1. Course Statement

a. Course description
This course will examine assessment frameworks and interviewing techniques for working with children across the child lifespan (birth thru age 17), and their families. This course will provide grounding in the following perspectives: attachment/transactional theory, child and adolescent development, and parenthood, including ethnic/cultural variations in child rearing practices. The interaction between environmental risk factors, protective factors, and developmental factors as they contribute to coping, resiliency, and disorder will also be covered. Major clinical concepts including assessment, treatment planning, work with biological parents or primary caretakers, and developmentally appropriate engagement and intervention techniques will be addressed. This course will be organized in terms of the sequence of development and will cover clinical issues and assessment approaches relevant to each developmental stage. Intersectional issues relevant to cultural diversity, gender, ability, socio-economic status and so on will be acknowledged as core to assessment and implication of assessment findings for reporting and treatment.

b. Course content – Proposed Themes
This course will identify social work and conceptual frameworks to guide assessment that explores biopsychosocial challenges and assessing well-being. Important content includes establishing the purpose, methods and evidence to inform assessment findings.
Contemporary and emerging issues adversely affecting children and their families will provide important contexts for directing assessment purposes. Intake and worker factors will consider PODS factors that influence engagement, building a therapeutic alliance, and the effective pursuit of the assessment process. Ethical issues will be discussed as students become familiar with differences between voluntary, non-voluntary, and involuntary situations. Assessment strategies, documentation and establishing realistic recommendations will be important content in this course.

c. Course objectives and competencies

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe and apply several assessment procedures (e.g. direct observation of or interviews with the client, parent or primary caretaker, and collateral contacts with teachers, caseworkers, or other professionals) that identify internal and external risk and protective factors that may affect children, youth and their families.

2. Describe the primary developmental tasks and characteristics of childhood and adolescence as they relate to the selection and implementation of developmentally appropriate techniques for engaging and assessing children and youth.

3. Identify the ways in which continuity or disruption in primary care relationships may impact children, adolescents, and the assessment process.

4. Conduct and write up an assessment that includes information on the child’s physical, emotional, and cognitive development, temperament, relationship history, and performance as the basis for formulating an understanding of the child’s presenting problems and circumstances.

5. Implement research supported assessment strategies (e.g. both quantitative and qualitative) that are compatible with client and family or caretaker goals, needs, circumstances, and values.

6. Monitor and evaluate assessment with regard to: relevance, comprehensiveness, sensitivity to client-worker differences; impact of clients’ and families’ social identities (i.e. race/ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, religion) on their experience of power and privilege; and appropriateness of the intervention to specific client needs resulting from conditions such as maltreatment, deprivation, disability, and substance abuse.

CSWE Competencies addressed in this course include:
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice
Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

d. Course design

This course will make use of lectures, demonstrations, discussion, media such as videotaped interviews with children, small group exercises, role plays / simulations. This course will meet three hours a week. Students will demonstrate their knowledge acquisition by means of class demonstration, written responses to assignments, participation in class discussion, in-class assignments, videotapes, and short papers about their child welfare practice.

e. Curricular themes

*Multiculturalism and Diversity*: will be addressed by teaching students matters of sensitivity, respect, and cultural humility when working with clients where there are racial, cultural, ethnic, class, religious, gender, nationality and other differences. Case examples will highlight how power differences and the voluntary nature of service provision affect a child and family’s responses to assessment, engagement and building the therapeutic relationship for assessment.

*Social Justice and Social Change*: Students will learn that differences in problem identification and responsive to assessment practices are influenced by external factors such as risks associated with living in poverty, discrimination, and disenfranchisement. In assessment, children are at a fundamental disadvantage in systems that are controlled by adults. The role of power and privilege differentials between workers, systems of care and children (and families) will be a theme throughout the course. The assessment process is not necessarily designed to be child-centered and often assumes an adult-centered mindset consistent with a professional orientation. Students will learn that an appropriate role for assessment often depends on their ability to listen to the voice of the child in whatever ways the child can communicate and express concerns and strengths.

*Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation*: The assessment process focuses on risks, protections, preventive and promotive factors. The course will cover the role of prevention strategies and promotion of child strengths as essential to assessment and the development of recommendations emerging from assessment for treatment and rehabilitation. Similarly, students will learn that philosophically, child assessment and intervention aims to promote the welfare of the child and child well-being.

