SOCIAL INTERVENTION: DIRECT PRACTICE
SSA 30100 (06)

Winter Quarter 2012
Mondays, 9:00 – 11:50 AM, W-1B

**Course Instructor:** 
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This two-quarter course aims to provide an overview of direct social work practice introducing students to beginning competencies in direct practice with clients from a generalist perspective. The course exposes students to the history and mission of the profession of social work, its fundamental perspectives, concepts, values, and skills, and their application to working directly with client systems, including with individuals, families, and groups. Throughout the course, special consideration is given to understanding and learning how to respond to difference (such as in the forms of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and so forth), as this shapes the helping process.

In the second quarter, the course focuses on the integration of practice with strategic thinking to promote meaningful positive change in clients’ lives, linking the developing social worker’s thinking with what they are doing in an integrated way. This second quarter introduces students to theoretical frameworks from which to help conceptualize their practice, and the means to develop clinical hypotheses that guide the social worker’s efforts in a coherent and efficacious fashion. Common elements of promoting change, as well as common obstacles to change will be considered as well as strategies to address these in practice with clients.

This is the second part of a two-quarter course that introduces students to fundamental values, skills, empirical evidence and conceptual bases of direct social work practice. These processes are approached from various theoretical perspectives and systems levels, while examining unifying principles of social work practice. Emphasis is on assessment and intervention with individuals, families, and groups in the context of service agencies, organizations, communities, and cultural groups. Students learn that the foundation of effective service is an understanding of the person-in-environment. This course strives to broaden awareness of the effects of poverty,
race, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, and sexual orientation on social work assessment and interventions.

During this quarter, the course integrates theory and practice to prepare students to differentiate, apply, and evaluate various theories of social work practice. Students are expected to develop a broad understanding of the assessment of problems and beginning competence in the process of change.

In student groups we will explore several theoretical approaches and frameworks for practice including psychodynamic, cognitive, behavioral, group and family systems and apply those theoretical approaches to a common case vignette, which will be role played by a student group, including researching the application of the approach, assessing the family through role play interviews, culminating in group presentations illustrating the application of the theoretical approach to provide social work services.

**EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

**Knowledge**

1. To further understanding of several theories and models utilized in social work practice and the relationships between theory, research, and evaluation in direct practice (3, 6, 7, 9, 10).

2. To extend knowledge of assessment and intervention strategies in practice with individuals, families, and groups (7, 10).

3. To understand the potential significance of sociocultural factors such as race, ethnicity, culture, gender, socioeconomic status, immigration background, religion, disability, sexual orientation and age in the application of social work methods (2, 3, 4, 5, 9).

4. To understand the importance of competency-based practice and empirical evaluation of intervention strategies (1-10).

**Skills**

1. To enhance skills in assessment of needs and problems in living in the context of individual, family, group, organizational, and community systems (3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10).

2. To enhance skills in the professional use of self and empathic awareness within the client-worker relationship (1, 2, 3).

3. To enhance skills in planning, implementing, and evaluating interventions (6, 7, 8, 9, 10).
Knowledge
5. To become familiar with several social work theories and the relationship of theory, research and evaluation, to direct practice.
6. To extend knowledge of assessment and intervention strategies in practice with individuals, families, and groups.
7. To understand the potential significance of ethnicity, race, culture, socioeconomic status, religion, gender, and age in the application of social work methods.
8. To understand the importance of competency-based practice and empirical evaluation of intervention strategies.

Skills
4. To develop skills in assessment of problems in living in the context of individual, family, group, organizational, and community systems.
5. To develop skills in the conscious use of self and empathic awareness within the client-worker relationship.
6. To develop skills in planning, implementing, and evaluating interventions.

The course will be taught in partnership with fieldwork activities assignments, and the seminar taught by Kim Vander Griend.

REQUIRED READINGS

2) A course packet is available for purchase from the SSA Production Room. A copy of the course packet is also available on reserve at the SSA Library.

3) Many of the required readings for this course are available on line in order to keep the cost of course materials to a minimum. These can be accessed via the Chalk website for this course. These readings are denoted by (**) in the reading list below.

COURSE FORMAT AND ASSIGNMENTS

Your learning in this course will stem from several modalities: Course readings and lectures, role plays, exercises which draw from your field experience and assignments which seek to focus you on select fundamental aspects of direct practice work with client systems. In addition, this course is complemented by the required applied learning seminar and field placement.

This seminar will include a quarterly evaluation by your Field Consultant. This quarterly evaluation is combined with the evaluation conducted by your Field Instructor to assess your work in the field. Passing grades on both evaluations are required to receive a passing grade for the field practicum. The field practicum is graded on a pass-fail basis.
For this course, your grades will be based on course assignments, along with the quality of your participation in this course, as follows:

1) Partnered Video Taping and Analysis  
   Due: Feb 20th
   10 points

2) Group Theory Presentation  
   Due: Date Depends on Group Assignment  
   Class Presentation and Discussion Leadership  
   10 points

3) Reading Reflections  
   Sign up for 4 weeks across the quarter  
   20 points

4) Participation  
   Attendance and Participation, 3 points per day  
   30 points

5) Final Exam  
   30 points

Total Possible Points for the Course  
   100 points

Your final grade will be based on the total points accumulated for the course, as follows:

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Be sure to familiarize yourself with the SSA/University of Chicago Student Handbook regarding academic honesty. Additional information can be found on the following website: [http://www.uchicago.edu/docs/studentmanual/academic_honesty.html](http://www.uchicago.edu/docs/studentmanual/academic_honesty.html). It is expected that papers will uphold the expectations of academic honesty, including citing references and being sure that others’ ideas are given appropriate credit. Please talk with me if you have any questions about this (or any other) policy.

