THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  

COURSE TITLE: Interpersonal Practice with Individuals, Families and Small Groups  
DIVISION NUMBER: 792  
COURSE NUMBER: 521  
CREDIT HOURS: 3  
PREREQUISITES: None  
LOCATION: Foundation Methods Course  

Fall, 2001
Brett Seabury

1. 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.

2. Course Content:
   Students will learn various social work roles (e.g., counselor, 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, termination.
3. **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:
   - 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.
   - 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:
   - engaging diverse client systems
   - employing assessment protocols of PIE, ecomaps, genograms, network maps, and group composition
   - 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.
   - implementing treatment protocols consistent with treatment plans and sensitive to clients’ situations
   - 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.

4. **Course Design:**

This course will employ a number of pedagogical strategies to promote skill development such as: gamed simulations, case analysis, interactive media simulations, exercises in vivo, practice within the classroom through role playing, didactic presentation of theory/models/procedures, modeling with demonstration on video, etc.

5. **Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:**

   - **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.

- *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 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.

- *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.

- *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.

6. **Relationship of the Course to Social Work 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.

7. **Topical Outline:**

**A. Unit One: Presentation and critique of assumptions and frameworks underlying contemporary interpersonal practice:**

1. Ecological-systems
2. Bio-psycho-social
3. Problem solving versus Solution Focused
4. Pathological versus strengths base
5. Disease model versus Events/stress Perspective
6. Structural

*Hepworth, Rooney, Larsen (TEXT):
Part of Ch 1, pp. 17-23.


Derezotes, Part III: Intervention Paradigms: The Four Forces of Social Work

Lum, Chapter 2: Ethnic-Minority Values and Knowledge Base, Chapter 3: A Framework for Social Work Practice with People of Color

Saleebey, Part I: The Philosophy, Principles and Language of the Strengths Perspective

“University of the Poor,” http://www.universityofthepoor.org/indexflash.html

B. Unit Two: Values and Ethics in interpersonal practice:
1. Codes of Ethics – NASW, ABSW, International SW, Canadian SW etc.
2. Value conflicts with clients, agency, community, and society
3. Recognizing, clarifying, and resolving competing values
4. Adjudication procedures of NASW code violations

*Hepworth, Rooney, & Larsen (TEXT)

*Schneider & Lester (TEXT) Chs. 1 & 2, pp. 1-55; 56-85.

*NASW Code of Ethics, revised August, 1996 in Student Guide.

*NABSW Code of Ethics, http://ssw.unc.edu/professional/NABSW.html


C. Unit Three: Multicultural Issues and Competencies in interpersonal practice:

1. Intrapersonal awareness (critical consciousness and self understanding of diversity issues – age, race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, disability; awareness how attributes and life experiences impact on the workers ability to relate to others with different personal attributes and life experiences)

2. Interpersonal awareness when worker and client are from diverse backgrounds (sensitivity to relationship barriers, awareness of differences in verbal and non-verbal interaction, bridging diversity and finding common ground, awareness of how clients will perceive and react to differences between themselves and their workers)

3. Power dynamics in interpersonal practice (status hierarchies in the helping relationship, agencies, and communities; ageism sexism, racism, ableism, classism, and heterosexism in practice)

Anderson, M & Collins, P. eds, Race, Class and Gender, New York: Wadsworth, 1994:
Sucheng Chan, "You're Short, Besides!" pp 374-380.
McIntosh, Peggy, "White Privelde and Male Privelde: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies," pp 76-86.
Smith, B., "Homophobia: Why Bring It Up?" pp. 414-417


Center for World Indigenous Studies http://www.cwis.org/


*J. Daniels ed., Letters to America, Detroit, MI: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1995:
Espada, Martin, "Jorge the Church Janitor Finally Quits," p. 86.
Young, Al, "A Poem For Players," p. 199.
Ngee-Chinn, Daryl, "Skin Color From The Sun," p. 46.

http://www.lib.umich.edu/cgi-bin/pqissues?27868


D. Unit Four: Interventive Roles of interpersonal practice:

1. Advocate (case, class, internal and external advocacy; identifying and assessing the support and resistance of decision makers; from gentle nudge, persuasion, bargaining, to adversarial tactics; principles of documentation of the issue, client involvement, least contest, escalation of tactics, avoiding no-win contest, etc.)

