**SW 521 - Interpersonal Practice with Individuals, Families and Small Groups**

*Fall 2006*

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**Office Hours:**  
Monday: 12:30-4 pm, Most Wednesdays: 10:00 -11:45 a.m.  
(Other days and times possible by appointment)

**Required Text (on reserve):**


**Required Readings (on reserve and in Ctools):**


COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course presents foundation knowledge and skills essential to interpersonal practice while considering the community, organizational, and policy contexts in which social workers practice. It integrates content on multiculturalism, diversity, social justice, and social change issues, and it relies on the historical, contextual, and social science knowledge presented concurrently in the foundation SWPS and HBSE courses. The student’s field experience and future practice methods courses will build upon the skills presented in this basic course. Throughout this course, students examine social work values and ethics as well as issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and ability as these relate to interpersonal practice.

COURSE CONTENT

Students will learn various social work roles (e.g. counselor/therapist, group facilitator, mediator, broker, advocate and resource planner), recognizing that these roles must be based on an awareness of cause and effect and on the adherence to social work values and ethics. Students will understand the importance of developing relationships with clients, colleagues, supervisors, other professionals, and many other constituencies that make up the organizations in which they work. Students will also learn how self-awareness and the conscious use of self affect the helping relationship.
In this course all phases of the IP treatment and prevention process (i.e. engagement, assessment, evaluation, planning, intervention, and termination) will be presented with attention to how they are applied to work with individuals, families, and small groups. Students will learn to assess problems in clients' lives that relate to attributes of the client (e.g. age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability) as well as situational and environmental factors relevant to the client's social functioning. Students will understand patterns of functioning, to assess strengths and limitations, and to plan, implement and monitor change strategies. Students will learn the importance of evaluating methods of change based on situational effectiveness and on whether their implementation enhances the client's capacity for self-determination and the system's capacity for justice. Various prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation models will be covered as well as various IP skills. In subsequent IP courses, more emphasis will be placed on specialized assessment procedures, evaluation, treatment interventions, and termination.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

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

1. Describe ecological-systems, bio-psycho-social, problem solving, structural, and pathology versus strengths based frameworks in practice with individuals, families, and small groups AND critique the strengths and weakness of these various frameworks.

2. Recognize the impact of race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, power and privilege on interpersonal practice by:
   a. demonstrating self-awareness about how their attributes and life experiences impact on their capacity to relate to others with different personal attributes and life experiences.
   b. describe how others who are very different may perceive them and how status and power issues impact professional relationships with clients, colleagues, and other professions.

3. Carry out the roles of advocate, broker, counselor/therapist, group facilitator, and resource developer and assess the appropriateness of these roles in context.

4. Demonstrate basic interpersonal practice skills including active listening, empathic responding, critical thinking, case recording, and contracting.

5. Conduct culturally sensitive interpersonal practice by:
   a. engaging diverse client systems
   b. employing assessment protocols of PIE, ecomaps, genograms, network maps, and group composition
   c. articulating treatment and prevention goals, developing measurable treatment and prevention objectives, and employing measurement tools to monitor and evaluate practice while maintaining sensitivity to the special needs of clients.
   d. implementing treatment protocols consistent with treatment plans and sensitive to clients' situations
   e. recognizing basic termination issues that pertain to interpersonal practice.

6. Operationalize the NASW code of ethics and recognize value dilemmas that emerge in interpersonal practice.
COURSE DESIGN

Learning happens best in a supportive, comfortable environment. To that end, we will use various methods such as individual exercises, class discussion, and small group work to examine the material presented. We will use PowerPoint, videos, movie clips and song clips to illustrate topics.

My hope is that you will glean basic techniques even within the classroom experience. I will try to highlight basic techniques of reflective listening, attunement and asking questions. Because we will be exploring topics that can raise strong feelings, it is important that you practice listening to and respecting others, especially when strong and/or opposing opinions are offered. Your contributions to a supportive learning environment will be much appreciated.

