

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

COURSE NUMBER: SOWO 857
COURSE TITLE: ADVANCED CLINICAL PRACTICE WITH FAMILIES
SEMESTER AND YEAR: SPRING 2009

INSTRUCTOR: **Paul R Smokowski, M.S.W., Ph.D., C.P.**
School of Social Work
CB # 3550, 301 Pittsboro St.
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3550
Phone: 919-843-8281
Email: smokowsk@email.unc.edu

OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 1-2pm or Fridays 12:30-2pm or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This advanced practice course is devoted to intervention with families. Intervention methods will be applied to families coping with major life stressors and relational problems. Family therapy models are covered.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, students will:

1. Understand issues social workers face in working with families, especially those issues that differentially affect clinical work with families from socioeconomically disadvantaged, vulnerable, and oppressed groups, with emphasis on women, on individuals with disabilities, on gays and lesbians, on African-Americans, on Latinos, and on other minority groups.
2. Articulate how stressors and problems (such as depression, anxiety, or substance use) both influence family patterns of functioning and are potentiated by family patterns of functioning.
3. Describe the role of explanatory and practice theory in social work, and compare and contrast the concepts and assumptions that underpin major conceptual frameworks for social intervention with families. Major conceptual frameworks for social intervention with families that will be focused on are: systemic, structural, communications, experiential, psychodramatic, psychodynamic, and cognitive-behavioral family intervention.
4. Formulate a comprehensive assessment of a family using appropriate concepts and measures from our research and clinical knowledge base on family functioning.
5. Apply conceptual frameworks and models of family intervention to case examples and demonstrate mastery of the practice models in simulated sessions (e.g. role play scenarios) with clients.

6. Understand and articulate how social work values and ethics guide social interventions with families.

EXPANDED DESCRIPTION:

This course is facilitated as a skills-training laboratory for working with families. Relational patterns and processes, rather than individual concerns, will be stressed. Development of family systems thinking and acquisition of advanced assessment and social intervention skills will be paramount throughout the semester. Using a diverse array of interactive exercises, video modeling, and simulation scenarios will facilitate skills acquisition. Students will be expected to maintain a high level of active participation, will demonstrate their practice skills in front of others, and will serve as consultants for each other.

Special emphases will be placed on vulnerable, disadvantaged, and diverse families. This is an advanced practice elective in the Direct Practice Concentration. It will be expected that students have already had an advanced HBSE course in their Field of Practice.

Field experience working with families is particularly helpful for working in this class. Students should leave this course with increased confidence in their ability to analyze patterns, assess, and intervene using diverse family systems perspectives.

REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS:

Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R.C. (2006). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods* (7th Edition). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

The text is available at the student bookstore or can be ordered over the internet (e.g., www.amazon.com, www.bestbookbuys.com, or www.textbooks.com)

Readings from sources other than the textbooks above will be provided in the Social Work Reading Resource Room on the fifth floor of the Tate-Turner-Kuralt building.

TEACHING METHODS

The development of a supportive learning environment, reflecting the values of the social work profession, is essential for the success of this class. 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 linking experience to readings and assignments. I appreciate your contributions to making this a safe and respectful class for learning and growth.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Mid-Term Paper: Assessment of a Family Assess a family that you are familiar with. This can be a family you worked with in your internships, a friend's family, or a family presented in a video of your choice (with prior approval by the instructor). Do not assess your family of origin or your family of choice for this assignment. Show that you understand the basic concepts necessary to do a family assessment. Apply concepts from the course texts and class discussions to the family you assess. You must show

competence in analyzing family process dynamics. Consider concepts such as family system roles, boundaries, projections, emotional cutoffs, rules, traditions, strengths, risk factors and major transitions. Use approximately 4 pages to assess the family's dynamics. Then, you must discuss how you would plan to intervene with this family. If there is a particular model you would use, please indicate this and say why you would choose this model. Length of paper: 6 pages, double-spaced, typed. This paper is due the class session before Spring Break. It is worth 30% of your class grade.

