

Birth – Six Years: Early Childhood Development,
University of Pennsylvania
Graduate School of Social Policy and Practice
Social Work Program
FALL 2013

SW 719

Professor Andrew Fussner, M.S.W

afussner@sp2.upenn.edu; 610-299-3039

Description:

This course will concentrate on early childhood development. The students and instructor will explore multiple perspectives from several different theories and practice methods spanning the time frame from the mid-nineteenth century up to the twenty-first century. Understandings of infants and children as another species of animal (4th century B.C.), as a god-like creation (Polynesia), and as a mechanical stimulus/response organism (c. 1920) demonstrate a continuously growing field which currently views the very young child as aware, thinking, and absorbing, being capable of grasping much from the environment and communicating to others (1985). A review of the syllabus and readings illustrates a wide range of ideas encompassing the fields of anthropology, psychology, cultural history, psychoanalysis, family systems, and eco-systems. Beginning with the phenomenon of pregnancy and birth in the first class we will proceed to examine the first year of life in sessions one and two. The third and fourth sessions will be devoted to the second and third years of life as the child is challenged by the acquisition of language and the capacity to walk; both developments are exciting and frightening for the child. In the sixth session we will explore the emotional, intrapsychic, and cognitive phenomenon. Interspersed with visits to day care and head start settings the course will include those significant aspects of context, i.e., familial, historic, cultural and socio-economic which are active components in the life of the child. Delays in development and several ways to interpret and intervene in these seemingly more frequently occurring complex behaviors will be highlighted. Temperament, Moral Development, Trauma, Gender Identity, and the unique manners of Grieving in very young children will each receive individual attention. The majority of the readings are seminal works written by seminal thinkers, researchers or practitioners whose influence on the understanding of early childhood has been long lasting.

This course is a "free elective" which builds on the knowledge of the human life cycle obtained in HBSE 602 and 612 courses, as well as the foundation courses SW

604 and 614. Although this course is not a practice course per se, there will be a generous amount of intervention methods offered to the participants.

Objectives:

1. A solid grasp of the phenomena of growth and development in early childhood.
2. Detailed understanding of several theoretical perspectives on infancy and early development, and an appreciation for the influence of familial, cultural, and socio-economic factors.
3. Gain an understanding of the multiple ways to communicate with and attend to very young children.
4. Articulate those specific contextual processes which are significant to the growth of infants and young children.

Class Format:

1. This is a didactic course. The energy in the class will be devoted to illustrating the ideas in early childhood development. Lecture will be the more dominant method. Student participation through comments, questions, and observations will be a routine feature of the classroom experience as the instructor attempts to create a learning atmosphere which is dialogic as much as instructional.
2. Educational variations will be evident. Use of DVDs, puppets, dolls, scenes from select moments from children's literature and television will be a regular feature in the course.
3. It is anticipated that each student will make three visits during the semester: one visit to a day care setting, one visit to a Head Start classroom, and one visit to a first grade class. These visits will be facilitated by the instructor. The instructor will accompany the students to the visits. The visits will be scheduled during classroom hours.

Readings:

Text: *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, Daniel Stern. Basic Books, 2000.

BlackBoard: There are numerous articles on BlackBoard (SW719). Each week select articles will accompany the topics for class.

Course Requirements:

1. Reaction paper. There will be three visits scheduled during the semester. Each of these sites will initiate the student's writing of a short paper which captures the reactions/observations of the children, staff, and environment. Three pages is sufficient.
2. Student may elect to waive one paper on the visits and offer to do a 10 - 15 minute oral report to the class. If many students select the oral reporting assignment, a lottery system will be implemented.
3. A longer paper will be assigned during the end period of the semester. This paper will be constructed around a case of a child which the instructor will write. The student will write an assessment which explicates the child and context referencing theory or theories from the reading list. A VERY SPECIFIC FORMAT for the paper will be clearly outlined a few weeks before the paper is due. Several pages.
4. Participation in the class will be valued. Questions, comments, observations about the content are considered participation. This instructor places a high value on social workers' speech, as well as writing.

