COURSE TITLE: Interpersonal Practice with Families
DIVISION NUMBER: 25413
COURSE NUMBER: 623 (Section 003)
CREDIT HOURS: 3
PREREQUISITES: 521
LOCATION: Advanced Interpersonal Practice Methods Course
INSTRUCTOR: Scott Weissman
Class Meets: Wednesdays 9-12
PLACE:
E-MAIL ADDRESS sweissman119482MI@comcast.net
TELEPHONE NO. (734) 913-9548

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 a range of diversity dimensions such as ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation. 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.

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 oppressive 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. Work with nontraditional families, couples counseling, and divorce and separation counseling will also be included. 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.

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

1. Articulate at least two conceptual frameworks that take into account individual and family needs, problems and experiences within the family, and resources and opportunities of the social environment.
2. Describe challenges, risks, and tasks as they apply to diverse groups such as; women, the poor, families of color, and gay and lesbian families.
3. Identify the resources, strengths, and effective family processes across diverse populations including those based on a range of diversity dimensions such as ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, and class.
4. 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.
5. Describe ways to 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.
6. Identify at least two models of prevention and intervention and explain the applicability of each model to the challenges faced by families.
7. Apply appropriate outcome measures that are reliable and determined by agreed upon goals in order to evaluate the effects of family-centered interventions.

**Course Design:**
The course design will include lectures, assigned theoretical and practice reading, and discussion; 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; and role-playing as worker and as family member.

**Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity:**
will be addressed by considering the unique characteristics of families of composed of various diversity dimensions (e.g., ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation), 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.

**Theme Relation to Social Justice:**
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 various diversity dimensions and other factors in causing or maintaining family problems.
Traditional solutions to family problems will be analyzed for their potential to maintain oppression and disempowerment. Empowerment models of practice will be stressed, including the involvement of natural helping networks and teaching advocacy skills to families.

Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation:

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.).

Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research:

will be addressed by identifying the family functions and processes which are useful for the successful development of its members.

Relationship to SW Ethics and Values:

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. 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.

Intensive Focus on PODS:

Faculty Approval: 11/30/2006

Source Materials:

A. Books & Articles


B. Journals

*Families in Society*

*Family Process*

*Family Therapy Networker*

*Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*
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 process by 1) providing didactic and experiential encounters that have been found useful in social work practice with families; 2) providing a supportive learning environment; and 3) being clear regarding expectations of you in the course. 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 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 and that you will participate in the required class activities (described below).

### APA FORMAT AND ACADEMIC HONESTY

Please refer to the *American Psychological Association Publication Manual* (often called the APA Style Manual) in the preparation of your writing assignments. The current edition is the fifth, but using an earlier edition is acceptable. I think you will find having your own copy a valuable resource over the next two years. You can find out more at http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html.

It is critical to reference all sources of information or ideas you use in your writing, to do otherwise is academic dishonesty. Direct quotes in particular should be identified as such. Situations of apparent plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be reported and handled according to University policy.

### ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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.

### General Grade Information

10% of the grade is based on class participation. This includes attendance, promptness, active participation in large and small-group discussion, respectfulness, and the ability to listen. Points will be deducted for absence, tardiness, etc.
The fine print is for problems that hopefully won’t arise. But just in case, here are the rules: If more than two sessions are missed—whatever the reason—the grade will be lowered five points for each session over two unless the session is made up. To make up a session find out from other students what was covered in the missed sessions and develop a make-up plan to be submitted via email for my approval. The plan should focus on the topic of the missed session, and should involve four or more hours of effort.

The first paper is worth 20% of your grade. Each of the 2 remaining papers is worth 35% of the grade. Papers are expected to be handed in on their due dates and papers must meet all academic standards for ethical documentation. Papers will be marked down 5% for every day late. If you are unhappy with a grade, you can rewrite the paper and turn it in no later than one week after it has been returned to you. Your rewrite should be turned in with all changes highlighted AND with a copy of the old paper. The two grades will then be averaged for a final grade.

