1. Course Description:

This course will build on the content presented in course SW 521 (i.e. Interpersonal Practice with Individuals, Families, and Small Groups). 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. **Weekly written assignments are required when due even when you are absent,** except under unusual circumstances. You may send them to be by e-mail attachment, fax, “snail-mail” or by another student or you may turn them in in the week prior to the week you will be absent.

In the Lawson and Prevatt text, questions are found at the end of each chapter other than the last (Chapter 14). a) When an assigned reading involves two chapters, answer the questions at the end of both chapters. b) When the assignment involves readings other than from the text, develop a total of three questions regarding the readings. In these instances, state your question, state what thinking stimulated the question for you, and state your own thoughts in response to the question. c) When an assigned reading involves the Lawson and Prevatt text and the course pack, answer the questions at the end of the text assigned reading and develop two questions about the other readings. (This last procedure is different from that used last semester.)

Questions will be graded according to accuracy and completeness [45% of grade/45 points or 5%/5 points total per assignment, **not per chapter**].

2. **Brief papers**

Three brief (3-5 page papers) are required throughout the term. Dates they’re required are 5/28/02, 6/18/02, and 7/9/02. Choose three from a list of 5. These papers will be developed from your course pack and will involve looking at a videotaped family intervention session and developing the paper according to the topic. You will receive full descriptions of the issues to be addressed in a separate assignment sheet. [13 points per paper/total 39% of the grade. Paper topics are:
Family and individual development
Family assessment
Social justice
Family and individual strengths
Values and ethical dilemmas

3. Take-home test.
For this assignment you are asked to look at the same video used in the assignments in item #2 above and develop a brief paper responding to specific questions to be distributed separately. [16 points/16% of grade.]

Requirements for written assignments: Daily, brief, and take-home assignments will be graded according to accuracy and completeness, must reflect appropriate integration of content from relevant assigned readings, and must be typewritten with correct spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and use of the 5th edition guide of the American Psychological Association where appropriate. Turning in work that is copied or developed from the work of other students in a previous term is considered plagiarism and is not acceptable. (See p. 50 of the 2001-2002 Student Handbook) In fairness to other students, a penalty of 5 points must be assigned for every 24 hours or fraction thereof that a brief paper or the take home is late.

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. Since the knowledge derived from this class is based in large part on experiential activities such as role-playing, it is expected that you will attend all class sessions and that you will participate in the required class activities (described below).

Although attendance at all classes is expected, two absences are permitted without penalty. You should use your discretion in being absent, but absences may be permitted for such reasons as your own illness or that of a family member, death of a family member, observation of religious holidays, job or field placement interviews, or other personal needs. Absences from more than two class sessions will result in an automatic deduction of 5 points from your final grade for each missed class session beyond the two allowed. Students who have an extended illness or incapacitation causing them to 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 and Course Pack):**


**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 at the end of the chapter (Lawson & Prevatt text) or to develop questions that can be used for future class discussion (all other assigned readings) 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 promptly at 1:10PM in the classroom (SSWB 3752), where we will remain until the first break at 2:30PM. Here we will discuss any remaining issues related to the previous week’s role play, discuss the assigned readings, receive a brief lecture on the topic/family intervention model(s), view videotapes related to the topic/model, participate in small group exercises, and plan for the upcoming role plays in the second half of the class. After the break, we will assemble in the Clinical Suite at 2:45PM. One role-play session will be held from 2:45 to 3:40. A second break will occur at 3:50. The second role-play session will be held from 3:50 to 4:45. We will dismiss at 4:45PM.

In preparation for the weekly role plays, small groups of 4 participants each will be formed in the first class session. Each small group should form itself into a role play family. Be creative in forming the family. There are a number of possible forms. 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 (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. Two separate role play sessions will be held during each class period. In this way, there will be a Session 1 and Session 2 for the family (involving one small group). From another small group, two persons will serve as co-practitioners for Session 1, while the other two from that group serve as reflecting team, then, after the break, roles will be reversed and the two persons who served as reflecting team members will become the co-practitioners for Session 2 and the two who served earlier as co-practitioners will become the reflecting team for that session.

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

**Course Outline**

**Tues., May 7, 2002** – 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*

Video: Excerpt from “A Daughter Who Needs a Mother” with Harry Aponte.

