SW 521 - Interpersonal Practice with Individuals, Families and Small Groups

However much concerned I was at the problem of misery in the world, I never let myself get lost in broodings over it. I always held firmly to the thought that each one of us can do a little to bring some portion of it to an end.

~Albert Schweitzer

Fall 2011
Tuesday Section

Prof. Julie Ribaudo
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Office Hours:
Monday 12:30 - 2:00
Tuesday 11:30 - 12:30
Thursday 12:15 - 1:15
Others by appointment - Please see me or email me to schedule a time.

Required Text:


Optional Text (Strongly recommended for students interested in cross-cultural and therapeutic practice):


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, religion, and ability as these relate to interpersonal practice.

COURSE CONTENT

Students will learn various social work roles (e.g. counselor/therapist, 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, and termination.

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:**
   - 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.
   - 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. **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 interpersonal practice by:**
(a) engaging diverse client systems
(b) employing assessment protocols of PIE, ecomaps, genograms, network maps, and group composition
(c) 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.
(d) implementing treatment protocols consistent with treatment plans and sensitive to clients' situations
(e) 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.

COURSE DESIGN

Learning happens best in a supportive, comfortable environment. To that end, we will use various methods such as individual exercises, class discussion, and small group work to examine the material presented. We will use PowerPoint, videos, movie clips and song clips to illustrate topics.

My hope is that you will glean basic techniques even within the classroom experience. I will try to highlight basic techniques of reflective listening, attunement and asking questions. Because we will be exploring topics that can raise strong feelings it is important that you practice listening to and respecting others, especially when strong and/or opposing opinions are offered. Your contributions to a supportive learning environment will be much appreciated.

Two major themes will underlie most of our discussions, though they will not often be reflected in the readings. The first major theme will be: what makes humans who we are? Attachment theory will be presented to help us consider this question. The second major theme will be: what helps people change? Your preconceived ideas about both these arenas will impact how you perceive information in this class. Together, we will explore our ideas and thoughts about “what makes us tick.” This course will be most useful to you if you are willing and able to reflect on your own thoughts, feelings and ideas.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO FOUR CURRICULAR THEMES

1) 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.

2) 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 person in the environment (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.

(3) *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.

(4) *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.

**RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO 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.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities and the way that the course is taught can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. The earlier that you make me aware of your needs the more effectively we will be able to use the resources available to us such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, and the like. If you do decide to disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential. Also, please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

(1) Attend each session (10% of course grade); absences will lower your grade since:

(a) Some material considered essential to the objectives of the course will only be presented in class;

(b) The application of key concepts and student co-learning requires participation in class discussions and exercises.

(c) Predictability, reliability and consistency are core to any strong relationship… “being there” is incredibly important to clients, so it is important in this class

(2) Completion of Three Assignments

(a) Genogram - 25 points
(b) Listening exercise - 25 points
(c) Final Exam - 40 points

You will also take part in an ungraded group demonstration.

WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENTS
NOTE: All text readings that are not within a required text (i.e. Boyle, Walker and Rosen) will be on reserve at the Shapiro Library - University Reserves; any reading designated in Ctools will be available through the resources tab in Ctools.

(September 6)
Session 1: Introductions
Class introductions
Intro to Ctools
Course expectations
What does it mean to “help” people? Video clip

Reading: 
Ctools: Review symbols used for Genogram
Find examples of Genograms on line or in books in prep for assignment

A site for further genogram information: 
http://www.genopro.com (can purchase the program to do genograms on the computer - especially helpful if you think you will be using this tool in the future. Gives a good sample and includes symbols for emotional relationships). Free trial (but may not be able to download on school computers - only home computers).

(September 13)
Session 2: Roles of Social Workers

Ctools (Boyle, et al) Chapter 3: Theoretical Perspectives on direct practice: An overview, pp. 73-110.

(September 20)
Session 3: Values and Ethics in Interpersonal Practice

(Cooper and Lesser) – Chapter 2: Key issues in clinical practice
Ctools (Hepworth, et. al) - Building blocks of communication: Communicating with empathy and authenticity, pp. 83-127
(September 27) GENOGRAM or LISTENING EXERCISE DUE (submit paper on Ctools by 11:00 p.m. - hand in genogram drawing or audio tapes in class)

Session 4: Ethnicity, Culture and Social Work Practice - Working Across Differences

(C and L) - Chapter 5: Multicultural practice

(October 4)
Session 5: Attachment Theory and Personality Development

Ctools (Davies) Chapter 1: Attachment as a Context for Development, pp. 7 - 38
Ctools (Sroufe) Chapter 12: Behavioral and Emotional Disturbance, pp. 239-264 (dense but important reading)
Ctools (Brown & Trevethan) Shame, Internalized Homophobia, Identity Formation, Attachment Style, and the Connection to Relationship Status in Gay Men, pp. 268-275

