



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

**SW 715: Adventure/Experiential-Based Social Work Practice
Spring Summer 2012**

Instructor: Antonio G Alvarez

Tuesday 1:00- 5:00 PM (May 8, 15, 22, 29, June 5, 12, 19, 26, July 3, 10, 17)

***** Hoping for an all-day Saturday (May 19) to take the place of June 26 & July 3**

SSWB Room B798

Office: Rm. 2760/2784

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Course Description

This course will focus on experiential and adventure practice (theories, models, tools and techniques) that social workers may use in their work with individuals, groups, families, organizations and communities. Some particular focus will be given to their use in social work with groups. Students will be introduced to adventure through readings, discussions, guest speakers and experiences. This course is designed to provide the student with a theoretical, philosophical and experiential understanding of adventure and experiential learning and its application to Social Work Practice. Theoretical models of practice arising out of the adventure and experiential fields will be offered and discussed in tandem with current social work theories and models of practice. Evidence-based literature will be reviewed to promote experiential interventions that build on strengths and resources of individuals and their families, and that integrate components of evidence based practice into the experiential methodologies.

Course Content

Course content will include:

- Theoretical and philosophical foundations of adventure based practice
- Discourse on the safe and appropriate use of adventure activities with different client groups
- Integration of evidence-based practice techniques in the application of adventure based practice
- Use of adventure activities in assessment and intervention

- The creation and maintenance of physical and emotional environment conducive to change and growth
- Impact of assessment data and environmental conditions on client outcomes
- The art of matching intervention tools with individual and environmental assessment
- Demonstration of a variety of facilitation skills using adventure activities
- Exploration of effective methods of processing experience and enhancing the learning from interventions
- Appropriate use of program evaluation to maintain personal and program efficiency

In this course the emphasis of intervention is as much on the context as on the person. Intervention strategies focus on ways to bring about change at levels such as the classroom or school, the peer group, and the community or population, as well as at the individual level. Mezzo and macro practice skills covered in this course are aimed at promoting interpersonal competence, self-esteem, self-efficacy, achievement, and moral development by making the contexts within which they develop more responsive to their expressed needs.

Direct practice methods covered in this course provide students with the skills necessary to select and provide effective short-term interventions, evaluate direct practice, develop service delivery systems and work effectively with individuals, families and groups in society. Skills for engagement, assessment, intervention, prevention, and evaluation relevant to contexts such as families, neighborhood and community, schools, group care facilities, residential care, hospitals, correctional programs and institutions, courts, governmental and nongovernmental agencies will be covered.

Intervention strategies will be derived from the experiential and adventure approaches and theoretical perspectives. Students will learn to use the knowledge and skills to engage and communicate effectively with all consumers. The student will learn how to design individual programs of intervention that are based on clearly articulated goals and priorities, reflect an examination of the evidence base and are consistent with social work ethics and values. Throughout the course, cultural competence and sensitivity to differences among families and the impact of worker/client differences in values, experiences, and power will be analyzed. In addition, the student will learn to understand the significance of “multiple identities” (the interaction of factors such as the diverse dimensions: including 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) in shaping the uniqueness of families and individuals and in shaping power and privilege differences.

Course Objectives

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

- Describe the theoretical underpinnings of Experiential and Adventure Practice
- Apply relevant Social Work practice principles into Adventure Practice
- Demonstrate a model for adventure/experiential facilitation.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the tools and techniques of adventure practice
- Perform adventure-based assessments, formulate adventure-based plans and develop evaluation procedures.
- Understand the significance of environmental/ecological factors in individual assessment and interventions, as well as broader contexts of family, group, neighborhood, and society.
- Safely facilitate client systems through some of the common tools in adventure practice, including those that are found in Challenge Courses
- Demonstrate ways to help the participant(s) transfer the learning from the facilitated experience to other aspects of their life.
- Adapt adventure tools for use indoors, particularly for the counseling or therapeutic setting.
- Demonstrate appropriate use of adventure-based activities with diverse client groups and in different settings.
- Discuss typical ethical concerns related to adventure-based Social Work practice.

