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, discussion, and writing assignments (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 Reading**

**Required Texts:**


3. Coursepack readings *(Ulrich’s Bookstore or Social Work Library Reserve):*

**Required Videos (On Reserve in the Social Work Library)**

- Aponte, Harry. *A Daughter Who Needs a Mother*.
- Berg, Insoo Kim. *I’d Hear Laughter*.
- Boszermenyi-Nagy, Ivan. *I Would Like to Call You Mother*.
- Lerner, Stephen. *Constructing the Multigenerational Family Genogram*.
- Madigan, Steve. *Narrative Therapy*.
- Montalvo, Braulio. *A Family with a Little Fire*.
- Satir, Virginia. *Of Rocks and Flowers*. Fanlight Productions. *From a Secret Place*

**Assignments and Grading Basis**

1. **Written practitioner assessment and intervention plan (20 points)**

   Each student will assume the role of co-practitioner for one family role-play session. The approach of the practitioner is expected to follow the family intervention approach covered in the course for the week the role play occurs. In the class prior to the one in which the student will serve as co-practitioner, the student will receive a printed copy of the family role play scenario for which they will be serving as practitioner the following week. They should use this information, along with any relevant readings and videos assigned for that week, to prepare a plan by which they will approach assessment and intervention with the family (recognizing that this can only be hypothetical and tentative before meeting the family and actually beginning the session). The written plan must be supported by knowledge gained from the assigned readings and clinical videos related to the model to be used.
The written plan should include the student’s understanding of the thinking underlying the particular model, that is:

- What do proponents of the model believe is the source of problems of a family or an individual in a family?
- What methods or techniques are recommended to address the problem?
- What is considered the basis for using these methods or techniques, that is, how are they expected to work and why?
- How might the practitioner utilize this information in approaching this particular family?

Each role play session will be videotaped and videotapes will be made available to the practitioners at the end of the session. Arrangements for duplicates can be made with the School of Social Work Audiovisual Department. Co-practitioners are encouraged to collaborate, including discussing how they will manage the co-therapy aspect of the session. However, papers should be written and submitted independently, even though both may (and hopefully will) agree on what is planned.

2. Written practitioner process evaluation (20 points)

One week following the completion of the session for which the student served as practitioner, the student should complete a written evaluation of the process of the previous session. This should include:

- What were the goals of the family and the practitioner(s) for the session?
- How was assessment of the family approached and in what way did it coincide with the model?
- What was the outcome of the assessment?
- What interventions were used to accomplish the goals of the session?
- To what extent did the interventions used coincide with the model.
- What was the outcome of the interventions used (that is, to what extent were they effective in accomplishing the goals for the session or in making progress in that direction.)
- If the practitioner(s) were to continue working with this (role play) family, utilizing the same model, where would they like to go from here – in the next session, and in future work with the family.

While the co-practitioners may want to discuss these together (and probably will), the papers should be written and submitted independently.

3. Brief empirical review paper (30 points).

Complete a literature search and written report of the empirical evidence for the family therapy model you utilized in the role play for which you served as practitioner. Critique the evidence with regard to how extensive or limited it is. This may be turned in at any time following the role play for which you served as practitioner but no later than the last scheduled day of class.
4. **Written critique and fishbowl discussion of each of 3 chapters from McGoldrick text at 10 points each; total 30 points)**

Each student is encouraged to read all chapters in the McGoldrick text. However, each student will only be responsible for three. At the beginning of the semester, sets of two students each will be assigned to read and critique three of the 30 chapters in the McGoldrick text (excluding the first chapter). Each report should include a brief summary of the chapter and a discussion of its strengths and limitations as related to social work practice with families. Student pairs will be asked to sit before the class and to briefly discuss the results of their critique of each chapter. At the end of each discussion-chapter, others in the class may raise questions or express opinions related to the particular reading.

**Requirements for written assignments:** These assignments will be graded according to the thoroughness with which they meet assigned criteria and accuracy of content. They 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. There are no page expectations or limits. Use your judgment regarding what is required to thoroughly address the criteria. 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) Some assignments may call for or allow collaborative work and, if so, that is acceptable, although equal participation and contribution is expected from each student. **In fairness to other students, a penalty of 5 points must be assigned for every 24 hours or fraction thereof that a written assignment is late.**

**Attendance and Participation**

It is my desire that your experience in this course is 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 are considered 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
- remain in each class for its entirety (both during the lecture/discussion and the role play segments)
- do the required readings prior to each class
• view the required videotapes prior to each class
• participate in discussions and other class activities.

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 5 points from your final grade for each missed class session beyond the two allowed. Students who have an extended illness or incapacitation or other circumstance causing them to miss class 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 required experiential learning activities will result in a deduction of 5 points each from your final grade.**

**Grade Calculation**

\[
A = 94-100 \text{ points; } A- = 90-93 \text{ points; } B = 84-89 \text{ points; } B- = 80-83 \text{ points; } C = 74-79 \text{ points; } C- = 70-73 \text{ points; } D = 64-69; \ D- = 60-63; \ F = 59 \text{ and below.}
\]

**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 is on the family as its own expert. In these later 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 history and 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 Lawson and Prevatt text and/or the course pack related to a model of social work practice with families. In many instances, viewing videotapes in which clinical use
of the model is demonstrated will also be assigned. These videotapes will be placed on reserve in the Social Work Library. A special room and equipment have been provided in the Library for viewing these videotapes. Group viewing is recommended, particularly during the 12noon – 2pm time on Wednesdays that is set aside for meetings.

