If a community values its children, it will cherish their parents.
~ John Bowlby

SW 724
Theory and Practice of Infant Mental Health
SS 2021
Prof. Julie Ribaudo
She, her, hers
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Office hours – by Zoom
Monday – 1:00 to 1:45
Others by appointment

Course Domain and Boundaries

This is an introductory course on the relationship between theory and practice in infant mental health. It is intended for graduate students in Social Work, Education, Nursing and Psychology. Its purpose is to furnish a conceptual framework, based upon recent developments in attachment theory, for understanding how the emotional qualities of the infant-parent dyad influence the infant’s development, the parent's capacity to give care, and finally the professional's state of mind regarding the family. Emphasis is given to how the experiences of early childhood persist over time, and how they are summoned up again by the presence of a baby. This understanding becomes in turn the basis for learning how to plan a treatment approach that takes into account the family's capacities for change.

Specific Knowledge and Skill Objectives

The students should learn:

1. Theories of the relationship between early parent-infant interaction and subsequent development.
2. Consequences of failures or disruptions of the attachment process for both parent and child.
3. Strategies for effective intervention to strengthen early attachment.
4. Transference and countertransference issues pertinent to infant mental health work.

Course Agenda
Day One

Morning –
   Class Introductions; course parameters
   Attachment Theory

Afternoon–
   Attachment Theory
   Adult Attachment Interview

Day Two

Morning –
   Assessment
   Strategies for intervention
      Infant-Parent Psychotherapy

Afternoon–
   Strategies for intervention
      Watch, Wait and Wonder
      Transference and Countertransference

Course Requirements:

Expectations for student time.
This is a 1-credit graduate course offered online during the Spring/Summer term. This means that, as a student, you are expected to spend a total of 45 hours on this course across the semester, including synchronous and asynchronous class time, and reading/viewing material. I anticipate the final assignment requiring 2 to 3 hours of work. For more information, you can check out the UM Center for Academic Innovation at https://ai.umich.edu/.

Prep for Class One (Found in Modules) – 3 to 4 hours of reading:

- Weatherston & Ribaudo (2020). The Michigan infant mental health home visiting model
- Parker, A. (2021). Reframing the narrative – Black maternal mental health and culturally meaningful support for wellness.
- Fraiberg - Ghosts in the Nursery (This is a long but classic article. Some of the terminology is outdated and offensive but the underlying theory remains relevant).
- Lieberman - Angels in the Nursery

ASYNCHRONOUS PRE-CLASS LECTURES - REQUIRED (50 minutes total). Watch from 9 to 10 am on day one (or earlier if you like). It is expected you will have watched the materials before class begins.
- Infant Mental Health - The Gift of Love - Part 1 - (16 Minutes) - What is Infant Mental Health?
- IMH - The Gift of Love - Part 2 - Components of IMH Services (16 minutes)
- Using Reflective Practice to Examine Microaggressions in Early Childhood Mental Health (11 minutes)
- Overview of the Strange Situation Procedure (brief YouTube clip)
Prep for Class Two (Found in Modules) – 3 to 4 hours reading:


Suggested Further Reading:

- Case Studies in Infant Mental Health: Risk, Resiliency, and Relationships - (In files tab of Canvas). 27-39 (Ulrich Chapter – single mother and 5 month old), pp. 67-84 (Crockett Chapter – pre and post-natal work mo. with FASD) and pp. 187-199 (Weatherston Chapter – isolated young mother who had spent years in foster care, pre and post natal work).
Attendance and Class Participation Requirement:

Attend both sessions – You must be present for the entire 2 days to pass the course. If you are running late for some reason, please talk to me.

- Some material considered essential to the objectives of the course will only be presented in class
- The application of key concepts and student co-learning requires participation in class discussions and exercises
- Predictability, reliability and consistency are core to any strong relationship. “Being there” is incredibly important to clients, so it is important in this class
- Please refrain from texting, web surfing, emailing, etc., in class. It is distracting to others, including me. I may not say anything to you directly, but if it becomes very noticeable, I reserve the right to not issue a passing grade.
- Your active participation includes listening well to others and contributing at least occasionally. Please be mindful of contributing too much or too little.

Paper Requirement:

We will discuss it further in class on the first day.

Recording Class

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 in advance that a recording will occur and be provided with an option to opt-out. 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.

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