THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

COURSE NUMBER: SOWO 751
COURSE TITLE: Behavioral Intervention with Children
SEMESTER & YEAR: Spring, 2010
INSTRUCTOR: Jean Livermore, MSW, LCSW
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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 12:15 – 1:45pm, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course teaches basic principles of behavior theory and intervention, current applications, and how to assess behavior, design and implement behavior plans for children.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
At the end of the course students will:
1. Know current applications of behavior theory with children, including individual behavior management, Positive Behavior Intervention in school settings, and parent training.
2. Know the research on effectiveness of behavioral interventions with children and on parent training programs.
3. Be able to conduct an individual behavioral assessment of a child using a Functional Behavioral Assessment framework.
4. Be able to create an individual intervention plan for a child using a Positive Behavioral Intervention framework, and know how to evaluate the effectiveness of such plans.
5. Have knowledge of other behavior intervention strategies with children such as token economies.
6. Know the application of behavioral interventions to some specific disorders of childhood, such as Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.
7. Identify diversity and ethical issues regarding the use of behavioral interventions with children.

EXPANDED DESCRIPTION:
This course builds on the introduction to behavior theory that is presented in the Integrated Practice course. It will review the history, theoretical foundations and basic principles of clinical behavior therapy and teach the application of these principles to child behaviors. Students will practice assessing specific child behaviors and designing and evaluating individualized intervention plans, consistent with the Functional Behavioral Assessment/Positive Behavioral Intervention approach used in schools. Students will be introduced to additional behavioral intervention strategies such as social skills training, self-management programs and token economies. The appropriate application of behavioral intervention to some specific disorders of
childhood including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and anxiety disorders will be reviewed. Research on effectiveness of behavioral interventions with children and on group-based parent training programs will be presented. Diversity considerations and ethical issues regarding the use of behavioral interventions with children will be considered and discussed.

**REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS:**
There is no textbook for this class; required readings can be obtained via Blackboard or the UNC electronic library.

**RELATED READINGS:**
Supplemental recommended readings are noted for specific classes and found in the attached Bibliography.

**TEACHING METHODS**
This course will use a variety of teaching and learning methods, including lecture, group discussions, role plays and student presentations. Discussions will draw upon work and field experiences, readings and assignments; participation by each student is essential and expected. For discussions to be lively and enthusiastic, the development of a supportive learning environment, in which all contributions are valued, is essential. A supportive learning environment is fostered by listening to the ideas and views of others, being able to understand and appreciate a point of view which is different from your own, articulating clearly your point of view, and demonstrating interest and engagement in the contributions of classmates.

**CLASS ASSIGNMENTS**
Assignments are described below, and assignments, expectations and grading criteria will be discussed in more detail during the first class session. All written assignments should use references following APA format and be typed or word processed using correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**Class participation (20%)**
In a seven week course, missing class has a significant impact on participation and learning opportunities. Students are expected to attend all classes, to be on time, and to stay for the duration of the class. Points will be deducted for missing class, arriving late or leaving early. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor in advance if unable to attend class. Students are expected to contribute regularly to classroom discussion, including being prepared to discuss readings and assignments; asking questions; initiating topics; offering ideas, examples and comments; and responding to contributions of other students. Students are expected to demonstrate engagement in discussions by listening respectfully to others and through other verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

**First Paper: Brief report of positive reinforcement (10%)**
A one-two page paper presenting details of a two-week behavioral observation and brief intervention. Students will be required to define the behavior, record baseline measurements, describe and justify the positive social reinforcer, measure and report results of the intervention. A detail description of the assignment and a form for recording data are available on Blackboard.
Second paper: Review of behavioral instructional programs for parents and caregivers (25%)
A four-five page paper reviewing a book or guide for teaching behavior management skills to parents or caretakers. Choices will include self-help books, curricula for use individually with parents or in group Behavioral Training Programs, and manuals or guides for therapists to use in working with parents. These books and manuals will be available from the instructor, or, with permission, you may purchase or utilize your own. Students are to describe the primary target audience; assess the ‘user friendliness’ of the information or program; assess and discuss the presentation of basic principles including thoroughness and clarity; identify parenting skills represented in the material that are in addition to strictly behavioral interventions, and justify why or why not they would use it with parents or caregivers. Lastly, a brief, concise (one paragraph) summary of the material is required, to be distributed to classmates during presentation of the review. A list of parent training materials is available on Blackboard.

