**SW 521 - Interpersonal Practice with Individuals, Families and Small Groups**

Fall 2003  
Prof. Robert M. Ortega, MSW, Ph.D.  
2796 SSWB, O: (734) 763-6576  
Office Hours: M, Th 12:30-2:30pm, Tues., 9am-11am  
Other times available by appointment only  
e-mail: rmortega@umich.edu

**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, 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 weaknesses 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.

(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 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.

COURSE DESIGN

This course will employ a number of pedagogical strategies to promote skill development such as: game simulations, case analysis, interactive media simulations, exercises in vivo, practice within the classroom through role playing, didactic presentation of theory/models/procedures and modeling with demonstration on video.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO FOUR CURRICULAR THEMES

(1) 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.
(2) *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.

(3) *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.

(4) *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 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.

**REQUIRED TEXT**


**ADDITIONAL TEXTS (ON RESERVE)**


PERIODICALS
As social workers, you should familiarize yourselves with the following journals:
- American Journal of Orthopsychiatry
- Child Welfare
- Family Process
- Health and Social Work
- Journal of Social Issues
- Journal of Social Work Education
- Public Welfare
- Proceedings, National Conference on Social Welfare
- Smith College Studies in Social Work
- Social Casework
- Social Service Review
- Social Work
- Social Work Research and Abstracts
- Social Work with Groups
You should also be aware of the Encyclopedia of Social Work (now in its 19th edition), updated regularly by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
(1) Attend each session (10% of course grade); absences will lower your grade since:
   (a) some material considered essential to the objectives of the course will only be presented in class;
   (b) the application of key concepts and student co-learning requires participation in class discussions and exercises.
(2) Completion of 6 log assignments (30% of course grade). (To be discussed in class).
(3) Midterm Exam (In Class) - October 27 (25% of course grade).
(4) Final Exam (Take Home) - Due no later than 5pm on 12/15 (35% of course grade).

TOPICAL OUTLINE
(September 8) Session 1: Introduction - Defining Social Work Interpersonal Practice
(September 15) Session 2: Social Work Interpersonal Practice Frameworks
(September 22) Session 3: Values and Ethics in Interpersonal Practice
(September 29) Session 4: Ethnicity, Culture and Social Work Practice - Working Across Differences
(October 6) Session 5: The Helping Relationship
(October 13) Session 6: Fall Study Break – No Class
(October 20) Session 7: Basic Interpersonal Practice Skills
(October 27) **Session 8: From Contact to the Helping Agreement – Midterm Exam (In-class)**

(November 3) **Session 9: Assessment and Planning**

(November 10) **Session 10: Interventive Methods of Interpersonal Practice**

(November 17) **Session 11: Mobilizing Formal and Informal Support**

(November 24) **Session 12: Monitoring and Evaluation**

(December 1) **Session 13: Termination**

(December 8) **Session 14: Helping and Community (Take Home Final Exam Distributed – Due December 15 by 5pm)**

**SESSION READING ASSIGNMENTS**

(September 8)

**Session 1: Introduction - Defining Social Work Interpersonal Practice**

**C&G: Chapter 1: Key Themes for social work practice; Reading 1-1 Social Work’s Mission by Harry Specht; Chapter 19: Avoiding Burnout (pp. 498-501)**

**OPTIONAL:**

Derezotes: Part II: Advanced Generalist Approach Interventions with Individuals, Couples, Families and Groups.

(September 15)

**Session 2: Social Work Interpersonal Practice Frameworks**

**C&G: Chapter 2: The ecosystem perspective and the use of knowledge (pp. 28-58); Chapter 3 Problem solving: A process for social work practice (pp. 83-93) Reading 1-2 The strengths perspective: Principles and practices by Dennis Saleebey; Reading 2-3 An ecosystemic approach to assessment**

**OPTIONAL:**

Corwin: Chapter 2: Brief Treatment Principles and Techniques: Theoretical Foundations (pp. 13-26)

Derezotes: Part III: Intervention Paradigms: The Four Forces of Social Work

HRL: Chapter 2: Direct Practice: Domain, Philosophy and Roles (pp. 25-34)


(September 22)