**Tues., May 14, 2002** – Orientation to Family Social Work practice

**Required Reading:**


(Course pack)

Borderlands: Reconfiguring Family Therapy. JMFT, 18, 157 – 164. (Course pack)

Tues., May 21, 2002 – The Social Constructionist Models: Narrative Therapy

Required Reading:


In addition, In The Family Therapy Networker, 18:

O’Hanlon, “The Third Wave” pp. 19-26, 28-29
Epston, “Extending the Conversation”, pp. 31-37, 62-63
Nylund & Thomas, “The Economics of Narrative”, pp. 38-39
Wylie, “Panning for Gold”, pp. 40, 42-48
Wylie, Policing our Lives”, pp. 48-49.
Treadway, “Miniature Roses”, pp. 50-56, 64.

Video: “Narrative Therapy” with Steve Madigan


Required Reading:


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

Video: “I’d Hear Laughter” with Insoo Kim Berg

Tues., June 4, 2002 – Intergenerational Models of Family Intervention

Required Reading:

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

Video: To Be Announced

Tues., June 11, 2002 – Assignment work to be completed.

Tues., June 18, 2002 – Structural and Social Learning Models of Family Intervention
Required Reading:

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

**Tues., June 25, 2002** – Humanistic, Experiential Methods of Family Intervention

Required Reading:

Lawson & Prevatt (1999):
*Chapter 6*: The Brief Therapy Approach of the Palo Alto Group

Video: “Of Rocks and Flowers” with Virginia Satir

**Tues., July 2, 2002** – Systemic and Strategic Family Intervention

Required Reading:

Lawson & Prevatt (1999):
*Chapter 8*: Milan Systemic Therapy: Hypothesizing, neutrality, and circular questions
*Chapter 9*: Strategic Therapy: Protection, unit, sequence, hierarchy, the therapeutic relationship, a four-step intervention.

**Tues., July 9, 2002** – Intervention with Families with a Member with a Chronic Condition

Required Reading:

Lawson & Prevatt (1999): *Chapter 1*: Contextual Therapy: Development, theoretical underpinnings, entitlement, the therapeutic contract,
Lawson & Prevatt (1999): *Chapter 13*: Psychoeducational Family Therapy

Video: “Structural Therapy” with Harry Aponte

**Tues., July 16, 2002** – Outcome Research and Ethical Considerations

Required Reading:

Goldenberg & Goldenberg (2000):

Video: “From a Secret Place” – Parents respond to the coming out experience of their sons and daughters.
**Brief Papers.** Select 3 from the following 5 topics/descriptions. Write paper approximately 3 pages as described under each topic within the context of the accompanying video.

A – Discuss the developmental (individual and family development and the interaction between these) that may be confronting this family and its members. Discuss the concepts theoretically first, then apply the theoretical concepts to the video-taped session.


B – Define social justice first, then discuss the areas of a socially just life in the United States that may be compromised for this family as a result of race/ethnicity, class, gender, diagnostic status, and family culture.

Refer to coursepack Chapter 3 in Goldenberg & Goldenberg (2000): “Gender, Culture, and Ethnicity Factors in Family Functioning: Gender Issues in Families and Family Therapy, Multicultural and Culture-Specific Considerations, Poverty, Class, and Family Functioning” and

Refer to appropriate content of Chapter 14 in Lawson and Prevatt (1999): “Current Trends in Family Therapy (written by Herbert Goldenberg and Irene Goldenberg): Population Diversity, Multiculturalism, Gender-Sensitive Family Therapy, and Same-Sex Coupling…”

C – Identify the strengths of this family and its members. Elaborate on how these strengths may facilitate accomplishment of this family’s goals.

Refer to Madsen, Chapter 1 (Coursepack), particularly the section “Believing in Resourcefulness…” and refer to Goldenberg & Goldenberg, Chapter 1 – “Adopting a Family Relationship Framework, particularly the section on Family Resiliency.”

D – Assess this family within the context of a plan for intervention.

Refer to course pack Kilpatrick & Holland (2000), Chapter 1 “Levels of Family Need” and Chapter 2 “An Ecological Systems-Social Constructions Approach to Family Practice”.

E – Discuss potential social work and family therapy value and ethical dilemmas presented during the videotaped family intervention session.

Refer to: the NASW Code of Ethics (Student handbook and world wide web), the AAMFT (American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists) Code of Ethics (world wide web), and coursepack Chapter 17 Goldenberg & Goldenberg “Professional Issues and Ethical Practices”.

**Take-home test.** a) Identify all of the specific models of family intervention reflected in the clinician’s work with this family, including engagement, information gathering, and interventions. b) Critique each method used in terms of the intent of the model (from the literature/text) and whether it accomplished what the clinician seemed to be seeking to accomplish. Then c) discuss how you would proceed with this family if you were brought in as the clinician following the videotaped session, both in the next session and long-term.