SW 628 – Interpersonal Practice with Adult Individuals

Fall 2004
Section 001, Thursdays, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
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Office hours by appointment

Course Description

This course will approach work with individual clients from a person-in-environment perspective and build on the content presented in course 521/540 (i.e. Interpersonal Practice) and equivalent courses. The stages of the treatment process (i.e. engagement, assessment, planning, evaluation, intervention, and termination) will be presented for work with individual adults. The relevance and limitations of various theoretical approaches will be reviewed as they apply to assessment, planning, and intervention methods. This course will focus on empirically evaluated models of intervention and will teach students how to monitor and evaluate their own practice. Special attention will be given to issues of diversity (i.e. race, gender, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation of the client), time-limited treatment methods, and practice with involuntary clients.

Course Content

This course will present various models of intervention designed to prevent and treat psychosocial problems of individual adults. Emphasis will be placed on approaches that enhance social functioning, strengthen problem solving capacities, and support the coping capacities of individual adults. The various models will be responsive to the impact of social environments, and supported by empirically based efficacy studies. Treatment models that focus on specific psychosocial problems associated with work, relationships, mood, anxiety, and impulse problems will be discussed. Various treatment models will be presented such as psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, and client-centered. These intervention models will also be evaluated for how well they fit the special needs of diverse populations (e.g. people of color, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered clients, and the poor) and meta-theories from empowerment, feminist and socialist perspectives will be applied.
Each model presented will cover all phases of the intervention process: engagement and screening, assessment, planning, evaluation, implementation, and termination. Although evaluation will be discussed in much greater depth in the Practice Area evaluation courses, students will learn how to integrate evaluation techniques and measures into their on-going interventions with individual adults so that they can employ systematic measures of their effectiveness in the field. This course will carefully explore the issues that influence and determine client motivation because many individual adults come into the treatment process with varying degrees of willingness and sometimes are coerced to seek help by authorities or family members. Strategies that workers can employ to engage reluctant or resistant clients will be presented. Intervention models in this course will be general enough to apply to a wide range of adult clients in a wide range of situations, since other courses will focus more specifically on special populations and problems. Course content will include ethical issues that related to interpersonal practice with individual adults and with those elements of the NASW Code of Ethics that especially impact on practice with individual adults.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1) Describe how theory informs and shapes the kinds of intervention strategies that may be employed when working with individual adults.
2) Assess the effectiveness of various kinds of intervention models and procedures that may be utilized with individual adults.
3) Operationalize the various intervention phases of prevention and treatment models that effectively impact the psycho-social problems of individual adults.
4) Identify common factors that determine client motivation in adults and how to apply specific interventions to enhance “readiness” for client change.
5) Modify intervention models to take into account race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, and special abilities of adult clients.
6) Operationalize the NASW Code of Ethics as it applies to value dilemmas in interpersonal practice with adults.

Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes

Multiculturalism and Diversity will be addressed through careful analysis of how clinical models can be applied and modified to fit the special needs of various groups. Resistance and motivation of adults to interventions will be covered to demonstrate how effective intervention models must be adapted to fit the needs of various ethnic and racial groups. This course will emphasis that mono-cultural clinical models must be adapted to fit the definitions of “problem” and “treatment” that exist in diverse groups in order for social workers to practice with adults from diverse backgrounds.
Social Justice and Social Change will be addressed by recognizing that, historically, clinical services have excluded poor and oppressed clients from “talking therapies.” Often these clients were given the harshest and most restrictive treatments (e.g. shock, sterilization, medications, and lobotomies), whereas more privileged clients were granted more benign interventions (e.g. outpatient family therapy). This course will examine those differences as well as how socioeconomic exclusion arises in screening criteria that exclude clients because of intelligence, verbal ability, insight, and motivation.

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation will be addressed through a focus on intervention models and intervention procedures that can be used to prevent and treat psychosocial problems of adults.

Behavioral and Social Science Research will be addressed through careful selection of intervention models for which there is empirical evidence on efficacy. Students will learn that although many time-limited models of practice with adults have proliferated over the past two decades, not all of them have generated research that demonstrates their efficacy.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values

In working with adults, social workers must encourage self-determination and empower adult clients to choose and pursue their own change goals. Ethical issues such as sexual relations between client and worker, involuntary treatment, primacy of client interests, and precipitous withdrawal of services will be considered as they impact individual clients.

