FALL TERM, 2005—INSTRUCTOR: LAURA NITZBERG

OUTLINE FOR SW COURSE #623—IP WITH FAMILIES

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Please contact me at above voice mail number or e-mail to schedule appointments.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

FIRST PAPER DUE: OCTOBER 21, 2005

FINAL PAPER DUE: DECEMBER 9, 2005

GRADING POLICY: EACH PAPER WILL ACCOUNT FOR 45% OF GRADE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE WILL ACCOUNT FOR 10%.

ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED! If you anticipate being absent or have to miss a class, please leave a message on my voice mail informing me of your absence.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS: (available at Ulrich’s)


OPTIONAL BOOK—ON RESERVE AND HIGHLY RECOMMENDED


Coursepack material on reserve.
OPTIONAL AND SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

1. Family Therapy Journals (e.g. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry; The Family Therapy Networker (currently called the Psychotherapy Networker); Family Process; Journal of Marital and Family Therapy; In the Family, etc.

Articles and Books on Reserve—literature will be referred to in lectures and additional readings will be made available to students interested in special issues.

1. Course Description:

This course will build on the content presented in course 540 (i.e. Theory and Practice of Interpersonal Practice). This course will present a theoretical analysis of family functioning and integrate this analysis with social work practice. Broad definitions of "family" will be used, including extended families, unmarried couples, single parent families, gay or lesbian couples, adult siblings, "fictive kin," and other inclusive definitions. Along with theories and knowledge of family structure and process, guidelines and tools for engaging, assessing, and intervening with families will be introduced. The most recent social science theories and evidence will be employed in guiding family assessment and intervention. This course will cover all stages of the helping process with families (i.e. engagement, assessment, planning, evaluation, intervention, and termination). During these stages, client-worker differences will be taken into account including differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other factors. Various theoretical approaches will be presented in order to help students understand family structure, communication patterns, and behavioral and coping repertoires. The family will also be studied as part of larger social systems, as having its own life cycles, and as influencing multiple generations. An overview will be given of current models of practice.

2. Course Content:

Content on the engagement phase will emphasize methods for overcoming barriers to helpseeking that are both internal and external to the family. Students will learn how to identify client-worker differences and how to find common ground with clients. In particular, students will learn methods for engaging the most reluctant family members. Assessment content will draw from the major theories of family functioning and life-span development, as well as meta-theories that address social forces (e.g. sexism and racism). A sampling of reliable assessment measures will be introduced and applied. Goal setting and planning will flow from the assessment of the family, the goals of the family and its individual members, empirical evidence for different approaches, and ethical considerations. A variety of intervention and prevention models will be presented, along with the specific methods and procedures of each model. Included will be work with nontraditional families, couples counseling, and divorce and separation counseling. The role of social work in the primary prevention of family problems will be emphasized (e.g. family life education programs). Methods for the evaluation of intervention and
prevention efforts will be covered, including the use of self-report and observational measures.

3. Course Objectives:

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

1. Articulate a conceptual framework that takes into account individual and family needs, problems and experiences within the family, and resources and opportunities of the social environment. Within such a framework, students will be able to:
   a) identify the normative experiences, risks, and needed tasks as families move through each developmental stage.
   b) discuss these challenges, risks, and tasks as they apply to women, the poor, families of color, and gay and lesbian families.
   c) describe the resources, strengths, and effective family processes across diverse populations including those based on ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, and class.

2. Apply family assessment frameworks that are ecological and family-centered and take into account the influence of oppressive social forces. Such assessments will account for the presence and impact of family violence, the presence and impact of substance abuse, and the impact that the students’ own value system has on their assessment formulations.

3. Establish a professional relationship with family members in order to engage in assessment, goal setting, and planning. The capacity to establish relationships with families will include an appreciation of cultural diversity and the unique strengths of nontraditional families.

4. Identify various models of prevention and intervention and explain the applicability of each model to the challenges faced by families. From an array of family-centered models of practice, students will select prevention and treatment interventions that can be applied to families and their larger social context.

5. Select appropriate outcome measures that are reliable and determined by agreed upon goals in order to evaluate the effects of family-centered interventions.

4. Course Design:

The content of this course will be delivered using a combination of cognitive, affective and experiential methods. Specifically, the design will include lectures, assigned theoretical and practice reading, and discussion (cognitive); exposure to the actual experiences of families in general and to those of particular families, through such media as case materials, videotapes, and client personal descriptions (affective); and role-playing as worker and as family member (experiential).