2. Broker (needs vs. wants; knowledge of formal, informal and indigenous resources; linking and cementing strategies, etc)

3. Group Facilitator (types of leadership, impact of race, gender, social status on member perception of leadership, effective and ineffective leadership moves, responsibilities of group members, effective and ineffective teamwork, etc.)

4. Counselor/therapist (direct/non-directive styles; active listening and empathic responding; partializing and goal focused assessment; basic intervention tactics, etc.)

5. Resource Developer (needs and wants of clients, knowledge of service delivery systems, promoting resources and opportunities, mobilizing support and implementing connections between users and resources, etc.)

*Hepworth, Rooney, & Larsen (TEXT):
Ch. 2, “Direct Practice: Domain, Philosophy, Roles,” pp. 25-34.
Ch 15. Developing Resources, Planning and Advocacy as Intervention Strategies (pp.448-455)

1. **The Broker:** (needs vs. wants, knowledge of formal, informal, and indigenous resources, linking and cementing strategies)

   Michigan COMNET can be accessed through the School of Social Work’s web page (http://www.ssw.umich.edu/) or directly (http://comnet.org/gw/index.html)


2. **The Advocate:** (case, class, cause, external and internal advocacy; types of advocacy, assessing support and resistance to change; change tactics from gentle nudge and persuasion to bargaining and conflict; basic principles of successful advocacy)

   *Schneider & Lester (TEXT): Chs. 4-9, pp. 115-334.


E Unit Five: Basic Interpersonal Practice Skills:
1. Active listening
2. Empathic responding
3. Contracting
4. Case Recording
5. Critical and Creative thinking

*Hepworth, Rooney, Larsen (TEXT):

*Schneider & Lester (TEXT): Ch. 3, pp. 93-114.

Compton and Galaway, (TEXT) Chapter 8: Relationship for Social Work Practice (pp.263-297)
    (esp. Addie Morris, Four Pennies to My Name: What It's Like on Welfare (pp.298-306));
Chapter 9: Communication and Interviewing for Social Work Practice; Chapter 11: The Contract Phase: Joint Assessment, Goal Setting and Planning (pp. 395-423)


Dunlap, Richard, "Typical Gaffes and Faux Pas. . . ."
F. Unit Six: The Service/Treatment Sequence:


1. Engaging diverse client systems:

   a. from applicant to client

   Garvin & Seabury (TEXT), Ch 5 & part of Ch 6, pp. 107-126 & 127-145.


   Perlman, Helen Harris, "Intake and Some Role Considerations," Social Casework, 41, April 1960, pp. 171-177.


   b. the group proposal:


   *Hepworth, Rooney, & Larsen (TEXT):
   
   
   Ch. 9, “Assessing Intrapersonal and Environmental Systems,” pp 219-258.


**a. Crisis Assessment/Intervention:**


Golan, N., Treatment in Crisis Situation, Ch 4, pp. 59-89.


   Ch 10 by Hess & Ruster, "Assessment and Crisis Intervention with Clients in a Hospital Emergency Room," pp. 196-220.


b. Suicide Assessment:

*Hepworth, Rooney & Larsen (TEXT): Part of Ch 9, pp. 238-240.


Hoff (Text), Chs. 6 & 7; pp. 167-210, 211-232.


3. The treatment/prevention plan, generating measurable case objectives and time limits that can be written into agency based forms, differentiating between client-centered goals, objectives, and tasks

*Hepworth, Rooney & Larsen (TEXT):
   Parts of Ch. 12, “Negotiating Goals and Formulating a Contract,” pp. 327-339; 348-356.

Garvin & Seabury (TEXT), Ch 7, pp. 153-171.


