THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

S.W. 521 Interpersonal Practice with Individuals, Families and Small Groups
Prof. T. Powell;
Fall, 2004
Office Hours: Mon. 12-1; Tues. 11-12:00; and by appt.
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... professionals--people you could call in the middle of the night if there was trouble, people whose being had
begun to meld with their doing, who were what they did. Lynch, T. (1997). The Undertaking: Life studies from the dismal trade.

-- the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still
retain the ability to function. One should, for example, be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined
to make them otherwise. F. Scott Fitzgerald. The Crack Up. 1936


Text is available at the Common Language Bookstore which is located on 215 S. 4th Ave between
Liberty and Washington; hours are Mon-Thu: 10:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.; Fri-Sat: 10:30 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.;
Sunday: 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Telephone 734-663-0036. commonlangbooks@aol.com,
http://www.commonlang.com/

Other required readings are in a separate Course Reserve catalog. Both electronic and hard copies are
listed together. Click on Mirlyn <http://mirlyn.lib.umich.edu/>. Click on the link at the top right corner
of the page - GO TO FIND OTHER LIBRARY CATALOGS. Scroll to the bottom of the first column,
then click on the Course Reserves link. For Course Name, enter sw 521 and click on SEARCH. Then
click on Instructor. Watch for a more direct link on the front page of Mirlyn. If you want hard copies, I
can loan you copies for photocopying.

If you need an accommodation for a disability, please make an appointment with me at your earliest
convenience. Many aspects of the course including the assignments, class activities, and my teaching
methods can be modified to fit your circumstances.

1. 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, socio-economic state, age, religion,
   and ability as these relate to interpersonal practice.

2. 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.

3. **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 weakness of these various frameworks.
2. Recognize the impact of race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, power and privilege on interpersonal practice by:
   1. 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.
   2. 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. recognize the role of privilege in one’s ability to assess needs and intervene in the helping process.
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 and culturally competent interpersonal practice by:
   1. engaging diverse client systems
   2. employing assessment protocols of PIE, ecomaps, genograms, network maps, and group composition
   3. 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.
   4. implementing treatment protocols consistent with treatment plans and sensitive to clients' situations
   5. 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.

4. **Course Design:**

A supportive learning environment is essential for the success of this class. Please help me make it so by listening carefully to the ideas and views of others, understanding and appreciating points of view.
different from your own, articulating clearly your point of view, and linking experience to readings and assignments. Your contribution toward making this a respectful and productive learning environment will be most appreciated.

The class uses lectures, class discussions, role plays, small group work, videos, and CourseTools as appropriate. A number of the ideas used in the course are adapted from those used by Sallie Foley, Robert Ortega, Brett Seabury, and Michael Woolley and I want to acknowledge their contribution.

5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

- **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. Multicultural content will be infused throughout the course especially in the assessment and intervention phases of the change process.

**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.

Perhaps it was an illness not to be able to live one’s life the way they did … with justice defined in terms of respect for property, innocence defended in their children’s privileges, love in their procreation, and care only for each other. A sickness not to be able to ignore that condition of a healthy, ordinary life: other people’s suffering. P73 Gordimer, N. (1979). *Burger's Daughter*. New York: Penguin.

**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.

- **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.

6. Relationship of the Course to Social Work 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.

8. Source Materials:

All wisdom is plagiarism; only stupidity is original.


**Additional Recommended Resources**


McGoldrick, Monica; Pearce, John; Giordano, Joseph, and (eds.). Ethnicity and Family therapy, 2nd ed. New York: Guilford; 1996.

Singelis, T. Teaching about culture, ethnicity, and diversity: Exercises and planned activities. Sage; 1998.

Some Interesting Ideas about Common Elements in Psychotherapy

1. *A Good Relationship* An intense, emotionally charged, confiding relationship built on trust is recognized as an essential element of most psychotherapy.

2. *Emotional Release* In a wide variety of ways, therapists encourage their patients to express and experience pent-up feared feelings. Emotional release may strengthen the therapeutic relationship and may increase the potential for change.

3. *Cognitive and Experiential Learning.* Therapists teach their clients new information directly through verbal instruction and indirectly through experiment and other opportunities for self-discovery. Therapists may provide situations in which maladaptive beliefs about the self and others may be examined.

   Through the strength of the patient's attachment to the therapist, a variety of influencing methods become available. These include positive and negative reinforcement (smiling, compliments, interest in certain topics) and identification with the therapist as a model for a better way to consider oneself.

4. *Practice.* Built into most therapies is the practice opportunity. Called "working-through" in psychodynamic therapies, the practice phase enhances the patient's sense of mastery over the new learning.

I assume that each viable perspective highlights some portion of psychological reality and that different terms sometimes have overlapping meaning for similar psychological territory. Many psychotherapists seem to have become distracted by their attachment to particular words, and, like people whose cultures are defined by their language, are reluctant to reach compromises with psychotherapists using other words. (Beitman, p. 111)