A = 94-100 points; A- = 90-93 points; B+ = 87-89 points; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83 points; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76 points; C- = 70-73 points; D = 64-69; D- = 60-63; F = 59 and below.

Required Reading (Available at Ulrich’ Bookstore)


3. Material located on Ctools site.

Course Philosophy and Format

Within the past decade, 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
the conceptual shift to 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. Most chapters will include detailed case material.

Roleplays/Assignment I

Each class member will be responsible for either playing the role of “Family Member” or the role of “Therapist” in one of 5 role-plays (of family therapy sessions) throughout the semester. Each class member will also be responsible for a paper/“reflection” on the experience after it is over. Each role-play will be done in the Clinical Suite (in the School of Social Work) and will consist of a 45 minute session during which 2 co-therapists will meet with the family utilizing a specific model of Family Therapy. The co-Therapists will get feedback from the class mid-way through the session, and then continue with the session making use of the input from the class. Here is a tentative role-play schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 16</td>
<td>Structural Family Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 23</td>
<td>Strategic Family Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30</td>
<td>Couples Therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 7</td>
<td>Narrative Therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 14</td>
<td>Solution-Focused Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 21</td>
<td>Integrating the Models</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In preparation for the weekly role plays, small groups of 4 participants or 2 participants will be formed in the second class session. Each small group of 4 should form itself into a role play family. Each two-some will be co-therapists utilizing a specific Family therapy model.

For the groups of 4: 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.

In preparation for these role-plays, “family members” and “therapists” are responsible for some preparatory work. The preparatory work is as follows:

Family Members will be responsible for the following (NOT GRADED- I WILL LOOK AT THESE INFORMALLY DURING CLASS – you can even develop these together in class on June 2):

a. a genogram (worked on by the family group) detailing 3 generations of family history – with attention to culture and ethnicity. A chapter on genograms is in the readings for next week.
b. 2 structural family maps which: 1) detail a time when your family is stressed; and 2) a time when your family is not stressed. I will speak about “family maps” next week.

c. a 1 PARAGRAPH summary of the “presenting problem” from your perspective. Include your understanding of the history of the problem and of the part each family member plays in the problem. If you are a “child” in the family, pretend you have explained your perspective to a loving adult, who translates it for you into this 1-paragraph summary.

TO BE READ TO CLASS BEFORE ROLEPLAY BEGINS

**Therapists** will be responsible for the following (NOT GRADED):

a. a 1 page summary detailing the key points of the particular model of Family Therapy that you will be utilizing. Please bring a very preliminary outline of this summary to the class on **Oct. 10 (or possibly, Sept. 26)** when we will have in-class time to prepare for the role-plays. This summary will NOT be turned in for a grade and can be hand-written.

**Therapist and Family Members** (after the actual role-play) should create a 3-4 page reflection paper detailing your PERSONAL responses to the process of either being a family member or therapist in the context of a family therapy session. Please be specific (short description) about actual experiences in the process of either developing or enacting the session and then reflect on these experiences in light of the themes of this class. Please incorporate issues of culture, class, ethnicity, gender and/or sexual orientation into this paper. For example:

*Experience:* as the mother in the family, you felt uncomfortable and angry when confronted by the therapist about the way you were parenting

*Reflection:* you might reflect on the theme of “role of the therapist,” on the idea of “working collaboratively” in light of this experience of discomfort. Perhaps if the therapist was of a different race than the family members, the reflection might contemplate how issues of “race” might have played into these dynamics.

**Due:** On class following the roleplay

**Grading for Assignment I**

*(20 % of the total Course Grade)*

*(Due 1 week after roleplay is over)*

30% - are there specific “process” experiences incorporated into the paper?
30% - are these experiences specifically related to course concepts
30% - did the paper intelligently incorporate a discussion of ethnicity, culture, race, etc…
10% - grammatically correct, clear and organized
Draw a genogram on your own family or the family of a client with whom you are working. The genogram should focus on at least three generations (including yours, your parents and their parents, your children, if applicable and even more if you have the information). Use McGoldrick’s chapter (in the Coursepack) on Genograms as your guide for the mechanics of drawing the genogram. You will most likely need to contact family members of your own family or your client’s to obtain the necessary data. Include significant dates, illnesses, occupations, striking character traits (i.e. gentle, moody, intelligent) and other significant patterns (i.e. occupations, religions, prevalence of divorces, religious affiliations, illnesses, substance abuse problems) on genogram. You may want to use different colored pencils to illustrate alliances, coalitions, cut-offs, and triangles. The genogram must be on an 8 1/2 by 11 sheet and carefully drawn.

