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

Course Description:
This course presents social work foundation knowledge and skills essential to interpersonal practice with individuals, families and small groups in social contexts. It integrates content on multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice 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 status, age, religion, and ability as these relate to interpersonal practice.

Course Content:
This course builds a base from behavioral and social science theories to inform the practice concepts and skills taught in this course. Students learn how to perform various social work roles (i.e. counselor/clinical social worker, group facilitator, mediator, and advocate), recognizing that these roles must adhere to social work values and ethics. Students learn the importance of developing relationships with clients, colleagues, supervisors, other professionals, and many other constituencies. Students also learn how self-awareness and the conscious use of self affect the helping relationship and how to apply practice skills such as active listening, empathic responding, contracting, critical and creative thinking in practice.

In this course, all phases of the IP treatment process (i.e. engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation) are presented and applied to social work practice with individuals, families, and small groups. Students learn how to assess vulnerabilities and strengths in clients' lives that relate to attributes (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) as well as situational and environmental factors relevant to the client's social functioning.

Students learn how to assess risks, and barriers, and to plan, implement and monitor change strategies. Students learn how to apply various evaluation techniques in order to demonstrate effectiveness.
COMPETENCY 1—Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.

Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession’s history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession’s enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. Social workers

1.1 advocate for client access to the services of social work;
1.2 practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;
1.3 attend to professional roles and boundaries;
1.4 demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;
1.6 use supervision and consultation.

COMPETENCY 2—Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers

2.1 recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;
2.2 make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work Statement of Principles;
2.3 tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts;
2.4 apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

COMPETENCY 3—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers

3.1 distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom;
3.2 analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and
3.3 demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

COMPETENCY 4—Engage diversity and difference in practice.

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers

4.1 recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;
4.2 gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;  
4.3 recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences; and  
4.4 view themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.  

COMPETENCY 5—Advance human rights and social and economic justice.  
Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers  
5.1 understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;  

COMPETENCY 6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.  
Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers  
6.1 use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and  
6.2 use research evidence to inform practice.  

COMPETENCY 7—Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.  
Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers  
7.1 utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and  
7.2 critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.  

COMPETENCY 9—Respond to contexts that shape practice.  
Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers  
9.1 continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services; and
COMPETENCY 10—Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

COMPETENCY 10(a)—Engagement
Social workers

10.a.1 substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
10.a.2 use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and
10.a.3 develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.

COMPETENCY 10(b)—Assessment
Social workers

10.b.1 collect, organize, and interpret client data;
10.b.2 assess client strengths and limitations;
10.b.3 develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives; and
10.b.4 select appropriate intervention strategies.

COMPETENCY 10(c)—Intervention
Social workers

10.c.2 implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;
10.c.3 help clients resolve problems;
10.c.4 negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients; and
10.c.5 facilitate transitions and endings.

COMPETENCY 10(d)—Evaluation
Social workers

10.d.1 critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

Course Objectives:
Upon completion of this course, students using a social work practice framework will be able to:

1. Describe and apply research-based knowledge and frameworks in interpersonal practice with individuals, families and small groups and critique the strengths and weaknesses of these various frameworks.”

2. Recognize the potential impact of race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, power and privilege on interpersonal practice.
3. Carry out the roles of counselor/clinical social worker, client services manager, group facilitator mediator, and advocate in a culturally responsive manner (by attending to social identities such as race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, and to power and privilege)

4. Demonstrate basic interpersonal practice skills including active listening, empathic responding, critical/creative thinking, case recording, and contracting.

5. Operationalize the NASW code of ethics and other ethical codes, and recognize value dilemmas that emerge in interpersonal practice.

**Course Design:**
This course employs a number of pedagogical strategies to promote skill development such as: gamed simulations, case analysis, interactive media simulations, exercises in vivo, practice within the classroom through role playing, didactic presentation of theory/models/procedures, etc. is included in the topics of relationship building, communication, assessment, intervention, termination and evaluation. These topics 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 are explored.

**Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity:**
are central to the topic of various roles assumed by social workers and in the clienthood process in social agencies. The focus of the course is on small system change (individual, families, and groups) but the larger social context and implications for change is reflected in PIE, ecological assessment, and in the experience of applicants as they enter social agencies. These themes are 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.

**Theme Relation to Social Justice:**
are themes reflected in various purposes and models of contemporary social work practice. In addition, this course emphasizes skills that can be implemented with promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation as practice goals and outcomes.

**Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation:**
is reflected in the theoretical base developed in this course to support practice methods, skills and assessment procedures.

**Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research:**
Social work ethics and values are addressed within the course as they pertain to issues related to working with clients and colleagues. The NASW Code of Ethics and other ethical codes are presented to give students direction about these ethical issues. In particular, this course focuses on client issues, such as confidentiality, privacy, rights and prerogatives of clients, the client's best interest, proper and improper relationships with clients, cultural sensitivity and competence.

**Faculty Approved:** October 17, 2012
REQUIRED TEXTS:


We will use the e-version of the text. It comes packaged with access to video examples, quizzes, and several other learning tools. Once you own the text, you can download any part of it for printing and reading off-line as you wish. Anyone who prefers a paper text version is welcome to purchase that, but it will be much more costly to do so. You should purchase the bundled Coursemate version so you will have access to all the included learning tools which accompany the e-version.

The text can be ordered at cengagebrain.com

Our particular course identification number is: CM-9781133371717-0000084
To access CourseMate and enroll in our course, use this url: http://www/cengagebrain.com/micro/tropman

2. Rubin, Lillian (2003). The Man With the Beautiful Voice, Boston, MA: Beacon Press. This is a lovely, well-written, short book with several stories of the author’s experiences as a most thoughtful and effective clinician. You can probably get it used on Amazon for a reduced price.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:


Yalom, Irvin D. (2009). The Gift of Therapy. New York: Harper Perennial. This is a wonderful nugget of stories, insights, observations, pointers from “the other side of the desk” by a “grand-master” of the art of therapeutic interventions, both with individuals and groups.

LEARNING NEEDS AND ACCOMMODATIONS: If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know and I will do my best to make suitable arrangements.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

REQUIREMENTS:

1. You are expected to complete the required reading assignments, as detailed in the syllabus. In addition, there are several recommended readings to help those of you who wish to pursue further study of a specific area or topic. The required readings are located in your text(s) or in Course Tools.

2. Class attendance is required, except in the case of unavoidable extenuating circumstances, in which case, the student should make every effort to try to inform the instructor before class if an emergency prevents attendance. Because this is a practice methods class, active participation is encouraged, and student participation and input is valued. (Class participation = 5% of the final grade.)

3. There are five assignments in this course, as detailed below. You are expected to complete four written papers and to make a class presentation based on one of the papers. A specific outline of the expectations for each of the assignments is posted on Course Tools.
ASSIGNMENTS:

ASSIGNMENT # 1: CRITIQUE OF TAPED INTERVIEW  
DUE: SEPT. 30, 15% OF FINAL GRADE

ASSIGNMENT # 2: A PERSONAL “CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS” ANALYSIS  
DUE: OCTOBER 21, 15% OF FINAL GRADE

ASSIGNMENT # 3: RESEARCH PAPER ON A SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE TOPIC:

One class is underway, students will self-select into groups of no more than four members. Each group will select a topic with which they are not already familiar to study in depth, and each group member will write a research paper (8-10 pp.) on the subject. The group will then do a joint presentation to the class. A list of possible topics will be distributed in class/posted on Course Tools, and guidelines for research papers will also be posted.

DUE: NOVEMBER 25 30% OF FINAL GRADE

ASSIGNMENT # 4: STUDENT PRESENTATION

The students who have written their research paper on a particular subject will meet as a group to plan an in-class presentation on the topic. Groups will be encouraged to employ a variety of teaching tools in their presentation, and to educate about the substance of the topic, as well as to comment on the nature of the group process in preparing the presentation. A list of more specific guidelines will be distributed in class/posted on Course Tools.

DUE: NOVEMBER 24 and DECEMBER 2 20% OF FINAL GRADE

ASSIGNMENT # 5: FINAL TAPE CRITIQUE

Students will do a taped interview of approximately 30-45 minutes in length with a different person than the one chosen for the first interview. As before, the person will agree to tell you about a real concern of theirs which they feel comfortable sharing, and you will provide the earlier stated (see assignment # 1) confidentiality guarantees. The student will discuss the interview in 4-5 typed pages according to criteria and guidelines which will be distributed in class/posted on Course Tools.

DUE: DECEMBER 9 15% OF FINAL GRADE

COURSE OUTLINE: OVERVIEW

Sept. 9 Overview of Course, Intro. to Social Work Practice, Social Work Values and Roles  
Ethics: Principles and Dilemmas

Sept. 16 Relationship Building Skills: Preparing, Empathy, Active Listening

Sept. 23 Relationship sustaining and enhancing skills:  
Verbal following, exploring, focusing

Sept. 30 The Person of the social worker:  
Multi-cultural awareness and skills of working with Ethnic, racial, class, gender, cultural diversity.