4. Evaluation procedures/protocols that fit the treatment/prevention plan such as Goal Attainment Scales (GAS), Visual Analogue Scales (VAS), Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF), Subjective Units of Discomfort Scale (SUDS), Hudson Scales, etc

*Hepworth, Rooney & Larsen (TEXT):

Garvin & Seabury (TEXT) Ch.12, pp. 285-305.


5. Implementing treatment protocols that are consistent with treatment/prevention plan and sensitive to client’s situation such as Task Implementation Sequence (TIS), crisis intervention, suicide prevention, Critical Incident Stress Debriefing, uncovering and supportive procedures

*Hepworth, Rooney, Larsen (TEXT):
  Ch. 13, “Planning and Implementing Change-Oriented Strategies,” pp. 359-398.


G. Unit 7: Family Assessment and Intervention:

*Hepworth, Rooney, & Larsen (TEXT):

H. Unit 8: Termination, transfer, and evaluation used to end the treatment sequence such as rituals/ceremonies to deal with transference issues, planning to maintain changes in the Client System, Client Satisfaction Questionnaires, etc.


Grading Mechanisms
This course will employ two grading mechanisms – log assignments and a final, in-class test. 50% of the final grade will be determined by logs and 50% will be determined by the final test. The log assignments are graded by the number completed. Students will receive an A for submitting 5 logs, a B for submitting 4 logs, a C for submitting 3 logs, a D for submitting 2 logs, and an E for submitting 1 log. One log will be completed in September, two logs will be completed in October and two more will be completed in November. Late logs will result in a penalty of ½ a grade. The average log is between 2-3 pages in length and describes the student’s efforts to operationalize and discuss course concepts. The descriptions of potential log assignments are presented below, and the first log assignment is required of all students:

*1. ETHNIC ROOTS: The starting point for engaging in ethnic sensitive practice begins with self awareness of our own ethnic roots. This assignment is designed to help you learn more about your own ethnic roots and about the ethnic roots of others. Each of you should identify what you consider to be a significant ethnic root from your formative years. After selecting one root (many folks have several) go to the Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups edited by Thernstrom AND also McGoldrick, Giordano, and Pearce, Ethnicity and Family Therapy (either 1st or 2nd edition) and look up what experts say about your ethnicity. Once you have read these sections, surf the Web to find sites that provide others kinds of information about your ethnic root. After collecting all of this information, you are to critically analyze what the experts say about your ethnicity. How similar and different was your own life experiences from what is described in these texts and websites? This written assignment will be due in the first week of October and will be brought to class. This information will be shared in class as we explore the various ethnic roots of our class.

2. CROSS CULTURAL COMPETENCE: This log uses the information that you have gained from the first log assignment and places it into the context of practice when you will be relating to others (client, co-workers, supervisors etc.) who may be from a different ethnic/racial background. Immigration has increased significantly over the past decade. Over half the residents of NYC were born in other countries, and white Americans are no longer a majority in the State of California. Ethnic sensitive practice requires social worker to be aware of some of the conflicts that may arise when they are interacting with people from different ethnic backgrounds. Using the course texts mentioned in log # 1 above or other resources you find on the Web, take two ethnic groups that are very different from your own roots and describe the kinds of potential misunderstandings, barriers, and issues that may arise when you are interacting with these two groups. You can assume that these people will be clients, residents of a community, or co-workers in your field placement.

3. VALUES IN PRACTICE: Analyze the canned case on "values" by discussing the value issues that you see in this case situation. Take a position either for or against the actions taken in this case. Identify the ethical issues, including the social work values and duties that conflict. Identify the individuals, groups, and organizations who are likely to be affected by the ethical decision. Tentatively identify all possible courses of action and the participants involved in each, along with possible benefits and risks for each. Thoroughly examine the reasons in favor of and opposed to each possible course of action. Consider the following issues that we discussed in class or you discovered in your readings: ethical theories, principles, and guidelines; codes of
ethics and legal principles; social work practice theory and principles; personal values (including religious, cultural, and ethnic values and political ideology), particularly those that conflict with your own.

4. RELATIONSHIP: Analyze the canned "negative" case example that was handed out in class. Describe major mistakes and omissions that this worker has made. Be warned that there is not one redeeming intervention on the social worker's part. Critique this interview from what you know about first interviews and forming a relationship with an individual client who is different from the social worker. What should the Social Work Profession do about colleagues who practice so insensitively?

