss the underlying assumptions about social and economic justice, empowerment and social change from various theoretical perspectives;
3. Discuss the underlying assumptions about human growth and development from various theoretical perspectives;
4. Analyze the ways in which various theoretical perspectives address diversity in individuals, groups, families, organizations and communities
5. Delineate major research issues related to the evaluation of theories; and
6. Describe the ways in which the study of comparative human behavior theory can inform research, policy and practice in social work.

### **III. Course Content**

This course includes content on systems theory, conflict theory, theories of assimilation, acculturation, bicultural socialization and ethnic identity, neurobiology, psychodynamic theory, lifespan development, symbolic interaction theory, feminist theory, and theories of cognitive, moral and spiritual development. The emphasis is on comparing theories and examining their application and utility for evidence based practice.

### **IV. Course Structure**

The course is organized to provide a framework for integrating, synthesizing and critiquing various theories of human development in the context of gender and cultural diversity. Class lectures, discussions, and exams are on delivered Blackboard Vista. Lecture material is intended to supplement, not review, the assigned readings. Because the readings are a major source of learning, students are expected to study this material as it is assigned.

### **V. Textbooks**

#### **Required**

Robbins, S.P., Chatterjee, P. & Canda, E.R. (2006). *Contemporary human behavior theory: A critical perspective for social work* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

All additional required reading assignments will be placed on Blackboard.

### **VI. Course Requirements**

#### **A. Reading Assignments**

A class schedule with all assignments and due dates are below.

#### **B. Written Assignments**

There will be one (1) graded paper required for this class and an associated class presentation. Guidelines for this paper are below.

#### **C. Exams**

There will be one (1) required final examination.

#### **D. Class Attendance, Orientation and Participation on Blackboard**

There is a **mandatory class orientation on Saturday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> from 2:00- 5:00 PM; room TBA.** Students who fail to attend this orientation will be dropped from the class.

I will be using Blackboard Vista for this class and **all class members are REQUIRED to sign onto Blackboard by January 28<sup>th</sup> and check it weekly (at a minimum).** This allows me to have instant communication with everyone in the class. Students will also be required to post a brief introduction and picture of themselves. **Participation in 2 online class discussions will be required,** and you can also earn extra credit towards your final grade if you participate in a meaningful way and contribute more than the required minimum posts. We will discuss this more fully at the class orientation. Students are also required to download and test the Respondus Lockdown Browser prior to the final exam. Students who fail to sign on to Blackboard by January 28<sup>th</sup> will be dropped from the class.

**In-class attendance is required** on three dates that are listed on the class schedule below for the following classes:

- Mandatory orientation
- Midterm paper presentations
- Course evaluations and exam review

#### **VI. Evaluation and Grading**

Grading will be based on the quality of paper and final exam. Grades will be calculated as follows:

Midterm paper **45%**  
Exam **55%**

The following standard grading scale has been adopted for all courses taught in the college.

A = 96-100% of the points	C+ = 76-79.9%
A- = 92-95.9%	C = 72-75.9%
B+= 88-91.9%	C- = 68-71.9%
B = 84-87.9%	D = 64-67.9%
B- = 80-83.9%	F = Below 64%

Please refer to the UH Graduate and Professional Studies catalogue for the university policy regarding a grade of “incomplete.” Incompletes will be given only in accordance with this policy.

### VIII. Consultation

My office is on the third floor of the Social Work Building, room 311, and my office phone number is (713) 743-8103. My E-mail address is **srobbins@uh.edu**

**Addendum:** Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. Please call 713-743-5400 for more assistance.

## Class Schedule and Assignments

### WEEK OF

JANUARY	18-	<u>Lecture 1: Introduction to the Bio-Psycho-Social Perspective and Class Overview</u> Pinker, My Genome, Myself (located on Blackboard) Review Robbins et. al, Ch 1
	24 -	<u>Lecture 2/Exercise: Systems Theory and its Applications</u> Robbins, et al. Ch. 2
	28-	<b>LAST DAY TO SIGN ONTO BLACKBOARD AND POST PICTURE AND INTRODUCTION</b>
	31-	<u>Lecture 3/Exercise: Conflict Theory and its Applications</u> Robbins, et al. Ch. 3
FEBRUARY	2-	<b>DUAL PERSPECTIVE GROUP MEMBERS AND TOPIC DUE</b>
FEBRUARY	7-	<u>Lecture 4/Exercise: Stratification Theory</u> Robbins, et al. Ch. 4
	14 -	<u>Lecture 5/Discussion: Deficiency Formulations of Minority Groups</u> Robbins, et al. Ch. 5
	21-	<u>Lecture 6: The Dual Perspective, Bicultural Socialization &amp; its Application</u> Robbins et al. Review Ch. 5
	28-	<u>Lecture 7/Discussion: Freudian Theory, the Psychoanalytic</u>