Course Design:

THIS CLASS IS ABOUT LEARNING EXPERIENTIAL/ADVENTURE TOOLS. IT WILL BE EXPERIENTIALLY TAUGHT! EXPECT TO ENGAGE REGULARLY IN PHYSICAL AND INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES. Other classroom teaching strategies may also be used, including lecture, multimedia presentations, small and large group discussion, presentations by students and guest lecturers. Students' experiences in the field will be utilized as much as possible in assignments and case presentations and discussions.

Relationship of Course to Four Curricular Themes:

- *Multiculturalism and Diversity* will be addressed through careful analysis of how these models can be applied and modified to fit the special needs of various groups. Resistance and motivation of participants to interventions will be covered to demonstrate how effective intervention models must be adapted to fit the needs of various ethnic and racial groups. This course will emphasize that mono-cultural models must be adapted to fit the definitions of "problem" and "treatment" that exist

in diverse groups in order for social workers to practice with assorted client systems from diverse backgrounds.

- Students will learn to recognize the existence of group differences in a number of areas (such as nonverbal communication, individual and family values, family and community structures, preferred and accepted responses to crisis, response to exclusion or oppression) and how these may impact intervention relationships with individuals and their families.
- Social change and social justice issues will be addressed by recognizing that historically poor and oppressed clients have been excluded from adventure and experiential programs. This course will also examine how socioeconomic exclusion arises in screening criteria that exclude clients because of intelligence, verbal ability, insight, and motivation. Advocacy for individuals, especially children and youth whose families and communities are particularly impacted by social inequality and social injustice, will be emphasized at individual, family, organizational, community, and policy levels.
- Promotion and prevention will be addressed through a focus on intervention models and procedures that can be used to prevent and treat psychosocial problems of all individuals including children, youth and adults. These areas are addressed in the micro practice areas through family life education, family preservation activities, early identification of children/youth at risk, and family. At the mezzo and macro practice levels, program development and evaluation, and staff and professional training (teambuilding, communication workshops, etc), addresses the relationship between program decisions and risks to individuals and families.
- Social science knowledge is presented as the necessary basis for conducting empirically grounded assessment, intervention and evaluation practice at all levels of intervention. Course materials draw upon research knowledge from a variety of social sciences, as well as other professions and disciplines (i.e., social work, education, psychology, sociology, etc.), and emphasize the need for multidisciplinary collaboration and communication around issues related to individuals, especially children and youth, and their ecosystems. Social science research concepts and methods are described in relationship to both social work practice and program and policy evaluation processes.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values

When working with adults, social workers must encourage self-determination while empowering them to choose and pursue their own goals. Ethical issues around management of boundaries, addressing physical space, touching, as well as encouraging clients to make choices and live by their consequences will be discussed as they impact individual clients. Practice with children and youth require considerable attention to issues of ethics and values, due to the special challenges these populations offer the social work practitioner. For example, issues of self-determination and autonomy often arise when an adolescent discloses important information that has not been shared with a parent or other responsible adult. Social work values and social science knowledge may also conflict with the child-rearing beliefs and practices of some cultural or religious

groups. Social work values and ethics, as outlined in the professional Code of Ethics, are presented as the necessary and appropriate guidelines for practice when ethical dilemmas arise in social work practice.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Let me know if you need an accommodation for a disability. All aspects of the course can be modified to facilitate your learning process. There are resources available to help us to meet your needs. Know that when you disclose a disability to me, I will treat that information as private and confidential.

