

**SW 521/511 Interpersonal Practice with
Individuals, Families and Small Groups**

However much concerned I was at the problem of misery in the world, I never let myself get lost in broodings over it. I always held firmly to the thought that each one of us can do a little to bring some portion of it to an end.

~Albert Schweitzer

Winter 2021
Initial Syllabus

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(I try to respond within 48 hours – don't hesitate to re-write if I overlook responding)

Office Hours:

Monday 5 to 6 (most Tuesdays)

Enter the "waiting room" and I will let you in. If I am with another student it may take a while, which is why I suggest scheduling a Zoom office hours appointment.

Others gladly by appointment – Please email me to schedule a time.

Required Text:

Cooper, M.G and Lesser, J.G. (2015). *Clinical Social Work Practice*, 5th edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Menakem, R. (2017). *My Grandmother's Hands*. Central Recovery Press

Other readings will be posted in Canvas

Pandemic Statement:

This will be an unprecedented term. You are entering the MSW program during 2 major pandemics – Covid-19 and the long-standing pandemic, now undergoing a national reckoning, of racism and oppression. I hope we will strive to treat ourselves and each other with compassion and grace, while also encouraging our collective growth. There will be glitches along the way. The course outline is my best attempt to help you predict what the class holds in store for you.

Course Description

SW 521: This course presents social work foundation knowledge and skills essential to interpersonal practice with individuals, families and small groups in social contexts. It integrates content on multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice 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, socio-economic status, age, religion, and ability as these relate to interpersonal practice.

SW 511: This course offers students the opportunity to practice the assessment, engagement, intervention and evaluation skills essential to interpersonal practice with children, youth and their families while considering the community, organizational, and policy contexts in which social workers practice. The student's field experience and future practice methods courses will build upon the skills rehearsed 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

SW 521: This course builds a base from behavioral and social science theories to inform the practice concepts and skills taught in this course. Students learn how to perform various social work roles (i.e. counselor/clinical social worker, group facilitator, mediator, and advocate), recognizing that these roles must adhere to social work values and ethics. Students learn the importance of developing *relationships* with clients, colleagues, supervisors, other professionals, and many other constituencies. Students also learn how self-awareness and the conscious use of self, effect the helping relationship and how to apply practice skills such as active listening, empathic responding, contracting, critical and creative thinking in practice. In this course, all phases of the IP treatment process (i.e. engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation) are presented and applied to social work practice with individuals, families, and small groups. Students learn how to assess vulnerabilities and strengths in clients' lives that relate to attributes (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) as well as situational and environmental factors relevant to the client's social functioning. Students learn how to assess risks, and barriers, and to plan, implement and monitor change strategies. Students learn how to apply various evaluation techniques in order to demonstrate effectiveness.

SW 511: In this course all phases of the IP treatment and prevention process (i.e. engagement, assessment, planning, intervention, evaluation, and termination) will be taught and rehearsed, with attention to how they are applied to work with individuals, families, and small groups. Students will learn and practice specific skills, such as empathic inquiry and collaborative exploration 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 the historical, political, situational, environmental and psychological factors relevant to the client's functioning. Students will practice the use of specific assessment tools, such as biopsychosocial assessment, genograms, ecomaps, and family sculpting to discern patterns of functioning, to assess strengths and vulnerabilities, and to plan, implement and monitor process of growth or change strategies. Students will practice methods of intervention specific to three modalities of intervention, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Psychodynamic Psychotherapy and Child Play Therapy. Additionally, students will learn strategies of self-regulation in order to stay cognitively and emotionally able to effectively intervene in therapeutic relationships. Students will practice methods of evaluating 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.

Course Objectives

SW 521: Upon completion of this course, students using a social work practice framework will be able to: 1. Describe and apply research-based knowledge and frameworks in interpersonal practice with individuals, families and small groups and critique the strengths and weaknesses of these various frameworks. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 3.2, 6.2, 7.1, 10b.4) 2. Recognize the potential impact of race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, power and privilege on interpersonal practice. (Practice Behaviors 4.1, 4.3, 5.1) 3. Carry out the roles of counselor/clinical social worker, client services manager, group facilitator mediator, and advocate in a culturally responsive manner (by attending to social identities such as race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, and to power and privilege). (Practice Behaviors 1.1, 1.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 5.2, 5.3, 10c.2, 10c.3, 10c.4) 4. Demonstrate basic interpersonal practice skills including active listening, empathic responding, critical/creative thinking, case recording, and contracting. (Practice Behaviors 1.4, 3.1, 3.3, 10a.1, 10a.2, 10a.3) 5. Operationalize the NASW code of ethics and other ethical codes and recognize value dilemmas that emerge in interpersonal practice. (Practice Behaviors 2.2, 2.3)

SW 511: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to: (1) Demonstrate skills for engagement such as empathic inquiry, active listening, collaborative exploration, case recording and goal setting. (2) Utilize three assessment tools to identify client strengths and vulnerabilities, as well as sources of biopsychosocial, cultural, sociopolitical and spiritual risks and supports. (3) Recognize the impact of age, race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, power and privilege on interpersonal

practice by (a) Demonstrating self-awareness of their own privilege, identity, positionality and life experiences impact on their capacity to relate to others with different personal privilege, identity, sociopolitical and life experiences. (b) Describing how others who are very different may perceive them and how status and power issues impact professional relationships with clients, colleagues, and other professions. (4) Conduct culturally sensitive interpersonal practice by: (a) Articulating socio-political, environmental, family and/or individual-level contributing factors of at least two specific disorders, prevention and/or treatment goals, developing measurable prevention and treatment objectives, and employing measurement tools to monitor and evaluate practice while maintaining sensitivity to the individualized needs of clients. (b) Implementing treatment protocols consistent with treatment plans and sensitive to clients' situations (c) Recognizing basic termination issues that pertain to interpersonal practice. (5) Demonstrate intervention skills specific to two evidence informed treatment modalities such as CBT, Motivational Interviewing, and Psychodynamic Psychotherapy. (6) Demonstrate capacity for strategic use of self in the therapeutic relationship by identifying their own sociopolitical, environmental, and experiential or emotional/cognitive factors that may support or impede the therapeutic relationship.