Tradition & Contemporary Controversies

Robbins, et al. Ch. 6

- MARCH
- 7 - Lecture 8/Discussion: Erikson, Epigenetic Psychosocial Development; Nature vs. Nurture – the Role of Genetics and Neurotransmission  
Robbins, et al. Ch. 7
- 12 - **MIDTERM PAPER PRESENTATIONS; 2-5 PM Room TBA**  
**MIDTERM PAPERS DUE**
- 14 - **SPRING BREAK**
- 21- Lecture 9: Contemporary Stage Theorists/ GLBT Development  
Robbins, et al. Review Ch. 7  
Tavris. Introduction and Ch. 1 (located on Blackboard)
- 28 - Lecture 10/Discussion: Feminist Theories on Human Development  
Tavris. Ch. 9; Robbins, et al. new chapter on Feminist Theory (both located on Blackboard)
- APRIL  
and
- 4- Lecture 11/Discussion: Symbolic Interaction, Social Construction Social Learning Theory  
Robbins, et al. Chs. 9, 10 & 11
- 11- Lecture 12/Discussion: Contemporary Theories of Cognitive, Moral and Spiritual Development  
Robbins, et al. Chs. 8 & 12
- 18 - Lecture 13/Discussion: Comparison and Evaluation of Theories  
Robbins, et al. Ch. 13
- 25- Review all lectures and readings
- 30- Required in-class meeting for course evaluations and review for the exam 2-5 PM; Room TBA
- MAY
- 4- FINAL EXAM (on Blackboard)  
The exam will be available from 5AM – 11:30 PM

**MIDTERM PAPER ASSIGNMENT**

## THE DUAL PERSPECTIVE THEORY: A COMPARISON OF CULTURES AND CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF ERIKSON'S LIFESPAN THEORY

For this assignment you are to work in small groups of 4-6 persons and choose an ethnic, racial, or cultural group that you would like to learn more about (preferably one that is unfamiliar to all group members). This is a group paper and all members of your group are responsible for the final product submitted to me. The grade will be a group grade.

This assignment will be presented in a two-part paper as described below.

**Part I.** Utilizing the Dual Perspective (Norton, et al., 1978), prepare an outline showing a comparison of cultures that contrasts the nurturing system of your chosen group (in its most contemporary form) with the sustaining system of dominant Anglo society. Your comparison should address all of the following:

1. Structural differences;
2. Differences in values and beliefs;
3. Differences in religious/ spiritual beliefs; and
4. Differences in customs

Part I must be presented in outline form (see the attached handout), and the suggested length is approximately 3-4 pages PLUS a reference list for this section.

**PART II.** Using Erikson's theory of epigenetic life span development, discuss at least one developmental stage or developmental conflict that would be problematic for your chosen culture due to incongruence between your culture's nurturing system and the norms of the Anglo sustaining system, as embodied in Erikson's theory.

In this section you should be critiquing Erikson's theory and looking for theoretical constructs based on dominant Anglo norms that do not apply to your cultural group.

Part II must be written in narrative form, double-spaced, and the suggested length is approximately 2 pages PLUS a reference list for this section. All papers must be typed using an Arial 12 point font and 1 inch margins, contain full references and citations, and the usual rules of spelling and grammar should be followed. **MAXIMUM LENGTH for the entire paper is 6 pages PLUS references. Separate reference lists are required for each section. Internet sources (other than online journals) should be kept to a minimum and references should reflect scholarly articles and/or books. APA format is required.**

You must inform the instructor by the date listed on the class outline as to who your group members are and which racial, ethnic, or cultural group you have chosen to study. The due date for this paper is on the class outline. You will also be giving a class presentation on this date and attendance is required of all students.

### SAMPLE OUTLINE

#### Assignment #2: The Dual Perspective - A Comparison of Cultures

(Adapted from Edward, Palema, Miller & Bishop; cited in E. G. Brown, *Practice with Indian Families*; American Indian Projects, Arizona State University, undated.)