*Behavioral and Social Science Research*: Research and evidence-informed knowledge and skills will be at the center of the material taught in this course. Empirically based practice will be taught, which necessarily implies reliance on social science knowledge and research findings. Students will learn to critically evaluate assessment approaches used with children across the child development lifespan.
f. Relationship to social work ethics and values

Issues of values and ethics of a social work professional working with children and using guidelines such as NASW Code of Ethics will be an inherent part of this course. Students will learn that assessment with children and families requires social workers deeply committed to best practices that maintain the interests of the child first, even though the stance may at times be unpopular. In addition, ethics as they relate to mandated reporting, client confidentiality, and decisions about who the client is (child, parent, family) will be addressed.

g. Intensive focus on PODS

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning. (Course Statement Approved By Governing Faculty 11/8/06).

2. Class Requirements

a. Class materials [See CANVAS site]
b. Class schedule

9/3 Week 1: Background in Social Work and Conceptual Frameworks to Guide Assessment
9/9 Week 2: Understanding Contexts for Assessment: Biopsychosocial and Spiritual Challenges and Strengths in Assessing “Well-Being”
9/16 Week 3: Assessment Purpose, Methods, and Ethical Practice
9/24 Week 4: Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment: Standardized Instruments, Facilitative Methods and Implications for Diversity
10/1 Week 5: Contemporary Issues Adversely Impacting Children Across the Child Lifespan and their Families
10/8 Week 6: Assessment and the Intake Process.
10/15 Week 7: Intake and Interviewing Client(s) “Factors”
10/22 Week 8: The Assessment Process: Intake and Interviewing Worker “Factors”
10/29 Week 9: Designing the Assessment “Roadmap”
11/5 Week 10: Engagement and Establishing Rapport Across the “Voluntary” Continuum with Children, Youth and Adolescents
11/12 Week 11: Engagement and Establishing Rapport Across the “Voluntary” Continuum with Primary Caretakers and Families
11/19  Week 12: Moving from Assessment to Intervention: Linking Assessment to Realistic Expectations for Change

11/26  Week 13: (No Class) ***** Thanksgiving *****

12/3    Week 14: Documentation and Establishing Realistic Goals

12/10   Week 15: Assessment and System Change: Anticipating “Systemic and Environmental” Barriers and Obstacles to Change

c. Assignments [TBD]

Week 1 (9/3):  Background in Social Work and Conceptual Frameworks to Guide Assessment

Week 2 (9/9):  Understanding Contexts for Assessment: Biopsychosocial and Spiritual Challenges and Strengths in Assessing “Well-Being”

Reflection Questions:
(1) In general, what is the purpose of assessment?
(2) What is meant by “risk” factors (i.e., risk of what?) and what does a focus on strengths add to the assessment process?
(3) What is meant by internal and external risks?


http://web.b.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/ehost/detail/detail?vid=6&sid=06a29c7b-f87f-4ec2-a8b0-60b385beb253%40pdc-v-sessmgr06&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGltZSszY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=2018-48688-001&db=psyh


Week 3 (9/16):  Assessment Purpose, Methods, and Ethical Practice

Reflection Questions:
(1) What makes “development” important to consider in assessment?
(2) What are examples of ethical concerns in assessment?
(3) In what ways does “culture” matter in assessment?


**Week 4 (9/24): Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment: Standardized Instruments, Facilitative Methods and Implications for Diversity**

**Reflection Questions:**

1. What are “unique” contributions of quantitative and qualitative aspects of assessment?
2. What are important considerations when determining “appropriate” measures in assessment?
3. What are the strengths and limitations of relying on standardized measures?


**Week 5 (10/1): Contemporary Issues Adversely Impacting Children Across the Child Lifespan and their Families**

**Reflection Questions:**

1. How might the unique factors of our time (e.g., use of social media and reliance on technology) impact “well-being” and individual / family functioning?
2. What is meant by “adverse childhood experiences”?
3. How might “matters of diversity” present unique challenges to assessment? (Hint: Think in terms of unique “differences” and the consequence of the experiences of differences on assessing individual and family well-being?)

Bettmann, J.E., Anstadt, G., Casselman, B. & Ganesh, K. (2020). Young adult depression and anxiety linked to social media use: Assessment and treatment *Clinical Social Work*
Week 6 (10/8): Assessment and the Intake Process

Reflection Questions:
1. In general, what factors are important to consider in preparing for the initial intake?
2. What are important considerations in our hearing the client narrative (i.e., their story)?
   (Hint: Think in terms of how we become conscious of client narratives, our interpretation of their meaning, and implications for worker impressions.)
3. What might “silence” communicate during the initial interview?