We will begin each class session promptly at 9:10AM in the classroom (SSWB 3752), where we will remain until the break at 10:15AM. During this time, we will discuss the assigned readings and videotapes and will hear from the “fishbowls” (3 each) scheduled for that day. After the break, we will assemble in the 2nd Floor Clinical Suite (2686 SSWB) at 10:30AM for the role play session. Persons serving as practitioners should see that the role-play sessions end at 11:30, which will allow time for de-briefing before the class ends.

During the role-play segments for the first two classes, I will serve as practitioner and will ask for volunteers to serve as the role play family, including creating a scenario for the role-play. These sessions will be videotaped and segments of the tapes may be played during class sessions throughout the semester to demonstrate certain elements of course content.

During the first class, role-play groups of four persons each will be formed randomly. Groups will be given an opportunity to meet, decide on the “problem” scenario they will use and who in the group will play what role. One member of the group should accept the responsibility for writing up and typing the details of the role play scenario and bringing it back to the next class session, at which time it should be signed by each role play group member. Turn these in at the beginning of the second class session. Remember to include your original group number.

Situations from ones own practice experience may be used as long as information is changed to protect confidentiality. However, students are asked to be creative in forming the family. There are a number of possible family forms. Diversity in family forms and in practice settings is strongly encouraged. Also, 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. If racial or ethnic identity is an important aspect of the role play scenario, that may be taken into consideration as well.

Each class member is expected to take one turn as family member and as social work co-practitioner. 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 will be videotaped.

“Practitioners” have the option, at any time during the role-play interview, to request a break and come into the observation room to consult with the rest of the class. If this is done, the family should be invited to participate in the consultation.

Course Outline

Wed., September 8, 2004 – Introductions, review of syllabus, philosophy of the course,
formation of small groups.

**Wed., September 15, 2004** – Values surrounding the practice of social work with families. 
[Role play scenarios are turned in. Role plays are scheduled. McGoldrick reading assignments are made.]

*Required reading:* McGoldrick Text, Chapter 1; Lawson & Prevatt text, Preface and Chapter 14
*Required video:* *From a Secret Place*: - Parents respond to the coming out experience of their gay or lesbian children.

**Wed., September 22, 2004, Collaborative Family Therapy**


*McGoldrick text Chapters 2, 3, and 4.*
*Required video*: Harry Aponte. *A Daughter who Needs a Mother*. Session with an African American blended family in which the mother, three children from a previous marriage and one child from the current marriage, are being seen following the oldest child’s (daughter) intentional overdose with aspirin.

**Wed., September 29, 2004 – Solution-focused practice**

*Required Readings*: 
Lawson & Prevatt text, Chapter 10
McGoldrick text, Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

*Required video*: *I’d Hear Laughter* (Insoo Kim Berg). Session with a Caucasian couple and their adolescent daughter, being seen because of the mother’s concern about recent changes in the daughter’s personality, behavioral, and academic achievement.

**Wed., October 6, 2004 – Narrative practice**

*Required Reading*: 
Lawson & Prevatt text, Chapter 12
McGoldrick text, Chapters 8, 9, and 10

*Required video*: *Narrative Therapy* with Steve Madigan. Session with an African American mother and her son, Ollie, who has been fined and court-ordered to do community service following an altercation with a fellow student at his school. Calls attention to differences in the race of practitioner and family.

**Wed., October 13, 2004 – Narrative practice (cont’d)**

*Required Readings*: 
*From The Family Therapy Networker, Vol. 18* *(Course pack)*: O’Hanlon, “The Third Wave”
Epston, “Extending the Conversation”,
Nylund & Thomas, “The Economics of Narrative”
Wylie, “Panning for Gold”
Wylie, Policing our Lives”
Treadway, “Miniature Roses”
McGoldrick text: Chapters 11, 12, and 13.

**Required Video:** Narrative Therapy with Steve Madigan (cont’d)

**Wed., October 20, 2004 – Humanistic model**

**Required Reading:**
- Lawson & Prevatt, Chapter 7
- McGoldrick text Chapters 14, 15, and 16.

**Required video:** Of Rocks and Flowers, with Virginia Satir. Blended Caucasian family with two pre-school boys, being seen around the pregnant wife’s fear that her husband’s children, who’ve shown behavioral acting out in the past, may harm the new baby when it’s born.

**Wed., October 27, 2004 – Integrated, intergenerational model**

**Required Reading:**
- Lawson & Prevatt, Chapter 2
- McGoldrick text: Chapters 17, 18, and 19

**Required video:** Stephen Lerner. Constructing the multigenerational family genogram: Exploring a problem in context.

**Wed., November 3, 2004 – Contextual model**

**Required Reading:**
- Lawson & Prevatt, Chapter 1
- McGoldrick text: Chapters 20, 21, and 22

**Required video:** Ivan Boszermeny-Nagy: I Would Like to Call You Mother. Interview with a Caucasian intergenerational family with multiple issues.

**Wed., November 10, 2004 – Structural model**

**Required Reading:**
- Lawson & Prevatt, Chapter 5
- McGoldrick text: Chapters 23, 24, and 25

**Required video:**
- Braulio Montalvo: A Family with a Little Fire. Session with a single-parent African American family of four being seen after the oldest child set a fire during the mother’s absence.

**Wed., November 17, 2004 – Brief therapy Palo Alto model**

**Required Reading:**
- Lawson & Prevatt, Chapter 6
- McGoldrick text: Chapters 26, 27, and 28

**Required video:**

**Wed., November 24, 2004 – Strategic model**

**Required Reading:**
Lawson & Prevatt, Chapter 9  
McGoldrick text: Chapters 29, 30, and 31

**Required video:**

**Wed., December 1, 2004** – Psychoeducational model  
**Required Reading:**  
Lawson & Prevatt, Chapter 13.

**Required video:**

**Wed., December 8, 2004.** – Wrap-up, COURSE EVALUATIONS.  
**Final Review Papers are Due.**