



Interpersonal Practice with Families  
Ellen Yashinsky Chute, LMSW, ACSW  
SW 623 Section 002  
Fall, 2014  
Thursday, 6:00 to 9:00pm

Cell: 248-505-2011  
Office: 248-592-2666  
[eychute@jfsdetroit.org](mailto:eychute@jfsdetroit.org)  
[eyashins@umich.edu](mailto:eyashins@umich.edu)

Office Hours: by appointment

### **1. 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.

### **2. 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.

### **3. 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 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.

### **4. 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.

### **5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:**

- *Multiculturalism and 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.

- *Social Justice and Social Change* 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.
- *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation* will be addressed by identifying the family functions and processes which are useful for the successful development of its members. 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.).
- *Behavioral and Social Science Research* 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.

## **6. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:**

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.

## **7. Course Philosophy and Format:**

*The current Council on Social Work Education standards state that the signature pedagogy of our profession is field instruction. In accordance with this policy, this course is designed to enhance the skills necessary to perform the role of social work practitioner with families in field related experiences.* Intervention with families has followed a progression from modernism to post modernism in the past decades. In the past, the family was seen as a group of people with relational or functional problems. The social worker was the “expert” who created a conceptualized view of the family and prescribed interventions to cure the family of its ills. In the post-modern view, the family members, themselves, are the experts in their relations and functioning ability, and the social worker is a facilitator of opportunities for learning, growth, and change, at the discretion of each family member. This is a substantial paradigm shift from early family interventive philosophy; however the knowledge, values and skills that the early family specialists gave us form the foundation for this new and developing context. For this reason, I believe that it is important that all social workers who intervene with families have an in-depth understanding of the evolution of the post modernist view. In addition,

I believe that family function represents the powerful influences of cultural, economic, social, and political systems, and that as social workers, we must apply ecological and generalist thinking when envisioning interventions with families.

The format of this course will follow the above post-modern philosophy. My goal is to facilitate your growth and learning so that you will become the expert in your own functioning when working with families, including the cultural, economic, social, and political forces that influence your family assessment and intervention abilities.

## **8. Course Design and Attendance Expectations**

This course will use a combination of lecture, class discussion, case material, role-plays, group discussion and video material as appropriate. Students are expected to attend **all** class sessions. **The instructor must be notified in the event of a possible absence due to illness or emergency.**

- **More than 2 absences will result in a reduction in the final grade** and will be subject to decision by the instructor.
- Assignments are expected to be **on time**. Assignments that are turned in late will result in an automatic reduction in the grade for the assignment.
- Class participation is strongly encouraged and is worth 10% of your final grade. If for personal reasons you find class participation to be difficult, please see me.

### **Grading:**

The requirements listed below are the minimal expectations for class assignments, and if followed precisely will result in a “B+” grade for the assignment. Grades higher than “B+” will be given to work that has gone above and beyond the minimal qualifications. This would reflect more thorough, thoughtful and thought provoking work on your part. This will be discussed in detail in class. Feel free to ask questions about this policy!

## **9. Class Requirements**

Progress in this course will be assessed by three assignments. The aim of the assignments is to give you an opportunity to focus on the history and current trends in family practice in order to facilitate the development of your own personal interventive style and philosophy. My hope is that you will draw from your personal experience and enhance your own knowledge, self awareness and skill levels through the in-class experiences and required assignments. My belief is that due to the innate power of the family system, post-modern family intervention, requires a unique combination of knowledge and personal awareness that are honed by experience, but nested in the social worker’s vigilance of personal individuation and differentiation, concepts we will discuss in class.

**The assignments for this class reflect the above philosophy. All papers are to be typed with page numbers, double spaced, and written in professional, clinical style.**

**Your progress in this course will be assessed by 3 assignments.**

### **Assignment 1: Family Assessment Paper**

Pick a family that you know or are working with. Please write a 4 page paper assessing the following elements:

Assessment questions

- Family composition
- Roles and rules
- Level on Beaver's Scale
- Homeostatic state
- Culture
- Gender/gender socialization/ gender roles
- PODS and other macro level influences, i.e. community, history
- Communication
- Stress management, emotional regulation
- Problem solving methods
- Bonding/cohesion

Engagement questions

- What do you think are entry points with this family as a social worker?
- What traits would a social worker need to engage this family? What social worker traits would work against engagement?
- What would be your personal goals in working with this family?

