1. Course Description

This course builds on the content presented in the Theory and Practice of Interpersonal Practice course and presents a theoretical analysis of family functioning and integrates this analysis with social work practice. Broad definitions of “family” including extended families, unmarried couples, single parent families, gay or lesbian couples, adult siblings, and other inclusive definitions will be used. During these stages, client-worker differences will be taken into account, including differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other factors.

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.

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 worker/client 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, 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 this course, students will be able to:

A. 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:
   1. identify the normative experiences, risks, and needed tasks as families move through each developmental stage.
   2. discuss these challenges, risks and tasks as they apply to women, the poor, families of color, and gay and lesbian families.
   3. describe the resources, strengths, and effective family processes across diverse populations, including those based on ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, and class.

B. Apply family assessment frameworks that are both ecological and family centered that take into account the influence of oppressive social forces. Such assessments will account for:
   1. the presence and impact of family violence
   2. the presence and impact of substance abuse
3. the impact the student's own value system has on their assessment formulations.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. Select appropriate outcome measures that are reliable and determined by agreed upon goals in order to evaluate the effects of family centered interventions.

4. Relationship to the Four Curricular Themes

Multi-culturalism and social 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 and economic justice 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 of well-being and prevention 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.)

Social and behavioral science and 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.

5. Relationship of this Course to Social Work Ethics and Values.

Ethical dilemmas unique to family work will be presented, for example 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.

6. Required Texts:

Casebook in Family Therapy, David M. Lawson and Frances F. Prevatt

Coursepack Readings

7. Recommended Reading


8. Recommended Journals:

Families in Society
Family Process
Family Therapy Networker
Journal of Marital and Family Therapy
Journal of Family Psychology
9. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Progress in the course will be assessed on completing three requirements. These include weekly reading and written assignments and two brief papers. The student is free to choose from an extracurricular option to substitute for one or more weekly assignments at the instructor’s discretion. These options will be introduced on the first day of class. Students are encouraged to connect with the instructor during office hours, Friday from 1:15 - 2:00pm, after class, or by appointment.

A. 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. The format of the assignment may vary slightly. Weekly written assignments are required when due even when you are absent, except under special circumstances. You may send them by e-mail attachment, fax, "snail-mail" or by another student, or you may choose to turn them in the week prior to the due date.

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. Questions will be graded according to accuracy and completeness (45% of grade/40 points or approx. 3%/3 points credit per assignment (not per chapter).

B. Family of Origin Paper - due October 11th

Write a 6-8 page paper assessing your family of origin including a brief history extending back at least three generations (including yours, your parents, and their parents, your children, if applicable and even more if you have the information). Trace three generational themes and/or patterns. Triangles, coalitions, alliances, and cut-offs should be explicated and analyzed. Include gender and ethnic influences. You may want to speculate about your role in the family system and sibling order must be discussed. Give an example of an intervention technique which might have been used to address a family problem or challenge.
It is helpful but not necessary to include a genogram. Refer to McGoldrick, Gerson, and Shellenberger, Genograms-assessment and intervention; second edition, Norton, 1999 for assistance. Also, explore ethnic dimensions of family (see McGoldrick). Include significant dates, illnesses, occupations, striking character traits (i.e. gentle, moody, intelligent) and other significant patterns (i.e. occupations, religions, prevalence of divorces, religious affiliations, illnesses, substance abuse problems). The genogram must be portable, small and carefully drawn. Colored pencils may help you to illustrate alliances, coalitions, cut-offs, and triangles.

This paper counts for 30%/30 points of grade.

C. **Family Assessment Paper - due by December 6th**

Write a 6-8 page paper focusing on a current family or couple with whom you are working in your practicum. You should describe your agency context, the presenting problem of your client system, the significant demographics, your treatment plan and what you have done thus far with the case (i.e. what interventions, derived form which models, you have used or have informed your practice). This section should be brief, not more than two pages.

In the next section of the paper describe any two therapy models, eg. Structural, Systemic, etc. giving a brief overview of their chief principles. Finally, give an example of three possible interventions for each model that you might choose to apply to your case. How would Aponte approach this family? Interventions must truly reflect the unique aspects of each model and reflect a thoughtful understanding of your case.

This paper counts for 30%/30 points of grade.

10 Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation in class is a requirement of this course. Absence from more than 2 class sessions will result in an automatic deduction of 5 points from your final grade for each missed class session. Students who must miss class for medical reasons, beyond the two allowed, have the alternative of requesting a grade of Incomplete for the semester.
11 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 = 69 and below.