Course Design

The 521 classes will be more aimed at teaching and learning theory, and our 511 lab classes will be utilized for practice and reflection, though we will still do some practice in 521. Though 521 and 511 are technically separate courses, we will run it as one course. So the assignments, reading, etc., will cover both the morning and afternoon sessions.

Learning happens best in a supportive, comfortable environment. To that end, we will use various methods such as individual exercises, class discussion, and small group work to examine the material presented. We will use PowerPoint, videos, movie clips and song clips to illustrate topics.

My hope is that you will glean basic techniques even within the classroom experience. I will try to highlight basic techniques of reflective listening, attunement and asking questions. Because we will be exploring topics that can raise strong feelings, it is important that you practice listening to and respecting others, especially when strong and/or opposing opinions are offered. Your contributions to a supportive learning environment will be much appreciated. All students will be expected to contribute visually (attending to others) and verbally (talking and listening).

Two major themes will underlie most of our discussions, though they will not often be reflected in the readings. The first major theme will be: *what makes humans who we are?* Attachment theory will be presented to help us consider this question. The second major theme will be: *what helps people change?* Your preconceived ideas about both these arenas will impact how you perceive information in this class. Together, we will explore our ideas and thoughts about “what makes us tick.” *This course will be most useful to you if you are willing and able to reflect on your own thoughts, feelings and ideas.*

Finally, the role of body-based recovery from trauma and stress is gaining increasing scientific attention. So that you have techniques to teach clients, as well as ways to help with your self-regulation, I will begin each class with a “mindful self-regulation” technique in order to help settle our bodies/spirit. My hope is that you will practice these so that when you have

evocative moments in the class, with clients or in your life more broadly, you have ways to mindfully attend to your present-moment experience. I will try to offer a variety in hopes that one “speaks” to you but knowing not every exercise is right for every person. You are free to participate or not, but please mute your mike so that others who want to can engage.

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. I will also be weaving in anti-racist, anti-oppressive practice.
- (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, and I will seek to provide non-dominant methods of healing as well.

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.

NASW Code of Ethics: <https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I hope we will work together to create an atmosphere of grace and compassion. In years past, I have had a fairly strict attendance policy. In light of the pandemic, the burdens some of you are carrying from that, and the heavy emotional toll that racism takes on BIPOC, I will work with you to strike a balance between acceptance of what is possible while still expecting you and supporting you to strive to be a thoughtful, excellent social worker. I will record all classes so that if you have to miss, you can still gain the material. However, some material considered essential to the objectives of the course will be hard to glean without live participation:

- The application of key concepts and student co-learning requires participation in class discussions and exercises
- If you have more than 1 absence, you will be required to submit an additional assignment that demonstrates you have watched the lecture
- Predictability, reliability and consistency are core to any strong relationship... “being there” is incredibly important to clients, so it is important in this class
- ***Attendance means participating and attending to others.*** Using computers or mobile devices to text, shop, read Instagram, etc. will reduce your grade. Unless you have a family emergency, (and please speak to me about it ahead of time) please reduce distractions such as cell phone use, social media, etc. We will connect best if most of us have our cameras on. For small group and break out work, that is my expectation. If you cannot have your camera on for some reason, I would appreciate knowing that ahead of time
- Children needing a cuddle or a parent recharge, pets, doodling, family members wandering through, etc., are all welcome (just be aware that some of the content will be graphic and not suitable for children to see or hear).

GRADING

I try to provide clear, thoughtful feedback that helps you to deepen your awareness of a number of key issues - 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.

- The “set point” in the courses is a B, which by UM grading definition means that you are mastering concepts. *That is all that is expected of you.* Unlike content that is more “factual”, learning to be a social worker is complex...dealing with humans is complex! My definition of excelling (A or A-) would be that you are already thinking and responding at a more complex, seasoned, nuanced level. I do not expect that of you but do acknowledge it when I see it.

SW521/511 Course Assignments Winter 2021

See Canvas for Assignments Descriptions and Due Dates

521 Students

Biopsychosocial Assessment

Listening Skills Worksheet

SIMMersion – Intake with Jemma

SIMMersion – Introducing CBT with Tanisha

Attendance and Participation; weekly polls to check for clarity/understanding/application of course readings

511 Students Only

Completion of a Character Development Paper

Completion of two Annotated Client Simulation Videos and a SOAP note for each “session

Provide supportive feedback to one peer’s annotation of each of the 2 simulations

Attendance and Participation

In all assignments, you will be assessed on (See rubrics in Canvas also):

- **Meeting parameters of assignment**
- **Clarity of thought**
- **Effort/ability to self-reflect**
- **Demonstration of social work values related to empathy, strengths-based thinking, and client dignity**
- **Insightfulness and clinical acuity (since this is a clinical course, this is the area that tends to differentiate papers that earn extra points from others)**
- **Integration of reading materials into paper**
- **The ability to discern which aspects of use of self would be important in assessment or intervention**
- **Writing Skill – clarity, coherence, organization, citation (if necessary), grammatically strong**

Additional School and University policies, information and resources:

<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