1. Course Statement

This is an *introductory* course on the relationship between theory and practice in infant mental health. It is intended for graduate students of Social Work, Education, Nursing, and Psychology. Its purpose is to furnish a conceptual framework, based upon 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 early childhood experiences persist over time and how they are summoned up again by the presence of a baby. This understanding becomes the basis for learning how to plan a treatment approach that considers cultural context and the family’s capacities for change.

a. Course description

Designed as an integrative seminar, this course will involve extensive participation on the part of the students. To promote clinical skills, including critical thinking, emotional attunement, and thoughtfully derived interventions, this course will employ various pedagogical strategies, including experiential exercises, small and large group discussions, didactic lectures, videos, and reflective writing.
b. Course Objectives and Competencies

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. Considerations in culturally-relevant practice, including attention to equity and anti-racist practice.
5. Transference and countertransference issues pertinent to infant mental health work.

b. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Attending to equity, inclusion, race, power, privilege, and oppression is crucial to understanding how social inequities impact infants and young children. We will attempt to understand our own lenses and how they shape what we see and don't see, ask and don't ask, consider and don't consider. I do my best to carefully curate readings to help us see and hear a variety of voices. I hope to co-create, with you, an atmosphere of curiosity, humility, and openness when we hold small and large group discussions of the readings and asynchronous and synchronous material. Additionally, if you find materials you think would be helpful for the class, please send them to me so I can post them! Finally, I welcome the opportunity to grow and learn. If I fail to address a topic or say something insensitive, please let me know. We are all learning and growing together.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

All required reading/viewing is found in Modules - there is one module per week of class. Please have material for the corresponding week read before class so we can have meaningful small and large group discussion about the assigned material. Each module also has suggested/optional additional resources.

b. Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Required Readings &amp; Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>What IS Infant Mental Health?</td>
<td>READ:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date/Time</td>
<td>Agenda</td>
<td>Required Readings &amp; Assignments</td>
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<td>Mocha Baby Gets Her Hair Washed (watch for and be ready to discuss behaviors that are addressed in the Lewis article). Optional: Lewis, 1999. Hair combing interactions: A New Paradigm for Research with African-American Mothers. Mini-Lecture (15 minutes) of the Adult Attachment Interview (see modules).</td>
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<td>Date/Time</td>
<td>Agenda</td>
<td>Required Readings &amp; Assignments</td>
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<td><strong>intergenerational transmission of angels</strong>).</td>
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|           |        | **DO:**  
|           |        | Mind Map draft due 5/31 in Canvas. |
| Week 4    | IPP and Intervention Continued | **READ:**  
|           |        | Trout, 2021. Four decades in Infant Mental Health: This hallowed ground. Chapter XI: The startling power of an early narrative. |
|           |        | **WATCH:**  
|           |        | See modules for another optional video on improving Black maternal health outcomes. |
| Week 5    | Intervention (Watch, Wait, & Wonder Model); Parallel Process; Reflective Supervision | **READ:**  
|           |        | Weatherston, 1995. She |
does love me, doesn't she?

WATCH:

Parents talking about Watch, Wait, and Wonder.

When the Bough Breaks: Watch, Wait, and Wonder (watch the first 30:23 minutes)

c. Assignments

Mind Map Draft – Due May 31 at 11:59 pm

Please see the final assignment for expectations regarding the Mind Map. For this assignment, please list three concepts you want to retain, with specific and associated IMH-related behaviors. This will help you get started building your final mind map. For example:

CONCEPT: Engage in culturally sensitive practice

BEHAVIORAL APPLICATION:

- Honor diverse family structures by avoiding assumptions.
- Ask, "Is there anything you think I should understand about how your family works?" or "What traditions regarding babies and young children are important in your family?"
- Recognize and respect non-dominant bodies of knowledge, such as grandparents, pastors/spiritual guides, etc.
- Support families in their preferred language or, if necessary, refer them to someone fluent in their preferred language.
- Return phone calls promptly and follow up with all clients.
- Reflect upon my own identity.
  - Reflect in supervision, and on my own time, upon beliefs, values, areas of privilege and oppression, and personal bias.
  - Acknowledge identities with clients if beneficial. Find and complete sense-of-self activities.
Mind Map Final Project - Due June 25 at 11:59 pm

Please create a "Mind Map" of the core concepts you derived from the course. A mind map is a way to capture your thoughts about core concepts related to IMH. Please don't just regurgitate slides - really think about what you want to retain about specific knowledge and skills associated with IMH. For each core concept, make sure you include a specific behavior application regarding your social work practice. Here are some examples of what constitutes specificity:

- Return calls promptly to convey that the parent is important to me;
- Watch for and highlight positive, responsive interactions between parent and infant,
- Specifically, observe ... (fill in) by watching for (fill in)
- Address and minimize power dynamics by...