5. ECOMAP/PIE: Sit down with a client or someone that you do not know very well and draw that person's ecomap with them. Remember that this process works best if you use a large piece of paper (like newsprint) and felt tipped pens of various colors. Try to be as comprehensive as possible by capturing all significant connections in that person's life at that point in time. After you have completed the person's ecomap, superimpose on each of the cross hatched lines (++++) and on each of the dotted lines (-------) the PIE codes for the particular trouble that has been identified by your subject. Briefly describe how the process went, what you and that person learned from this experience, and what your reactions are to this kind of assessment procedure. Include a copy of the ecomap, but delete identifying information.

6. ACTION: In this log assignment you are to engage in some kind of political or social action during the semester. In class we will be discussing the various kinds of social actions that social workers engage in with others in order to change institutional and social arrangements that impact negatively on our clients and ourselves. The context of this action can be UMSSW, the University of Michigan, or larger systems such as legislative bodies or governmental units. In this log you should describe the “action” and your participation. Explain the goal of the action and who the action was designed to influence. How many folks participated in the action, and how did you assess the impact (success or failure) of this action to achieve its goal? How would you classify this action – collaborative, persuasive, bargaining, adversarial? Why are social workers prohibited from participating in violent actions?

7. BROKERAGE: Listed below are ten general problem areas that social workers see with clients in their daily practice:

A. Domestic Violence   D. Suicidal Behavior   G. Family Problems   J. Etc.
B. Substance Abuse     E. Unwanted Pregnancy   H. Unemployment
C. Marital Discord     F. Alcoholism          I. Homelessness

Choose two (2) of these problem areas and locate two (2) different resources or agencies in a given geographical area that are designed to serve the two problem areas that you have selected. After you have located four resources, then contact each and determine specifically what applicants go through in applying for services. Collect the following information from each resource:

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1. Who is eligible for their services (note restrictions)?
2. How quickly can they provide their services (waiting list)?
3. Specific procedures that applicants must complete when applying for services (forms, examinations, tests etc.).
4. General procedures that this resource employs to help clients deal with their problems (e.g. group counseling, lobotomy etc.).

8. ADVOCACY: Throughout life we have the opportunity to advocate for others and for ourselves. Choose one of these life situations and analyze it by applying concepts that we have discussed in successful advocacy. What kind of advocacy situation was involved (case, class, internal, external)? What kinds of risks were you facing? What was the issue and objective? Were you able to mobilize support for your position from significant others in the organization? What kinds of tactics did you employ and what kinds of counter-tactics did the organization employ? What was the outcome of your efforts?

9. EMPATHY: In a small group of three or four of your classmates, complete the Milnes & Bertcher, Verbal Empathic Responding exercises (I-VIII). You may borrow the audio tape and workbooks from me and someone in your group will have to bring an audio tape player. The exercises take about three hours to complete in a small group and are designed for practitioners who have had little or no prior training in empathic responding. After you have completed this training experience, write up a brief paragraph describing your reactions to these various exercises.

10. CLIENTHOOD: By using your own life experiences as an example, recall an experience in which you were requesting help from some kind of human service organization. Try to remember what happened to you and what your feelings were when you applied for services. What aspects of the application process got in the way of getting help? What kind of screening did you go through? Did you have to build a "good case" to receive services. Were there problems that you wanted help with that were ignored (or screened out) in the intake process? Were there any procedures that you felt were demeaning, embarrassing, or dehumanizing?

11. CONTRACTING: Try out the Task Implementation Sequence (TIS) described in HRL (pp. 368-381) on a client or a willing friend who is having trouble following through on a task that s/he wants to accomplish. Briefly describe your client or friend (no identifying information) and the task they wanted to complete. Describe how you operationalized the five steps of TIS with your subject. For TIS to be most effective you must complete all five steps with your subject. Comment on your subjects reaction to this procedure and whether s/he was successful in completing the task.