12. 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).

Class time is planned to be divided approximately into 4 sections: 
discussion and questions, didactic lecture or speaker, exercises pertinent 
to material, and video and or role playing experiences.

**Role Play:** Small groups of 4-5 participants each will be formed in the 
first class. Each small group should form itself into a role play family. 
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 content and themes relating to 
multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice. Family member roles 
taken by participants should be consistent with the participant’s own 
gender and participants should use their own names.

Each class member is expected to take one turn as family member, social 
worker (individually or as 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.

After a 15 minute break, the class will reconvene. We will begin with a brief discussion of the previous role play, thoughts for beginning the next session, and selection of family and practitioner(s) reflecting team for the next session, as appropriate. Lecture material will be incorporated in this discussion where relevant.

13. Course Outline - September 6th - December 6th, 2002

September 6 - Introductions, Syllabus, Philosophy
orientation exercises, formation of small groups, history and development of family intervention

Required Reading:
Lawson and Prevatt, Chapter 5, Structural Family Therapy

Goldenberg/Goldenberg, Family Therapy An Overview Adopting a Family Relationship Framework pg 3-11
O'Hanlon, The Third Wave pg. 89-93
What We See is What We Get, Re-examining Our Assessment Process pg 37-45

September 13 - Orientation to Family Social Work practice
context for social change, advocacy for clients, self-awareness, and cultural implications

Required Reading:
Lawson and Pravatt, Chapter 1, Contextual Therapy, Chapter 2, Intergenerational Family Therapy

Madsen, Introduction and Chapter 1: Working with multi-stressed families: From technique to attitude pg 13-36

September 20 - Children and Families
family life cycle and developmental inventories

Required Reading:
Lawson and Prevatte, Chapter 9, Strategic Therapy

Holland, Kilpatrick, An Ecological Systems - Social Constructionism Approach to Family Practice, pg 46-56
Family Development: Continuity and Change, pg 57-68
McGoldrick, *Geneograms* (book on reserve)

**September 27 - Adolescents and the Resistant Client**
rites of passage in families, review of geneogram development

*Required Reading:*
Lawson and Prevatte, *Chapter 8, Milan Systemic Therapy*

Cloe Madanes, *Through the One Way Mirror* (book on reserve)

**October 4 - Sexuality & Substance Abuse Effects on Families**

*Required Readings:*
Lawson and Prevatte, *Chapter 10, Solution-Focused Brief Therapy*

*Cognitive-Behavioral Models pg 117-132*
*Growing Up Drug-Free, A Parent’s Guide to Prevention*

**October 11- Intergenerational Issues, Illness & Death Issues**

*Required Reading:*
Lawson and Prevatte, *Chapter 13, Psychoeducational Family Therapy*

Hospice Material (on reserve)

**October 18 - Abuse and Effects of Violence on Families (paper due)**

*Required Reading:*
Lawson and Prevatte, *Chapter 6, The Brief Therapy Approach of the Palo Alto Group*

*Treadway, Miniature Roses, pg 99-106, Sykes Wylie, Panning for Gold pg 107-116*

**October 25 - Sexual Abuse & Effects on Families**

*Required Reading:*
Lawson and Prevatte, *Chapter 7, The Humanistic Approach of Virginia Satir*

Nylund and Thomas, *The Economics of Narrative, pg 87-88*

**November 1 - Alternate Family Systems**
gay and lesbian families, single families
Required Reading:
Lawson and Prevatte, Chapter 12, Narrative Therapy: The Work of Michael White
Epston, Extending the Conversation pg 77-85, O'Hanlon, The Third Wave pg. 94-98

**November 8 - Couples Therapy**
divorce, implications on children, step-families, mediation models

Required Reading:
Lawson and Prevatte, Chapter 3, Integrative Couple Therapy, and Chapter 4, Pragmatic Couple Therapy: An Informed Pluralistic Approach

**November 15 - Personality Disorders & Effects on Families**

Required Reading:
Lawson and Prevatte, Chapter 11, A Postmodern Collaborative Approach to Therapy
Hoffman, Setting Aside the Model in Family Therapy pg161-172, Falicov, From Rigid Borderlines to Fertile Borderlands pg173-179

**November 22 - Culture, Gender, & Race Implications for Treatment**

Required Reading: Gender, Culture, and Ethnicity Factors in Family Functioning pg 69-76

**December 6 - Summary of TX Styles, final paper due**

Required Reading:
Lawson and Prevatte, Chapter 14, Current Issues and Trends in Family Therapy