Policies of the University of Chicago and the School of Social Service Administration: This instructor will adhere to all University and School policies regarding accommodations for students with disabilities, incomplete grades, and academic honesty as described in the SSA/Chicago Student Handbook. If you have a disability and would like assistance with academic work or with field placements, please talk with the instructor at the beginning of the quarter. Information for students with disabilities can be found at the following website: [http://www.ssa.uchicago.edu/students/stdisable.shtml](http://www.ssa.uchicago.edu/students/stdisable.shtml).
CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

(Please note: **articles are found on electronic reserve through the Chalk website, the remainder are found in your course packet and textbook)

Week 1: (Jan 2nd)

***********NO CLASS NEW YEARS HOLIDAY***********

Readings:

Week 2: (Jan 9th): Obstacles to Change and Motivational Interviewing


Week 3: (January 16th): Theoretical Pluralism and Common Mechanisms of Change

***********NO CLASS MLK HOLIDAY***********


Week 4: (January 23rd): Theoretical Pluralism and Common Mechanisms of Change Cont


**Week 5: (January 30th): Group Work and Group Dynamics**

Hepworth, Rooney, Rooney, Strom-Gottfried, & Larsen
Chapter 16, “Intervening in social work groups,” pp. 491-517.

**Week 6: (February 6th): Psychodynamic Theory and Practice**

Chapter 12, “Emergence of the relational paradigm,” pp. 146-158.

Chapter 3, “Cyclical psychodynamics II: The centrality of anxiety,” pp. 31-47.
Chapter 4, “Cyclical psychodynamics III: Insight, the therapeutic relationship, and the world outside,” pp. 48-67.

**Week 7: (February 13th): Behavioral Theory and Practice**


**Week 8: (February 20th): Cognitive Theory and Practice**


**Week 9: (February 27th): Family Systems Theory**

Hepworth, Rooney, Rooney, Strom-Gottfried, & Larsen

**Week 10: (March 5th): Evaluation and Termination**

Hepworth, Rooney, Rooney, Strom-Gottfried, & Larsen  


***************FINAL EXAM MARCH 12TH***********************

**ASSIGNMENTS**

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period indicated above. More details on each assignment will be provided in class.

Because the assignments are provided ahead of time, this will be the case even if you are unable to come to class. If you are unable to come to class when an assignment is due, please email a copy of the assignment by the beginning of class. Any assignments that are turned in late are assessed a penalty of 5% of the total points possible and a 5% reduction for any additional days thereafter unless other arrangements are made with me ahead of time. All assignments are to be written in APA style unless otherwise specifically stated. Please use headings.
Class Discussion Guidelines
(Source: Rzepnicki, T. 2002)

Successful class discussion depends upon people being “good citizens” by taking joint responsibility for making sure that discussion moves forward. That means both following guidelines and helping to enforce them.

1) Read assignments and come to class prepared to talk.
2) Listen as well as talk.
3) Raise questions. Asking questions, asking for clarification from faculty or from other members of the class, and asking each other questions is as important, and often more valuable, than making points.
4) Build on each other’s points. Refer to each other and let people know how what you are saying is related to the discussion.
5) If you want to change the direction of the discussion, make it explicit. By doing so, you allow the class to decide whether or not they want to change direction. You allow the class to close up one discussion before beginning another. This also allows the class to know where you are coming from. You may know what you are talking about, but your classmates, who are still thinking about the previous discussion, may think you’re totally off base because they don’t realize that you are changing the topic.
6) Bring in your background. Let others know where you are coming from. If your comments are informed by personal experience or knowledge gained outside of class, you should tell the class. It helps us to know the basis of your remarks. Otherwise, some of your classmates will not be listening to you but will be wondering to each other, “was that in the readings?”
7) Make your point and support your position, then allow the discussion to move on. Do not persist in defending points. There is nothing more frustrating to a discussion than someone who keeps bringing the conversations back to the same point, restated, over and over again.
8) Respect the diversity of your classmates – who they are, their opinions, and the variety of perspectives they bring to the table.
   a) Remember that you can’t really know another person’s experience or group identity/affiliations. We come from a variety of backgrounds and have a diversity of lives that you may or may not learn about during your time at SSA. There are gay people in this room. There are Jewish people in this room. There are white people who have known hunger and people of color who have gone to prep schools and grew up in suburbia. There are people in this room who were teen parents and people who were consumers of many of the services social workers deliver. All this means that you should never assume that “we” are talking about “them” whether the “them” are clients or certain groups of people.
   b) Do not stereotype and never dismiss. Just because someone takes a “feminist” stand one day does not mean that every time that person speaks, everyone should roll their eyes and think, “okay, here’s the feminist position again.”
   c) Acknowledge that one of the mechanisms of institutionalized racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, etc., is that we are all systematically taught misinformation about our own group and about members of other groups. This is true for members of privileged and oppressed groups.
   d) Share information about your own group(s) and never demean, devalue, or in any way “put down” people for their experiences.
   e) Assume that people, no matter who they are, do the best they can. This includes those we work with and study, as well as members of this class.
9) Make the classroom a safe place. Things that people say in the classroom are confidential – comments made in class should not be repeated outside the class. Learning occurs when people feel free to experiment, openly discuss ideas, be challenged and grow without being judged. No one wants to be standing in the coffee line to overhear someone say, “Can you believe she said that?!”