12. CRISIS ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION: Apply crisis theory to one of your cases. Was your client in "Active Crisis?" What were the hazardous events or conditions that were going on in the client's life? How did the client try to cope with these events and was s/he successful? Was there a precipitating factor and was it realistically perceived by the client? What kinds of interventions did you take that were consistent with the models discussed in class - i.e. did you stay event focused and help the client reconnect with natural support systems? Did
you employ catharsis and help the client to mobilize his/her problem-solving capacities? If you do not have a good case for this log, you may substitute the interactive video - "Crisis Counseling: I Am Chipper!" which you can complete on-line (http://www.ssw.umich.edu/faculty/bseabury/). If you complete Chipper, you will have to take the on-line quiz and pass with a grade of B or better in order to get credit for completing this log assignment.

13. SUICIDE ASSESSMENT: Apply one of the suicide assessment scales or interviewing protocols to one of your clients - past or present. How lethal or risky was the suicidal situation? What other risk variables were most important to your assessment of the situation? What measures did you take to defuse the situation? If you do not have a client to use for this log you may analyze a literary figure like Willie Loman in Henry Miller’s Death of a Salesman. Describe how you might have intervened in Willie's life to prevent his suicide. This play has been performed for modern audiences by Dustin Hoffman and is on video tape. You may also choose other films (e.g. Ordinary People) in which suicide is a central theme to the plot. You may also complete this log by going on-line and doing the tutorial on “Suicide Assessment: Rube Farmer.” In you complete Rube, you will have to take the on-line quiz and pass with a grade of B or better in order to get credit for completing this log assignment.

14. SOCIAL NETWORK MAP: Complete a social network map and grid on one of your clients or interview one of your new acquaintances or classmates. Be sure to disguise identifying information. You and your subject should look over the map and grid and identify any patterns that emerge. Do the amount and kinds of support represented on the map reflect any vulnerabilities for your subject? Has your subject recently moved and left behind significant sources of support? Should your subject be working on increasing various forms of social support? Can you and your subject see any culturally specific forms of help giving that are reflected in your subject's map? For example, is most social support connected to religious affiliation or is most connected to immediate family members and not relying on external sources of support?

15. GROUP PROPOSAL: Long before the first session of a group, there is a lot of planning activity that must go on in the agency to assure the success of a group service. In class, I presented an outline of an agency based proposal for group services. Using this outline as a guide, write up a specific proposal for a group service that you could implement in your field placement. Also discuss in this proposal the organizational considerations that you would have to take into account in your agency. For example who on your staff would be favorable, indifferent, and opposed to the idea of your group? Who must approve your proposal and who must you get support from in order to implement your group? What kinds of strategies would you employ in order to win support for your proposal – collaboration, persuasion, bargaining, adversarial? How would you avoid such pitfalls as “turf protectionism,” “hoarding clients,” and “sabotage”? On a scale of 1-10, what is the feasibility of this group being implemented by you in your present field placement?

16. FAMILY ASSESSMENT: Choose a family from your field experience (or from a piece of fiction or movie) and operationalize the major concepts from the typology of family conditions
presented in Chapter 10 of Hepworth, Rooney, & Larsen text. Some of these concepts may be hard to operationalize if they are not portrayed in the film that you choose or you have not obtained this information from your family in the field. Please tell me what piece of fiction or movie you are using for your analysis. If you use a case from your field placement, please to eliminate or disguise any identifying information from your analysis.

17. ETC: If you are not particularly thrilled by the selection of log assignments that I have presented above, then I want you to feel free to develop your own learning experiences that relate course concepts to your professional practicum or life experiences. I only ask that you check out your Etc. log with me before you do it. This not only gives me some warning but also allows me to react and be helpful to your ideas before you expend energy doing it.

**Final Test**

The final test will be conducted during the scheduled test day at the end of the semester in December. This in-class test will be composed of short answer questions and multiple choice questions. The test is not designed to test a student’s memory, but instead is designed to test a student’s ability to apply course concepts to practice examples. Before the final test, a study guide will be handed out in the class that lists the various concepts and readings that may be covered by the final test.