Two major themes will underlie most of our discussions, though they will not often be reflected in the readings. The first major theme will be: what makes humans who we are? - attachment theory will be presented to help us consider this question. The second major theme will be: what helps people change? Your preconceived ideas about both these arenas will impact how you perceive information in this class. Together, we will explore our ideas and thoughts about “what makes us tick.” This course will be most useful to you if you are willing and able to reflect on your own thoughts, feelings and ideas.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO FOUR CURRICULAR THEMES

(1) Multiculturalism and Diversity will be concentrated in the topics of relationship building, communication, assessment, intervention, termination and evaluation. These topics will explore how the differences between worker and client impact and shape these critical dimensions of social work practice. Critical consciousness about power imbalances between worker and client and between client and agency will also be explored.

(2) Social Justice and Social Change will be central to the topic of various roles assumed by social workers and in clienthood. The focus of the course is on small system change (individual, families, and groups) but the larger social context and implications for change will be embedded in person in the environment (PIE) ecological assessment, and in the experience of applicants as they enter social agencies. These themes will be integrated into this course through the use of case examples and case scenarios that will be selected by the instructor to exemplify skills in practice.

(3) Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation will be themes reflected in various purposes and models of contemporary social work practice. In addition, this course will emphasize skills that can be implemented with promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation as practice goals and outcomes.

(4) Behavioral and Social Science Research will be presented in this course to support practice methods, skills and assessment procedures. Planning, decision-making and intervention procedures will be directly borrowed from the behavioral and social sciences.
RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO ETHICS AND VALUES

Social work ethics and values will be addressed within the course as they pertain to issues related to working with clients and colleagues. The NASW Code of Ethics will be used to give students direction about these ethical issues. In particular, this course will focus on client issues, such as confidentiality, privacy, rights and prerogatives of clients, the client’s best interest, proper and improper relationships with clients, interruption of services, and termination. In addition, issues that arise when working with colleagues, such as referral, consultation, dispute resolution, and mediation will be addressed.

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities and the way that the course is taught can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. The earlier that you make me aware of your needs the more effectively we will be able to use the resources available to us such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, and the like. If you do decide to disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential. Also, please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

(1) Attend each session (5% of course grade); absences will lower your grade since:
   (a) some material considered essential to the objectives of the course will only be presented in class;
   (b) the application of key concepts and student co-learning requires participation in class discussions and exercises.
   (c) predictability, reliability and consistency are core to any strong relationship... “being there” is incredibly important to clients, so it is important in this class
(2) Completion of four assignments (each worth 15%)
(3) Completion of final exam (35%)

TOPICAL OUTLINE

(September 11) Session 1: Introduction - Defining Social Work Interpersonal Practice
(September 18) Session 2: Social Work Interpersonal Practice Frameworks
(September 25) Session 3: Values and Ethics in Interpersonal Practice
(October 2) Session 4: Ethnicity, Culture and Social Work Practice - Working Across Differences
(October 9) Session 5: The Helping Process and Client Coping
(October 16) Session 6: *** FALL STUDY BREAK - NO CLASS ***
(October 23) Session 7: Attachment Theory and Personality Development
(October 30) Session 8: Knowledge and Skills for Assessment and Planning
(November 6) Session 9: Knowledge and Skills for Intervention
(November 13) Session 10: Improving Family Functioning
(November 20) Session 11: Improving Group Functioning
(November 27) Session 12: Knowledge and Skills for Reflective Practice
(December 4) Session 13: Knowledge and Skills for Termination/Self Care in Practice
(December 11) Session 14: Intervention with Larger Systems

SESSION READING ASSIGNMENTS

(September 11)
Session 1: Introduction - Defining Social Work Interpersonal Practice
(B, et al): Chapter 1: Direct practice in social work, pp. 3-27