Week 7 (10/15): Intake and Interviewing Client(s) “Factors”

Reflection Questions:
1. What factors are important to consider specific to interviewing children, youth or adolescents?
2. How might “culture” and diversity matters reveal themselves when interviewing children, youth or adolescents?
3. How might you respond when assessment reveals “urgent matters”? (Consider disclosure of abuse, suicidality, other and implications for our mandate.)


Week 8 (10/22): The Assessment Process: Intake and Interviewing Worker “Factors”

Reflection Questions:
(1) What factors contribute to “worker bias” in assessment?
(2) What can a worker do to mitigate their own bias(es)?
(3) How might a cultural humility perspective impact worker bias(es) in assessment?


Week 9 (10/29): Designing the Assessment “Roadmap”
[Guest Lecture – Readings TBD]

Reflection Questions:
(1) What is your “vision” of an assessment plan (i.e., what “map” might guide your assessment strategy?)?
(2) How do you decide who to include in your assessment, and when to include them?
(3) How might “development” matters impact your vision?
Week 10 (11/5): Engagement and Establishing Rapport Across the “Voluntary” Continuum with Children, Youth and Adolescents

Reflection Questions:
(1) What might engagement and rapport “look like” when interviewing children, youth or adolescents?
(2) What differences might be encountered when interviewing voluntary, non-voluntary and involuntary children, youth or adolescents?
(3) What are essential skills for interviewing children, youth or adolescents?


Week 11 (11/12): Engagement and Establishing Rapport Across the “Voluntary” Continuum with Primary Caretakers and Their Families

Reflection Questions:
(1) What might engagement and rapport “look like” when interviewing parents or primary caretakers?
(2) What are “family dynamics” and how might they be included in an assessment?
(3) How might family communication style and “language” impact the worker assessment process?


Week 12 (11/19): Moving from Assessment to Intervention: Linking Assessment to Realistic Expectations for Change

Reflection Questions:
(1) What is the relationship between assessment and intervention?
(2) What factors are important to consider when advancing assessment recommendations for treatment? (Hint: How are the 6 A’s considered?)
(3) How might a worker respond to information revealed during intervention that is not consistent with assessment information?


http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/prj0000407


**Week 13 (11/26): (No Class) ***** Thanksgiving ***** **

**Week 14: (12/3):  Documentation and Establishing Realistic Goals**

_Reflection Questions:_
(1) What are core areas to consider in documenting assessment information?
(2) What factors are important to consider when taking notes during the interview process?
(3) What ethical issues might present themselves in assessment in the context of documentation?


**Week 15 (12/10): Assessment and System Change: Anticipating “Systemic and Environmental” Barriers and Obstacles to Change**

_Reflection Questions:_
(1) What are examples of system and environmental barriers and obstacles to change?
(2) How might assessment include an assessment of factors external to the child and family?
(3) How might self-care apply to workers during the assessment process?


**Students are strongly encouraged to:**

**Do the reading before class and be prepared to discuss it.** Readings will be directly relevant to the class session. Except for a limited number of handouts, all course material are available on the Canvas site. Each session’s reading assignments are in a separate folder, which is marked by session number.

Assignments will include the following:

1. **Eight (8) written reflections of at least one reflection question from eight (8) different weeks,** no more than 5 pages in length. Reflection responses are due no more than one week after the session in which the reflection question is presented. Submissions afterward are accepted with at least a half grade reduction (40% of course grade; each reflection is worth 5% of course grade)
2. **Attendance and active participation in class** (20% of course grade – 10% attendance, 10% participation) – Grading will be based on self-grade w/ instructor input.
3. **A final written assessment protocol** proposing a “quasi-formal” assessment of a client population you identify. For example, if you are interested in a specific challenge or concern relevant to a child or primary caretaker, your task is to develop an interview protocol you believe is consistent with an effective and efficient exploration of the challenge or concern you identified. More details will be provided as the semester unfolds. **Please submit your proposal (no more than a short paragraph) no later than November 12.** (30% of course grade)

Reflections and the final assignment will be graded according to the following rubric:

*A+* - **Student demonstrates beyond extraordinary knowledge of concepts and application of materials that exceeds expectations; effectively and substantively utilizes materials, exceptional use of examples to support assertions; offers beyond exceptional understanding and extremely insightful critique of materials that greatly extend the knowledge base required; overall, student performance greatly exceeds expectations.**

*A:* **Student demonstrates extraordinary knowledge of concepts and application of materials; effectively utilizes assigned materials and generous examples to support assertions; offers**
exceptional understanding and insightful critique of materials; student performance clearly exceeds expectations.

