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

Fall 2001 (Section 005)  Professor Jane Hassinger  7611015  jahass@umich.edu
Office Hours: TBA

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, 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.

(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.

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 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.
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.

REQUIRED TEXTS
(available at Common Language Bookstore, 215 S. Fourth St, 6630036)


ADDITIONAL READING ASSIGNMENTS

- Course Pack is available on reserve in the Social Work Library

- Each S-R group will choose one or more of the following memoirs or works of fiction to read as a group and use as inspiration for a journal entry and a group presentation later in the semester. Those starred (*) are available at Common Language Bookstore. Many will be available in the library, at bookstores such as Borders and Barnes and Noble, and in my own collection. Other works may be acceptable substitutes as long as they are approved by the instructor.


Account of the childhood and adolescence of a woman raised in the 1950’s and 60’s who experienced a mental breakdown and recovery.


*Two or Three Things I Know For Sure*, 1995, Penguin Books

These two autobiographical works tells of the violent and impoverished early life of the author and deal with themes of abuse, gender, and sexual orientation.
A narrative about the life of a bright and resilient Southern Black girl, Ruthie, and her survival through many experiences of abandonment, abuse, and racism.

This memoir offers a vivid account of the author’s experience growing up with a brother who suffers from schizophrenia; deals with the impact of mental illness on the family and the development of siblings.

A memoir about a young woman’s struggle with an eating disorder.

An ethnography which explores the world of residents in and out of a shelter community; emphasizes struggles with mental illness, addiction, and poverty.

A depression memoir which focuses on challenges of dealing with mental illness in the African-American community, single-parenting, medications, and employment.

*DeMilly, Walter A., In My Father’s Arms: A True Story of Incest*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1999
A memoir about the author’s early experience of father-son incest and its consequences.

A fictional account of family life with a mother with bi-polar illness, told through the eyes of her daughter.

This memoir tells the story of the author’s struggle with her biracial heritage and the psychological and social impacts of racism.

*Hooks, Bell, Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self Recovery*, South End Press, 1993
A part self-help book, part reflection on parenting practices in African-American Communities, part memoir which deals with the reverberations of slavery and racism on the Black women’s identities.

A memoir which explores the struggles of a young woman to separate from her highly pathological family and the dilemmas she faces in her young adulthood when her parent becomes seriously ill.


A remarkable first person account of horrible abuse, neglect, and hospitalization of an adolescent girl.


This memoir describes the impact of hidden drug addiction in the life of a family.


A gripping account of the impacts of racism, alcoholism, and poverty in the life of the Native American author and his community.


A story about a woman’s experience of domestic abuse and escape.


The author describes her relationship with an elderly homeless woman.


This author tells an engrossing tale of family life in Post-WWII, emphasizing the intergenerational impacts of alcohol and mental illness.


An account of the long-term traumatic sequelae of sexual assault.


This short novel tells the harrowing and inspiring story of an abused African-American girl named Precious. After becoming pregnant she escapes to a shelter where she learns to read and write, thus liberating her own voice. Emphasizes themes of resilience, creativity, the incredible power of mentorship, and love.


A dramatic depiction of the power of sexist and heterosexist ideology and its relationship to pathologizing difference. The author describes her commitment to a mental hospital as an adolescent for failing to fulfill her parents expectations for appropriate femininity.


An extremely well-written memoir which explores the challenges involved in providing care for elderly and sick parents.
The author grew up with two brothers, both diagnosed with schizophrenia.

This memoir is written from the perspective of a therapist (though she also has written elsewhere about her experiences with her own mental illness) who tells the stories about her patients and their remarkable struggles to overcome their illnesses.

Smith, Jeffery, *Where Roots Reach For Water: A Personal and Natural History of Melancholia*, North Point Press, 1999
This is a depression narrative that also offers considerable insight into the nature of melancholia; the author is a man who describes his own struggles as well as those of his wife and family in living with his years of depression.

A history of several generations of a Puerto Rican family; focuses on secrets and illness.

The author describes the unique experience of growing up as a hearing child of deaf parents—the burdens she faces and her exquisite sensitivity to the world of her parents and their community.