Write a 7-9 page paper. This paper should identify and articulate major three-generational themes and patterns. Triangles, coalitions, alliances, and cut-offs should be explicated and analyzed. Gender, ethnic, class influences should be addressed. You should also incorporate a theoretical discussion of these cultural themes based on knowledge gained from your readings. When discussing theory, please reference accordingly. The McGoldrick text is a particularly good source to utilize in developing a theoretical perspective on the cultural themes you are exploring in your papers. You may want to speculate about your role (or your client’s) role in the family system and please discuss sibling order, if applicable. Bowenian theory should be incorporated into your analysis and give three examples of how you imagine Murray Bowen might have intervened with this family.

Grading
20% - is genogram readable, and does it describe 3 generations of Family history clearly?
30% - does paper demonstrate an understanding of Bowenian theory?
30% - does paper incorporate a discussion of culture that is grounded in the Readings?
10% - grammatically correct, well-organized?

Assignment 3 – FINAL PAPER Due July 21

This 9-10 page paper should focus on a current family or couple with whom you are working (or have worked) in your practicum. You should describe your agency context, the presenting problem of your client system, the significant demographics, your treatment plan and what you have done thus far with the case (i.e. what interventions, derived from which models, you have used and have informed your practice – you need to specifically LINK your previous work to the models of F. Therapy). Next, you should give three interventions from each model for your case. These interventions must truly reflect the unique aspects of each model and reflect a thoughtful
understanding of your case. You should spend about 2 pages on each of the models and play out how you think your intervention might work or not work. Your discussion of your case must incorporate a perspective highlighting cultural, gender, class themes. Finally, spend 1-2 pages reflecting on your proposed interventions – integrate your ideas in some way – which model would you choose to use? Is there a combination of models that might prove most effective? If so, why??

Grading:
30% - does paper clearly describe the family, presenting problem, and the agency setting?
30% - does paper provide a succinct and comprehensible summary of 3 models?
30% - does paper provide 3 family interventions that truly follow from the models being discussed? Are the interventions discussed in terms of how they might impact the family?

Course Outline

“RP” means that a roleplay will be done on that day.

1. May 12 Overview of Course and Field of Family Practice: Part I

Readings:
Lawson & Prevatt (1999): Chapter 14: Current Issues and Trends In Family Therapy


TEXT: Chapter 1: McGoldrick, M., & Hardy, K. V. “Introduction: Re-Visioning Family Therapy from a Multicultural Perspective.”

2. May 19 Basics of Family Assessment

Readings:

TEXT: Chapter 8: McGoldrick, M. “Finding a Place Called Home.”

TEXT: Chapter 20: Hardy, K. V., & Laszloffy, T. A. “The Dynamics of a Pro-Racist Ideology: Implications for Family Therapists.”

(This chapter is meant to help you in the development of your own genogram for Assignment 2, the “Family of Origin” paper. It is extremely helpful, but does not need to be read (in full) for class.)


3. **May 26**

*Trangenerational Models of Family Therapy: Bowenian, Family of Origin*

**Readings:**

Lawson & Prevatt (1999): Chapter 2: Integrated Intergenerational Family Therapy

Kerr, “Chronic Anxiety and Defining a Self,” The Atlantic Monthly


**TEXT**

Chapter 5. Walsh, F.: “Spirituality, Healing, and Resilience”
Chapter 9, Pinderhuges, E., “Black Genealogy Revisited: Restorying an African American Family

4. **June 2**

*Gender, Culture, and Ethnic Sensitivity in Practice/ Working with Impoverished Families/ Working with Immigrant Families*

(Visit from Jim Toy and Jim Etzkorn)

**Readings:**
Laura Brown, “Therapy with Same Sex Couples: An Introduction


**TEXT:**

Chapter 23. Garcia-Preto, N. “Latinas in the United States: Bridging two worlds.”