Final Paper Each student will choose one topic that relates to family stress and dysfunction (e.g. substance abuse, marital infidelity, adolescent delinquency) and will describe in detail how at least one system of family therapy would intervene in a family experiencing that stressor. The paper must include a detailed discussion of clinical techniques that are used by clinicians working with families with the chosen stressor. This will serve as the final exam for the course. This paper is due on the final day of class, and will be 8-10 pages long, in APA format with references appropriately cited from professional sources (e.g. scholarly journals and books). At least three references to professional literature are required to be included in the paper. The final paper is worth 30% of your class grade.

Presentations of Final Paper Each student will have 15 minutes to present their research from the final paper. These presentations will take place on the final two sessions of class. The presentation is worth 10% of the final grade.

Unannounced Quizzes There will be two quizzes administered at different times during the semester to assess knowledge gained from reading assignments. Each quiz is worth 5 points for a total of 10% of the final grade.

Theoretical Matrix. Students will fill in a comprehensive matrix detailing the aspects of different schools of family therapy. The professor will hand out the blank matrix. This is worth 10% of the final grade.

Demonstration of Practice Skills Students must be able to put skills that are presented in class into practice. Analyzing in writing is not enough. Consequently, students will be graded on the quality of their clinical skills. Clinical skills will be evaluated using role-play simulations throughout the semester. If a student does not believe that his or her skills are adequately demonstrated in a clinical simulation, he or she can negotiate with the professor to demonstrate these clinical skills using another medium (i.e. submitting a videotape). This will be a rare case. Participation in role-playing is expected. The professor will give the most weight to skills demonstrated at the end of the semester when students should have the most expertise and feel most comfortable role-playing. However, the professor will also take into account how much growth students have shown in their skills from the beginning to the end of the semester. Demonstration of practice skills is worth 5% of the class grade.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Attendance is required and the class will rely heavily on discussion and participation in role-playing. It is expected that students will read the material and apply and discuss readings and field experiences in class. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. If there is some reason that you cannot attend a class, please contact the instructor or leave a message for the instructor at the School of Social Work. Students who miss three class sessions will be penalized by one letter grade. Students who miss four or more class sessions will receive an "F" as their final grade for the class.

Class Participation: Students are expected to contribute "meaningfully" to class discussion. The instructor may call upon students to respond to assigned readings/class discussion. Please let the instructor know if you have special concerns about speaking in front of the class. At the beginning of each class session, time will be allocated to address questions about readings/assignments.

GRADING SYSTEM

The School of Social Work operates on an evaluation system of Honors (H), Pass (P), Low Pass (L), and Fail (F). For this class, the numerical value of an H ranges from 94 - 100; a P is 80 - 93; an L is 70 - 79. A grade of P is considered entirely satisfactory. On a traditional grading scale, a P would range from B- to A-. The grade of Honors signifies that the work is clearly excellent in all respects. Only a small percentage of students attain Honors. A student receiving nine or more Low Passing credits is ineligible to continue in graduate school.

The final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Family Assessment Midterm	30%
Final Lit Review Paper	30%
Presentation of Final Paper	10%
Quizzes	10%
Theoretical Matrix	10%
Demonstration of Practice Skills	05%
Class Participation	05%

POLICY ON INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Unless negotiated in advance with the professor, assignments are due on the date specified in the syllabus. Submitting assignments late must be negotiated with the professor. One letter grade will be deducted from assignments turned in late (within 48 hours). Students will receive an "F" on assignments not submitted within the 48 hour grace period.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

All academic work submitted by students will be conducted within the letter and spirit of the Honor Code, which is described in The SSW Manual and the Graduate School Record. 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 may notify the professor if they wish to have special accommodations in instructional format, examination format, etc., considered.

READINGS AND COURSE OUTLINE

Class I (1/12): Moving from Individual to Family Practice

Introduction, Overview of Syllabus

Assumptions underlying practice with families

Practice Skills Emphasized: How to move from individual, to couples, and finally to family interventions.

Class II (1/26): Family Assessment - Family Processes, Systems, and Stress

Topic: What makes a family functional or dysfunctional?