A+: Student demonstrates exceptional knowledge of concepts and application of materials; effectively utilizes assigned materials with examples to support assertions; offers outstanding understanding of materials that exceed mastery of the knowledge base required; student performance in the exceptional performance range, clearly beyond mastery.

B+: Student demonstrates above mastery of knowledge of concepts and application of materials; liberally utilizes relevant assigned materials and examples to support assertions; offers important insights of materials that exceed mastery required; student performance beyond mastery.

B: Student demonstrates mastery of knowledge of concepts and application of materials; utilizes relevant assigned materials with periodic examples to support assertions; offers general insights of materials that clearly demonstrate mastery required.

B-: Student demonstrates minimal level of mastery of knowledge of concepts and application of materials; utilizes assigned materials to support assertions although less than sufficiently; offers some insights and application of materials that falls below level of mastery required.

C: Student demonstrates below minimal level of mastery of knowledge of concepts and application of materials; does not utilize assigned materials to support assertions; offers less than sufficient insights and application of materials; clearly below a minimum level of mastery required.

d. Attendance and class participation

Students must attend class. Students should make class attendance a priority and adherence to virtual class etiquette:

Etiquette for ZOOMing in our class

Attendance: ZOOM has a feature that allows me to know who is attending class, and when you arrive to class. Please check in on time and e-mail me if you are going to be late or need to leave early. ZOOM allows you to join at any time without difficulty if for some reason you are delayed.
Cameras: Please turn on your cameras. If you are unable to do so, especially because of accommodations, please let me know or reach out to our ADEP office about alternatives. When speaking, look at your camera in order to make eye contact when talking. Please mute your mic when not asking a question or making a comment. If you have a question and don’t want to interrupt the speaker, you can use the chat box or the participant icon on the bottom of the ZOOM page and choose “raise hand” from the participant window.

Recording Sessions: You will be reminded when class is being recorded at the start of the class session. Ordinarily we will not record our class but there may be occasions when a student requests it due to an unanticipated absence.

Answering Questions and Muting: Remember when answering a question, you will need to unmute your audio and then answer as you normally would. Also, please mute your mic once you have answered the question.

Chatting Privately: Chatting privately with members is permissible if it is considered part of class participation. If it becomes excessive and detracts from class, that feature will be disabled for all students. Please use the Chat feature with discretion and minimize private chatting.

Responding to Polls: Polling will be used occasionally and while we have no idea who weighed in in terms of responses to polling questions, we will know if you weighed in at all. Please participate in polling as another part of class participation.

The instructor will record attendance at each scheduled class. Please do not check in late, leave early, rejoin the class late after break, or miss class, without a valid excuse and prior notification. Attendance is crucial to understanding the content of the course. In fact, some content presented during lecture may not be in readings. Three absences (excused or unexcused) will automatically result in a meeting with the instructor. A pattern of lateness will automatically result in a reduction of your grade.

e. Grading

Grading Policy for Academic Courses (Faculty Manual - Standard 7.05)
A grades are given for EXCEPTIONAL individual performance and mastery of material. The use of A+, A, and A- should distinguish the degree of superiority w/ perfect attendance equal to an A.
B grades are given to students who demonstrate MASTERY of the material. B+ should be used for students who perform just above the mastery level but not in an exceptional manner. B- should be used for students just below the mastery level
C grades are given when mastery of the material is minimal. A C- grade is the lowest grade which carries credit.
D grades indicate deficiency and carry no credit
E grades indicate failure and carry no credit

[Per the SSW]
Recommended Change to AY 20-21 Grading Policy
1. The University of Michigan School of Social Work MSW program will use a modified grading system for academic year 20 - 21 that awards letter grades of A to C- and a notation of “NRC” (No Record COVID) for grades of D+ to E.
2. Students in the UM SSW MSW program may withdraw or disenroll from a course through the last day of classes in the term without a “W” appearing on the official transcript.

h. Class Recording and Course Materials

Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified a recording is occurring. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor.]

i. COVID-19 Statement [Required]

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person/hybrid basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the Wolverine Culture of Care and the University’s Face Covering Policy for COVID-19. Your ability to participate in this course in-person/hybrid may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the Office for Institutional Equity. If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis. I also
encourage you to review the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

j. Health-Related Class Absences

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a doctor’s note) for medical excuses is not required.

Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction
Student Grievance procedures
policy for grading in special circumstances.
Testing and grading from CRLT.

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