**NURTURING SYSTEM**  
(Native American)

**SUSTAINING SYSTEM**  
(Anglo Dominant Culture)

Social Structure

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Non- status seeking</li> <li>b. Decentralized government;<br/>family/ clan governance are predominant</li> <li>c. Life is family centered</li> <li>d. Extended family</li> <li>e. Frequent, on-going contact with relatives</li> <li>f. Family is a producing unit of society</li> <li>g. Matrilineal orientation</li> <li>h. Loosely constructed rules and regulations</li> <li>i. Decision making is done by consensus</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Status seeking</li> <li>b. Centralized government</li> <li>c. Life is divided between family, work,<br/>&amp; outside interests</li> <li>d. Nuclear &amp; modified nuclear family</li> <li>e. More sporadic contact with relatives</li> <li>f. Family is a consuming unit of society</li> <li>g. Patrilineal orientation</li> <li>h. Legalistic approach to government</li> <li>i. Decision making is done by authority<br/>or by representation</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

Economics

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Depend on food availability</li> <li>b. Sharing of the basics of life; expected<br/>to be taken care of</li> <li>c. Private ownership of land is not accepted</li> <li>d. Work limited to meeting family needs</li> <li>e. Harmony with nature &amp; environment</li> <li>f. Utilize only what is needed</li> <li>g. Slow pace; time sense is rhythmical<br/>&amp; in harmony with surroundings</li> <li>h. Present orientation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Money economy</li> <li>b. Self-sufficiency</li> <li>c. Private ownership of land is promoted</li> <li>d. Work ethic</li> <li>e. Subdue the earth</li> <li>f. Accumulation valued</li> <li>g. Rapid pace; time is an economic<br/>commodity</li> <li>h. Future orientation</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

Family

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Family is work centered</li> <li>b. Family is the first priority</li> <li>c. Discipline is based on threats from<br/>external sources</li> <li>d. Discipline is in the form of threats to physical<br/>well-being or harmony with the environment</li> <li>e. Family shares common dwelling areas<br/>(i.e. hogans, tepees)</li> <li>f. Giving is valued and respected</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Family is activity &amp; support centered</li> <li>b. Family may be placed last</li> <li>c. Discipline comes from the parents</li> <li>d. Discipline is based on withdrawal of<br/>love &amp; support and on spankings</li> <li>e. Separate living space is esteemed<br/>&amp; sought (i.e. one's own bedroom)</li> <li>f. Receiving is often expected<br/>(seen as a matter of rights)</li> </ul> |
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**NURTURING SYSTEM**  
(Native American)

**SUSTAINING SYSTEM**  
(Anglo Dominant Culture)

Family (continued)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g. Orientation to meeting others' needs</li> <li>h. A retiring approach is valued</li> <li>i. Family members are expected to be quiet &amp; respectful</li> <li>j. Dress is modest</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g. Self gratification orientation</li> <li>h. Assertiveness is valued</li> <li>i. Family members are often verbal and challenging</li> <li>j. Dress may range from modest to sexy &amp; is based on individual preference</li> </ul> |
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Communication

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Limited eye contact is expected</li> <li>b. Emotions are controlled; there are no words for many emotions</li> <li>c. A soft speaking voice is expected</li> <li>d. Silence is contemplative and normative</li> <li>e. Affection is not shown publicly</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Direct eye contact is expected</li> <li>b. Emotions are expressed &amp; verbalized</li> <li>c. A more boisterous or louder speaking voice is often accepted</li> <li>d. Talk and sharing are expected</li> <li>e. Open expression of affection is often encouraged</li> </ul> |
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Education

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Formal education is often questioned or seen as negative</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Formal education is supported and highly valued</li> </ul> |
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Time

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Time is a servant of the people</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Time controls</li> </ul> |
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Courtship

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Structured courtship (i.e. Squaw Dance)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Dating, dancing, &amp; free choice</li> </ul> |
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Leisure

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Family centered; members participate as a total family</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Based on the person's skill &amp; interest; often centered away from the family</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

Religion

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Respect for all things</li> <li>b. Based on harmony with nature &amp; environment</li> <li>c. Native spiritual beliefs combined with varying degrees of conversion to Christianity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Respect for authority</li> <li>b. Based on the Bible</li> <li>c. Monotheistic</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

NURTURING SYSTEM  
(Native American)

SUSTAINING SYSTEM  
(Anglo Dominant Culture)



### Death

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Little or no ceremony around the body</li> <li>b. Great fear of the dead</li> <li>c. Ceremonies in memory of the deceased as in the “give- away”</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ceremony over the dead</li> <li>b. Fear of the dead ridiculed</li> <li>c. Few or no ceremonies</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

### **POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM**

Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one’s own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an “I” for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you must set the quote in quotation marks or use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number(s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using any other person’s work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see the instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.