Chapter 10. Lopez-Colon, F. “The discovery of my multicultural identity.”


Chapter 21. McIntosh, P. “White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women’s studies.”


(Role-play preparation. If you are a therapist, please come with an outline of your “key points” to this class. If you are a family member, come prepared to complete your preparatory and work out the details of your roleplay)

5. **June 9**

*Structural Family Therapy*

Readings:

- **Lawson & Prevatt** (1999): Chapter 5: Structural Family Therapy

  *The Psychotherapy Networker, Vol. 29, no.3*

  Wylie, Mary Sykes, “Maestro of the Consulting Room” p. 40


**TEXT:** Chapter 22. Dolan-Del Vecchio, K. “Dismantling white male privilege within family therapy.”

**ASSIGNMENT II DUE**

6. **June 16**  

**Strategic and Systemic Family Interventions**

**Readings:**

- **Lawson & Prevatt** (1999):  
  Chapter 9: Strategic Therapy;  
  Chapter 8: Milan Systemic Therapy  
  Chapter 6: Brief Therapy Approach of the Palo Alto Group

**McGoldrick text**

- Chapter 12: Watson, M. F. “Voluntary childlessness and motherhood: Afterthoughts.”  
- Chapter 16. Lawless, J. J. “Transforming a racist legacy.”  
- Chapter 18: Abudabbeh, N. “My evolving identity from Arab to Palestinian to Muslim.”  


**Structural Family Therapy Roleplay**
7. June 23

**Couples Therapy**

Readings:

**Lawson & Prevatt** (1999):
*Chapter 4*: Pragmatic Couples Therapy: An Informed Pluralistic Approach
*Chapter 1*: Contextual Therapy
*Chapter 3*: Integrative Couples Therapy

**McGoldrick text:**

Chapter 29. Boyd-Franklin, N. “Working with African Americans and trauma: Lessons for clinicians from Hurricane Katrina.”
Chapter 33. Fraenkel, P., & Carmichael, C. “Working with families who are homeless.”


Doherty, William Bad Couples Therapy; Getting past the myth of therapist neutrality 2002

**Strategic Family Therapy Roleplay**

8. June 30

**The Social Constructionist Models: Narrative Methods**

Readings:

**Lawson & Prevatt** (1999):
Chapter 12: Narrative Therapy: The Work of Michael White
Chapter 11: A Postmodern Collaborative Approach to Therapy
Couples Therapy Roleplay (using Bowen!)

9. July 7

**Solution-Focused Therapy**

Readings:
Lawson and Prevatt: Chapter 10: Solution-Focused Therapy

A feminist critique of solution-focused therapy, Shannon B Dermer; Crystal Wilhite Hemesath; Candyce S Russell, The American Journal of Family Therapy; Jul-Sep 1998; 26, 3; Research Library pg. 239

Narrative Family Therapy Roleplay

10. July 14

**Cognitive Behavioral Family Therapy**

Readings:
Goldenberg & Goldenberg (2000): *Chapter 12: Cognitive – Behavioral Models*

Lawson and Prevatt, Chapter 13, Psychoeducational Family Therapy

Solution-Focused Therapy Roleplay

11. July 21

**Experiential Family Therapy**
Reading: Lawson & Prevatt:
Chapter 7: The Humanistic Approach of Virginia Satir:

McGoldrick text:
Chapter 13: Kliman, J., & Trimble, D. “Grieving in network and community: Bearing witness to the loss of our son.”


Freeman, M.L., (1999), Virginia Satir: A woman and a Social Worker Beholden to No One, Journal of Couples Therapy, 8,1,1-15

Cowley, A.S., (2000), On Satir’s Use of Self, Journal of Couples Therapy, 9,3-4, 51-68

ASSIGNMENT III DUE