ASSIGNMENT # 1 DUE
Oct. 7
Helping Process Overview: More skills
Overview of treatment models: differential approaches,
Evidence-based practice

October 14: NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

Oct. 21
Multi-dimensional assessment, planning and intervention:
Individuals: use of DSM V
ASSIGNMENT # 2 DUE

Oct. 28
Skills of moving beyond assessment:
Goal setting, contracting, implementing change,
Additive empathy, interpretation, confrontation

Nov. 4
Assessment, planning & Intervention: families

Nov. 11
Skills of working with groups

Nov. 18
Working with involuntary and hostile clients (first half)
Effective casework with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and
Transgendered Clients. (second half)

Nov. 25
STUDENT PRESENTATIONS: ASSIGNMENT # 4
ASSIGNMENT #3, RESEARCH PAPER DUE

Dec. 2
STUDENT PRESENTATIONS: ASSIGNMENT # 4

Dec. 9
Skills with special populations;
Skills in the ending phase of casework practice.
ASSIGNMENT # 5 DUE

OUTLINE: CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Sept. 9: Overview of Course, Introduction to Social
Work Practice, Social Work Values and Roles
Ethics: Principles and Dilemmas

Required reading: Hepworth et al, Ch. 4: Operationalizing Cardinal SW Values
NASW Code of Ethics (Course Tools)

Recommended reading: (The listed articles are all posted on C.Toolsl, and are all excellent pieces which discuss ethical issues in practice)

Compton, Galway and Cournoyer, Chapter 6, “Ethical Practice.” (CTools)

Corey, Corey & Callahan (1998). Issues and Ethics in the Helping Professions, Chapter 1. (CTools)


Sept. 16: Relationship Building Skills: Preparing, Empathy, Active Listening

Required reading: Hepworth, et. al, Ch. 1: The Challenges of Social Work
   Ch. 2: Direct Practice: Domain, Philosophy and Roles
   Ch. 5: Building Blocks of Communication, Empathy and Authenticity

Brems, Christiane, “Attending Skills,” Ch. 4 in Basic Skills in Psychotherapy and Counseling. (CTools)

Sept. 23 Relationship sustaining and enhancing skills: Verbal following, focusing, exploring

Required reading: Hepworth, et. al., Chapter 6: Verbal Following, Exploring, Focusing Skills
Hepworth, et. al., Chapter 7: Eliminating Counterproductive Communication Patterns

Sept. 30 The Person of the Social Worker: Multi-cultural Awareness and Skills of working with diversity: ethnic, racial, gender, class, cultural, religious, sexual orientation, physically abled.

ASSIGNMENT # 1 DUE

Required reading:

Dhooper and Moore, “Essentials of Culturally Competent Social Work Practice, Ch. 2. (CTools)


Ridley, Charles and Udipi, Sharranya, “Putting Cultural Empathy Into Practice,” Ch. 14 in Pedersen, et. al., Counseling Across Cultures. (CTools)
Recommended Reading:


October 7: 

Helping Process Overview:
Overview of Differential Treatment Models

Required reading:
Hepworth, et. al, Chapter 3: Overview of the Helping Process
Chapter 13: Planning and Implementing Change Oriented Strategies
Rubin, Lillian, “Doing Therapy,” in The Man With the Beautiful Voice

Recommended reading:


October 14: NO CLASS, FALL STUDY BREAK

October 21: Multidimensional Assessment: Planning and Intervention:
Individuals; Use of DSM V.

Required reading: Hepworth, et. al., Ch. 8: Assessment: Exploring and Understanding Problems and Strengths.

Recommended Reading:

October 28: Skills of moving beyond assessment;
Skills of implementing change.
Additive empathy, Interpretation, Confrontation
ASSIGNMENT # 2 DUE

Required Reading
Hepworth, et al, Chapter 12: Developing Goals and Forming a Contract
Chapter 14: Developing Resources, Organizing, etc. as Intervention Strategies
Chapter 17: Additive Empathy, Interpretation and Confrontation
November 4  Assessment, Planning and Intervention: Families

Required Reading:

Hepworth, et. al., Ch. 10: Assessing Family Functioning in Diverse Family & Cultural Contexts
Ch. 15: Enhancing Family Functioning and Relationships


November 11:  Skills of Working with Groups

Required reading:

Hepworth, et. al., Chapter 11: Forming and Assessing Social Work Groups
Chapter 16: Intervening in Social Work Groups

November 18:  First half:  Working with involuntary and hostile clients .
Second half: Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered clients

Required reading: Hepworth et al, Ch. 18: Managing Barriers to Change


November 25:  STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (Assignment # 4)
ASSIGNMENT # 3: RESEARCH PAPER DUE

December 2:  STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
(Assignment # 4)

December 9:  Skills with special populations;
Skills in the termination process

Required reading: Hepworth, et. al, Chapter 19: The Final Phase: Evaluation and Termination
FINAL TAPE CRITIQUE DUE (Assignment # 5)