Course Description

This course deals with practice theories and techniques for working with children and adolescents and their parents. The course will provide grounding in perspectives related to child and adolescent development, attachment/transactional theory, the parent/child relationship, learning theory and parenthood, including ethnic/cultural variations in child rearing practices. The interaction between the environmental risk factors, protective factors and developmental factors, as they contribute to coping resiliency and disorder, will be covered. The practice components will address major clinical concepts including assessment/formulation, treatment planning, work with parents, and developmentally appropriate engagement and intervention techniques. The course is organized in terms of the sequence of development, and common mental health problems and disorders of childhood and adolescents, and will cover clinical issues and treatment approaches relevant to each disorder and developmental stage.

Course Objectives

- Describe and apply a number of assessment procedures (such as direct observation of or interviews with the client, parent or caretaker, and collateral contacts with teachers, caseworkers, or other professionals) which identify internal or external risk and protective factors that may effect children and youth.
- Describe the primary developmental tasks and characteristics of childhood and adolescence as they relate to selection and implementation of developmentally appropriate techniques for engaging and treating children and youth.
- Identify the ways that continuity or disruption in primary care relationships may impact children and adolescents and their therapeutic relationships.
- Conduct and write up an assessment, which uses information on the child’s or adolescent’s physical, emotional and cognitive development, temperament, relationship history and performance, as a basis for formulating an understanding of the child’s presenting problems and circumstances.
- Implement research supported prevention and intervention strategies (such as, play therapy and parent training) which are compatible with client and family or caretaker goals, needs, circumstances and values.
- Monitor and evaluate implemented interventions in regard to: effectiveness; sensitivity to client/worker differences; about the impact of clients’ and families social identities (i.e.,
race/ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, religion) on their experiences of power and privilege; the appropriateness of the intervention, to specific client needs resulting from conditions, such as maltreatment, deprivation, disability and substance abuse.

**Format of Course**

The objectives of the course will be pursued through lecture, discussion, demonstrations, case presentations and analysis, videotapes and role-plays. There will be two examinations of short essay format, one at mid-term and one at the final session. The examinations will integrate theory, direct practice strategies, research and case analysis. Students are expected to attend all classes and excessive absence will result in the lowering of the students grade.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

- Mid-term examination (June 3rd) 50%
- Final examination (July 15th) 50%

**Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes**

*Multiculturalism and Diversity* will be addressed throughout the course. Racial, ethnic, gender, and social class differences in the timing, sequencing, nature, and outcome of interpersonal practice with children, adolescents and their families will be discussed. *Social Justice and Social Change* will be addressed throughout the course through information and discussion on the ways in which social status mediates the experience of children, adolescents and their families, and the effect on direct practice with this population. *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation* will be central to this course. Specific principles of program design, implementation, and evaluation will be presented throughout the course. *Behavioral and Social Science Research* will be the substantive foundation for this course. Emphasis will be placed on the review, critique and understanding of empirically proven practice methods which promote health and well-being, and prevent problems in children, adolescents and their families.

**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 discusses the complexities of the ethical dilemmas as they relate to work with the child and youth populations and the ways that the professional Code of Ethics may be used to guide and resolve value and ethical issues that may arise in direct practice.

**Topics and Required Reading Assignments**


Additional readings will be on reserve in the School of Social Work Library.
Psychosocial Evaluation


A. Anxiety Disorders in Children and Youth


B. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder


C. Childhood Trauma, Abuse & Neglect, and Play


D. Depressive Disorders


**E. ADHD/Disruptive Behavior and Parenting**


**F. Children and Divorce**


**G. Peer Problems and Social Skills**


**H. Culture and Practice Issues**
