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 help-seeking 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**

2. **Brief papers**

Two brief (5-7 page papers) are required during the term. Dates they’re due are **February 19, 2003 and March 19, 2003**. Choose two from the list of 5. These papers will involve looking at a videotaped family intervention session (tape to be announced at a later date) and developing the paper according to the topic, using content from readings in your course pack. **[20 points per paper/total 40% of the grade.]**
Paper topics are:

A.  Family and individual development
B.  Social justice
C.  Family and individual strengths
D.  Family assessment
E.  Values and ethical dilemmas

**Brief Papers.** Select 2 from the following 5 topics/descriptions. Write a paper 3-5 pages maximum, according to the description under each topic and within the context of the accompanying video.

A – Discuss the developmental (individual and family development and/or 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. Refer to (Coursepack) Chapter 1 in Betty Carter and Monica McGoldrick, Overview: The expanded family life cycle: Individual, Family, and Social Perspectives.


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…”

D – Assess this family within the context of a plan for intervention. Refer to coursepack 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. Cite the NASW Code of Ethics (http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp).

3. **Take-home test.**

   For this assignment you are asked to look at the same video used in the brief paper assignments in item #2 above and develop a brief paper responding to specific items at the bottom of page 12 of this syllabus. **[60 points/60% of grade.]**

   **Take-home test.** a) From the contents of the course in its entirety, 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) Using the reading from Chapter 15 in the coursepack – Family Therapy Research, Goldenberg & Goldenberg (2000), critique the clinician’s use of each method in terms of the theoretical intent of the model (from the
literature/text) and whether it accomplished the family’s and the clinician’s goals. 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. Maximum length: 8 pages firm.

**Due Friday, April 21, 2004 at the start of class.**

**Requirements for written assignments:** These assignments will be graded according to **accuracy and completeness**. They 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 citations and a reference list are appropriate. Turning in work that is copied from another student or copied or developed from the work or ideas of an author is considered plagiarism and is grounds for failing the course. (See p. 57 of the 2002-2003, 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) using my role as teacher to demonstrate skills and techniques in working with families; 2) providing didactic and experiential encounters that have been found useful in social work practice with families; 3) providing a supportive learning environment; 4) being clear regarding expectations of you in the course; 5) being fair and impartial in grading. 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 in their entirety 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, that you will remain in each class for its entirety, and that you will participate in the required class activities (described below).

Although attendance at all classes is expected, two absences (partial or full) 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 3 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 withdrawing from the course and taking it at a later time. 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 = 94-100 points; A- = 90-93 points; B = 84-89 points; B- = 80-83 points; C = 74-79 points; C- = 70-73 points; D = 64-69; D- = 60-63; F = 59 and below.

Required Reading


Required Additional Reading Sources (SW Library Reserve and Course Pack):

- Treadway, D. C. (1994). *The Family Therapy Networker, 18, 50-56, 64*. (Course pack)

Course Philosophy and Format

Within the past decade or so, 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. Students desiring more in-depth study regarding any of these are referred to the recommended readings from which lectures will be developed.

We will begin each class session promptly at 9:10AM in the classroom (SSWB 2752), where we will remain until the break at 10:15AM. Here we will discuss any remaining issues related to the previous week, discuss the assigned readings, receive a brief lecture on the topic/family intervention model(s), view videotapes related to the topic/model (videos as listed or to be added), 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 2nd Floor Clinical Suite at 10:30AM for the role play session.

In preparation for the weekly role plays, small groups of 4 participants each will be formed in the second 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 family forms. Diversity in 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. Role play scenarios may involve an office visit or a home visit. Role play someone of your own gender and use your own name, although your “age” will need to reflect that of the person whose role you are playing.

Each class member is expected to take one turn as a) family member, b) social worker (co-practitioner), and c) 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 interviewing practitioners will ask for a break, at which time the reflecting team will exchange places with the interviewers and family members, i.e., the reflecting team will go into the interviewing room and the interviewers and family members will join the rest of the class in the observation room. For the next 5-7 minutes, the reflecting team will discuss their observations and suggestions, both for directions they think might be continued and for new and different directions. During their discussion, the reflecting team is encouraged to emphasize strengths observed in the family.

At least one role play situation will be held during each class period. I will begin this process by serving as practitioner for the first two role-play sessions. On these occasions, the entire class will serve as the reflecting team and the volunteer family and I will come into the observation room to receive the class’ input midway through the role play. These two role play sessions will be videotaped so we can discuss details of them in the subsequent two didactic sessions.

**Course Outline**

**Wed., January 7, 2004** – Introductions, review of syllabus, philosophy of the course, orientation exercise(s), formation of small groups.

**Required Reading:**
Nichols & Schwartz, *Chapter 1 – Foundations of Family Therapy, and pp. 17-18 in Chapter 2.*


**Required Reading:**

Video: “From a Secret Place” – Parents respond to the coming out experience of their sons and daughters.

**Wed., January 21, 2004** – Basic Techniques and Concepts of Family Intervention

**Required Reading:**
Nichols & Schwartz, *Chapters 3 and 4.*

**Wed., January 28, 2004** – Narrative Methods

**Required Reading:**
Nichols and Schwartz, *Chapter 13*

Video: “Narrative Therapy” with Steve Madigan
Wed., February 4, 2004 – Narrative Methods (cont’d)

**Required Readings:**

*From The Family Therapy Networker, 18* (Course pack):
  - 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, Policing our Lives”, pp. 48-49.
  - Treadway, “Miniature Roses”, pp. 50-56, 64.

Video: “Narrative Therapy” with Steve Madigan (cont’d)

Wed., February 11, 2004 – Solution-Focused Brief Methods

**Required Reading:**

Nichols & Schwartz, *Chapter 12.*

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

Wed., February 18, 2004 – Structural Family Intervention Methods – BRIEF PAPER #1 IS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS TODAY.

**Required Reading:**

Nichols & Schwartz, *Chapter 7.*

Video: Braulio Montalvo: A Family with a Little Fire

Wed., February 25, 2004 – SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS!


Nichols & Schwartz, *Chapter 8.*

Video: “Of Rocks and Flowers” with Virginia Satir

Wed., March 10, 2004 – Bowen Family Systems model

Nichols & Schwartz, *Chapter 5.*

Wed., March 17, 2004 – Cognitive-Behavioral Models of Family Intervention – BRIEF PAPER #2 IS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS TODAY.

**Required Reading:**

Nichols & Schwartz, *Chapter 10.*

Wed., March 24, 2004 – Strategic Family Therapy

**Required Reading:**

Nichols & Schwartz, *Chapter 6.*

Wed., March 31, 2004 – Psychoanalytic and Integrative models

**Required Reading:**

Nichols & Schwartz, *Chapters 9 and 14.*

Video: Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy: “I Would Like to Call You Mother”.
**Wed., April 7, 2004** – Comparative Analysis – Looking to the future.

*Required Reading:*

Nichols & Schwartz, *Chapters 15.*

**Wed., April 14, 2004** – Advances in Family Therapy Research.

Nichols & Schwartz, *Chapter 16.*

**Wed., April 21, 2004.** – Wrap-up, COURSE EVALUATIONS.

*TAKE HOME FINAL EXAMS ARE DUE BACK TO ME AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS TODAY.*