**This assignment is worth 30% of your grade and is due in the Assignments tab on c-Tools by 6:00pm on October 9, 2014.**

### **Assignment 2: Small Groups Assignment**

This assignment is a reciprocal assignment in which two groups of 4 or 5 students will demonstrate a family intervention session, with one group role playing an **actual** family, and one group playing the role of social work team. Each person will have the opportunity to be a family member, and to be on the social work team (on different dates.)

The role played "family" may be a client family of one of the group members, the actual family of one of the group members, or a family well known by one of the group members. The following elements will be presented to the class on the day of the presentation, **and to the instructor in written form:**

For the "family" team:

- A very brief description of the family using the elements from Assignment 1

- An individual presentation from each family member stating their: (cont.)
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Communication style
  - Personality characteristics
  - Role in family
  - Membership in various dyads, triads
  - Personal thoughts about being a member of this family
- A description of the presenting issue

For the social work team:

- The key concepts of the method you are modeling, citing the readings for the week
- Your interventive goals
- Your interventive style/format

Your demonstration should last 30 to 45 minutes, with each member of the treatment team participating in the intervention. Please note: this is a personal assignment. This will be demanding of you as both a family member, and as the social worker. The nature of family intervention is intimate, and the goal of this assignment is twofold: first to promote nonjudgmental feedback and communication about interventive styles and techniques, and second to expand your family assessment skills.

**Each half of this assignment is worth 15% (with a total of 30%) of your grade and dates for the presentations will be picked during the first and second class sessions.**

### **Assignment 3: Case Study**

Pick a family with whom you are working or have in-depth familiarity. Please address the following elements in a 5 to 7 page paper.

- 3 generation genogram on 8 ½ x 11 paper, carefully constructed.
- Brief assessment of the family, no longer than a paragraph
- Presenting problem or context. This must be something that needs to change—a particular problem that the interventions will address.
- Significant demographics including culture, class, gender, as they relate to the presenting problem
- On what level of the Beavers Scale would you assess this family? Why? How does this level of functioning affect the current problem
- What is this family's stage of development? How does it affect the current problem?
- What is this family's homeostatic state? How does it support the presenting problem?
- Referencing class readings and discussion, propose intervention strategies from 3 different models, justifying your choice of model. Please suggest at least 2 strategies from each model, citing references from the readings. Describe how each technique would be used, including dialogue between therapist and family

member. At least 6 class readings must be cited in this paper, at least 2 of which must reference topics other than from the text book..

- Please discuss how you think each of the interventions you have proposed might work, or not work with this family.
- Personal reflection about the assignment.

**This assignment is worth 30% of your grade and is due in the Assignments tab on c-Tools by 6:00pm on December 4, 2014.**

**Required Text:** (available at Ulrich's)

Nichols, M. P., Schwartz, R. C.(2009) *The Essentials of Family Therapy, 5th Edition*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon

**Optional Texts** (available in the social work library)

Mc Goldrick, M. (1998). *Revisioning Family Therapy; Race, Culture and Gender in Clinical Practice*. New York: The Guilford Press.

McGoldrick, Giordano, J., Garcia-Preto, N., M. (Ed.)(2005). *Ethnicity & family therapy 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*. New York: The Guilford Press.

**Optional Books**

Boyd-Franklin, N. (2003). *Black families in therapy: understanding the African American experience*. New York, NY. The Guilford Press.

Gottman, J., Silver, N. (1994). *Why marriages succeed or fail*. New York, NY. Simon & Schuster

Kort, J. (2008). *Gay affirmative therapy for the straight clinician*, New York, NY. W.W. Norton & Co.