Optional
Ctools (Kobak): The Emotional Dynamics of Disrupted Attachment Relationships
Ctools (Mann and Kretchmar) A Disorganized Toddler in Foster Care: Healing and Change from an Attachment Theory Perspective, pp. 29-36

(October 11)
Session 6: The Helping Process and Client Coping

(C and L) - Chapter 1: An integrated approach to clinical practice
(C and L) - Chapter 3: The clinical interview: the process of assessment
Ctools (Seligman) Why How You Feel Matters, pp. 1-6

(October 18) Fall Study Break

(October 25)
Session 7: Knowledge and Skills for Assessment and Planning

(C and L) - Chapter 4: The psychosocial study: the product of assessment
(Rubin) Chapter 6: Watching and Waiting pp. 103 -130
Ctools (Hesse) The Adult Attachment Interview (only pp. 552-573, reading beyond pg. 573 is optional)

(November 1) GROUP Demonstrations
Session 8: Knowledge and Skills for Intervention

(C and L) Chapters 6, 7, 9, 10
(Rubin) Chapter 3: The Man with the Beautiful Voice, pp. 36-54
GROUP WORK - groups will demonstrate each model of intervention
(November 8) GROUP Demonstrations
GENOGRAM OR LISTENING EXERCISE Due (Submit papers on Ctools by 11:00 p.m.)

Session 9: Improving Group Functioning
(C and L) Chapter 8: Relational Theory

(November 15)
Session 10: Strengthening Family Functioning (32 pages plus 50 min. video)
Ctools (Biblarz and Stacey): How does the gender of parents matter? pp. 3 - 17.
c tools (Goldstein): Chapter 11: Couple and family treatment, pp. 267-285.
Watch video: http://ctiv.alexanderstreet.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/View/534807
(If video isn’t running well, switch web-browser. I think Mozilla runs it better than IE. You must sign in through your umich address too.)
Be ready to discuss your questions, observations, clinical insights

Optional
(W and R): Chapter 9: The five good things in cross-cultural therapy, pp. 151-173 (good chapter looking at multiracial family systems).

(November 22)
Session 11: Knowledge and Skills for Reflective Practice (25 pp.)
(Rubin) Chapter 8: What makes therapy work? pp. 154 - 160
c tools (Heffron) Balance in Jeopardy: Reflexive Reactions vs. Reflective Response in Infant/Family Practice, pp.15-17
c tools (Bennett and Deal) Beginnings and Endings in Social Work Supervision: The Interaction Between Attachment and Developmental Processes pp. 101-114

(November 29)
Session 12: Knowledge and Skills for Termination/ Self Care in Practice (50 pp.)
(Boyle): Chapter 14: Knowledge and skills for termination, pp. 445-468
(Rubin): Chapter 5: To Live or Die, pp. 81-102
c tools (Jones Harden) You Cannot Do it Alone, pp. 10 -16

(December 6) FINAL EXAM DUE Sunday DEC. 11 at 11:00 p.m.
Session 13: Intervention with Larger Systems
Ctools (Heckman) The Dollars and Cents of Investing Early, pp. 10-16
Ctools (Lally) Good Health, Strong Families and Positive Learning Experiences, pp. 6-9
Ctools (Shedler) The Efficacy of Psychodynamic Psychotherapy, pp. 98-107
SW521 Course Assignments
Fall 2011
Prof. Julie Ribaudo

Papers are due on Ctools by 11:00 p.m. of the day due (for audio tapes or hand drawn genograms, those portions will be due in the class that meets on the due date).

In all assignments, you will be graded on:

- Meeting parameters of assignment
- Clarity of thought,
- Effort/ability to self-reflect,
- Demonstration of social work values related to empathy, strengths-based thinking, and client dignity,
- Insightfulness and clinical acuity
- Integration of reading materials into paper
- the ability to discern which aspects of use of self would be important in assessment or intervention
- Writing Skill

1. Genogram

As a part of an effort to enhance your understanding of self, prepare a genogram of three generations of your own family. You may draw the genogram or use a software program to create the graphic. Several word processing packages allow for creation of square, circles, triangles, and ways to draw lines to link them. You could also use one of the "family genogram" programs that are available commercially or as shareware. You may download a demonstration copy of such a program through the World Wide Web site of the Computer Users in Social Services Network at http://www.genopro.com/.

You will turn in three parts: the actual genogram drawing, a synopsis of the key people you have included and the paper that addresses your integration of the material.

