



<b>Course title:</b>	Interpersonal Practice with Families
<b>Course #/term:</b>	SW623, Spring/Summer 2019
<b>Time and place:</b>	Tuesdays, 1-5 <b>Hybrid Class: Some sessions online or shortened</b>
<b>Credit hours:</b>	3
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	SW521 and 511 or permission
<b>Instructor:</b>	Richard M. Tolman
<b>Pronouns:</b>	he, his, him
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<b>Office hours:</b>	by appointment

## 1. Course Statement

### 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. (Practice Behaviors 3.IP, 9.IP) 2. Describe challenges, risks, and tasks as they apply to diverse groups such as; women, the poor, families of color, and gay and lesbian families. (Practice Behavior 5.IP) 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. (Practice Behavior 4.IP) 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. (Practice Behaviors 5.IP, 6.IP, 9.IP, 10.b.IP) 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. (Practice Behaviors 1.IP, 4.IP, 10.a.IP) 6. Identify at least two models of prevention and intervention and explain the applicability of each model to the challenges faced by families. (Practice Behaviors 2.IP, 3.IP, 10.c.IP) 7. Apply appropriate outcome measures that are reliable and determined by agreed upon goals in order to evaluate the effects of family-centered interventions. (Practice Behaviors 10.b.IP, 10.d.IP)

## 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.

## Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & 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.

## Theme Relation to Social Justice

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.

## Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & 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.).

## Theme Relation to 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 to SW 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.

## 2. Class Requirements

### a. Required Text

Gehart, D. R. (2018). *Mastering Competencies in Family Therapy: A Practical Approach to Theory and Clinical Case Documentation*, 3rd Edition. Cengage Learning.

- b. Required and recommended readings: All are on CANVAS and all required readings will be available at the start of the semester. Recommended readings may be added, without a requirement of completion by a class session. See CANVAS for list of additional readings.

Date/Time	Agenda	Required Readings
Week 1: May 14 In-person	Introduction to working with families, evidence-base for family practice	Gehart, Chapters 1-3
Week 2: May 21 In-person	Structural and Strategic Approaches to working with families	Gehart, Ch. 4-5  Minuchin, P., Colapinto, J., & Minuchin, S. (2013). <i>Working with families of the poor</i> . Guilford Publications. Ch. 3-4
Week 3: May 28 Online- asynchronous	Intergenerational and Cognitive Behavioral Approaches to working with families	Gehart, Ch. 7-8  Parker, E. O., & McDowell, T. (2017). Integrating social justice into the practice of CBFT: A critical look at family schemas. <i>Journal of marital and family therapy</i> , 43(3), 502-513.

		McGoldrick, M. The Genogram Casebook, Ch. 2-3
Week 4: June 4 In-person	Emotion-focused approaches to working with families	Gehart, Ch. 6
Week 5: June 11 In-person	Narrative and Solution Focused approaches to working with families; Case Conceptualization	Gehart, Ch. 9-10  Hudak, J., & Giammattei, S. V. (2014). Doing family: Decentering heteronormativity in "marriage" and "family" therapy. In <i>Critical topics in family therapy</i> (pp. 105-115). Springer, Cham.
Week 6: June 18 In-person	Working in Teams on Case Conceptualization; Initial interviews with simulated family members	Gehart, Ch. 12
Week 7: June 25 In-person	Recording 1 <sup>st</sup> simulated family sessions	
Week 8: July 2 In-person or online	Working in teams on Intervention Planning	Gehart, Ch. 13-14
Week 9: July 9 In-person	Recording 2 <sup>nd</sup> simulated family sessions	
Week 10: July 16 In-person or online	Working in teams on case conceptualization, intervention planning and case presentations	
Week 11: July 23 In-person	Case presentations; Endings	

- c. Assignments: Note that due dates, point details, rubrics and additional details for all assignments are listed on CANVAS.

**Individual Annotation of online lectures:**

You will watch weekly online lectures covering the class content outside of class, and annotate them. This will be our main learning tool for presentation and

discussion of course content. Schedule and rubric for these annotations can be found on CANVAS.

**Individual Annotation of video sessions:**

You will watch and annotate video sessions demonstrating various theories and techniques for working with families. Schedule and rubric for these annotations can be found on CANVAS.