Course Resources

1. Required Texts:
 - a. Alvarez, A. G. & Stauffer, G. (2012) Adventure Activities Manual, Ypsilanti, MI: AIT Inc. **Order through instructor**
 - b. Stanchfield, J (2007) Tips and Tools: The Art of Experiential Group Facilitation; Wood N Barnes Publishing Co, OK. **Can be ordered through instructor**
2. Recommended Texts: (If you intend to do individual family or group counseling or therapy)
 - a. Lung, D.M., Stauffer, G.S. & Alvarez, A.G. (2008) Power of One: Using adventure and experiential exercises in one-on-one counseling sessions; Wood N Barnes Publishing Co, OK. **Can be ordered through instructor**
 - b. Norton, C (2011) Innovative Interventions in Child and Adolescent Mental Health; Routledge Press, NY
 - c. Gass, M., Gillis, H.L., & Russell, K. (2012) Adventure Therapy: Theory, Practice & Research, Routledge Press, NY
3. CTools Site: Will provide access to many/most of our additional readings during the course. Several websites which contain useful resources for our use will be provided.
4. UM and Alvarez Libraries: A few texts and journals are available at the library and in the instructor's personal library and can be borrowed for short periods of time.

Course Expectations

- Professional Accountability (see clarifications below)
- Out of class reading and preparation
- Completion on an individual project at the student's field placement setting (or an alternative if the placement is unable to offer the experience)
- Completion of other assignments (more during class session)

Professional accountability will be based on the following criteria. The professional accountability points are assigned based on the collection of all of these factors NOT just attendance.

- Engagement: The appropriate, respectful, and relevant participation in one's own learning as well as contributions to the learning of others. Inappropriate engagement can negatively affect your grade (disrespectful comments, side conversations, and inappropriate comments, text messaging, etc.).
- Integration: The demonstration of appropriate efforts to make connections, both conceptual and practical, between the course curriculum and your experience. Inappropriate efforts (clear lack of having done reading, raising questions that are not related to the conversation or discussion) can negatively impact this portion of your grade.
- Attendance: Attendance is required and is considered as being present for the entire class period. Point will be subtracted for each session missed. Participation in class discussions is contingent upon attendance and can be used to affect your grade. Although some absences are justifiable, that does not suggest that points will not be lost.
- Timely: Completion of assignments on date due, including coming to class prepared to discuss and apply assigned readings.

Course Assignments- Spring Summer 2012

Note: I prefer that all assignments be uploaded into CTools

The purpose of this class is to introduce you to a relatively young adventure/experiential approach to social work practice. There are very few social workers practicing in this manner. As recently as 1996, when a meeting for all social workers was called at an international adventure conference, there were barely 15 who showed up and six of those included me and five UM MSW students.

In the last twenty years, there has been a push to create concepts and models for the intentional use of these tools and techniques in our practice. This year, we have close to ten social work faculty members who practiced and currently teach in this manner.

Dewey coined the phrase “learning by doing” to describe his ideas about experiential education. Other leaders continue to challenge the field to consider adventure-based ways to get things done that often is done through talk.

To enhance your learning, the following assignments are being required; a late assignment will lose points, whether unintentional or with extra time requested

Who Showed Up: **May 11**

10 points

Introduce yourself to me and the class through a poster that you create. Feel free to use pictures, cutouts, artifacts, drawings, poems, etc. Through this poster, share with us the following:

Who are you: What is important for us to know about you? Often, this includes a little about where you are from, what you did before UMSSW, things you are good at, areas you need improvement in, why you are in the S of SW, why this class, your passions- personal and professional.

Hopes and Wishes: Tell me- how you hope this class will go, what you hope it isn't, what kinds of things you are hoping to experience, what you want to leave this class with.

Each of you will take around 5 minutes to present your poster to the class

What is A/E SW Practice? **May 18**

10 points

Write a 3-page paper telling me your ideas about what you believe this practice to be. Make sure to reference articles from the readings of sessions 2 and 3.

A Literature Review: **Many due dates- see below**

30 points

What area of concern are you passionate about? Working with young kids with special needs? Couples who are homeless? Older people dealing with dementia? The ongoing oppression experienced by people of color? The disempowerment of young people? Young women with eating disorders?

