**Course Title:** Interpersonal Practice with Families  
**Division Number:** 778  
**Course Number:** 623 (Section 001)  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Prerequisites:** 540  
**Location:** Advanced Interpersonal Practice Methods Course  
**Instructor:** Leslie Doty Hollingsworth, PhD, ACSW, CSW  
Class Meets: Mondays 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM  
**Place:** 2752 School of Social Work Building (SSWB)  
**E-mail Address:** lholling@umich.edu  
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**Office Hours:** Weds., 8AM-11AM or by appointment

1. **Course Description:**

This course will build on the content presented in course SW 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.

7. Source Materials:

A. Books & Articles


B. Journals

*Families in Society*
*Family Process*
*Family Therapy Networker*
*Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*
*Journal of Family Psychology*

**Required Written Assignments**

1. **Weekly Reading/Written Assignments.** Written assignments are due every week at the beginning of the class session coinciding with the assigned reading(s) for that week. Late submissions require instructor approval to receive credit. It is essential to keep up with assigned readings as other learning experiences coincide strictly with these readings. The format of the assignment may vary slightly. The following procedures should be followed:

   a. Where questions are listed at the end of chapters that are required readings, answer all questions for all chapters assigned. (This is true for the Lawson and Prevatt text and for any other reading assignments that are accompanied by questions to be answered.)

   b. Where readings are assigned that do not contain questions, please develop three questions that arise for you in the course of doing the assigned readings. You should address your questions to the entire assignment. Therefore, if a reading assignment contains two chapters, neither of which is followed by questions, distribute the focus of your questions among the two chapters.

   c. Where a reading assignment contains one or more chapters with questions at the end and one or more chapters without questions, read the entire assignment but only answer the questions provided. In this instance, you do not need to develop additional questions. When developing questions, briefly mention: your question, what stimulated the question, and what your own thoughts are in response to the question.

   Questions will be graded according to the completeness and thoroughness with which the content is addressed, along with requirements for written assignments [65% of grade/65 points or 5%/5 points total per assignment].

2. **Final Integrative Paper.** Complete an analysis, in writing, of a video of a family session. (The videotaped session and the analysis questions, and the basis for grading (in addition to the requirements for written assignments), will be distributed later in the term [35% of grade/35 points]).

Requirements for written assignments: Daily and final assignments must be typewritten and must reflect correct spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and citations.

**Attendance and Participation**
It is my desire that your experience in this course will be beneficial to you in your future practice as a social worker. Therefore, I will make every effort to facilitate your success in the learning experiences that have been incorporated by 1) providing didactic and experiential encounters that have been found useful in social work practice with families; 2) providing a supportive learning environment; and 3) being clear regarding expectations of you in the course. Please call to my attention any questions or lack of clarity regarding any of the assignments.

Because this is a skills-development course, prompt attendance at, and participation in all class sessions is essential. SW 623 is the only course offered in the School for preparation for advanced social work practice with families. It is assumed you will attend all class sessions and that you will participate in the required class activities (described below). Absence from more than 2 class sessions will result in an automatic deduction of 5 points from your final grade for each missed class session. Students who must miss class for medical reasons, beyond the two allowed, have the alternative of requesting a grade of Incomplete for the semester. Failure to participate in any of the three required experiential learning activities (serving as practitioner, serving as family member, and serving as a member of a reflecting team) will result in an automatic deduction of 5 points from your final grade.

Grade Calculation

A = 95-100 points; A- = 90-94 points; B = 85-89 points; B- = 80-84 points; C = 75-79 points; C- = 70-74 points; D = 65-69; D- = 60-64; F = 59 and below.

Required Reading


**Required Additional Reading Sources (SW Library Reserve):**


Course Philosophy and Format

Within the past decade, the field of family intervention has moved from a modernist era, where the focus was on the family as a group with problems that had something done to it by an expert problem-solving practitioner, to a post-modern era where the focus was on the family as its own expert. In these collaborative models of intervention, the role of the practitioner is to facilitate the family’s rediscovery of its own expertness. These models are especially appropriate for families that are socially, politically, and economically disenfranchised since they are received as collaborators in the practice arena. While this is a substantial shift in paradigms from theoretical models of the 1980’s and before, these newer models did not arise independently. Instead, they evolved on the shoulders of models that came before. I consider it important, therefore, that students not only become familiar with the knowledge, values, and skills of these newer models, but that they familiarize themselves also with the earlier models on which the more collaborative methods were built. Finally, I believe families do not exist in a vacuum but within cultural, economic, political, and social systems that influence family functioning and well being and the functioning and well being of family members. It is therefore important that students learn how these systems influence families and the implications for practice outcomes and for policy.