You must be specific (ex. of non-specific - "look at attachment"; ex. of specific - "observe what happens in the dyad when the infant is distressed, looking for markers of safe base behavior such as...")

- and demonstrate that you are incorporating concepts from the lecture
- and readings/asynchronous material.

I will ask you to redo your mind map if it does not include specific application of IMH concepts, explicit use of some of the reading material, or only has non-specific behavioral applications. If I ask you to redo your mind map, there is an automatic 1/2 grade reduction and no guarantee of a grade above proficient.

Here is a Link (Links to an external site.) to examples of mind maps. Don't worry if you are not creative...it can be very simple or as creative as you might enjoy.

Upload your mind map as a jpg, ppt, word doc, or a recording with you talking through some of the elements.

PLEASE review mind maps online and ask questions before week 4 of the course.

Grading:

Excellent (A+ to A-) papers will demonstrate exceptional breadth and depth in developing their thoughts about IMH core concepts and associated behaviors. They will demonstrate that the student understands the concepts central to IMH vs. generalist social work practice. Associated behaviors are expressed in behavioral terms and demonstrate that the student is aware of the actions and ways of thinking and observing that are core to IMH values. A-level papers will also show evidence that the student read and meaningfully thought about and can apply course material. Clear attention to developing an anti-racist/anti-oppressive as a future IMH practitioner is evident.

Proficient (B+ to B-) papers will demonstrate acceptable breadth and depth in developing their thoughts about IMH core concepts and associated behaviors. They capture at least three core concepts central to IMH. Associated behaviors show an
acceptable level of proficiency in applying concepts to inform their practice and there is some evidence of having read or watched course material.

**Minimal Proficiency (C+ to C-)** papers can lack demonstration of anything beyond simplistic regurgitation of course materials, fail to integrate readings meaningfully, or lack behavioral specificity. **If your paper lacks behavioral specificity, I will return it to you, but that does not guarantee receiving any grade above proficient.**

Please see [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#) for an overview of university standards in grading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mind Map Draft</td>
<td>May 31 at 11:59 pm</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mind Map</td>
<td>June 25 at 11:59 pm</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>No submission required</td>
<td>20%</td>
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d. **Attendance and class participation**

I will consider both your attendance and your participation. Participation includes a balance of speaking, **careful attention to others (i.e., limiting distractions)**, and listening for themes/reflecting what you have heard others say to deepen dialogue. There is no pressure to speak to get "points" (talking a lot doesn't always constitute strong participation), but we can all learn from each other. I expect to see and hear all students discussing the readings during small group discussions.

I will deduct points when it is clear that the student is using technology or their phone in ways unrelated to the course. I may or may not say something to you, but I notice. If it is unclear to me, I will ask you individually. If you have an emergency or are on-call, or are a caregiver and need to check your phone, let me know. I am a stickler for this to help you build the skill of paying careful attention. The interactions that provide meaningful information regarding the nature of a relationship between a parent and infant are often fleeting and require the capacity for self-regulation and control of attention. This is my attempt to help you develop or expand that skill.

Doodling, knitting, and using fidgets are fine with me, but please watch any video closely and show respect to your colleagues by paying them attention during discussions. And if you need to stand, stretch, etc., separate from the breaks, feel free to do so!

Since this is a short course, you must attend every class session. Any absence will require a make-up assignment. Please submit a 2 to 3-page synthesis of 3 key
takeaways from the week’s material, including all assigned reading and media. It is due the Sunday evening before the next class. This also applies to students with accommodations, although if you need additional time, you can discuss that with me. More than one absence will typically result in automatic failure, though depending on the circumstances, I reserve the right to assign an alternative assignment. I will work with students with accommodations to develop an alternative assignment in the case of an absence.

e. COVID-19 Statement

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, we must be mindful of the safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. Your participation in this course is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University and compliance with the University's COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. Other applicable and additional safety measures may be described in the Campus Maize & Blueprint. Failure to comply with campus safety measures may impact your ability to participate in this course. 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.

f. Health-Related Class Absences

Please evaluate your 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 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 possible so I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a doctor’s note) for medical excuses is not required.

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