**Group Assignment : Case conceptualization for your simulated family**

Create a family. Complete the Gehart case conceptualization for that family using each model. Designate which group members have primary responsibility for each part of the conceptualization. This should progress on an ongoing basis during the semester but completed by the start of simulations.

**Group Assignment : Case conceptualization, intervention plan and presentation for your intervention family**

Complete a draft of the Gehart case conceptualization form and intervention plan after your first family assessment session. Revise the assessment and intervention plan after the second session. Designate which group members have primary responsibility for each section conceptualization but the project will be a shared group assignment. Each group will give a case presentation at the last class.

**Individual Assignment: Annotated simulated Session 1**

Using the rubric on CANAVAS annotate your simulated group session. Each team member will be particularly responsible for annotations for their activity during the session. Submit a 1-2 page reflection to discuss issues not included on the annotation.

**Individual Assignment: Annotated simulated session 2**

Using the rubric on CANAVS, annotate your simulated group session. Each team member will be particularly responsible for annotations for their activity during the session. Submit a 1-2 page reflection to discuss issues not included on the annotation.

d. Attendance and class participation

**Class attendance is required.** If you are unable to come to class on a specific day, please contact me (via email or c-tool message to create a written record) with the reason for the absence. If you miss more than one class session, we will need to meet to discuss a plan for making up missed class material to adequately complete the course.

**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 colleagues on their videos and learning contributions.

**Note on use of technology in the classroom:** Laptops are to be used only for taking notes, or for specific other uses as directed in class. Personal use of laptops, phones and other technology is not allowed during class except in cases of emergency. If you need to use them for that purpose, please let me know about it that day in class. Significant reductions in active engagement grades will be made from unwarranted use of technology in class.

Here is the [Policy on Class Attendance](#) found in the MSW Student Guide.

#### e. Grading

In the spirit of a professional development experience that encourages you to stretch and grow, grading will be mainly on a credit/no credit basis for each assignment. If you make a strong and timely effort on each assignment, you will do well in this class in terms of grading. I will give feedback on each assignment that focuses on improving your knowledge and skills. If you complete the assignment at an acceptable graduate level, you will get the points allotted for that assignment. Students can lose points by not doing acceptable work and not participating at an acceptable level. I will give you specific feedback about what needs to be improved to make an assignment acceptable.

- Points for all assignments total to 95. Remaining 5 points reserved for exceptional performance. I will occasionally award a bonus point for assignments that are exceptionally well-done and for exceptional class participation and contributions.
- You will lose 1 point for the 1<sup>st</sup> assignment that I judge as unacceptable. You may then resubmit the assignment in acceptable form for credit. If not resubmitted with revisions, you will get no credit for the assignment. You will lose 2 points for the 2<sup>nd</sup> unacceptable assignment and 3 points for the 3<sup>rd</sup> unacceptable assignment and so on.
- You will lose 1 point for a late assignment. An additional point reduction will be made when an assignment is more than one week late. Longer than that, no credit will be earned for the assignment.
- Lose 1 point for a missed class, without prior arrangement or medical reason. Upon the 3<sup>rd</sup> absence, there will be 5-point deduction for each absence. You can be excused from a class if you contact me in advance and get authorization, or if you are physically unable to attend due to illness. But in no case can you miss

more than two class sessions without point deductions. You will need to do make-up work for the missed class regardless of the reason.

- Pattern of unauthorized use of phones or laptops deduction of 1 point per occurrence after a warning.
- Being late to class or back from a break, lose 1 point for each two occurrences.

I try to provide clear, thoughtful feedback that helps you to deepen your awareness of professional social work practice as well as your writing and communication skills. ***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:**

**98-100 =A+; 93-97 = A; 92= A-**

**91 =B+, 88-90 =B, 86-87 =B-**

**86= C+; 83-85= C;80-82= C-**

**Below 80; not passing**

Here is a reference to the MSW Student Guide policies on Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction as well as Student Grievance procedures and the policy for grading in special circumstances.

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Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: <https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources>. They include:

- *Safety and emergency preparedness*
- *Mental health and well-being*
- *Teaching evaluations*
- *Proper use of names and pronouns*
- *Accommodations for students with disabilities*
- *Religious/spiritual observances*
- *Military deployment*
- *Writing skills and expectations*
- *Academic integrity and plagiarism*