**Session 3: Values and Ethics in Interpersonal Practice**

**C&G: Chapter 6: Ethical practice (pp. 151-166); Reading 6-1 Confidentiality and social work practice with African cultures by Kwame Owusu-Bernpath**

**Travers: Ethics (p.43); Useful forms and phone numbers, note pps 71 (Consent for video/audio taping), 72 (Consent for communication), 73 (Disclosure statement), 82-83 (Limits of confidentiality) and 86 (Release of information)**
OPTIONAL:
HRL: Chapter 4: Operationalizing the Cardinal Social Work Values (pp. 57-83)
Corey, Corey and Callanan: Chapter 2 - The Counselor as a Person and a Professional (pp. 32-65); Chapter 3: Values and the Helping Relationship; Chapter 4: Client Rights and Responsibilities

(September 29)
Session 4: Ethnicity, Culture and Social Work Practice - Working Across Differences
**C&G: Chapter 9 Communicating across cultures; Reading 9-1 A framework for thinking about social work relationships across racial/ethnic lines by Joan Velasquez, Marily E. Vigil and Eustalio Benavides; Reading 9-2 Working together across differences by Uma Narayan; Reading 2-2 Social work and the medicine wheel framework by Lyle Longclaws.

**Travers: Gay and lesbian concerns (p.25); Social and cultural considerations (p.50)

OPTIONAL:
Corey, Corey and Callanan: Chapter 10; Multicultural Perspective and Diversity Issues (pp. 316-345)
C&E: Chapter 1 - Setting the Stage: Ethnicity in American Society (pp. 1-22) and Chapter 2 - Ethnicity and Social Work Practice with Individuals (pp. 23-42); Chapter 3 - Ethnicity and Social Work with Groups (pp. 43-59); Chapter 4: Ethnicity and Social Work with Families (pp. 60-81)
Green: Chapter 1: Race, Ethnicity and Social Services (pp. 3-47); Chapter 2: Help-Seeking Behavior: The Cultural Construction of Care (pp. 49-79); Chapter 3: Methods of Cross-Cultural Social Work (pp. 81-115)

(October 7)
Session 5: The Helping Relationship
**C&G Chapter 5 Authority for social work practice; Chapter 4: Client-worker partnership; Reading 4-1 The record of change: Client-focused recording by Susan Steiger Tebb; Chapter 7 Relationship in social work practice; Reading 7-1 Four pennies to my name: What it’s like on welfare by Addie Morris

**Travers: Casenotes (p.36); Developing your own approach (p.40); Alphabetical index of selected theories (pp.56-67)

OPTIONAL:
Gutierrez, Parsons and Cox: Part 1: An Introduction to Empowerment Practice (pp. 1-27); Chapter 2: Empowerment of Women; Chapter 4: Empowerment Practice Lesbians and Gays; Chapter 5 Empowering People with Disabilities; The Role of Choice

(October 13)
Session 6: Fall Study Break
**(October 20)**

**Session 7: Basic Interpersonal Practice Skills**

**C&G:** Chapter 8 Engaging potential clients; Reading 8 Approach and companionship in the engagement process by Craig Rennebohm; Reading 8-2 Basic communication skills for work with groups by Barry Cournoyer and Katherine V. Byers

**OPTIONAL:**

C&E: Chapter 6: Ethnicity and Social Services (pp. 101-119); Chapter 7: Ethnicity and Health (pp. 120-137)

HRL: Chapter 5: Relationship-Building Skills: Communicating with Empathy and Authenticity (pp. 87-138); Chapter 6: Verbal Following, Exploring and Focusing Skills (pp. 139-170); Chapter 7: Eliminating Counterproductive Communication Patterns (pp. 171-186); Chapter 9: Communication and Interviewing for Social Work Practice

Lukas: Chapter 2: Looking, Listening and Feeling: The Mental Status Exam; Chapter 3: How to Think About Your Client's Health: The Medical History; Chapter 9: From Initial Contact Through Assessment pp. 414-454.

**(October 27) - Midterm Exam**

**Session 8: From Contact to the Helping Agreement**

**C&G:** The service agreement; Reading 11-1 A brief solution-focused practice model by Michelle MacKenzie; Reading 11-2 Goal setting with biological families.