The format of this course is established according to the above philosophy. We will begin the course with a brief discussion of the progression of the field in this regard (including the contribution of the social work profession to family theory and practice), move to a discussion of whether and why the focus on family relationships (rather than on individual functioning), and consider how families and the individuals in them develop differentially in view of their cultural, economic, political and social contexts. Each week, you will be assigned one or more chapters in the text or a required supplementary reading on a topic or model relevant to family intervention. Most chapters will include detailed case material. You will be asked to read the assigned reading and to answer the questions as written at the end of the chapter or to develop questions that can be used for future class discussion and hand them in before that class period ends. Sixty-five percent of your total grade will be based on this assignment. The purpose of this assignment is to provide students with a general familiarity with the theoretical elements of each topic or model and with how these are played out in practice. Students desiring more in-depth study regarding any of these are referred to the recommended readings from which lectures for specified dates will be developed.

We will begin each class session after the first in the Clinical Suite. Small groups of 4 – 5 participants each will be formed in the first session. Each small group should form itself into a role play family. Diversity among family forms is strongly encouraged. Each role-play family should develop a scenario that will be acted out in the family role-play situation. In developing role-play scenarios, please pay attention to the statements in this syllabus regarding Course Content and Objectives, and the
Relationship of the Course to the curricular themes having to do with multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice. Family member roles taken by participants should be consistent with the participants’ own gender and participants should use their own names.

Each class member is expected to take one turn as family member, social worker (individually or as co-practitioner), and member of a reflecting team. Family role-play scenarios will be acted out in the interviewing room of the clinical suite. Remaining class members will observe through a one-way mirror. Role-plays may be videotaped. When one or two class members are serving as social work practitioner(s) in a family role-play scenario, the remaining members of those persons’ small group will serve as the reflecting team. The reflecting team pays special attention to the role-play and gives special thought to how it is proceeding, what works and what may be helpful. About mid-way into the session, the reflecting team (at an appropriate time) will enter the interviewing room and will talk together about their observations and suggestions. The interviewing practitioner(s) and family members may ask questions, after which the reflecting team members will return to the observation room and the interview will continue, hopefully utilizing the input of the reflecting team. Reflecting team members are encouraged to focus on strengths during their reflections.

I will begin this process by serving as practitioner to the first family. The entire class will serve as the reflecting team and the family and I will come into the observation room to receive the class’ input.

After a 15-minute break (10:30 – 10:45 AM), the class will reconvene in SW 3752. We will begin with a brief discussion of the previous role-play, thoughts for beginning the next session, and selection of family and practitioner(s)/reflecting team for the next session, as appropriate. Lecture material will be incorporated in this discussion where relevant. The remainder of the class will be devoted to observing and discussing relevant video segments, discussing and/or practicing methods presented in assigned reading for the day, and other activities as appropriate.

The last class will be Mon., April 16, 2001. The final paper is assigned to provide an opportunity for students to apply what they have learned to an actual case situation. There will not be a final exam. The paper is due at 5:00 PM on Monday, April 23, 2001. In fairness to other students, a penalty of 5 points must be assigned for every 24 hours or fraction thereof that a paper is late.

Course Outline

Mon., January 8, 2001 – Introductions, review of syllabus, philosophy of the course, orientation exercise(s), formation of small groups, history and development of family intervention, including contributions of the social work profession, videotape.

Recommended Reading:
Goldenberg & Goldenberg (2000): Chapter 5: Origins and Growth of Family Therapy

Mon., January 15, 2001 – Celebration of the Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – Class will not meet – Reading Assignments will be due on January 22, 2001, along with the assignments for the January 22, 2001 class. Orientation to Family Social Work practice
Required Reading:

Goldenberg & Goldenberg (2000): Chapter 1: Adopting a Family Relationship Framework. (Course Pack)


Required Reading:

Lawson and Prevatt (1999), Chapter 14: Current Issues and Trends in Family Therapy (written by Herbert Goldenberg and Irene Goldenberg).