5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:
• **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be addressed by considering the unique characteristics of families of various ethnic and racial groups and by tailoring engagement, assessment, goal setting, planning, and intervention to these characteristics. Assessment procedures will focus on strengths rather than deficits in family functioning.

• **Social Justice and Social Change** will be addressed through a multi-systems perspective in which students will view the family as a system within, and affected by, a larger social structure. Family assessment will consider the impact of poverty and discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other factors in causing or maintaining families' problems. Traditional solutions to family problems will be analyzed for their potential to maintain oppression. Empowerment models of practice will be stressed, including the involvement of natural helping networks and teaching advocacy skills to families.

• **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** will be addressed by identifying the family functions and processes which are useful for the successful development of its members. Prevention programs will be described that are designed to help the general population and at-risk families to avert problems before they develop (e.g. marital enhancement, parent education, premarital counseling, parent-school linkages, etc.).

• **Behavioral and Social Science Research** will be addressed by discussing the relationship of theoretical and empirical knowledge to family practice, by describing the theoretical frameworks within which practice methods may be carried out, and by identifying and critiquing the techniques and outcomes of evaluation which have been used with each practice method.

6. **Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:**

Ethical dilemmas unique to family work will be presented, such as balancing individual and family goals, contracts regarding confidentiality and record-keeping, and addressing oppressive family structures. Presentation of value conflicts that exist toward families in society will be used to raise the students' awareness of personal and professional values.

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY—ON RESERVE**

1. Walsh and McGoldrick, *Living Beyond Loss*
2. Mirkin, *Women in context*
3. Wachtel, *Treating troubled children and their families*
4. Shapiro, *Grief as a family process*
5. McGoldrick, *Ethnicity as a family process (volumes I and II)*
6. Boyd-Franklin, *Black families in therapy*
7. Walters, Carter, Papp, Silverstein *The invisible web*
8. Man Keug, *Family therapy with ethnic minorities*
9. Papp, *The process of change*
10. Minuchin and Fishman, *Family therapy techniques*
11. Hoffman, *Foundations of family therapy*
12. Minuchin, Colapinto, and Minuchin, *Working with families of the poor*
14. Okun, *Understanding Diverse Families—What Practitioners Need to Know*
15. Laird and Green, *Lesbians and gays in couples and families*
17. McGoldrick and Anderson, *Women in families*

**THEORETICAL ORIENTATION**

The course will be dedicated to enhancing awareness/appreciation for diverse family structures with special emphasis on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race and class. The student will be exposed to the most important theoretical models about family dynamics and the major models of family treatment will be explicated. Issues of oppression and poverty will be ongoing issues for discussion and the predominant goal will be for the student to develop culturally-sensitive assessment skills as well as the ability to tailor treatment plans to individual client/family systems needs. The student will be cognizant of theoretical models as they are relevant to specific diagnoses/problems (e.g. substance abuse, mental illness, chronic medical illness) and students will be expected to make differential applications of treatment interventions based on a bio/psycho/social evaluation. Overarching themes of grief and loss will be discussed as they relate to most clinical presentations.

**CLASS FORMAT**

Each class will have a didactic component and many classes will include videotapes of clinical interviews illustrating the specific models and reflective techniques of the models. Some classes will integrate experiential exercises designed to help students practice these techniques with each other. Guest lecturers who are expert clinicians will be invited to illustrate modern practice in various settings.

**SEPTEMBER 9**

I. Overview of the course
II. Overview of the field of family practice
III. Overview of the different models of family therapy
IV. Discussion of indications/contraindications for family therapy
V. Discussion of systems theory as it relates to social work practice

Readings for next class:
1. McGoldrick and Gerson, Genogram book (this book should be read for the next few weeks in preparation for first paper).

2. Nichols and Schwartz, Part I

**SEPTEMBER 16**

I. A review of systems theory  
II. Use of genograms  
III. Conceptual models (i.e. life-cycle, developmental perspectives)  
IV. Specialized interviewing techniques  
V. Ethnicity, race, gender, culture, class, sexual orientation in assessment and treatment  
VI. The basics of family assessment

Readings for next class:

1. Nichols and Schwartz, Chapters 5, 8, 9  
2. McGoldrick, Revisioning Family Therapy, Part I.

2. Article on reserve: Kerr, “Chronic Anxiety and Defining a Self”

**SEPTEMBER 23**

I. Transgenerational models of family therapy—object relations, Bowenian, Family-of-origin, Experiential  
II. Themes of loss and grief from a multi-generational perspective

Readings for next classes:

1. McGoldrick, Parts II, III, and IV

**SEPTEMBER 30 AND OCTOBER 7**

I. Clinician's use of self and self-awareness in clinical practice  
II. Gender, ethnicity, and culture in helping families with bereavement, adjustment to illness, and life-cycle transitions  
III. Gender and culture sensitivity in practice
Readings for next class:

1. Nichols and Schwartz, Chapters 7 and 10
2. McGoldrick, Part V

**OCTOBER 21—FIRST PAPER DUE**

**OCTOBER 14 AND 21**

I. Structural family therapy and working with families affected by poverty and immigration—A review of theory and specialized treatment approaches (i.e. family preservation models, in-home treatments, ecological perspectives).