In creating your own genogram, include your grandparents and parents, if possible, as well as your siblings and yourself. If you have children or grandchildren, you may include them as the fourth and fifth generations, respectively. Please don’t be worried if you don’t have strong family connections or don’t have access to information. This exercise is part of learning about yourself. If it brings up a lot of anxiety, please see me. For this exercise, rely on your own memory, rather than seeking a lot of information from other family members. Try to include the approximate dates and categories of significant family events, such as births, deaths, marriages, divorces, separations and losses, military service, significant hospitalizations, changes in place of residence salient if a child moved frequently), injuries, and traumatic experiences. If you do not remember details, enter question marks instead of facts. Develop a succinct, few-word synopsis of the personal characteristics of the more significant members in your experience. In addition, briefly characterize the nature of the various relationships within your family (you can depict this verbally in the synopsis, as well as visually in the genogram).
When you have completed your genogram, reflect on your childhood and family experiences by addressing the following questions, and any others you’d like:

1. What role or roles did you play in your family? At the present time, what roles do you tend to play in family or family-like situations? What about in other relationships?
2. How was affection expressed in your family? At the present time, how do you tend to express affection?
3. How were feelings such as anger, fear and joy expressed in your family? At this point in your life, how do you express them? Do you notice any trends in emotion expression or how family members interact emotionally with each other? (Be thoughtful here - this is where many student lose points - being able to understand and tolerate a wide range of emotions contributes to therapeutic insight and skills).
4. How were people (especially children) educated, guided, and disciplined in your family? Who performed these functions?
5. How did your family reflect their cultural and ethnic identity? How do you reflect it today?
6. How has your family been affected by poverty, privilege, oppression, diversity or (in)justice?
7. Who, if anyone, are you like in your family? What did you learn about yourself or your family in completing this exercise (if you’ve done this before, what new questions or insights did it raise)? This is not just a family tree - this is a way for you to look at intergenerational patterns of interactions.
8. Final reflection - Any closing thoughts. This is a place for self-reflection…you will receive highest marks for this section if you are thoughtful and thorough about what you found yourself thinking, feeling, wondering, etc. as you considered your family.

GRADING CONSIDERATIONS:
Genogram drawing
Thoroughness of details, clear, easy to understand, includes at least 3 generations, use of symbols and relational depictions are accurate

Person synopsis
Includes key people. Descriptions are thoughtful and show insight.

Paper
Thoughtful discussion of how you have developed to be the person you are today through your relationships with important family members. Clinical thinking re: family dynamics in general (i.e. you may note patterns or themes of strength, connectedness, isolation, loss, abuse, etc.) – you are not asked to “diagnose” family members but to reflect on generational themes. For example, if you notice a family history of a lot of support and caring, how has that impacted you and others in your family? Conversely, if you know one of your parents was raised by an abusive parent, how has that impacted your generation? These are only examples – feel free to explore what seems salient to you. Qualitatively, students who show strong insight into themselves and others will generally earn an A range; students who are showing developing skills in insight will generally earn in the B range; students who are in need of further significant growth in
understanding individuals, families and systems - themselves and others, will earn in the C range.

NOTE: Some students can feel uncomfortable revealing themselves to a professor - that is understandable; however, the experience of making yourself vulnerable to another human being is often what we are asking of clients in undertaking a therapeutic journey. That being said, only reveal as much as you are comfortable. If you choose not to reveal details (for instance, how you were affected by particular life circumstances) then you must still note in which ways you did deal with them (for example - through therapy, or work with a spiritual leader, or a support group, or “I haven’t dealt with it yet!” and some discussion as to why).

Writing Skills
Clarity, grammar, thoughtfulness, etc. Papers are expected to be well organized, clearly written, and show minimal grammatical errors.

In this and in most of your classes, you will be asked to demonstrate proper grammar, spelling, and, when appropriate, the rules of the American Psychological Association Publication Manual (6th edition). You are not required to purchase the manual; however, I do encourage you to access it and other writing resources online (e.g., ttp://apastyle.apa.org/ and/or http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/). If you choose to cite a source for one of your papers, please use APA style citation. Please be aware that I will deduct points for poor writing skills including grammatical errors. I encourage you to use the Sweetland Writing Center if you require writing assistance.

2. Listening Exercise

Ask a friend, colleague, or fellow student (disguise names!) if you can do a 20 minute audiotaped interview with them, assuring them of confidentiality (you and I will be only one listen to tape) and that the goal is just for you to practice listening and empathic, open-ended responses. PLEASE DO NOT USE YOUR CHILD OR PARTNER – it gets too complicated if there is an issue that gets evoked within the “session.” Ask them to discuss a real concern they have. Your role is to practice skills such as empathic responses, asking questions to clarify your understanding, and attuning to the state of the speaker. When you are done interviewing, ask for some feedback as to how they experienced you in your role as a counselor … did they feel listened to and understood? What was the experience like for them to have someone “just” listen? NOTE: you can use open-ended questions, summarize, ask for clarification, etc., but your goal is to gain a strong understanding of what the person is struggling with and be able to convey that understanding. The ability to understand is best developed by being a good listener!