Recommended Reading:

Becvar & Becvar (2000): Chapter 3: The Paradigmatic Shift of Systems Theory; Chapter 4: Postmodernism and Family Therapy


Required Reading:

Kilpatrick & Holland (1999):
Chapter 1: Levels of Family Need (Written by A. C. Kilpatrick);
Chapter 2 – An Ecological Systems-Social Constructions Approach to Family Practice (Written by T. P. Holland & A. C. Kilpatrick.)

Goldenberg & Goldenberg (2000):
Chapter 2 – Family Development: Continuity and Change;
Chapter 3: Gender, Culture, and Ethnicity Factors in Family Functioning”.

Recommended Reading:

Franklin & Jordan (1999):
Chapter 12: Gender issues in family therapy.

Carter & McGoldrick (2000):
*Chapter 1: Overview: The Expanded Family Life Cycle;*
*Chapter 4: Culture and the Family Life Cycle;*
*Chapter 5: Social Class and the Family Life Cycle;*
*Chapter 6: Women and the Family Life Cycle*


**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**

Kilpatrick & Holland (1999): *Chapter 11, pp. 171-191*

**Mon., Feb. 12, 2001 – Narrative Therapy (continued)**

**Required Reading:** In *The Family Therapy Networker, 18:*

O’Hanlon, pp. 19-26, 28-29
Epston, pp. 31-37, 62-63
Nylund & Thomas, pp. 38-39
Wylie, pp. 40, 42-48
Wylie, pp. 48-49.
Treadway, pp. 50-56, 64.


**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**

Franklin & Jordan (1999): *Chapter 5: Solution-Focused Brief Therapy*
Kilpatrick & Holland (1999): Chapter 9, pp. 139-154.

Mon., Feb. 26, 2001 – Spring Recess – Class will not meet. No reading assignments.

Mon., March 5, 2001 – The Social Constructionist Models: Collaborative Conversational Approaches

Required Reading:

Lawson & Prevatt (1999): Chapter 11: A Postmodern Collaborative Approach to Therapy (Written by Harlene Anderson, J. Paul Burney, and Susan B. Levin.)

Recommended Reading:


Mon., March 12, 2001 – Intergenerational Models of Family Intervention

Required Reading:

Lawson & Prevatt (1999):
Chapter 2: Integrated Intergenerational Family Therapy
Chapter 3: Integrative Couple Therapy

Recommended Reading:

Goldenberg & Goldenberg (2000): Chapter 8: Transgenerational Models

Mon., March 19, 2001 – Structural and Social Learning Models of Family Intervention

Required Reading:

Lawson & Prevatt (1999): Chapter 5: Structural Family Therapy

Recommended Reading:

Franklin & Jordan (2000): Chapter 4; 6.
Kilpatrick & Holland (1999): Chapter 7; 8.

Mon., March 26, 2001 – Humanistic, Experiential Methods of Family Intervention
Required Reading:

Lawson & Prevatt (1999):

Chapter 6: The Brief Therapy Approach of the Palo Alto Group, and
Chapter 7: The Humanistic Approach of Virginia Satir

Recommended Reading:

Becvar & Becvar (2000): Chapter 8: Experiential Approaches

Mon., April 2, 2001 – Systemic and Strategic Family Intervention

Required Reading:

Lawson & Prevatt (1999): Chapter 8: Milan Systemic Therapy; Chapter 9: Strategic Therapy

Recommended Reading:

Franklin & Jordan (1999): Chapter 3: Mental Research Institute (MRI), Strategic, and Milan Family Therapy.

Mon., April 9, 2001 – Psychoeducational Family Intervention

Required Reading:

Lawson & Prevatt (1999): Chapter 1: Contextual Therapy
Lawson & Prevatt (1999): Chapter 13: Psychoeducational Family Therapy

Recommended Reading:

Franklin & Jordan (1999): Chapter 7: Psychoeducational Family Therapy.
Goldenberg & Goldenberg (2000): Chapter 14: Psychoeducational Family Therapy
Mon., April 16, 2001 – Outcome Research and Ethical Considerations

Required Reading:

Goldenberg & Goldenberg (2000):
Chapter 15: Family Therapy Research;
Chapter 17: Professional Issues and Ethical Practices;
Appendix C: AAMFT Code of Ethics

Mon., April 23, 2001 – Final Papers are due by 5:00 PM