Required reading for this class

Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R.C. (2001). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods* (6th Edition). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, pp 374-397 and 87-112.

Practice Skills Emphasized: Circular Questioning

Video Aids: *Family Secrets*

Class III (2/2): Action Methods for Family Intervention

Required reading for this class

Blatner, A. (1999). Psychodramatic methods in psychotherapy. In D.J. Wiener (Ed.) (1999). *Beyond Talk Therapy: Using Movement and Expressive Techniques in Clinical Practice*. Washington, D.C.: APA, pp.125-143.

Wiener, D.J. (1999). Rehearsals for growth: Applying improvisational theater games to relationship therapy. In D.J. Wiener (Ed.) (1999). *Beyond Talk Therapy: Using Movement and Expressive Techniques in Clinical Practice*. Washington, D.C.: APA, pp.165-180.

Dale Buchanan article. Articles will be handed out in class on 1/26

Action Techniques: Role reversal, mirroring, doubling, soliloquy

Class IV (2/9): Techniques used in Early Sessions

Required reading for this class

Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R.C. (2001). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods (6th Edition)*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, pp 49-84.

Action Techniques: Putting ecomaps into action, spectograms, the Diamond of Opposites

Unit II: Practice-Based Intervention Models

Class V (2/16): Bowenian Systems Approaches

Required reading for this class

Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R.C. (2001). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods (5th Edition)*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, pp 115-143.

Video Aids: Bowenian Therapy with Philip Guerin
Practice Skills Emphasized: Boundary-Making

Class VI (2/23): Structural Approaches

Required reading for this class

Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R.C. (2001). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods (6th Edition)*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, pp 171-196.

Video Aids: Aponte working with a Latino blended family
Practice Skills Emphasized: Initial treatment procedures, establishing goals, and matching goals to treatment procedures

Class VII (3/2): Solution-Focused Approaches

Required reading for this class

Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R.C. (2001). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods (5th Edition)*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, pp 320-335.

Supplementary solution-focused article handed out in class on 2/23

Practice Skills Emphasized: Working with the Miracle Question in action

Mid-Term Paper: Assessment of a Family due by the end of this class session.

+++++ 3//9/09 – Spring Break +++++

Class VIII (3/16): Strategic & Cognitive Behavioral Approaches

Required reading for this class

Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R.C. (2001). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods (5th Edition)*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, pp 145-168, 246-274.

Video Aids: Strategic Therapy with James Coyne
Practice Skills Emphasized: Working with anxiety and depression in action

Class IX (3/23): Communications Approaches

Required reading for this class

McLendon, J. (1999). The Satir system in action. In D.J. Wiener (Ed.) (1999). *Beyond Talk Therapy: Using Movement and Expressive Techniques in Clinical Practice*. Washington, D.C.: APA, pp.29-54.

Roberts, J. (1999). Beyond words: The power of rituals. In D.J. Wiener (Ed.) (1999). *Beyond Talk Therapy: Using Movement and Expressive Techniques in Clinical Practice*. Washington, D.C.: APA, pp.55-78.

Video Aids: Virginia Satir

Practice Skills Emphasized: Family sculpting and communication typologies

Class X (3/30): Psychodynamic & Experiential Approaches

Required reading for this class

Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R.C. (2001). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods (5th Edition)*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, pp 220-243 and 198-217.

Video Aids: Carl Whitaker

Practice Skills Emphasized: Working with the family projection process in action; Using metaphor, imagery, and role-playing

Class XI (4/6): Narrative Therapy

Required reading for this class

Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R.C. (2001). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods (5th Edition)*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, pp 337-353.

Practice Skills Emphasized: Changing family narratives

Class XII (4/13): Integrating Models

Required reading for this class

Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R.C. (2001). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods (5th Edition)*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, pp 354-372.

Practice Skills Emphasized: Internal Family Systems Therapy

Class XIII (4/20): Discussion of Final Papers

Student presentations of techniques researched in final papers.

Required reading for this class

Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R.C. (2001). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods (5th Edition)*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, pp 400-451.

Class XIII (4/27): Wrap Up, Final Paper due by end of class period