Interpersonal Practice with Families
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SW 623 Section 002
Fall 2018
Thursday, 6:00 to 9:00pm
Office Hours: by appointment

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.

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.

**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.

**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, videos, and client personal descriptions; and role-playing as worker and as family member.

**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.

**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.

**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. I believe that working with families effectively requires an understanding of how the cultural, economic, political, religious and social systems influence family functioning and well-being.

The format of this course will follow the above post-modern philosophy. The 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.
Safety & Emergency Preparedness

In the event of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 from any cell phone or campus phone.

All University of Michigan students, faculty and staff are required to familiarize themselves with emergency procedures and protocols for both inside and outside of the classroom. In the event of possible building closure (i.e. severe weather conditions, public health notices, etc.) you may contact (734)764-SSWB (7793) for up-to-date School closure information.

Be Prepared. Familiarize yourself with the emergency card posted next to the phone in every classroom/meeting room. Review the information on the emergency evacuation sign (located nearest the door) and locate at least (2) emergency exits nearest the classroom.

If you are concerned about your ability to exit the building in the case of an emergency, contact the Office of Student Services and/or email ssw-ADAcompliance@umich.edu.
Office of Student Services
School of Social Work | Room 1748
734-936-0961

For more information, view the annual Campus Safety Statement at http://www.dpss.umich.edu/.

Register for UM Emergency Alerts at http://www.dpss.umich.edu/emergencymanagement/alert/.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
If you need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment with me at your earliest convenience. Many aspects of the course including the assignments, class activities, and my teaching methods can be modified to fit your circumstances. The Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office can assist with academic accommodations. For more information, contact SSD at 734-763-3000 or ssdoffice@umich.edu

Counseling for Students
U-M Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is dedicated to supporting students of social work and the SSW community. Students can directly email Megan Shaughnessy-Mogill, LLMSW, our SSW embedded counselor, to schedule an appointment at mshaughm@umich.edu

Class participation and engagement (10%).
- Active engagement-throughout-see description below.
- Observer annotator –for at least one simulated session.
- Individual and Group assignments and activities.
Active participation in class is expected. Active participation can be demonstrated in several ways, some examples are: participation in discussion, volunteering for in-class exercises, bringing experiences or problems with families to class discussion, sharing techniques with class members, thoughtfully processing classroom experiences, taking risks in sustaining dialogue on difficult issues that arise in class, giving thoughtful feedback to your classmates on their videos and learning contributions.

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 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 in compliance with the APA Format and Academic Honesty.

Please refer to the American Psychological Association Publication Manual (often called the APA Style Manual) in the preparation of your writing assignments. The current edition is the fifth, but using an earlier edition is acceptable. I think you will find having your own copy a valuable resource over the next two years. You can find out more at http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html.

It is critical to reference all sources of information or ideas you use in your writing, to do otherwise is academic dishonesty. Direct quotes in particular should be identified as such. Situations of apparent plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be reported and handled according to University policy.

Your progress in this course will be assessed by 3 assignments.
Assignment 1: Family of Origin Paper

Draw a genogram on your own family or the family of a client with whom you are working. The genogram should focus on at least three generations (including yours, your parents and their parents, your children, if applicable and even more if you have the information). Use McGoldrick’s chapter (in the Coursepack) on Genograms as your guide for the mechanics of drawing the genogram. You will most likely need to contact family members of your own family or your client’s to obtain the necessary data. Include significant dates, illnesses, occupations, striking character traits (i.e. gentle, moody, intelligent) and other significant patterns (i.e. occupations, religions, prevalence of divorces, religious affiliations, illnesses, substance abuse problems) on genogram. You may want to use different colored pencils to illustrate alliances, coalitions, cut-offs, and triangles. The genogram must be on an 8 1/2 by 11 sheet and carefully drawn and turned in at 8Am in hard copy form. The paper is to be submitted on CANVAS.