Before reviewing the tape, write process notes (a complete recording of what was said – see Chapter One of Cooper and Lesser) – recall what was said and in what order. As you then play back the tape, notice how accurately or inaccurately you captured the process, what you “heard” and what you didn’t and think about why that might be.
Write a 4 – 5 page double spaced paper reflecting on the following (in no particular order): (Turn in the tape (you can also upload on the computer), the process notes, and the paper...all will be returned to you).

Describe the “presenting concern” (disguising identifying info) and how the “client” presented throughout the interview – what did you observe about body language, voice tone, affect, eye contact, etc.

Give a brief summarize your understanding of what the person was struggling with. Did any themes present themselves?

What did your “client” say about the experience...how did they describe your attending and listening style?

What was the experience like for you? How was it to “just” listen, only being able to ask clarifying questions, or make an empathic comment, or a summarizing comment - i.e. not give advice!? How did you do in that role? I will be looking at your capacity to self-reflect. What reactions did you have internally to the subject matter of the conversation?

How closely did your process notes connect with the actual interview? What are your thoughts on the degree of match or mismatch?

What did you learn about yourself through this exercise?

NOTE: Please do not fake a “session.” Your task is to show that you can listen, ask appropriate questions and make clarifying statements – that is the start of any Social Work role. You aren’t doing an intake – you are showing that you can listen and understand.

GRADING will be based on:

Audio Tape
Ability to listen, limiting “advice-giving”, and asking pertinent clarifying questions or statements

Process Notes
I want to see that you did them...I don’t mind if they aren’t “accurate”...that is part of the learning process!

Paper -
Quality of observations - how well you noted eye contact, body position, breathing, etc. and attempted to understand how the non-verbal and verbal aspects of the “client” aligned.

Reflective Aspect - ability to show self- reflection, ability to generate some clear idea of your own reactions, thoughts and feelings...both in role as counselor and in reaction to the content of the discussion; addressing mismatches in what you “heard” and what was said...addressing your thoughts as to matches and mismatches. If any issues stood out in the discussion, address those briefly
(for example, you may note that your “client” is having difficulty adjusting to a life situation but you notice that she/he minimizes or dramatizes the experience).

Writing Skills

Clarity, grammar, thoughtfulness, following parameters of assignment, etc.

NEXT STEP: Make an appointment with me to review your tape and paper - we will listen to a portion of your tape together, and discuss it. I will provide direct vs. written feedback.

3. Group demonstration of methodology (no points given) - four groups of 5 - 6 will demonstrate use of one of the primary techniques used in Chapters 6, 7, 9, or 10 of Cooper and Lesser. You will create a skit that demonstrates the technique. One or two other group participants will describe the technique, when it is best utilized and any clinical contraindications, constraints or limitations. Please be prepared to show an accurate depiction of technique and coherent summarization of the model, with some integration of other course concepts noted in the analysis of the model (i.e. use of the relationship, use of listening or empathy, use of assessment, etc.).

4. Final Exam

Exam will be a take-home review and application of all readings and class notes, issued through the Ctools exam site. The test will be composed of short answer questions and multiple-choice questions. The test is NOT designed to test a student’s memory, but instead is designed to assure the student has read course material and is able to apply course concepts to practice examples. Students in the past have noted the test requires anywhere from 10 to 12 hours to complete so please allot an appropriate amount of time. You will be able to open and close the test session so you will not be required to complete it in one session. You will have one week to complete the exam.

GRADES

I try to provide clear, thoughtful feedback that helps you to deepen your awareness of a number of points - the process of working with others, themes that arise in IP work, who you are in the work, writing and communication skills, etc. If I write or say something that confuses or upsets you, please make an appointment so we can discuss it! If I help you deepen your understanding of something that is helpful for me to know too.

GRADING SCALE

The criteria for each grade are as follows:

100 - A+ Brilliant mastery of subject content; demonstrates exceptional skill, insight, reflection, understanding of self and others; exceptional mastery of core concepts
95 - 99 A  Strong mastery of subject content, demonstration of insight, clinical astuteness, creativity and/or complexity in completion of assignment; strong capacity for self-reflection

90 - 94 A- The difference between A and A- is based on the degree to which the above described skills are demonstrated

88 - 89 B+ Mastery of subject content beyond expected competency; is growing in insight, clinical acuity, and self-reflection and in mastery of core concepts

85 - 87 B Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency – meets course expectations

80 - 84 B- Less than adequate competency, but demonstrates student learning and potential for mastery of subject content

70 - 79 C or C- Demonstrates a minimal understanding of core content, and of self and others. Significant areas need improvement to meet course requirements.

69 and below Student has failed to demonstrate minimal understanding of subject content.