Brief (5 minute) presentations of these papers in class (10%)

Third paper: A comprehensive Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and Positive Behavioral Intervention (PBI) plan for a specific, problematic behavior (35%)
Through their field placements, students will identify a child with a specific behavior that is problematic either at home or in school. (Students who are not in a child serving field placement will work with the instructor to identify an alternative opportunity.) Students will be required to conduct a comprehensive functional analysis of the behavior in context and to develop a positive intervention plan for behavior change. The six-seven page paper will present the details of the FBA and PBI in a format provided for the assignment. The paper will describe the child and the environment; define the behavior and explain why this behavior was selected; describe the assessment process including function of the behavior for the child, antecedents, reinforcement and other variables; describe the intervention plan including a description of the alternative, socially appropriate skill and details regarding how this skill will be taught or increased, an explanation and justification of choice of consequences and persons involved; and describe how the success of the PBI will be evaluated. Sample FBA and PBI forms are available on Blackboard.

COURSE EVALUATION:
Class Attendance and Participation 20%
First Paper on Positive Reinforcement 10%
Second Paper on Review of Parent Training 25%
Class Presentation on Reviewed Material 10%
Third Paper on FBA and PBI 35%
100%
**Grading System**
H = 94-100
P = 80-93
L = 70-79
F = 69 and below

**Policy on Late Assignments and Incompletes**
Written assignments are due at the beginning of class on their due date, as noted in the course outline. Points will be deducted for late assignments. A grade of Incomplete is given on rare occasions when there is sufficient reason to warrant it. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate a conversation with the instructor to request an Incomplete—instructors have no responsibility to give an Incomplete without such a request.

**Policy on Academic Dishonesty**
Please refer to the APA Style Guide, The SSW Manual, and the SSW Writing Guide for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism and appropriate use of assistance in preparing assignments. All written assignments should contain a signed pledge from you stating that, "I have not given or received unauthorized aid in preparing this written work." In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required.

**Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**
Students with disabilities that affect their participation in the course and who wish to have special accommodations should contact the University’s Disabilities Services. Disabilities Services will notify the instructor that the student has a documented disability and may require accommodations. Students should discuss the specific accommodations they require (e.g. changes in instructional format, examination format) directly with the instructor.

**Policies on The Use of Electronic Devices**
The use of electronic devices in the classroom is prohibited. Exceptions will be made only for students with written documentation of a disability. For these students the use of electronic devices for non-class related activities (e.g. checking email, playing games) is strictly prohibited.

**Course Outline and Readings**
The class format is based on the expectation that you are prepared and active learners. Reading the assigned materials prior to the date they are due is a prerequisite to getting the most out of class sessions and successfully meeting the course objectives.

**Week 1: Foundations of Behavior Therapy**
January 12, 2010
*Origins of behavior therapy, early behaviorists, experimental psychology*  
*Classical and operant conditioning, social learning theory*  
*Basic principles and assumptions about human behavior in behavior theory*
Defining and analyzing behavior: context, antecedents, consequences, contingencies, reinforcement schedules

**WEEK 2: BASIC PRINCIPLES, APPLIED**
**JANUARY 19, 2010**
Additional concepts: extinction, generalization, chaining, shaping and more
Functional analysis of child behavior
Application to specific child behaviors

**Readings Required for Week 2:**

**Recommended Supplemental Reading:**

**WEEK 3: PARENT TRAINING**
**JANUARY 26, 2010**
Research on effectiveness of parent training
Parent training programs: evolution, models, design, intent

First paper due

**Readings Required for Week 3:**

**WEEK 4: BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT AT HOME AND ELSEWHERE**

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February 2, 2010

Specific individual interventions including time-out, token economies, response-cost systems, self-management programs, social skills groups

Required Readings for Week 4:


Week 5: Functional Behavioral Assessment, Positive Behavioral Intervention in Schools
February 9, 2010
IDEA
School-wide and classroom approaches to positive behavior
Conducting a Functional Behavioral Assessment
Developing a Positive Behavioral Intervention plan
Monitoring and revising plans

Second paper due
Student presentations in class

Required Readings for Week 5:


Recommended Supplemental Reading:

**WEEK 6: APPLICATION TO SPECIFIC CHILDHOOD DIAGNOSES**  
**FEBRUARY 16, 2010**  
*Disruptive Behavior Disorders*  
*Internalizing Disorders*  
*Behavioral interventions combined with other treatment modalities*

**Student presentations in class, continued**

**Readings Required for Week 6:**  


**Recommended Supplemental Reading:**  


Readings Required for Week 7:

Weiss, N. R., & Knoster, T. (2008). It may be nonaversive, but is it a positive approach? Relevant questions to ask throughout the process of behavioral assessment and intervention. Journal of Positive Behavior Intervention, 10(1), 72-78. (Available via UNC electronic Library)