THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

SW 521 Deborah Greer, MSW, CSW
Interpersonal Practice with Individuals, Families and Small Groups
Fall, 2002

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 weakness 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.

This course is designed to facilitate the integration of theory and practice skills and requires that students participate actively in discussion and experiential exercises. Social work practice requires the heart and body as well as the head. In class, therefore, cognitive, emotional and intuitive ways of knowing are recognized and explored. Although some class sessions may involve formal lectures on specific topics, often the questions you bring to class in response to the required reading will create the day’s discussion. On my part, I am committed to making this course a safe place in which students can express themselves, question, experiment and grow. **Students who take this section of 521 need to be willing to engage in an ongoing process of candid dialogue, feedback and discovery.**

**Course Design**

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Class 1
September 9

Introductions, Course Review, Questions & Answers
Creating Connections

Onboard Question & In-Class Writing

PDC: Process Determined Content

Fiction pieces
Impromptu readings
In-class activities
Video tapes
Audio tapes
Guest Speakers

Class 2
September 16

Building a Foundation
Risking thru thinking, feeling and sharing

Required Reading:

1) Belenkey, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule. Connected Teaching.
2) XXXX. Social Work: A Noble Tradition.
3) Speaking Clearly- Discovering the leader within.

Onboard Question & In-Class Writing

PDC . . .

Assignment due:
Class 3  
September 23

Gathering a Knowledge Base  
*every theory has its place*

Required Reading:

1) Deloria. Ch. 4: *If You Think About It, You Will See That It Is True.*

2) Turner. Ch 1: *Theory and Social Work Treatment*

3) Whitaker. Ch. 8: *The Hindrance of Theory in Clinical Work.*

Onboard Question & In-Class Writing

PDC . . . .

Assignment Due:

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Class 4  
September 30

The Classroom as Group Experience  
"I'd never join a club that'd have me as a member"

Required Reading:

1) Imber-Black. Ch 3: *The Secret Society*, Ch. 4: *We Know What's Best for You to Know.*

2) Yalom. Ch. 1: *The Therapeutic Factors*, Ch. 5: *The Therapist's Basic Tasks*

Onboard Question & In-Class Writing

PDC . . . .

Assignment Due:
Class 5  
October 7  
Perspectives for Social Work  
*Practice Makes Perfect*

**Required Reading:**

1) Gutiérrez & Lewis. Part 1: *The Empowerment Approach to Practice*

2) Derezotes. Part 1: *Assessment*


**Onboard Question & In-Class Writing**

PDC . . . .

**Assignment Due:**

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Class 6  
October 21  

**COLLABORATIVE LEARNING WORKSHOP**
Class 7
October 28

Perspectives for Social Work, cont.
the seventh inning stretch

Required Reading:

1) Shulman. Part 4: Skills in the Workplace.

2) Lukas. Ch 1: How to Conduct the First Interview with an Adult. Ch. 5: How to Conduct the First Interview with a Child. Ch. 13: How to Write an Assessment

Onboard Question & In-Class Writing

PDC . . . .

Assignment Due:

CLASS EVALUATION OF CONTENT AND PROCESS

Class 8
November 4

Paradigms for Practice
And the beat goes on

Required Reading:


Onboard Question & In-Class Writing

PDC . . . .

Assignment due:
Class 9
November 11

Values & Ethics
let your conscience be your guide, but...

Required Reading:

1) Lum. Part 2: *Culturally Diverse Values and Knowledge Base*

2) Compton & Galaway. Ch. 4: *Values and Social Work Practice.*

Onboard Question & In-Class Writing

PDC . . . .

Assignment Due:

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Class 10
November 18

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING WORKSHOPS
Class 11
November 25

Spirituality and Social Work Practice
Touched by an angel or the devil made me do it

Required Reading:

1) Fukuyama & Sevig. Ch. 2: The Spiritual Journey: Worldviews.
   Ch. 4: Multiculturalism and Spirituality
   Ch 5: Positive and Negative Expressions of Spirituality

2) Canda & Furman. Ch.1: Compassion, The Call to Service, and Ethical principles for
   Social Work

3) Turner. Ch. 103: Our Clients, Ourselves

Onboard Question & In-Class Writing

PDC . . . .

Assignment Due:

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Class 12
December 2

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING WORKSHOPS
Class 13
December 9

Self Care
To thine own self be true

Required Reading:

1) Turner. Ch. 54: Conceptualizing and Preventing Burn-Out

2) Saakvitne & Pearlman. Ch. 1: What is Vicarious Traumatization
   Ch. 3: Addressing and Transforming Vicarious Traumatization.

Onboard Question & In-Class Writing

PDC . . . .  CELEBRATORY PARTY & POTLUCK
REQUIRED CLASS READINGS


Boundary violations.


Social Work: A noble tradition.


Whitaker, C. (?). The hindrance of theory in clinical work.


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Assigned Readings:** As quality discussion is dependent upon participants having a shared knowledge base, students are expected to complete assigned readings before every class. Because every effort will be made to allow for collaborative learning and because I do believe that process determines content, there will be a place for additional readings, audio/video tapes, and guests suggested by the students as interests develop.

2. **In class writings and exercises:** During class time students will be expected to design "onboard questions", write impromptu reflection pieces and participate fully in exercises and workshop presentations. All voices are necessary for a rich and diverse learning experience so I will be calling on you. Respect for the individual is a primary value, but no "hiding".

3. **Reflection papers:** During the course we will choose points at which to step back and critically analyze what we are learning. This analysis should include narrative description of concepts and skills from the required reading and/or reading you have chosen as an outgrowth of class discussions and developing interests. These papers should also include perceptions of your strengths, resistances and experiences of growth. (Now don't get anxious!!! We will set up due dates for these papers and talk about this assignment in class)

4. **Interviews:** So much of social work is about listening, communicating and relating. Each student will be required to complete an interview with an individual, family or small group. Ideally this interview is recorded on audio tape. The assignment includes a process recording, excerpt from the audio tape and a narrative paper that describes the experience including motivation and reasons for choosing the subject, background research and reflections on the experience. (A separate packet of information will be given in class to assist in the successful completion of this assignment.)

5. **Workshop Presentations:** We will learn about group dynamics, develop relevant content and experience ourselves as core to the learning process by creating and presenting workshops. All students will be required to participate in a small group, choose a relevant topic, research and present that topic to the class and write a reflection paper.