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, socio-economic state, age, religion, and ability as these relate to interpersonal practice.

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.

**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 weaknesses 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.
   c. recognize the role of privilege in one’s ability to assess needs and intervene in the helping process.

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 and culturally competent 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.
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. Multicultural content will be infused throughout the course especially in the assessment and intervention phases of the change process.

- **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.

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.
Source Materials

Required text:

Coursepack of required readings available at Excel.

Course Design and Expectations:

This course will use a combination of lecture, class discussion, case material, role plays, group discussion, and video material as appropriate. Students are expected to attend all classes. The instructor must be notified in the event of absence, and more than 2 unexplained absences will result in a reduction of your grade. Assignments are expected to be turned in on time and are to be typed, double spaced, edited, with correct spelling and written in professional style. Class participation is strongly encouraged and worth 10% of your grade. If for cultural or other personal reasons you find class participation to be difficult, please see me.

Class Requirements:

There are three assignments for this class. The purpose of these assignments is to promote a sense of personal efficacy in approaching the profession of social work. These assignments are designed to offer you a range of choices, so that they will be personally meaningful.

Assignment 1: Due Tuesday, September 25, 2001
This is a 3 to 5 page paper describing your visions of yourself as a social worker. This is a confidential paper, designed to help you gain a greater understanding of the motivating factors behind choosing a graduate level course of study in social work, as well as your strengths and weaknesses as you think they might affect your professional career. This paper must include references to your:
1. ethnicity
2. cultural background
3. socio-economic status
4. gender
5. race
6. sexual orientation
7. power and privilege
as they have affected your career choice, and how you expect them to influence your work in the field. The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to be introspective and obtain a deeper understanding of your authentic self. Taking this risk in the classroom setting will hopefully begin a process that will become an integral part of your professional life. Please conclude your paper by creating your “dream social
work position” of the future, and tell why this would be your optimal choice based on your strengths and weaknesses.

This assignment is worth 20% of your grade.

Assignment 2: Due Tuesday, October 23, 2001

Read and critique a book of your choice on a topic related to course content and your practice method concentration. Your critique should be 5 to 6 pages in length and should include the following information:
1. Your reasons for choosing this book
2. A brief summary of the book: no longer than 2 paragraphs
3. To what readership the book is directed
4. How does this book address social work from an ecological perspective?
5. Is this book based on a particular theoretical framework?
6. How does this book address issues of multiculturalism and social justice?
7. How does this book address issues of values and ethics?
8. Discuss the book’s strengths: this should include what you liked about the book as a social worker and strengths for its readership
9. Discuss the book’s weaknesses: this should include your hesitations about recommending this book to clients, other social workers, etc.
10. General discussion of the value of the book from a social work perspective.

Please do not use long quotations from the book, or talk extensively of the book’s content other than in relation to the above criteria. Required texts from other classes are not acceptable. All book selections must be approved by me prior to completing the assignment.

This assignment is worth 30% of your grade.
Assignment 3: Due Tuesday, December 4, 2001

This is a research project. You have a choice of two different formats for this project: an in-class presentation, or a paper. Your task for this project is to identify a particular issue area such as AIDS, homelessness, childhood poverty, mental illness, trauma, or family violence, and follow the criteria listed below for the project:

- Fact finding: using at least 10 sources cited in a bibliography, summarize your findings about the issue: present this information as if you were teaching it to someone with little or no knowledge of the subject (4 to 5 pages)
- Social work issues: discuss the social work interventive skills needed to address this issue at multiple levels: macro, mid and micro. (4 to 5 pages) These issues will be highlighted throughout the semester, and will be expected to be incorporated into this paper.

If you choose to do an in-class presentation, it should include all of the information mentioned above and submitted in outline form with a bibliography to me. Please arrange a date with me for your presentation. We will do presentations the last few weeks of class.

This assignment is worth 40% of your grade.

Grading:
The requirements listed above are the minimal expectations for class assignments, and if followed precisely will result in an “A-” grade for the assignment. Grades higher than “A-” will be given to work that has gone above and beyond the minimal qualifications. This would reflect more thorough, thoughtful and thought provoking work on your part. This will be discussed in detail in class. Feel free to ask questions about this policy!

Assignments that are turned in late will result in an automatic reduction in the grade.
Course Schedule:

**September 11, 2001**
Overview of course
Class introductions
The Big 7

**September 18, 2001**
NO CLASS

**September 25, 2001**
Strengths Based, Ecological Perspective
Generalist Social Work Practice

Required Readings:
Text: Introduction, Prologue, Chapter 1
Coursepack: pages 1-63
   - Generalist Social Work Practice
   - The Ecosystems Perspective
   - Two Mothers

Assignment 1 due.

**October 2, 2001**
Values and Ethics in Interpersonal Practice

Required Readings:
Text: Chapter 8
Coursepack: pages 64-100
   - The Social Worker as Moral Citizen, Susan Manning
   - Do Social Workers Have a Duty to Warn? Kopels and Kagle
   - NASW Code of Ethics
October 9, 2001

Multicultural Issues and Competencies

Required Readings:
Text: Chapter 3
Coursepack: pages 101-154
- Alienation an Anger, Cannon and Heyward
- You’re Short, Besides!, Chan
- A Poem for Players, Young
- If Marilyn Monroe, Romero
- On the Subway, Olds
- Sand Nigger, Joseph
- Skin Color from the Sun
- Jorge the Church Janitor Finally Quits
- Poem for the Young White Man...., Cervantes
- Powwow, Arnett/Gogisgi
- Oppression, Frye
- Homophobia, Why Bring it Up?, Smith
- Race Matters, West

October 16, 2001

Multicultural Issues, con’t.
Social Justice

Required Readings:
Coursepack: pages 155-194
- White Privilege and Male Privilege, McIntosh
- Listening to Middle Aged Women Talk About Their Lives, Butler
- Shifting the Center, Madrid
- The Plight of Black Men, Dyson

October 23, 2001

Assumptions and Frameworks Underlying Contemporary Interpersonal Practice

Required Readings:
Text: Chapters 4,5,6,9,10,11,12
Coursepack: pages 195-199 The Heroic Client, Duncan and Miller

Assignment 2 due
October 30, 2001

Basic Interpersonal Practice Skills

Required Readings:
Text: Chapters 16, 17, 18, 19

November 6, 2001

Interventive Roles

Required Readings:
Coursepack: pages 214-259
  *On Being K'ed*, Patton
  *My Most Challenging Case*, Family Therapy Networker
  6 articles by Pipher, Treadway, Pittman, Straus, Black and Madanes
  *The Importance of Risk Management in a Managed Care Environment*, Harris

November 13, 2001

The Service Treatment Sequence:
  Engagement
  Assessment Protocols
  Treatment Planning

Required Readings:
Text: Chapter 2, 7
Coursepack: pages 260-271 *Diagrammatic assessment of family relationships*, Hartman

November 20, 2001

The Service Treatment Sequence:
  Termination
  Evaluation

Required Readings:

Coursepack: pages 272-295
  *Measures for Practice for Families from a Strengths Perspective*
  *Design Evaluation: Illuminating Social Work Practice for Better Outcomes*
  *Termination in Direct Practice*
November 27, 2001

Groups

Required Readings:
Coursepack: pages 296-318
  *Types of Groups*
  *Defining the Term: Group*

December 4, 2001

Families

Required Readings:
Coursepack: pages 319-345 *What Ever Happened to Huckleberry Finn?*

Assignment 3 due

December 11, 2001

To Be Determined