**OPTIONAL:**

HRL: Chapter 11: The Contract Phase: Joint Assessment, Goal Setting and Planning (pp. 395-423); Chapter 12: Negotiating Goals and Formulating a Contract (pp. 327-356);

Lukas: Chapter 1: How to Conduct the First Interview with an Adult; Chapter 4: How to Conduct the First Interview with a Family; Chapter 5: How to Conduct the First Interview with a Child; Chapter 7: How to Conduct the First Interview with a Couple;

Lum: Chapter 6: Contact

**(November 3)**

**Session 9: Assessment and Planning**

**C&G:** Chapter 10: Data collection and assessment; Reading 10-1 Family group decision making by Gale Bufford, Joan Pennell and Susan MacLeod; Reading 10-2 The clinical utility of models and methods of assessment in managed care by Cynthia Franklin and Cathleen Jordan

**OPTIONAL:**

Travers: Alphabetical index of client issues (pp. 2-34); DSM-TR Use (pp.41-42); Genograms (pp.44-45); Psychological assessment (p.47); Suicide Assessment checklist (pp 88-90); Treatment plan (p.92).
OPTIONAL:
Corwin: Chapter 3: Levels of Intervention: The Engagement and Assessment Process; Chapter 4: Levels of Intervention: Case Conceptualization and Treatment Plan
HRL: Chapter 8: Multidimensional Assessment (pp. 187-217); Chapter 9: Assessing Intrapersonal and Environmental Systems (pp. 219-258); Chapter 10: Assessing Family Functioning in Diverse Family and Cultural Contexts (pp. 259-298); Chapter 11: Forming and Assessing Social Work Groups (pp. 299-326)
Lukas: Chapter 8: How to Determine Whether a Client Might Hurt Somebody – Including You; Chapter 9: How to Determine Whether a Client Might Hurt Herself; Chapter 10: How to Determine Whether a Client is a Substance Abuser; Chapter 11: How to Assess Children for Neglect, Abuse, and Sexual Abuse; Chapter 13: How to Write an Assessment
Lum: Chapter 8: Assessment

(November 10)
Session 10: Interventive Methods of Interpersonal Practice
**C&G: Chapter 12 Interventive methods to mobilize client power; Reading 12-1 How do we really empower families? Strategies for social work practitioners by Barbara Bryant Solomon; Reading 12-2 Action as a vehicle for promoting competence by Anthony Maluccio

**Travers: Couple and Family Systems (pp. 38-39); Consultation (p.37); Supervision (p. 51); Psychopharmacology (p.48).

OPTIONAL:
HRL: Chapter 14: Enhancing Clients. Problem Solving, Social, Assertiveness and Stress Management Skills (pp. 399-435) Chapter 15: Developing Resources, Planning and Advocacy as Intervention Strategies (pp. 448-455)

(November 17)
Session 11: Mobilizing Formal and Informal Support
**C&G: Chapter 13 Case management and formal social support; Chapter 14 Mobilizing informal social support; Reading 14-1 The social network map: Assessing social support in clinical practice by Elizabeth M. Tracy and James Whittaker; Reading 14-2 Self-help in African American communities: A historical review by Elijah Mickel

(November 24)
Session 12: Monitoring and Evaluation
**C&G: Chapter 17 Evaluating practice; Reading 17-1 Does my intervention make a difference? Single system research; Reading 17-2 Do no harm: Policy opinions that meet human needs by John McKnight
(December 1)

Session 13: Termination

**C&G: Chapter 18 Endings in social work; Reading 18-1 Termination in context by Howard Hess and Peg McCartt Hess

**Travers’ Termination summary (p. 91)

OPTIONAL:
HRL: Chapter 20: The Final Phase: Termination (pp. 591 - 600)
Lum: Chapter 10: Termination

(December 8)

Session 14: Helping and Community- Final Exam Distributed, Due 12/16 by 5pm

**C&G: Chapter 15: Building helping communities; Reading 15-1 Regenerating community by John McKnight; Reading 16-1 The dance beyond the family system by John Victor Campher