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SW 350.02: Social Work Intervention I: Generalist Practice with Focus on Individuals and Families

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Social Work 350, Section 2, Fall, 2001
Generalist Practice with Focus on Individuals and Families

Professor: Janet Finn

Office: Rankin Hall, Room 109, Phone: 243-5583; **Office Hours:** Monday 1-3

Prerequisites: Social Work 200 and approved application to enroll in upper division SW courses.

Course Goals: The UM social work major focuses on preparation for professional practice. In keeping with that orientation, SW 350 is a professionally oriented course designed to provide basic knowledge and skills needed to work directly with individuals and families in diverse settings. The course helps prepare social work students for their practicum and first social work job. Students gain a critical understanding of the relationship between social service and social change by examining social work theory and practice in organizational, social, political, and economic context.

Course Objectives: Students completing SW 350 will be able to:

1. Describe the phases in planned change and in the helping process.
2. Describe how the generalist perspective is applied to practice.
3. Discuss diverse perspectives on “family” and the implications for practice.
4. Discuss the relationship of poverty to individual, family and community well being and the possibilities for social work intervention to address conditions of poverty.
5. Describe the various professional roles common to direct social work practice (e.g., broker, counselor, teacher, case manager, advocate, collaborator, animator).
6. Describe how cultural, ethnic, class and religious factors relate to social functioning of individuals and families and explain how knowledge of such factors can be applied in practice.
7. Demonstrate understanding of gender, sexual orientation, ability and age as key themes in the social reality of individuals and families, and explain how knowledge of such factors can inform practice.
8. Demonstrate understanding of the concept of difference and discuss ways in which histories and systems of discrimination and oppression may shape experiences of family and personhood.
9. Describe how self-understanding and critique can be enhanced and how worker self-awareness relates to practice decisions and activities.

10. Describe and explain the process of evaluation, including use of procedures such as single subject design, measurement of client satisfaction and task achievement scaling, and how basic research concepts such as sampling, validity and reliability apply to the evaluation of services to clients.
11. Prepare professional reports and document service activities (e.g., social assessment reports, case notes, family history)
12. Describe and compare several of the theories, models and perspectives used in work with individuals and families, including crisis intervention, family systems theory, feminist, empowerment and strengths perspectives, and behavioral approaches.
13. Identify the implicit or explicit assumptions of a practice theory or model concerning how and why people change.
14. Gather data and assess social functioning of individuals and families using several different procedures such as observation, eco-maps, social network maps, and culturagrams.
15. Discuss the concept of resistance and describe the basic principles and guidelines for working with non-voluntary, hard to reach, and dangerous clients.
16. Describe elements and activities of effective case management, client advocacy, interagency coordination and referral.
17. Describe how agency context (mission, policy, procedures, funding base, etc.) may influence the selection of practice roles and interventions.
18. Describe how community context, public attitudes, political climate, scope of problem, demographics, culture, available resources, economy, etc. influence the selection of practice roles and interventions.
19. Describe examples of empowering social work practice with individuals and families that promotes social justice and human dignity.
20. Demonstrate basic competence in interactional skills needed for effective engagement and relationship building with individuals and families.

Texts: Sheafor, B., Horejsi, C., & Horejsi, G. Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

Readings on reserve at Mansfield Library:

1. Janet Campbell Hale (1993). "Daughter of Winter" in *Bloodlines: Odyssey of a Native Daughter*. New York: Harper Perennial, pp. 23-89.

2. Mona Simpson (1986). "Lawns." In *The Pushcart Prize, XI*, ed. Bill Henderson, New York: Penguin Press, pp. 3-22.

A Faculty Pack of additional assigned readings is available at the U.C Bookstore.

Course Format: This is an interactive, practice-oriented course. It engages students with real-life challenges and possibilities of agency- and community-based social work with individuals and families. The mission of our classroom/agency is social worker development. Given the practice orientation of the course, attendance and participation are critical. This course places considerable demands on students' time. Students will be expected to practice interviewing, assessment, and intervention techniques, prepare written reports, evaluate their knowledge and skills, and participate in community-based learning opportunities. Students will also assist in facilitating class discussions and arranging classroom and community learning opportunities.

Several of the written assignments for this course are designed to simulate the work you will be doing during your practicum and after graduation. They should be clear and well organized, reflecting your professionalism. Meeting deadlines is a reality in social work practice and in this course. Students are expected to complete written assignments, readings and activities on time. When citing references in your written work, please use APA format. Information on APA documentation format is available at this website: www.apa.org/apa-style/

As part of the course, we will be working in collaboration with the Poverello Center of Missoula. Early in the semester we will hold a class meeting at the center and learn about the organization's history, mission, participants, and activities. We will develop a plan with staff of the center regarding possibilities for ongoing involvement over the course of the semester. Our involvement may include serving meals, identifying and developing community resources, and advocacy. This will give us an opportunity for hands-on involvement in agency and community-based practice with individuals and families who are homeless.