Readings for next class:

1. Nichols and Schwartz, Chapters 6 and 12.

**OCTOBER 28**

I. Brief therapy models—strategic, problem-focused, solution-oriented—an overview of theories and techniques

II. Relevance to managed care settings

Readings for next class:

1. Nichols and Schwartz, Chapters 11, 13 and 14.

**NOVEMBER 4**

1. Systemic and Narrative models—a presentation on the Narrative approach

Readings for next class:

1. Nichols and Schwartz, Chapters 15, and 16.

**NOVEMBER 11**

I. A review of major models in the field and their differential and sequential application to practice—a synthesis of class material for final paper
II. Same-Sex Couples and Family Therapy Models

Readings for next class:

1. Couples Therapy readings on reserve in folder in library
2. McGoldrick: Part VI.

NOVEMBER 18

Couple Therapy—an overview of the field—theory, models, techniques, research data

Readings for next class:

1. Gurman and Kniskern, Handbook of Family Therapy, Vol. II (on reserve), Chapters 16 and 17

NOVEMBER 25—NO CLASS DUE TO THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

DECEMBER 2—FINAL PAPER DUE

I. Divorce—epidemiology, statistics, economic/social consequences—implications of divorce on children, physical and mental health

II. Stepfamilies—treatment approaches

III. Mediation and prevention strategies

Readings for December 9th

. Readings from John Rolland on reserve
DECEMBER 9—FINAL CLASS

I. Chronic illness and the Family Life Cycle

II. Mental Illness and Stigma

III. Psychoeducation and support groups

IV. Ethical/Legal issues in the field of Family Therapy

PAPER ASSIGNMENTS

OCTOBER 21—FAMILY OF ORIGIN PAPER

Draw a genogram on your own family or the family of a client with whom you are working. The genogram should focus on at least three generations (including yours, your parents and their parents, your children, if applicable and even more if you have the information). Use McGoldrick’s textbook on Genograms as your guide for the mechanics of drawing the genogram. You will most likely need to contact family members of your own family or your client’s to obtain the necessary data. Include significant dates, illnesses, occupations, striking character traits (i.e. gentle, moody, intelligent) and other significant patterns (i.e. occupations, religions, prevalence of divorces, religious affiliations, illnesses, substance abuse problems) on genogram. You may want to use different colored pencils or plastic overlay sheets to illustrate alliances, coalitions, cut-offs, and triangles. The genogram must be portable, small and carefully drawn. Write a ten-page paper (maximum). This paper should identify and critique major three-generational themes and patterns. Triangles, coalitions, alliances, and cutoffs should be explicated and analyzed. Gender, ethnic, class influences must be addressed and referenced. You must incorporate a theoritical discussion of these cultural themes based on knowledge gained from your readings. You may want to speculate about your role (or your client’s) role in the family system and sibling order must be discussed. Bowenian theory should be described (the theory needs to be succinctly summarized—about two pages) and incorporated (with footnotes) into your analysis and give three examples of how Murray Bowen might have intervened with this family.

DECEMBER 2—FINAL PAPER

This ten-page paper should focus on a current family or couple with whom you are working in your practicum. If you do not have a family currently, you may use a family from past professional experience. If you have not had an opportunity to work with a family, then I will provide you a fictional family to use for your paper. You should describe your agency context, the presenting problem of your client system, the
significant demographics, your treatment plan and what you have done thus far with the case (i.e. what interventions, derived from which models, you have used and have informed your practice). This section should be written concisely and probably be no longer than two pages. The next section of the paper involves your giving a thorough, but succinct, review of Structural Family Therapy, Systemic or Narrative Family Therapy, and Strategic Family Therapy. You should devote about two pages to each model incorporating many readings and references. Finally, you should give three interventions from each model for your case. For instance, how would Minuchin treat your case? These interventions must truly reflect the unique aspects of each model and reflect a thoughtful understanding of your case. Your discussion of your case must incorporate a perspective highlighting cultural, gender, class themes.