I. Pregnancy and Birth: First Four Months of Life

Readings:

- *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, Daniel Stern M.D., Basic Books, p. 3 – 100.
- “Neonatal Assessment” in *The Course of Life*, Greenspan and Pollack, Editors; T. Berry Brazzleton, M.D., 1980.

II. The Emergent Self:

Daniel Stern’s Paradigm: “Babies” A Documentary about the First Year of Life in Four Different Cultures(2010)

Readings:

- *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, Daniel Stern M.D., Basic Books, p. 100 – 162.

III. + IV. Many Perspectives on Attachment:

Theories based on attachment are very popular at this time in the human services. All the current theories have their origins in a few seminal researchers and practitioners. Charles Darwin, Harry Harlow, John Bowlby, Mary Ainsworth, Margaret Mahler, Anna Freud. Four different videos or video segments will be shown in these two classes.

Readings:

- “General Principles of Expression” in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Charles Darwin, 1862.
- “The Forerunners of the Separation-Individuation Process” in *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant*. Mahler, Pine, Bergman; Basic Books, 1975.
- “Self Reliance and Some Conditions that Promote It” in *The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds*. John Bowlby; Routledge Press, 2008. P. 124 – 149.
- “The Significance of the Early Anxiety Situations in the Development of the Ego” in *The Psychoanalysis of Children*. Melanie Klein; W.W. Norton Press, 1932.

V. Visit to a Day Care Center

(location to be arranged)

Readings:

- “Infant Mental Health Consultation in Early Childhood Classrooms”, authors; Sherryl Heller, Allison Booth, Angela Keyes, and Neena Malik

VI. Fantasy, Fairy Tale, Play and Toy

Readings:

- "Play and Work in Early Childhood" in *Preschool Questions and Answers*. Erna Furman, International Universities Press, 1999.
- "Mastery Play" p. 167 - 171.
- "Symbolic Play" p. 555- 569. Jean Piaget in *Play*. Bruner, Jolly, Sylva, Editors. Basic Books, 1976.
- "Toys" in *Mythologies*. Roland Barthes; Hill and Wang Publishers, 1957.
- "Toys and Reason" in *Childhood and Society*. Erik Erikson, Norton, 1963.

VII. Contextual Influences

Readings:

- "Day Care and Preschool as Contexts of Human Development" in *The Ecology of Human Development*. Harvard University Press. 1979. Uri Bronfenbrenner
- "Economic Deprivation and Early Childhood Development" in *Child Development* Vol. 65, No. 2; Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, Klebanov, authors

VIII. Developmental Delays:

A comparative reading of three diagnostic manuals on the topic of developmental delays, i.e., PDD, Autism Spectrum, Asperger's Syndrome. *DSM5, PDM and ZERO TO THREE*.

Readings:

- DVD Stanley Greenspan M.D. Interviews with two different children and their families

IX. Visit to a Head Start Classroom

(location to be arranged)

X. Right and Wrong: Aspects of Moral Development

Readings:

- "The Development of Moral Judgement" Lawrence Kohlberg in *Promoting Moral Growth from Piaget to Kohlberg*, Reimer, Paolitto and Hersh. Waveland Press. 1983

XI. Temperament:

Within the psychological and educational literature a relatively underappreciated aspect of early childhood development temperamental differences are evident to every parent and teacher.

Readings:

- "The Clinical Interview for Temperament" and "The Concept of Goodness of Fit" in *Temperament: Theory and Practice*, Stella Chess M.D. and Alexander Thomas M.D. Bruner/ Mazel New York 1996.

XII. BOY/GIRL: Perspectives on Gender Identity

Readings:

- "Infantile Sexuality" in *Three Essays on Childhood Sexuality*, Sigmund Freud, 1905
- *In a Different Voice; Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Carol Gilligan, Harvard University Press. 1980
- *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler, Routledge, New York, 1990

XIII. Visit: First Grade Classroom

(Location to be arranged)

XIV. TRAUMA:

The unique manner of children's reaction to trauma at various stages of development.

Reading:

- "The Body Keeps the Score" Bessel van der Kolk in *Psychological Trauma*. Washington, D.C. American Psychiatric Press. 1987

XV. Grief and Mourning in Early Childhood

Observations by John Bowlby, Humberto Nagera, and Anna Freud.