(September 18)
Session 2: Social Work Interpersonal Practice Frameworks
(W and R): Chapter 1: How Relationships Heal, pp. 3-21

(September 25)
Session 3: Values and Ethics in Interpersonal Practice

OPTIONAL:
Travers: Ethics (p.43); Useful forms and phone numbers, note pps 71 (Consent for video/audio taping), 72 (Consent for communication), 73 (Disclosure statement), 82-83 (Limits of confidentiality) and 86 (Release of information)

(October 2)
Session 4: Ethnicity, Culture and Social Work Practice - Working Across Differences
(B et al): Look at table of contents (pp514-524 in Subject Index) and read sections of the text relevant to the following subjects: discrimination, diversity, empowerment, culture, gender, LGBTQ, privilege, race/racism, sexism, sexual harassment, social (in)justice, and women.

(October 9)
Session 5: The Helping Process and Client Coping
(B et al) Chapter 4: Basic Skills for Engagement, pp. 105-129 (note, reading beyond pg. 129 is optional)
ctools (Seligman) Why How You Feel Matters

(October 16) Session 6: Fall Study Break
(October 23)

**Session 7: Attachment Theory and Personality Development**

Ctools - (Davies) Chapter 1: Attachment as a Context for Development  
(Sroufe) Chapter 12: Behavioral and Emotional Disturbance  
(Mann and Kretchmar) A Disorganized Toddler in Foster Care: Healing and Change from an Attachment Theory Perspective  
Optional (Kobak): The Emotional Dynamics of Disrupted Attachment Relationships

(October 30)

**Session 8: Knowledge and Skills for Assessment and Planning**

(B et al): Chapter 5: Knowledge and Skills for Assessment, pp. 143-175;  
ctools (Hesse) The Adult Attachment Interview (only pp. 396 -411, reading beyond pg. 411 is optional)  
(Rubin) Chapter 6: Watching and Waiting pp. 103 -130

(November 6)

**Session 9: Knowledge and Skills for Intervention**

(B et al): Chapter 7: Knowledge and Skills for Intervention, pp. 215-247  
Chapter 8: Developing Clients Coping Skills, pp. 249 -280  
(Rubin) Chapter 3: The Man with the Beautiful Voice, pp. 36-54  
(W and R) Chapter 4: Making Great Memories: Empathy, Derailment and Growth, pp. 53-65

(November 13)

**Session 10: Strengthening Family Functioning**

(B et al): Chapter 10: Strengthening family functioning, pp. 311-345.  
(W and R): Chapter 9: The Five Good Things in Cross-Cultural Therapy, pp. 151-173  
ctools(Goldstein): Chapter 11: Couple and Family Treatment, pp. 267-285.

(November 20)

**Session 11: Improving Group Functioning**


(November 27)

**Session 12: Knowledge and Skills for Reflective Practice**

(B et. al): Chapter 13: Knowledge and skills for evaluation, pp. 411-443.  
(W and R): Chapter 2: Relational Learning in Psychotherapy Consultation and Supervision, pp. 22 -30.  
ctools (Shahmoon Shanok) The Supervisory Relationship: Integrator, Resource, Guide  
ctools (Heffron) Balance in Jeopardy: Reflexive Reactions vs. Reflective Response in Infant/Family Practice
(December 4)

**Session 13: Knowledge and Skills for Termination/ Self Care in Practice**

(B et al): Chapter 14: Knowledge and skills for termination, pp. 445-468.

(Rubin): Chapter 5: To Live or Die, pp. 81-102

c tools (Jones Harden) *You Cannot Do it Alone*

(December 11) - Final Exam Distributed, Due 12/15 by 5pm

**Session 14: Intervention with Larger Systems**

(B et al): Chapter 12 Intervention with larger systems, pp. 377-409

C tools (Heckman) *The Dollars and Cents of Investing Early*

C tools (Lally) *Good Health, Strong Families and Positive Learning Experiences*