This is a multi-submission assignment

1. Describe your intentions- what population (children, adults, men, teenagers) you want to learn to do A/E SWP with. What setting (hospital, school after-school program, child welfare agency, community center) this might occur in? What concern (empowerment, organizing, anxiety, eating disorder, skill development, externalizing behaviors like anger management, battering) you might focus on. If not sure, share with me your thoughts so I can perhaps help move you towards a decision. **This 1-page paper is due May 18**
2. Find 5 articles that will help you/me understand what this population will need from social

workers. For example, veterans with PTSD according to the research do best with trauma reduction, with management of anxiety, with exploration of the trauma, with a support group, etc. Feel free to use a mixture of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, web-based stories and articles, newspaper articles, etc. Summarize each resource (1-1.5 paragraphs each); then summarize what you learned from reviewing these resources. **This 2-3 page paper is due May 25**

3. Find 5 articles in the adventure/wilderness/experiential field that address this population and/or this concern. Keep in mind that you might have difficulty finding these articles so do ask for assistance from me. Feel free to use a mixture of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, web-based stories and articles, newspaper articles, etc. Summarize each resource (1-1.5 paragraphs each); then summarize what you learned from reviewing these resources. **This 2-3 page paper is due June 6**
4. Reflect on what you have learned, what you had hoped to learn but didn't, and suggest areas where additional resources would have been useful. If your investigation uncovered limited use of E/A practice, describe how you might use the information you gathered (from sources other than E/A literature) to create an E/A program. For example, let's say you didn't find much written about the use of E/A methods with clients from the LGBTQ population. In your non-adventure readings you learned that members of this population are often bullied such that the sometimes consider killing themselves. Perhaps you might develop an adventure-based bullying prevention adventure camp offered only to members of the LGBTQ population. (3-4 pages). **This 3-4 page paper is due June 15**
5. Provide a reference list AND when possible, download copies of those referenced articles into CTools. Otherwise provide hard copies of your selections with your paper

In class Facilitation Experience

15 points

For this course, several hours will be reserved for opportunities for each of you to practice facilitating a session with your peers. You will each choose a 45-60 minute block of time during sessions 3-6 when you will co-facilitate your group through an adventure experience.

To make this happen, the following needs to occur:

1. You will help co-create a group numbering 8 members. Opportunities will be provided for your group to meet together to work on norms, solve problems, etc. Your group might also choose to meet outside of class for additional sessions
2. Each person in your group will choose a session when they will facilitate an E/A experience for the other group members
3. You will co-facilitate the group through an adventure group process. To do this, you will be expected to plan out a 45-60 minute group experience. As the group matures and develops, your assessment of the group and its abilities and capabilities will need to be addressed. In other words, if you are choosing to run the first session for your group, you will need to consider "beginning group tasks" and create activities that will get you what you need. However, if you are doing session 4, you will need to consider all that has happened in group and make sure your session activities correspond with where the group is
4. I will provide each group access to my adventure bag and to additional tools; I will also make myself available to meet with you if so desired.
5. At the end of the experience, collect written feedback from your colleagues (I have a sample form you can use). **After reading them, attach these to your written reflection submitted to me a week after your co-facilitation.** Include in that paper the following:
 - a. Your pre-session assessment of the group's Point A and your sense of the environment

- (presence/absence of 7 beliefs) $\frac{3}{4}$ -1 page
- b. Your proposed agenda (support this with any readings, discussion points made in class) $\frac{3}{4}$ -1 page
 - c. Your observations on how it went, on what happened (“the substance of the group interaction and what happened to the individuals”- Knapp) 1 page
 - d. Any generalizations made about the group’s experience (“pertains to the difference the experience made to the individuals, the consequences, and the meaning for them”- Knapp) $\frac{1}{2}$ page
 - e. Applicability of lessons learned (“The process of taking lessons from the experience and reapplying them to other situations”- Rhoades) $\frac{1}{2}$ page
 - f. Your thoughts on co-facilitation, areas of strength, areas for improvement. $\frac{1}{2}$ page

Out-of-class Facilitation Experience- Due July 6 15 points

It is very important to practice this work to become good at it! Here is an opportunity to write and get feedback on your process. Write a 5-6 page paper that reflects on an E/A experience that you facilitate or co-facilitate (at your field site, at someone else’s field site, at a volunteer place, at a work site).

