COURSE TITLE: Interpersonal Practice with Children and Youth
DIVISION NUMBER: 778
COURSE NUMBER: 625
CREDIT HOURS: 3
SEMESTER: Winter 2002
INSTRUCTOR: Mary C. Ruffolo, Ph.D., ACSW
Associate Professor
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1. Course Description:

This course will examine practice theories and techniques for working with children, adolescents, and their parents. This course will provide grounding in the following perspectives: attachment/transactional theory, child and adolescent development, and parenthood, including ethnic/cultural variations in child rearing practices. The interaction between environmental risk factors, protective factors, and developmental factors as they contribute to coping, resiliency, and disorder will also be covered. Major clinical concepts including assessment, treatment planning, work with parents, and developmentally appropriate engagement and intervention techniques will be addressed. This course will be organized in terms of the sequence of development and will cover clinical issues and treatment approaches relevant to each developmental stage.

2. Course Content:

This course will present prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation models appropriate to interpersonal practice with children and youth in a variety of contexts. Content will focus on the early phases of intervention, including barriers to engagement that may result from client-worker differences, involuntary participation on the part of the child, youth, or family, and factors external to the client-worker relationship, such as policy or institutional decisions that may influence or shape the therapeutic relationship. Since the intervention strategies taught in this course rely significantly on the social worker as a critical component of the change process, attention will be paid to the understanding of self as an instrument in the change process. A variety of methods for engaging children, youth, and their families (or other caretaking adults such as foster parents) will be presented. Assessment content will emphasize client and caretaker strengths and resources as well as risks to child or youth well-being that may result from internal or external vulnerabilities caused by trauma, deprivation, discrimination, separation and loss, developmental disability, and physical and mental illness. Particular attention will be paid to cultural, social, and economic factors that influence client functioning or the worker’s ability to accurately assess the child, youth, or family.

Content on treatment planning will assist students in selecting interventions which are based on a thorough assessment, appropriate to the child’s or youth’s situation, and sensitive to and compatible with the client’s and family’s expressed needs, goals, circumstances, values, and beliefs. Summary descriptions of developmental stages (i.e. infancy, toddlerhood, preschool age,
school age, and adolescence) will be presented in terms of developmental characteristics and milestones, salient developmental challenges, and themes such as self-esteem and the development of peer relationships. This information will form the background for discussions and case examples which illustrate the relationship between development and behavior, including communication and relational capacities and the necessity of selecting developmentally appropriate intervention techniques (e.g. the use of displacement techniques, such as play or drawing, with preschool children). Most frequently these techniques have as their goal the reduction of psychological distress and the improvement of individual functioning and interpersonal relations. Helping parents or other caretaking adults to understand the child’s or youth’s issues or behavior in developmental terms will also be discussed. A range of intervention approaches will be presented such as individual play therapy, family therapy, conjoint treatment of parents and children, cognitive behavioral interventions, group work, parent training, and parent guidance. Since work with children and youth almost always requires multiple intervention modalities, attention will be given to creating effective intervention plans through the integration of different modalities. Those intervention methods which have been empirically demonstrated to be effective will be given particular emphasis. Methods for monitoring and evaluating interventions will also be discussed and demonstrated in this course.

3. Course Objectives:

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

1. Describe and apply a number of assessment procedures (e.g. direct observation of or interviews with the client, parent or caretaker, and collateral contacts with teachers, caseworkers, or other professionals) that identify internal and external risk and protective factors that may affect children and youth.

2. Describe the primary developmental tasks and characteristics of childhood and adolescence as they relate to the selection and implementation of developmentally appropriate techniques for engaging and treating children and youth.

3. Identify the ways in which continuity or disruption in primary care relationships may impact children, adolescents, and the therapeutic relationship.

4. Conduct and write up an assessment that includes information on the child’s physical, emotional, and cognitive development, temperament, relationship history, and performance as the basis for formulating an understanding of the child’s presenting problems and circumstances.

5. Implement research supported prevention and intervention strategies (e.g. play therapy and parent training) that are compatible with client and family or caretaker goals, needs, circumstances, and values.

6. Monitor and evaluate interventions with regard to: effectiveness, sensitivity to client-worker differences; impact of clients’ and families’ social identities (i.e. race/ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, religion) on their experience of power and privilege; and appropriateness of the intervention to specific client needs resulting from conditions such as maltreatment, deprivation, disability, and substance abuse.

4. Course Design:

The instructor will select required and recommended readings. Class format will include lecture, discussion, case analysis, in class role plays and viewing of videotapes. Written assignments will integrate theory, research, and case analysis, and when possible, the student’s practicum work.
5. **Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:**

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be addressed through discussion of client-worker differences and power/privilege differentials based on culture, ethnicity, race, gender, and social class. Case examples of intervention and readings will reflect this theme.

