COURSE TITLE: Advanced Topics in Social Work: An Africentric Approach to Interpersonal Practice with African American Families

WINTER 2015

COURSE NUMBER: 713 (Section 002)
CREDIT HOURS: 3
PREREQUISITES: INTP 521, Comparable course or permission of instructor
METHODS TYPE: Advanced IP Methods, Elective
INSTRUCTOR: Leslie Doty Hollingsworth, PhD, ACSW, LMSW
CLASS MEETS: Tuesdays, 6:00 – 9:00PM
PLACE: 3816 SSWB
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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays, 9-12 or by appointment.

SYLLABUS OUTLINE

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course will apply African-centered values and principles in historical and contemporary context to the implementation of methods in interpersonal practice with African American families. The course is bounded by an affirmative framework in which students will 1) obtain an overview of the African worldview and the history, culture, and contributions to world civilization of African-descended people; 2) become familiar with literature that exemplifies the integration of the Africentric perspective in practice with African American families; and 3) utilize the case study method to apply knowledge gained. Throughout the course, students examine 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 with African American families.

COURSE CONTENT:
This course builds on theoretical and practice-related concepts associated with African-centered social work and African psychology. African American families are considered as having their source in the highest forms of health and excellence. Behavioral and social problems are understood within the context of the social devastation suffered historically and contemporarily by African descended people throughout the diaspora. Therapeutic intervention involves a cleansing of these effects and a return to families’ original inspirational source of health and excellence.
COURSE OBJECTIVES:
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Summarily describe the historical development and contributions of African people to world civilization.
2. Explain traditional African values, principles, and other guides for living.
3. Explain the trajectory of traditional African people across history, including concepts of Maat, the Maafa, and Sankofa.
4. Explain the residual effects of enslavement and continued oppression and their implications for interpersonal and social problems presented by African descent people.
5. Explain clinician, system, and client barriers to traditional Western approaches to interpersonal social work practice with African American clients.
8. Describe the empirical basis of integrated African Affirmative models of practice as they have been applied in at least one problem area, practice area, or special population group with regard to African American families.

COURSE DESIGN:
The course will be offered in a seminar format in which students have an active role in structuring their own learning, building on content delivered by instructor and guest lecturers and utilizing relevant reading materials (placed on CTools), experiential activities, and electronic media. In-class activities will build on extensive pre-class work. The course is divided into three general modules – the first focusing on African and African American history; the second focusing on the Africentric perspective/African world view (principles and values); and the third focusing specifically on interpersonal (clinical) practice with African American families using an Africentric model. Each module builds on the previous one.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO THE SCHOOLS’ FOUR CURRICULAR THEMES AND TO SOCIAL WORK VALUES AND ETHICS:
Multiculturalism & Diversity are included in the topics of relationship building, communication, assessment, intervention, termination and evaluation. These topics explore how the difference 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.

Social Justice is 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 (individuals, families, and groups) but the larger social context and implications for change is reflected in 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 students will submit and the instructor will supplement to exemplify skills in practice.

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation 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.

Behavioral and Social Science Research is reflected in the theoretical base developed in this course to support practice methods, skills, and assessment procedures.

**Social Work Ethics and Values** are addressed within the course as they pertain to issues related to working with clients and colleagues and with and regarding African American clients in particular. The NASW Code of Ethics and other ethical codes are available to give students direction about these ethical issues. In particular, this course focuses on personal and social issues as they have implications for African American clients in particular. Examples of such issues are confidentiality, privacy, client rights and prerogatives, the client’s best interest, proper and improper relationships with clients, and sensitivity to the culture of African American clients and to their own competence as sources of knowledge and experience in African American culture.

**Required Readings:**
All assigned readings, videos, and other course materials will be placed on our CTools site. There will be no formally assigned textbook.

**Learning Needs and Accommodations:**
If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities and the way the course is taught can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. The earlier 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 we can make appropriate arrangements. NOTIFICATIONS TO ME OF YOUR LEARNING AND ACCOMMODATION NEEDS MUST BE RECEIVED BEFORE THE END OF THE DROP-ADD PERIOD.

**Assignments:**

A. **Weekly class attendance and participation in pre-class and in-class learning activities. (Maximum available: 36 points).**
   - Three points for full attendance at, and active preparation for participation in each of classes beginning January 20th and ending April 21st, 2015 and not including the first class. Active preparation will include doing assigned readings and viewing assigned videos prior to class. Class participation will include taking part in all in-class exercises and activities. The course will make heavy use of case studies in which students will be called on to apply theoretical and practice-related knowledge, skills, and values that have been developed. Grades will be recorded at the end of the term.
PLEASE NOTE: The course is on a 100 point system. Therefore, missing a class results in a decrease of 3 points from the total possible 100. Opportunity is provided for up to two make-up assignments for missed classes. Making up a class requires completing the required reading and video for the missed class and submitting a detailed reflection paper (2-3 pages) on the assigned content and answering any assigned questions. Students will sign in on an attendance sheet every class session. This is the only manner by which attendance will be recorded. If you do not sign the sign in sheet, the class session will be counted as an absence for you. There are no exceptions. It is essential that you take responsibility for signing in weekly.