Several options including-

- A. Volunteer to facilitate at Fraser High School (ask me if interested)
- B. Find someone in your small group who is able to organize an event and co-facilitate it with her/him
- C. Run an experience at your field placement site
- D. Facilitate a session in a class you are in (many faculty members have agreed for this to happen in the past)

Your paper should include:

1. A description of the agency or organization sponsoring the experience/event $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ page
2. A brief but complete description of the client/consumer (age, strengths, areas for improvement, time period for the intervention, developmental issues, relevant variables, etc.) $\frac{3}{4}$ -1 page
3. A section that details the plan, including an outline showing appropriate sequencing of activities for the session. Make sure you have appropriate references to support and substantiate your ideas. You are expected to have developed this presentation based on knowledge of the population and how adventure-based practice has been used with this population. 2 pages
4. A brief report on the implementation of the experience. 1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pages
5. Finally, an evaluation of the actions you undertook and any lessons learned for future facilitations. $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ page

The Stick Project: Presentation on July 13 (Journal due July 20) 20 points

Our work is transformative. We guide our clients/consumers through the change process and observe as they transform into who they want to become. We, as guides, also transform as we do this work. This project offers you an opportunity to partake in the transformation of your stick. For this assignment, you will:

1. Choose a stick from the collection I provide
2. During the course of the term, record any transformation that the stick experiences (physical look, role, purpose)

3. Maintain a journal of this process with the stick (an entry a week). Write about things like- what made you choose this particular stick? Any stick characteristic strike you? Did you give the stick a name? Why? Why not? Talk about how you decided to transform the stick, or how you changed your mind midway, or what you needed to do when the stick wasn't cooperative; take photos of the process of the transformation. Journal can be in writing, through audio/photo/video form, and can be submitted as a photo album, a PPT, a video, a paper or any combination.
4. During the term, and not taking into account the time you spend working on the stick, spend purposeful time weekly with it (E.g. go for a walk with your stick; introduce your stick to others; make a game using the stick as a central prop; invite others to comment on your stick; take it home or to placement,)
5. Write a short story/poem using the stick as the main character
6. Present the stick to the class on the selected days; submit the journal by.

Points Available:

Assignments		100
Who Showed Up	10	
What is A/E SW Practice	10	
Literature Review	30	
In-Class Facilitation	15	
Out-of-class Facilitation	15	
Stick Journal and Presentation	20	
Attendance & Participation		22
Total Points that can be earned		122 points

Grading:

A+	123+
A	120-122
A-	116-119
B+	112-115
B	108-111
B-	104-107
C+	100-103
C	96-99

Session Outline and Readings

Date/Session	Session Topic	Readings in CTools
Session 1	CTE class	A Practitioners Perspective
Session 2	Theories/Models	ELC; SoC; LbD; SW HP;
Session 3	A/E Facilitation	FtEW; IoH; TW;
Session 4	Tools/Techniques	Assess Point A
Session 5	Tools/Techniques	Assess and Attend to the Environment
Session 6	Tools/Techniques	Multiple Identities/ Seeking buy
Session 7	Application	in/Resistance
Session 8	Application	Therapy/Therapeutic
Session 9	Application	Skill/Team Building/Staff
Session 10	Outcomes	Development
Session 11	Endings	Community Building/Empowerment
		Evaluate Point B

ELC- Experiential Learning Cycle; SoC- Stages of Change; LbD- Learning by Doing; SWHP- Social Work's Helping Process
 FtEW- Facilitating the Experiential Wave; IoH- Islands of Healing; TW- Therapeutic Wave