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS** (on reserve)
Pinderhughes, Elaine; *Understanding Race, Ethnicity, and Power: The Key Efficacy in Clinical Practice*, Free Press, 1996.
McWhirter, Ellen; *Counseling for Empowerment*, American Counseling, 1994

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES** (on reserve)
McGoldrick, Monica, John Pearce, and Joseph Giordano, eds., Ethnicity and Family Therapy, 2nd ed., Guilford, 1996.
COURSE DESIGN AND PHILOSOPHY

My approach to both practice and teaching reflects influences of feminist and multicultural critiques of cognitive and psychodynamic theories and approaches to human growth, development, and change. I believe that the success of our work together relies largely on our ability to create a safe, collegial, and respectful class in which all students are actively involved in setting agendas; sharing experiences; exploring your emergent theories about practice; and engaging in self-exploration and revelation. Our classroom can become a site for mutual aid and the beginnings of enlightenment, a model for other sites for learning and collaborating in each of our professional futures. We will emphasize the development of a critical consciousness about ourselves and our social environments that includes an understanding of the operations of power and privilege and their relationship to race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and other categories of difference. The following themes are recurrent throughout the class:

- the ingredients of ethical, professional interpersonal practice
- the ability to articulate the features of one’s own emergent style and approach to practice as well as to identify the influences of one’s own personal, situated-history and experience on one’s work with others
- the development of a critical consciousness about theories of practice and the settings professional/political circumstances in which we do our practice
- the building and maintenance of helping and empowering relationships across multiple practices domains—individual, couple, family, and group therapies; organizational consultation and supervision, social service management, collaboration with colleagues in social work and other professions, etc.

Students will address these themes through the use of experiential learning methods in and outside of class, personal reflection journaling, and individual and small group research projects and presentations. We will frequently engage in experiential learning tasks, some of which will be planned and facilitated by students. For our class to work well, regular attendance and participation are essential. If you know that you will not be able to attend class, please let me know in advance whenever possible.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

A. Search-Research Groups
During the first week of class, students will become members of Search-Research groups (approximately 6 students) which will work together over the semester on skill development and “use of self” work. Over the semester, each S-R group will work with a client (a composite client with identifying details well-disguised) in order to explore the work of engagement, need assessment, diagnosis, resource identification, and identifying appropriate treatment options. Additionally, each S-R group will select and read one or more first-person account or work of fiction that is representative of the issues addressed in Social Work practice. Each group will be responsible for a class presentation during November or December that will include an exploration and discussion about how the work reflects issues related to culture, class, ethnicity and race, gender and sexual orientation, mental health, social competency and empowerment, and other dimensions of personal and social functioning.

An analysis of the dilemmas addressed in the narrative should include a culturally-sensitive understanding of the narrator’s world view, sense of self, sense of membership and participation in sub-cultures, access to and use of resources and power. The presentation should also explore hypothetical role(s) and treatment approaches of the social worker and other care-givers that might be appropriate and useful for this person or family system. Models such as psychodynamic (including long-term and brief individual or group), cognitive t, feminist, empowerment, family systems, task-focused individual or group therapies may be considered.

The narrative(s) should be selected and read by the second week in October in order to provide adequate time for S-R group discussion and presentation planning.

Groups will be responsible for preparing a bibliography and a set of reading assignments: ideally three relevant articles or book chapters—for our class (to be read for the date of the group presentation). Reading assignments are due on October 29 for all groups. An outline of material to be covered and a bibliography should be provided or all students on the morning of the presentation. Each group will work to insure a fair distribution of effort and clear task assignments.

Presentations that focus on treatment approaches, either as they are represented in the text(s) you read or as your group would choose as a “treatment of choice” for the problems addressed in the book(s). The group should review the model’s origins, its central premises about human beings and psychological growth and change, its objectives, the basic methods, and the roles of therapist and clients, and the significance of the therapeutic relationship. Groups should offer critical appraisals of the models’ strengths, shortcomings, and utility across various client groups and problems.

B. Final Paper

Each group member will be responsible for writing a 10–15 page paper, due on December 3, in which you describe a case with whom you are working (or have worked). Disguise all potentially identifying client characteristics and data. Describe the client’s understanding of the presenting problem(s) and what s/he believes is needed to solve the problem(s). Pay particular attention to contextualizing the client’s dilemmas in terms of age, income, education, family status, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, health, and religion. Your paper should include a discussion of the client’s previous efforts at solving the problem(s), the circumstances of her/his initial contact with the agency, and any ethical conflicts related to your work with this client. You will be asked to make a careful assessment of client strengths and impairments in terms of psychosocial
development, social relations, capacity for learning, solving problems and work, patterns of relationships, and the client’s characteristic interpersonal and emotional style. Environmental, economic, and cultural factors that impact on the client and his/her problem(s) should be explored. Additionally, the relationship that the client develops with you and you with her/him should be examined with particular attention to the ways in which each participant may be influenced by personal history and culturally-based schema about factors of difference. Further criteria for this assignment will be provided later in the semester.

C. Finally, you will be asked to keep a Reflection Journal in which you can discuss your reactions to the readings, class discussions, and assignments. The journals should also focus on your (emerging) theories about practice. It can be place for asking questions of yourself and to me, to “think on paper” about aspects of your developing practitioner identity, style and your theoretical preferences. Reflection journal entries should also be responses to questions I will pose in class. Your journals will be most useful if you make a commitment to writing twice each week. I very much appreciate entries that engage me, as though in conversation, about the intellectual and personal challenges you encounter in this course. Please type your journal; email is fine.

