1. Course Statement

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. Course objectives and competencies
   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)

d. 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.
e. Curricular themes:

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.

f. Relationship 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.

g. 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 for the past 5-6 decades. In the past, the family was viewed 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.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials


Additional readings on Canvas

b. 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. Material presented in class may be personally triggering for you and I encourage self-care at these moments. If your self-care includes browsing on an electronic device, please leave the classroom to do so. **Participation includes being attentive and engaged during class. As social workers, our most significant relational skill is maintaining our connection and focus even when we are triggered, bored, or uninterested. Your participation grade will reflect this.**
c. 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.

d. Assignments

Progress in this course will be assessed by four 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 4 assignments.

Assignment 1: Group Formulation and In-Class Presentation of Family

There will be 4 groups in this class, 3 groups with 4 members and 1 group with 5 members. These groups will be together during all class sessions and facilitate the processing of class material. The first assignment for your group is to pick a family that you know, or a family depicted in media. Present this family either via genogram or maximum 20 minute video for class study and application of class concepts. There will be four dates throughout the semester for these presentations. This assignment is worth 10% of your grade.

Assignment 2: Individual Family Assessment Paper

Pick a family that you know or are working with. Please write a 3-4 page paper assessing the following elements including specific interactions that illustrate the point you are making. Please format the paper with the following section headings, each followed by narrative response:

- Family composition
- Roles and rules
- Level on Beaver’s Scale
- Homeostatic state: what is everyone doing when the car is running smoothly?
- Culture, i.e. class, ethnicity, religion
- Gender/gender socialization/ gender roles
- PODS and other macro level influences, i.e. community, history
• Communication: internal and external
• 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 Canvas by 11:59 on February 13, 2020.

Assignment 3: Group Practice Assignment

This is an assignment in which each student will participate in two different role plays. Beginning with the 7th class session, we will have in-class demonstrations of family therapy sessions 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 a 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.)
  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 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.

This is a 2 part assignment and is worth 20% of your grade and dates for the presentations will be picked during the first and second class sessions.

Assignment 4: Group Case Study Intervention Plan

This is a 7 to 10-page group paper utilizing the family that you presented in class. Please cite 6 references from class readings in this paper. Please address the following elements:

- 3 generation genogram on 8 ½ x 11 paper, carefully constructed.
- Brief assessment of the family, no longer than a page including:
  - Significant demographics including culture, class, gender, as they relate to the presenting problem
- Presenting problem or context. This must be something that needs to change—a particular problem that the interventions will address.
- 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?
- Propose intervention strategies from 3 different models, justifying your choice of model. Please suggest at least 2 strategies from each model. Describe how each technique would be used, including dialogue of 2-3 sentences between therapist and family member. Please discuss how you think each of the interventions you have proposed might work, or not work with this family.
- Group reflection about how playing a family member influenced your intervention plan.

This assignment is worth 30% of your grade and is due in the Assignments tab on Canvas by 11:59 PM on April 16, 2020.

e. Class schedule

**Week 1: January 9, 2020**

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

**Week 2: January 16, 2020**

Family Systems Theory
Fundamental Concepts
Readings:
Nichols & Schwartz: Chapters 1-4


Week 3: January 23, 2020 Group Case Presentation 1
Assessment

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


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;


https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/


Week 4: January 30, 2020: Spectrum Center My Voice Panel

Postmodernism and TLGBQI Families

Readings:
Chapters 1,2,3,8


Week 5: February 6, 2020  Group Case Presentation 2

Specific Clinical Influences in Systems

Readings:
Saunders, (2006.) Welfare workers’ responses to domestic

iss:3 pg:329 -338

Helena J.V. Rutherford, Norah S. Wallace, Heidemarie K. Laurent, Linda C. Mayes,
Emotion regulation in parenthood,
Developmental Review, Volume 36, 2015, Pages 1-14

Fred H. Besthorn, Sally St. George & Dan Wulff (2014) A Postmodern Critique of Societal
Discourses of Male Violence in Interpersonal Family Relationships: A Balancing Act for Social

(Eds.), The sage encyclopedia of marriage, family, and couples counseling (Vol. 2, pp. 598-600).

Approaches, Social Work in Public Health, 28:3-4, 234-247

Lisa Saldana PhD & Scott W. Henggeler PhD (2008) Improving Outcomes and Transporting
Evidence-Based Treatments for Youth and Families with Serious Clinical Problems, Journal of
Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse, 17:3, 1-10

**Week 6: February 13, 2020 Assignment 1 Due, Group Case Presentation 3**

Multigenerational Family Therapy

Readings:
Nichols & Schwartz: Chapter 5

theory, Journal of Marital and Family Therapy. 20, 1, p. 35


**Week 7: February 20, 2020: 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

The Psychotherapy Networker, Vol. 29, no.3
Wylie, Mary Sykes, “Maestro of the Consulting Room” p. 40


**Week 8: February 27, 2020: Group Format Presentation**
Experiential Family Therapy

Readings:
Nichols & Schwartz : Chapter 8

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 9: March 12, 2020: Group Format Presentation**
Solution Focused Therapy

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


Jung Jin Choi (2019) A Case Study of Solution-Focused Brief Family Therapy, The American Journal of Family Therapy, DOI:

Integration of Solution-Focused Therapy and Structural Family Therapy, Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 50:7, 481-495, DOI:


**Week 10: March 19, 2020: Group Format Presentation**

Narrative Family Therapy

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 11: March 26, 2020: Group Case Presentation 4**

CBT, and other behavioral therapies

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;


Week 12: April 2, 2020
TBD

Week 13: April 9, 2020
Couples
Readings:


The Family Therapy Networker, March/April, 1993, Issue # 293
Schnarch, D. “Inside the Sexual Crucible”


Week 14: April 16, 2020 Assignment 3 Due

f. 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