Madsen, W. (2003). *Collaborative therapy with multi-stressed families*. New York, NY. The Guilford Press.

Scarf, M. (1995). *Intimate worlds*. New York, New York. Random House

Schwartz, R. (1995) *Internal family systems therapy*. New York, NY. The Guilford Press.

**Journal articles accessed through C-Tools.**

**Family videos available at:**

Askwith Media Center, in the Shapiro Library Building  
Alexander Counseling videos at <http://ctiv.alexanderstreet.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>  
YouTube

## **Course Outline:**

### **Week 1: September 4, 2014**

Introduction to course; format, expectations  
Intro to working with families  
Levels of intervention: directive, symptom focused, insight focused

### **Week 2: September 11, 2014**

Family Systems Theory  
Fundamental Concepts

Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz: Chapters 1-4

Carr, A. (2000) Evidence Based Practice in Family Therapy and Systemic Consultation. *Journal of Family Therapy*. 22, 3, 273-295

Madsen, W.C.(2003). *Collaborative Therapy with Multi-Stressed Families*. NY. Guilford Press. Chapters 1, 2. p. 9-84.

### **Week 3: September 18, 2014**

Assessment through a Mezzo Lens

Readings:

Applegate, J.S., Shapiro, J.R., (2005), *Neurobiology for clinical social work*. New York, W.W. Norton Chapter 4

Kort, J., (2008). *Gay affirmative therapy for the straight clinician*. New York, Norton Chapters 1,2,3,8

Schwartz, Richard C., (1995). *Internal family systems therapy*. New York, Guilford Press. Chapters 1,2

Scarf, M. (1995). *Intimate Worlds*. New York. Random House. Chapter 2, p. 23-36 (PDF article)

McGoldrick (2005): *Ethnicity & family therapy 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*. New York: The Guilford Press. Chapter 1 p. 1-40

Davis, Tamara S.(2009) Diversity Practice in Social Work: Examining Theory in Practice', *Journal of Ethnic And Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 18: 1, 40 — 69

Keiley, M.; Dolbin, M.; Hill, J.; Karuppaswamy, N.; et al. The cultural genogram: Experiences from within a marriage and family therapy *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*; Apr 2002; 28, 2;

Luey, H. S.; Luey, H. S.; Glass, L.; and Elliot, H. Social Work 1995. Hard of hearing or deaf: issues of ears, language, culture and identity.

*Optional: McGoldrick (1998): Chapters 7-13, p. 93-175. I would recommend these readings if you have not previously examined your own conscious and unconscious racism and privilege.*

Rober, P., (2005.) The Therapist's Self in Dialogical Family Therapy: Some Ideas About Not-Knowing and the Therapist's Inner Conversation. Family Process. 44, 4, 477-495

### **NO CLASS September 25, 2014**

#### **Week 4: October 2, 2014**

Assessment through a Generalist Lens

Readings:

Saunders, (2006.) Welfare workers' responses to domestic violence cases: The effects of training and worker characteristics. Families in Society [1044-3894] vol:87 iss:3 pg:329 -338

Connell, C; Roberts, J ; McLaughlin, S. ; and Carpenter, B. (2009). Black and White Adult Family Members' Attitudes Toward a Dementia Diagnosis Journal of the American Geriatrics Society.

Stark, Evan, (2009) Rethinking coercive control. Violence Against Women 15: 1509

#### **Week 5: October 9, 2014 Assignment 1 Due**

Assessment through a Functional Lens

Multigenerational Family Therapy

Murray Bowen

Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz: Chapter 5

Knudson-Martin, Carmen. (1994) The female voice: Applications to Bowen's family systems theory, *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*. 20, 1, p. 35

#### **Week 6: October 16, 2014: Group Format Presentation**

Historical Models

Structural, Strategic

Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz: Chapters 6,7

Robbins, M.S., Bachrach, K., Szapocznik, J., (2002) Bridging the research-practice gap in adolescent substance abuse treatment: the case of brief strategic family therapy. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 23, 2, 123-132

Bobrow, E., Ray, W., (2004) Strategic Family Therapy in the Trenches, *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 23,4,28-38

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

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

Kim, Josephine, (2003) Structural Family therapy and Its Implications for the Asian American Family, *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 11, 4, 388-392.