Write a 6-7page paper. This paper should identify and articulate major three-generational themes and patterns. Triangles, coalitions, alliances, and cut-offs should be explicated and analyzed. Gender, ethnic, class influences should be addressed. You should also incorporate a theoretical discussion of these cultural themes based on knowledge gained from your readings. When discussing theory, please reference accordingly. The McGoldrick text is a particularly good source to utilize in developing a theoretical perspective on the cultural themes you are exploring in your papers. You may want to speculate about your role (or your client’s) role in the family system and please discuss sibling order, if applicable. Bowenian theory should be incorporated into your analysis and give three examples of how you imagine Murray Bowen might have intervened with this family.

Grading
25% - is genogram readable, and does it describe 3 generations of Family history clearly?
30% - does paper demonstrate an understanding of Bowenian theory?
35% - does paper incorporate a discussion of culture that is grounded in the Readings?
10% - grammatically correct, well-organized?

This assignment is worth 30% of your grade and is due in the Assignments tab on Canvas by 6:00pm on October 11, 2018.

Assignment 2: Role Play/Group Assignment

This assignment is a reciprocal assignment in which groups of 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, i.e. an individual presentation for each family member stating their:
  o Gender
  o Age
  o Communication style
  o Personality characteristics
  o Role in family
  o Membership in various dyads, triads
  o 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 20 to 30 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 7-10 page paper.
• Brief assessment of the family, 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.
• 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 4 class readings must be cited in this paper, at least 2 of which must reference topics other than from the textbook.
• 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 Canvas by 6:00pm on December 7, 2018.

Required Reading


Recommended Texts


Family therapy videos available at:

Alexander Counseling videos at http://ctiv.alexanderstreet.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/ YouTube

Course Outline:

Week 1: September 6, 2018
• Introduction to class format
• Systemic and Strategic Theories Readings
Readings:
- Gehart (2014) Chapters 1-4, p. 3 -124

Recommended Readings:


**Week 2: September 13, 2018**
Structural Family Therapy

Readings:

Recommended Readings:


- 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;

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Week 3: September 20, 2018
Satir Human Growth Model
Internal Family Systems

Readings:
- Gehart (2014) Chapter 6: 165-228,

Recommended Readings:
- Freeman, M.L., (1999), Virginia Satir: A woman and a Social Worker Beholden to No One, *Journal of Couples Therapy, 8,* 1, 1-15

Week 4: September 27, 2018
Bowen Intergenerational Therapy

Readings:
- Gehart (2014) Chapter 7, p.229-274

Recommended Readings:

Week 5: October 4, 2018
Cognitive Behavioral and mindfulness-based Couple and Family Therapies

Readings:

Recommended:
Week 6: October 11, 2018: (Assignment 1 Due)
Solution-Based Therapies
Collaborative and Narrative Therapies

Readings:
- Gehart (2014) chapter 9,10 331-446

Recommended Readings:

Week 7: October 18, 2018:
Emotionally-Focused Therapy
Group Treatment for couples and families

Readings:
- Gehart (2014) Chapter 11-12

Week 8: October 25: Assignment 2 - Group Presentation
Case Conceptualization and Clinical Assessment

Readings:
- Gehart (2014) Chapter 13-14

Recommended Readings:
- *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 9: November 1, 2018: Assignment 2 – Group Presentation

Week 10: November 8, 2018
Treatment Planning
Guest speaker: TBD

Readings:
- Gehart (2014) Chapter 15

Week 11: November 15, 2018
Couples Therapy
Readings:

Recommended:
- The Psychotherapy Networker, Vol. 26 no.6
  Doherty, W. “Bad Couples Therapy and How to Avoid it” p. 26
- The Family Therapy Networker, March/April, 1993, Issue # 293
  Schnarch, D. "Inside the Sexual Crucible"

Week 12: November 29, 2018
Evaluating Progress in Therapy

Readings:
- Gehart (2014) Chapter 16

Week 13: December 7, 2018: Assignment 3 Due
Wrap-up

Source Materials:
A. Books & Articles


B. Journals

*Families in Society*

*Family Process*

*Family Therapy Networker*

*Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*

*Journal of Family Psychology*