A template will be posted on the CTools site to guide the writing of weekly journal reflection entries regarding experiences related to course work. Each reflection should include what key points the student took from the previous class and from readings and videos assigned for the current class, what the student found useful or rewarding and what the student found challenging. For the first 30 minutes of each class session, each student will be paired with another student. Opportunity will be provided for pairs to voluntarily share or raise questions emerging from their conversation. We’ll use this as a base from which to proceed for the remainder of the class.

B. **Mid-term paper (Maximum available: 25 points)**
   
o Philosophy Statement. **Due Tuesday, February 17, 2015, 6:00PM.** In the week prior to the time for submission of the mid-term philosophy statement, students will be paired by assignment and will take turns facilitating an integrative interview with the partner. As opposed to the weekly paired conversations, this integrative interview will cover what has been covered in the class up to that time. (Questions to guide the integrative interview will be placed on CTools.) This interview will be used in the preparation of the 8-10 page statement of the student’s emerging philosophy of interpersonal practice with African American families from an African affirmative perspective. This paper will include how the student would address a case study, according to what has been covered in the class. The philosophy statement should be specific and detailed and should build on what the student brings to the course, from an African-centered perspective. It should be written according to guidelines of the APA Publications Manual, 6th edition, including citations and a reference list for works the student draws from in developing the philosophy statement (e.g., articles, videos, other materials).

C. **Small group presentations (Maximum available: 14 points)** **Report papers due April 14th, 2015**
   
o Early in the semester, class members will be given the opportunity to select their first, second, and third choice of a topic, problem area, or population group from a list provided. This should be a topic they want to research with regard to the evidence that exists for applying an Africentric approach to practice. Examples
will include psychosocial issues surrounding African American youth; substance abuse problems; psychosocial issues confronting African American gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals; psychosocial issues confronting African American women. Students will give presentations to the class on findings. Presentations should include a powerpoint containing a description of the research, its strengths, limitations, and gaps, along with an annotated reference list. A paper report should be submitted on the CTools site for this assignment by the due date.

D. Final philosophy paper. (Maximum available: 25 points) Due April 21st, 2015

- Similar to the mid-term paper, this 8-10 page double-spaced paper should build on knowledge, skills, and values developed throughout the course (cumulative) and should describe the student’s personal and professional growth and progress in that regard. Again, the integrative interview will be used to strengthen this process. The paper should be specific and detailed, should build on but not repeat knowledge, skills, and values developed since the previous writing. It and should particularly cover the way in which the student perceives being able to apply knowledge learned and experience in their ensuing professional practice. This paper will include how the student would address a case study, according to what has been covered in the class. Once more, the paper should be written according to guidelines of the APA Publications Manual, 6th edition, including citations and a reference list for works the student draws from in developing this final philosophy statement (e.g., articles, videos, other materials).

Assignment Summary:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Class attendance/participation</td>
<td>36 points maximum possible (3 per class)</td>
<td>Weekly, excluding the first week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Mid-term philosophy statement</td>
<td>25 points maximum possible</td>
<td>Tuesday, February 17, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Research presentation/paper</td>
<td>14 points maximum possible</td>
<td>Tuesday, April 14, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Final mid-term philosophy statement</td>
<td>25 points maximum possible</td>
<td>Friday, April 21, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 points maximum possible</td>
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*Please note that grades are based on a 100 point system.

Grading
Grades are earned by successfully completing the assignments as described above.

A+ 100-99
A  95-98   C+  78-79   F <50 (no credit)
A- 90-94   C   74-77
B+ 87-89   C-  70-73
B  84-86   D   60-69 (no credit)
B- 80-83   E   50-59 (no credit)
Course Outline

January 13th  Introductions and introduction to the course. Review of the syllabus. Discussion of assigned video and readings. (What this course is and is not.) Pre-surveys are completed. Review and discussion of historical video.

January 20th  Traditional principles, values, and culture of African descent people (The African World View and Africentricity.) Required readings and videos to be assigned.

January 27th  The African holocaust, colonization, Jim Crow laws, racial discrimination, oppression, and resistance. Required readings and videos to be assigned.

February 3rd  Residual effects of slavery and continued oppression Required readings and videos to be assigned.

February 10th  Enter: Interpersonal social work practice (Client, clinician, and system barriers and facilitators)

February 17th  Conducting the integrative interview. (Preparation for writing the mid-term philosophy statement paper.) Required materials to be assigned.

February 24th  Conceptualizing African Affirmative practice Required readings and videos to be assigned.

[Mid-term philosophy papers are due.]

March 3rd  SPRING BREAK. Class will not meet.

March 10th  Black experience based social work practice and NTU psychotherapy

March 17th  Integration of postmodern, collaborative methods

March 24th  Application of an African Affirmative model of interpersonal practice using a case study method.

March 31st  Application of an African Affirmative model of interpersonal practice, using role simulations.

April 7th  Small group research reports: What do we know about what works in African Affirmative practice?

April 14th  Integrative interviews
April 21st Last class. Wrap-up. [Final philosophy statement papers are due.] Sign up to bring a dish to pass – foods representative of the African diaspora.

1 The four curricular themes are addressed within the context of the focus on Africans and African Americans.
2 Instructions for the Integrative Portfolio (mid-term and final) will be posted on our CTools site but will require weekly logs (personal journal entries).