Course Design

This course will employ a number of methods to promote knowledge and skill development, such as reading assignments, case analyses, interactive media simulations, in vivo exercises, role play simulations within the classroom, modeling and video demonstrations, and didactic presentations of theory/models/procedures. Whenever possible, assignments will be tied to the field placement experiences of students.

Students are expected to bring their own thoughts, insights, and understanding from their field placements. Attendance, preparation for class, and participation are expected. Frequent absences are not acceptable and will result in a lowering of a course grade. If you know in advance that you are going to miss a class, prior notification of the instructor is expected.

REQUIRED TEXT

Book is available at Shaman Drum Bookstore on State Street.
Assignments

Class Activity
Each student is expected to do one during the semester. The presentation should
be no more than 10 minutes in length to allow for discussion. The activity involves
sharing one field experience that led to a positive outcome and one struggle as a therapist
in which you felt challenged. Provide the responses and outcome for both.

Written Assignments
Formal writing assignments for this course will be evaluated for content, ideas presented, and for
the clarity and accuracy of the presentation. Appropriate referencing is required on all written
assignments. Sources of assistance include Writing Term Papers, by Professor Kossoudji, in
your Student Guide to the Master's in Social Work Degree Program. The Publication Manual of
the American Psychological Association is the style manual to be used by all students. Another
source of assistance is Strunk & White's Elements of Style.

If you feel you need assistance in this area, please consult services offered through the
University.

All papers are to be typewritten or word-processed with a 12-point
font and double-spaced. All papers will need to include bibliographic
references and follow parenthetical format for references. Papers not
adhering to these instructions will be returned and regarded as “late”.

Paper #1
This paper will have two parts.
The first part is to select some aspect of treatment and thoroughly research it,
citing references. For instance, if you are looking at resistance, explore the literature of
resistance. This first part should present an overview/definition of the technical or other
aspect you have chosen, drawing from references.
Secondly, apply the literature to illustrate the concept using example(s) from your
field placement or previous experience. This application should be from the vantage
point of your currently preferred modality of treatment (i.e., cognitive behavioral,
psychodynamic, systems perspectives, crisis intervention, etc.). If you do not have a field
placement, use either a novel or movie for such illustration.
Some suggested aspects of psychotherapy: (Of course this list is not exhaustive.
If you have other ideas, feel free to use them.)
Resistance
Counter-transference
Transference
Termination phase
Acting out
Associations, free association
Regression in and out of the treatment room as a response to the treatment
Use of dreams
Defenses –any of them
Interpretations (timing of interventions, etc.)
Unconscious
Therapist’s neutrality
Thought processes
Working alliance
Repetitive interactions
Self-disclosure
Corrective emotional experience
Cultural aspects of treatment
Affects

This assignment is due October 21.

Paper #2
Write a 10 page essay relying on the conceptual frameworks and techniques studied in this class in which you discuss your own challenges as a therapist. Please use clinical material from your field experience to illustrate these challenges. Your reflections should emphasize particular aspects of the work itself (e.g., responding to ruptures in the therapeutic alliance, responding to and staying with intense affects, multicultural experiences, etc.) Comment on ethical issues you have encountered thus far in your work as a therapist and how you have resolved these questions. Please incorporate feedback you have received from supervisors, teachers, clients, and peers in your reflections. Use this essay as an opportunity to communicate about your goals for your own continued growth. Incorporate and state your preferred modality of treatment and why, citing references about your chosen method. Discuss your reasons for comfort or discomfort with particular theoretical approaches. Lastly, select one diagnostic category that you have struggled with and present the struggle and what you might have done differently or learned from the experience, citing some references about that particular diagnosis.

This assignment is due December 9.

Grading Criteria

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<th>Class participation</th>
<th>40 points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #1</td>
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<td>Paper #2</td>
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Course Outline and Reading Schedule

September 9
  Introductions
  Skills and abilities of a clinician

September 16
  Readings: Chapters 1 & 2 in Interpersonal Process in Psychotherapy. (“An Interpersonal Process Approach” & “Establishing a Collaborative Relationship”)

September 23
  Readings: Chapter 3 in Interpersonal Process in Psychotherapy.

September 30
  Readings: Chapter 4 in Interpersonal Process in Psychotherapy.

October 7

October 14

October 21

October 28

November 4

November 11

November 18

November 25
  Thanksgiving Day-no class

December 2

December 9
General Source Materials


McWilliams, Nancy (1999), Psychoanalytic Case Formulation, Guilford Press, New York.


Class Activities
September 23:


September 30:


October 7:


October 14:


October 21 (1st paper due):


October 28:


