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

Fall 2015
Tuesday Class, Section 008, 9 a.m. – Noon, Room B684 SSWB

Prof. Scott Weissman
3760 SSWB
Email: scowei@umich.edu
734-660-4636

Required Text:

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course presents foundation knowledge and skills essential to interpersonal practice with children, youth and their families 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:
   - describing 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, empathetic responding, critical thinking, case recording, and contracting.

5. Conduct culturally sensitive interpersonal practice by:
   - engaging diverse client systems
   - employing assessment protocols of PIE, ecomaps, genograms, network maps, and group composition
   - 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.
   - implementing treatment protocols consistent with treatment plans and sensitive to clients' situations
   - 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.

**Links to CSWE Practice Behaviors:**
Practice Behavior 3
• Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments
  o Distinguish, appraise and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom
  o Demonstrate effective oral and written communication
  o Analyze models of assessment, prevention, and intervention

Practice Behavior 4
• Engage diversity and difference in practice
  o Recognize and communicate understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences
  o Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups

Practice Behavior 7
• Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment
  o Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention and evaluation
  o Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment

Practice Behavior 10
• Engage, assess, intervene and evaluate...
  • Use empathy and other interpersonal skills
  • Collect, organize and interpret client data
    - Select appropriate intervention strategies

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 children and their broader systems, children/client and interventionist 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) Class Participation (10 points): 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
   (d) Attendance means participating and attending to others. Using computers or mobile devices to text, shop, Facebook, etc. will significantly reduce your attendance points. Unless you have a family emergency, (and please speak to me about it ahead of time) please put your phones away.
(e) Grades will be lowered by 5% for every session missed past 2 sessions. If emergencies have arisen during the course of the semester, please discuss individually with me.

WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENTS

All readings, besides those found in the required or optional text, can be found in PDF form in the schedule section of Ctools.

September 15, 22 - Week 1
Values and Themes that Guide the Practice of Social Work

Readings:

- Direct Social Work Practice (DSWP) – Chapters 1 - 2
  - Chapter 1: An Overview of the Book
  - Chapter 2: Integrative Themes that Guide Social Work

1. Oppenheim and Goldsmith (O & G) – Chapter 1 Constructing a Relationship Formulation (Zeanah)

September 29 - Week 2
Engagement Skills: exploring content, reflective listening, open-ended questions

Readings:

1. Ctools - Seligman - Why How You Feel Matters, pp. 1- 6
1. Sage Journal Article on Motivational Interviewing
1. DSWP - Chapters 5
  1. Chapter 5: Engagement and Relationship Building Skills

October 6 - Week 3
Ethics and Social Justice

Presentation: Jim Toy and Sandra Salmons: TBLGQ issues and Interpersonal Practice

Readings:

1. DSWP - Chapters 3-4
1. Chapter 3: From Evidence-Based Practice to Evidence-Informed Practice
1. Chapter 4: Professional Values, Ethics, and Professional Use of Self

1. Ctools -

1. Reed - Beyond Diversity and Towards Social Justice
1. Jennings, Sovereign - Nine Ethical Values of Master Therapists

**October 13 - Week 4**

**Assessment**

**Readings:**

**Week 4**

DSWP- Chapter 6

Assessment

1. Ctools - Clinical Assessment for Social Workers
1. Ctools - Alcohol Assessment (recommended)
1. Ctools - Suicide Safety plan
1. Ctools - Castillo, Cultural Assessment (recommended)
1. Sage Web Resource - Suicidality, DSM

1. Ctools - Strengthening the DSM: Incorporating Resilience and Cultural Competence

1. Sage Journal Articles
   1. Acculturative Stress Among Documented and Undocumented Latino Immigrants in the U.S.
   1. Suicide Risk Assessment with Asian American College Students
   1. Family Counseling and Ethical challenges with Gay, Lesbian, and Transgendered Clients (recommended)

**October 20 - Fall Study Break**

**October 27 - Week Five**

**Intervention and Change Strategies/ Substance Issues**

**Presentation:** Bruce Thomson on Substance Abuse Diagnosis and Treatment
Readings:

DSWP - Chapter 7
   - Change Strategies

Sage Journal Articles
   1. Motivational Interviewing
   2. Women Iraqi War Veterans
   3. Role of Self-Determined Goals in...(found in DSWP Chapter 8)

Ctools
   - Integrating Care for People with Co-occurring Disorders

Videos

Watch Five Approaches to Working with Adolescents, Part 2 - Depression (33:00 minutes)

(If video isn't running well, switch web-browser. I think Mozilla or Chrome runs it better than IE. You must sign in through your umich address too.)

November 3 - Week Seven
Core Intervention Strategies/ Using Cognitive Behavioral Approaches

Readings

Ctools
The Theory of Cognitive Therapy
The tools of CBT
Applications of Individual Cognitive Therapy to Specific Disorders

DSWP
Chapter 8

Sage Journal Articles
The Effect of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy on Depression
November 10 - Week Eight

Core Intervention Strategies/ Using Problem-Solving, Psycho-Educational and Mindfulness Approaches/ Ethnicity, Culture and Social Work Practice

Readings

DSWP
Chapter 9

Sage Journal Articles
Cultural Diversity and Populations at Risk
Motivational Interviewing and Mindfulness

Ctools
Microaggressions and Marginality
Childhood Poverty and Chronic Stress
How Connections Heal

November 17 - Week Nine

Family, Transgenerational, and Multi-Systemic Approaches I

Readings

DSWP
Chapter 10

Sage Journal Articles
Helping Families Search for Solutions
Acculturative Stress

Ctools
Couple and Family Treatment
Genogram with An Attitude
Chronic Anxiety And Defining a Self
Read through entire Family Resources section in the Resource section of Ctools - there are a number of different sections describing Genograms

Nov. 24 - Week Ten
Family, Transgenerational, and Multi-Systemic Approaches II

Readings

Ctools
The Application of Structural Family Therapy in the Developing the Binuclear Family
Strategic Therapy
The Third Wave (Narrative Family Therapy)

December 1 - Week Eleven
Group Therapy Lecture and Roleplays

Readings

Ctools
Forming and Assessing Social Work Groups
Getting Started

December 8 - Week Twelve
Termination and Wrap-up

Readings

DSWP
Chapter 11

Ctools
The Termination Phase
Child Therapy: Termination
Course Assignments

In all assignments, you will be graded on:
1. Meeting parameters of assignment
2. Clarity of thought,
3. Effort/ability to self-reflect,
4. Demonstration of social work values related to empathy, strengths-based thinking, and client dignity,
5. Insightfulness and clinical acuity (since this is a clinical course, this is the area that tends to differentiate “A” papers from others)
6. Integration of reading materials into paper (if asked to reflect on the Readings)
7. The ability to discern which aspects of use of self would be important in assessment or intervention
8. Writing Skill – clarity, coherence, organization, citation (if necessary), grammatically strong - If you choose to cite a source for one of your papers, please use APA 6th edition 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.

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, who you are in the work (i.e. what appear to be strengths and challenges for you), themes that arise in IP 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.

Percentages
Class Participation:  10%
Assignment 1:  25%
Assignment 2:  30%
Assignment 3:  35%

Assignment 1: Listening Exercise (Due: Oct. 17, 25% of grade)

Ask a friend, colleague, or fellow student (disguise names!) if you can do a 20 minute audiotaped interview with them, assuring them of confidentiality 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 your "client" 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, provide empathic, mirroring statements, 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. 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 5-6 page double spaced paper reflecting on the following:

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. What themes did you notice?

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 on your skills. 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.

**Assignment 2: Reflection on Role of Client in an out-of-class assessment session (Due Nov. 17, 30% of grade, session should be done any time after Oct. 13)**

**Part 1: Developing a client/character** (You may be in a 511 section where you are already doing “Part 1” - if so, you are welcome to use the client/character that you are developing for 511. This will provide ANOTHER opportunity to use experiences in the “client” role to better understand the “practitioner” role.)

Using the two character development worksheets located in Ctools/Calendar/Class 2, develop a client/character who you can use for class activities and for this particular assignment.

For this assignment, please write up (from your own perspective) a no-longer-than 1-page character description, detailing, key demographics, presenting problem, history of
the presenting problem, understanding of the presenting problem, family members who might be involved in treatment, and anything else you might find relevant…

Then write up your 5 snapshots, spending no more that 2 pages outlining your 5 snapshots. Please briefly detail each snapshot and then explain why this moment was particularly relevant for your client/character.

**Part 2: Experiencing Assessment**

With another student playing the “practitioner,” (I am assuming most of you will just trade off), and using the psychosocial assessment form (found on Ctools/Schedule/Oct. 13) as an outline, experience and conduct a 45-50 minute assessment session outside of class. Please make (for your own use - I don’t need to see/hear it) an audio/visual recording of this session and spend at least 15 minutes processing the session student-to-student after the session has concluded.

**Part 3 : Reflection on your experience in the role of “client” (3-4 pages)**

This assignment also has a reflective component in which you will use your experiences in the role of “client” to help you better understand the “practitioner” role.

Here are the steps you need to do to complete this assignment:

1. Before watching the video, make your own notes about what struck you in the session, both moments when you felt like the practitioner was helpful and moments when you felt that the practitioner was struggling in some way. You would notice this when you, as client, feel like the practitioner “misses” you in some way, is not attuning to what YOU feel is important

2. Review the feedback you got during your post-session discussion.

3. When you play the video, observe how your notes correspond (or not) to what you see on the video.

4. In watching the video, and reflecting on the session, pay attention to the skills we are covering in class – e.g. preparation and centering, empathic responding, authentic responding, paraphrasing, focusing, summarizing, and questioning.

5. The idea is to make an EXPERIENTIAL connection - to share:
   1. Living, breathing, concrete examples from the session itself that you would like to reflect on
   2. Reflect on these “experiences” in light of the “skills” mentioned above and in light of the themes of the class - does the experience shed light on any of the social work values/ethics we have discussed, on any of the treatment modalities we have discussed, …
   3. Integrate these understandings in some kind of clear understandings that you now have about the “practitioner role”
ASSIGNMENT 3: PERSONAL GENOGRAM (6-8 PAGE, DUE: LAST DAY OF CLASS)

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. Genopro offers a FREE 180-day trial. http://www.genopro.com but you may not be able to download on school computers - only home computers.

You will turn in two parts: the actual genogram drawing 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. The following questions are simply a guide, use them and any others you’d like to guide your reflection (you can write in narrative form and needn’t go question by question, but make sure to contemplate these areas):
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 (and any others) 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? How did/do children tend to feel about the way they are treated in your family?

5. What intergenerational patterns did you notice? (Again, another area that tends to distinguish excellent vs. basic mastery)

6. How did your family reflect their cultural and ethnic identity? How do you reflect it today?

7. How has your family been affected by poverty, privilege, oppression, or (in)justice?

8. 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.**

9. 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 understandable - genogram should be on an 8½ X 11 sheet and you can use multiple sheets to add more detail to specific parts of the family.

**Paper**

The most clinically astute papers will include a 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).