- **Social Justice and Social Change** will be addressed through discussion of differences between problems responsive to interpersonal practice interventions and those which result from poverty, discrimination, and disenfranchisement, requiring systemic as well as individual interventions. Advocacy for disadvantaged, deprived, victimized and underserved or inappropriately served children and youth and their families will also be emphasized.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** will be addressed through discussion of early intervention, parent guidance, and advocacy as methods of preventing or mitigating later developmental problems. Discussions will also emphasize intervention theories and techniques which support the child’s or adolescent’s developmental potentials.

- **Behavioral and Social Science Research** will be addressed in relationship to the selection, monitoring, and evaluation of assessment and intervention methods with specific emphasis on current research in the areas of developmental psychopathology, attachment, risk, resiliency and coping, trauma, and maltreatment. Students will develop skills necessary to critically evaluate intervention theories and approaches used with child and youth populations.

5. **Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:**

Social work ethics and values in regard to confidentiality, self-determination, and respect for cultural and religious differences are particularly important when working with children and youth. Social workers working with children and adolescents often need to make critical intervention decisions which may have to balance risks to the child’s or adolescent’s safety or emotional well-being with their need for ongoing connection to their families and communities. This course will cover the complexities of ethical dilemmas as they relate to work with child and youth populations and the ways that the professional Code of Ethics may be used to guide and resolve value and ethical issues.

**Course Required Textbooks and Readings:**

Required:

Recommended:
Additional required readings for this course are on reserve in the School of Social Work Library and also available at EXCEL (1117 South University).

Students are expected to have completed the readings prior to the class session in which the readings will be discussed. Students will be asked to share reflections from the readings in the class session.

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

- **Assignment #1:** Social Work Clinical Assessment Paper (Due: Feb. 18, 2002) 20%
- **Assignment #2:** Social Work Intervention Plan (Due: March 18, 2002) 20%
- **Assignment #3:** Social Work Clinical Evaluation Plan (Due: April 1, 2002) 20%
- **Assignment #4:** Clinical Intervention Resource Portfolio (Due: April 15, 2002) 15%
- **Class Participation and Presentation of Resource Portfolio** 5%

Grades are earned by successfully completing the work on the assignments and by attending and participating in class.

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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A+</td>
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Please note: Incompletes are not granted unless it can be demonstrated that it would be unfair to hold the student to the normal limits of the course. The student must formally request an incomplete with the instructor prior to the final week of classes.

Students with specialized learning needs are requested to make an appointment with the instructor to see to necessary arrangements.

All assignments are to be completed by the date due. Exceptions will need the permission of the instructor. At least one letter grade will be deducted for late submission of assignments.

Students are to use APA format style in their written assignments. Assignments will be considered unacceptable and returned for revision with a late penalty if:
- APA format style is not used correctly
- the assignment has not been developed in accordance with the guidelines
- if the assignment does not provide appropriate attribution of authorship for paraphrases or ideas acquired from another source or appropriate citations, included page numbers for direct quotes.
Assignment #1: Social Work Clinical Assessment Paper  
**Due:** Feb. 18, 2002  
20% of Course Grade

Choose a child or adolescent (and family) with whom you have begun to work. Write a clinical assessment report on this child or adolescent. Protect the confidentiality of your client system. Please disguise your case material, by using pseudonyms for all family members, omitting or changing specific geographical information and avoiding mention of details which identify clients.

**Section I:** Develop the written clinical assessment report addressing the following areas:
- Presenting Issues
- Relevant Biopsychosocial History (include developmental issues)
- Discussion of Protective and Risk Factors (child, family, community)
- Parent and Family Evaluation
- Formulate a clinical hypothesis (or hypotheses) which takes into account ecological-developmental issues.

This section should be professionally written for inclusion in a child’s record. The clinical assessment report needs to be single spaced with breaks between paragraphs) and not more than 3 pages.

**Section II:** In this section reflect on the your beginning relationship and role with the child/adolescent:
- how did you address sensitivity to child/adolescent and worker differences;
- what do you view are the impacts of race/ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation and religion in your development of your assessment and clinical hypotheses
- what clinical frameworks guided your assessment process

This section should be not more than 2 pages single-spaced.

**Section III:** You may want to include in an appendix the assessment tools used to help you in developing this plan, such as, a genogram, eco-map, child behavior checklist, depression instruments and other assessment forms.

Assignment #2: Social Work Intervention Plan  
**Due:** March 8, 2002  
20% of Course Grade

Using the same clinical case situation presented in the first paper address the following issues:

- Develop the clinical intervention plan.  
  The intervention plan needs to include goals, objectives and interventions linked to each objective indentified.
- Discuss the rationale for the selection of intervention goals. Indicate how these intervention goals reflect client and family system strengths based on diversity factors.
- Address the practice theories that are guiding your intervention process. Link this discussion to the practice literature and research on evidence based models relevant to this case situation.

You may want to include an appendix intervention tools used to help you in developing this plan. This assignment should be approximately 7 pages.
Assignment #3: Social Work Clinical Evaluation Plan
Due: April 1, 2002
20% of Course Grade

- Discuss how you are or will evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention plan you developed in the Social Work Intervention Plan.
- What measures will you use to determine if your interventions are effective?
- If your intervention plan is not working, what alternative approaches might you use to address the problem areas identified in the clinical assessment paper?

This assignment should be approximately 4 pages.

Assignment #4: Clinical Intervention Resource Portfolio
Due: April 15, 2002
15% of the Course Grade

Based on your field placement or your professional interest area, select a particular sub-population of children or adolescents (e.g., children with serious emotional disturbances, adolescents with substance use problems, youth who experienced trauma, children or adolescents with chronic health problems, youth who are truant, children living in poverty).

For this assignment, you need to conduct a review of 5 research articles on clinical interventions with this sub-population. Search the professional literature to locate clinical interventions and service system interventions that have been demonstrated to be effective in work with this sub-population.

For each article reviewed discuss the following:

- Target population for this Intervention
- Description of the clinical interventions and services used with this sub-population in the study.
- Study sample (size and characteristics), method and analysis procedures.
- How effective was the intervention? Discussion the strengths and limitations for using this intervention with a diverse child/adolescent population.

Each review should be approximately 2 pages.

You will share some key highlights from your portfolio in class (April 15, 2002). The presentation should be developed to capture the interest of your colleagues in improving the ways professionals serve this sub-population.
Course Schedule

Jan. 7
Ecological-Developmental Framework for Helping Children and Adolescents
Understanding the Context for Helping Children and Adolescents (Systems of Care Philosophy and Managed Behavioral Health Care Environments)
Prevention and Intervention Perspective

Readings:
(http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/home.html)

(http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/cmh/childreport.htm)

Jan. 14
Guest Lecturer: Professor Kathleen Faller
Clinical Issues in Child Abuse and Neglect with a Special Emphasis on Child Sexual Abuse

Readings:

*Ferrara, F.F. (2002).* *Historical review of child abuse issues (pp. 3-29) and Theoretical Models in the Diagnosis, Treatment and Recovery (pp. 101-116)*. In *Child Sexual Abuse*.


Jan. 21
Martin Luther King Day
Attendance at University Symposia

Jan. 28
Developing Culturally Responsive Biopsychosocial Assessment Skills in Working with Children/Youth and Their Families
Examining Assessment Tools and Procedures (Relevance, appropriateness, adequacy, and sensitivity to diversity issues such as, gender, culture, age, sexual orientation, SES status, family structure, religious practices in children and youth)
Developmental Tasks and Understanding Disorders in Childhood and Adolescence

Readings:
(http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/mental health/cre)


Feb. 4 and Feb. 11
Using Behavioral Interventions and Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions
Specialized Populations: Chinese American Youth, Japanese American Youth, American Indian Youth
Clinical Suite Role Plays

Readings

Pfeiffer & Reddy Text: pp. 3-14 and 31-45
Gibbs et al. Text: pp. 33-142


Feb. 18
Social Problem Solving for Children and Solution Based Work with Children and Families
Play Therapy (Basic Theory and Practice)
Specialized Population: African American Youth
Assignment #1 Due

Readings:
Fraser et al. Text, pp. 1-195.
Gibbs et al. Text, pp. 143-214


Feb. 25
Spring Break – No Class

March 4
Specialized Interventions for Children and Adolescents – Prevention and Intervention Strategies
Specialized Populations: Mexican American and Puerto Rican Youth
Clinical Suite – Role Play Demonstrations

Readings:
Pfeiffer & Reddy Text, pp. 15-30 and 63-74.


March 11
Specialized Interventions for Children and Adolescents– Prevention and Intervention Strategies
Specialized Population: Southeast Asian Refugee Youth

Readings:
Gibbs et al. Text, pp. 264-303.
Pfeiffer & Reddy Text, pp. 47-62 and 63-74


March 18
Group Work Approaches in Working with Children and Adolescents
Specialized Population: Biracial Adolescents
Clinical Suite Role Plays
Assignment #2 Due

Readings:
Gibbs et al. Text, pp. 305-332


March 25
Clinical Interventions with Adolescents
Clinical Suite Role Plays

Readings:
Pfeiffer & Reddy Text, pp. 75-86, 87-98, 99-110
April 1
Brief Clinical Interventions with Adolescents – Alcohol and Substance Abuse Issues
Clinical Suite- Role Play Demonstrations
Assignment #3 Due

Readings:
Monti et al. Text, pp. 58-79, 145-182, 244-274, 275-296

April 8
Ethical and Legal Issues in Working with Children and Adolescents and Their Families
Evaluating the Effectiveness of Interventions with Children and Adolescents and Their Families

Readings:


April 15
Emerging Professional Practice Issues in Work with Children and Adolescents
Special Issues Based on Class Interest
Presentations of Portfolios
Assignment #4 Due

* Indicates the readings are on reserve in the School of Social Work Library.