Brown, Neil, D., Samis, Michelle D. (1986-7) The Application of Structural Family Therapy in Developing the Binuclear Family, *Mediation Quarterly*, 1986-87, 14-15, 14-15, 51-69.

### **Week 7: October 23, 2014: Group Format Presentation**

Experiential Family Therapy

Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz : Chapter 8

Cheung, M., (1997) Social construction theory and the Satir model: Toward a synthesis. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*. . 25, 4, p. 331-343

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

### **Week 8: October 30, 2014: Group Format Presentation**

Cognitive Behavioral Family Therapy

Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz: Chapter 10

Dattilio, F.M.; Epstein, N., Introduction to the special section: The Role of Cognitive Behavioral Interventions in Couple and Family Therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*; Jan 2005; 31, 1;

O'Leary, E. M. McHugh, Barrett, P., Fjermestad, K., Cognitive-behavioral family treatment for childhood obsessive-compulsive disorder: A 7-year follow-up study. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* 23 (2009) 973–978.

Runyon, M., Deblinger, E., Ryan, E. Thakkar-Kolar, R., An Overview of Child Physical Abuse: Developing an Integrated Parent-Child Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment Approach. *Trauma Violence Abuse* 2004; 5; 65

Friedberg, Robert D. (2006). A Cognitive-Behavioral Approach to Family Therapy. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy* Vol. 36, Issue 4. Date: 12/2006 Pages: 159-165.

**Week 9: November 6, 2014: Group Format Presentation**

Narrative Family Therapy  
Social Constructionist Models

Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz: Chapters 13

*The Family Therapy Networker, Vol. 18, No.6*

O'Hanlon, "The Third Wave"

Stephen Madigan, "Body Politics"

David Epston, "Extending the Conversation"

David Nylund, John Thomas, "The Economics of Narrative"

**Week 10: November 13, 2014: Group Format Presentation**

Solution Focused Therapy  
Brief Family Therapy

Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz: Chapter 12, p. 247-264

Reiter, M., (2004), A Solution Focused Formula Task for Families, *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, 15,3,37-45.

**Week 11: November 20, 2014**

Evidence Based Methods  
Family Psycho-education

Guest: Amy Stern, LMSW

**Week 12: December 4, 2014:**

Couples

Guest: Paul Chute, LMSW

Readings:

Siegel, D.J., Solomon, M. (2013). *Healing moments in psychotherapy*. New York, Norton. Chapter 10: pp 195-215

Zielinski, J. (1999) Discovering Imago Relationship Therapy. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training [PscyARTICLES]* Vol. 36, Issue 1.

Johnston, S. (2007). The Contribution of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy* Vol. 37, Issue 1. Date: 03/2007 Pages: 47-52.

*The Psychotherapy Networker, Vol. 26 no.6*

Doherty, W. "Bad Couples Therapy and How to Avoid it" p. 26

Real, T. "The Awful Truth" p. 34

*The Family Therapy Networker, March/April, 1993, Issue # 293*

Schnarch, D. "Inside the Sexual Crucible"

Gottman, J.M., Silver, N., (1999) *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*, New York, The Three Rivers Press. Chapters 1, 2. p. 1-46.

Gottman, J.M., Levinson, R.W., Gross, J., Mc Coy, K., Rosenthal, L., Ruef, A., Yoshimoto, D., (2003). Correlates of Gay and Lesbian Couples' Relationship Satisfaction and Relationship Dissolution. *Journal of Homosexuality, 45, 1, 23-43.*

Bepko, C., Johnson, T., (2004) Gay and Lesbian Couples in Therapy: Perspectives for the Contemporary Family Therapist. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 26, 4, Oct, 409-419*

Biaggio, M, (2002), Couples Therapy for Lesbians: Understanding Merger and the Impact of Homophobia, *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 6, 1, 126-138*