Journals are due on Sept. 24, Oct. 29, and Nov. 26.
Please address the following questions in your journals as well as reactions to your readings:

Journal #1: What are some of the formative experiences in your life that have brought you to professional education in Social Work? Illustrate your circumstances (material circumstances and aspects of your social identities) at a particularly significant time in your life and/or around the time at which you made your decision to apply to Social Work schools by means of an eco-map.

Journal #2: What have you been learning in your S-R group exercises about the ways in which your interpersonal style and your reactions to others reflects your personal history and gender/cultural circumstances? What challenges do you observe to your abilities for listening, hearing, and understanding what others are saying that may relate to your history as your social identities-status? Please share any observations you may have about the dynamics of your group and how those may reflect or contain elements of your own personality assets and challenges.

Journal #3: Discuss your reactions to the “memoir-assignment. What was particularly gripping to you about this person and his/her experiences? How did you feel about this person as the story unfolded and at the end? How are your reactions in some way reflective of your own cultural and family history? How has your reflection on this character and the associated dilemmas and family circumstances influenced your thinking or contributed to your knowledge, skills, and sensitivity as a social worker? How is this story relevant to clients and/or other people you have known closely or otherwise?

D. Summary of Assignments and Dates

Your class grade will be based on participation in and completion of the following:
Attendance and class participation  %10
S-R group exercises and discussions  %15
Participation in class presentation  %15
( readings for class due 10/29 to JH and SW Library reserve desk )
Journal entries (9/24, 10/29, 11/26)  %30
Final paper on practice model (12/3)  %30

N.B.: If all of these assignments are adequately completed the student will receive a "B." Higher grades will reflect extra effort and exemplary performance.

CLASS SCHEDULE

September 10  Introductions to Course & Participants
The Person of the Social Worker: Multiple Identities and the Experience of the Self

September 17  Fundamental Values & Ethics/Development of Critical Consciousness

* Beth Glover Reed, Peter A. Newman, Zulema E. Suarez,

Edith A. Lewis, "Interpersonal Practice Beyond Diversity and Toward Social Justice: The Importance of Critical Consciousness" pp. 44-78 in Garvin & Seabury


* Doman Lum, Social Work Practice & People of Color: A Process-Stage Approach, 3rd Ed., Chpt. 1. (CP)

September 24  Toward Ethical, Culturally-Competent Practice
Journal #1 due

* Maryka Biaggio & Beverly Greene, “Overlapping/Dual
### September 31
**Creating Empowering, Therapeutic Relationships**

* L. Shulman, Part II: Social Work with Individuals, pp. 39-134
* Ellen Hawley McWhirter, Counseling for Empowerment, pp. 3-30 CP

### October 8
**Listening, Hearing, and Understanding**

* B. C. Murphy & C. Dillon, Chpt. 2, “Getting Started”, pp. 21-53, in IBID. CP
* Susan Lukas, Chpts. 1-3, 6, 8-9, 11 pp. 1-43, 78-86, 101-127, 138-152.

### October 13
**Relationship Skills in Context**

* Doman Lum, Chpt. 4, pp. 119 – 157 CP

Bruce Friedman, “Systems Theory” in Theory and Practice
October 22
Assessment
Contextually, Culturally-Relevant
Project topics due

**Priscilla Ellis & Bianca Cody Murphy, “The Impact of Misogyny and Homophobia on Therapy with Women”, in Women In Context, Marsha Pravda Mirkin (ed). pp 48 – 76. CP


**Maria Root, “Mixed-Race Women” in Women of Color: Ethnic and Gender Identities in Psychotherapy, pp, 455--478. CP

October 29
Assessment: Alternatives, Challenges,
Approaches
Guest tba

*Lukas, Chpts. 10, 12--14, pp.128-137, 153-17

**Doman Lum, Chpt. 6, pp 191 - 230  CP

*Antoinette Zeiss & Ann Steffen, “Behavioral and Cognitive-
Behavioral Treatments: An Overview of Social Learning, " in A Guide to Psychotherapy and Aging:

November 5  The Humanistic Group as a Site for Learning & Growth
Marvin Parnes, (guest lecturer)

L. Shulman, Part IV (pp. 595-710)**


November 12  Special Issues/Challenges to the Eclectic SWer

*Sidney Grossberg and Jerrold Brandell, “Clinical Social Work in the Context of Managed Care”,

IBID, pp. 404-422. CP


November 19  Social Work with “The System”

Shulman, L., Part V, pp. 711-801

November 26  Group Presentations #1 & 2

Journal #3 due  Readings TBA

December 3  Group Presentations # 3 & 4

Paper due  Readings TBA
December 10  Group Presentation #5 End of Semester Celebration