This course is based on an action-reflection model of learning. Students will build knowledge and skills for generalist social work practice through active participation in the classroom and community. Several times during the course of the semester, we will step back and reflect on the participatory learning experiences. In particular, we will examine the relations of power inherent in helping relationships, the making of difference and dynamics of cultural diversity, the challenges of social work and social justice, and the connections between the personal and the political for both providers and consumers of social services.

Adherence to Social Work Code of Ethics: Because this course is preparation for professional practice, students are expected to adhere to the Social Work Code of Ethics. A copy of the Code of Ethics can be obtained from the UM Department of Social Work. It is also available on the NASW website: www.naswdc.org. Students are expected to demonstrate ethical standards of practice in fulfilling course assignments.

Course Assignments and Exams

1. Reflections on Difference, Diversity, and Family: Three Short Essays

Throughout the course of the semester, you will write three short essays that address various aspects of difference and diversity in response to selected readings. This series of essays gives you opportunity to reflect on and think critically about the concepts of difference and diversity, which are key to effective social work practice with individuals and families. They also provide an opportunity for self-reflection on your own values, assumptions and experiences regarding difference and diversity.

The essays are to be 3-4 pages, double-space type. Use APA format in citing articles you refer to in your essays. Think critically as you read and write about difference and diversity. How are notions of difference constructed and reinforced? What differences “make a difference”? In what ways is the making of difference a value-laden process? How do notions of “otherness” serve to emphasize inter-group difference while masking intra-group diversity? What sorts of personal and social consequences of “being different” do the authors address? How do their experiences relate to or challenge your own experiences and beliefs? What resources and sources of strength do the authors identify? Below is a schedule of four possible essay assignments. You are only required to complete three of the four essays.

Schedule of Essay Assignments:

#1 (Due Sept. 19): Select either Fac Pack article #21, “Complexion,” by Richard Rodriguez or #22, “On the Meaning of Plumbing and Poverty” by Melanie Scheller. Read and reflect on the meaning and power of difference addressed in the article. Draw on some of the above questions in writing your essay. What lessons for social work can be drawn from the author’s experience? (25 points)

#2 (Due Oct 17) Read and critically review Fac Pack Articles #23, Weaver, “Indigenous People in a Multicultural Society: Unique Lessons for Social Work,” and #24 Broken Nose, “Working with the Oglala Lakota: An Outsider’s Perspective.” What issues of difference and diversity do the authors raise? Where do you see common ground and, perhaps, important differences in their discussions?

What do you see as strengths and limitations of their discussions? How do their discussions relate to or challenge your own experiences or beliefs? What resources and sources of strength to the authors address? (25 points)

#3 (Due Nov 14) Take time to reflect on your own “positionality” and future as a social worker and the kinds of differences that you will encounter in practice that may prove very challenging. These may be differences of age, gender, or cultural and class background. What “differences” might you find especially challenging? What personal values, assumptions and prejudices might be challenged in the process. What have you learned from course readings and discussions that might better prepare you for respectful engagement with difference? (25 points)

#4 (Due Nov 28) Telling One’s Own Story: The Power of Narrative, Family History, and

Social History: Read and reflect on the essay “Daughter of Winter” by Janet Campbell Hale on reserve at the Mansfield Library. What reactions does Hale’s essay provoke for you?. How did constructions of difference shape her experience? How do her experiences relate to or challenge your own experiences? What sources of strength and resilience does she address? What lessons regarding the meaning and power of family and community can you draw from this essay? What lessons for social work practice might you draw? (25 points).

Families in Film: Movie Review: Over the course of the semester there will be three or four “movie nights” in conjunction with SW 350, Section 1 (movies, time and place to be announced). We will select movies that will provoke discussion about aspects and dynamics of family. You are invited to attend all of the movies. Attendance is voluntary, discussion will be lively, and popcorn will be provided. Select one of the films (all will be available at local video stores, if you are not able to attend the movie night showing) and write a reflection paper that addresses the meaning and power of “family,” your response to the issues addressed in the film, and learning for social work practice that you take away from the film. The essay is due by **December 3**, however you are welcome to turn it in earlier in the semester. (25 points).

Social Work Practice: Engagement and Social History: During the fourth week of the semester each class member will be assigned to two dyads. In one, you will participate as the social worker in the relationship. In the second, you will participate as the “client.” Social workers will meet with and interview their “clients” 4 times outside of class to build a relationship and complete a social history (or social assessment report – see Sheafor, Horejsi & Horejsi, 2000:304-308). The social worker is responsible for writing the social history. In addition, the social worker will utilize one other assessment tool with the “client” as part of the process (e.g. ecomap, genogram, social network map, etc). Each session should be approximately 45 minutes to one hour, once a week. The first three sessions will involve engagement and interviewing for the social history. The fourth session is to be scheduled after the social worker has prepared the social history. During this session the worker will share the report with the client and together you will reflect on and evaluate the process. As social worker, you have responsibility for arranging a meeting place. Meeting places should be “neutral grounds” that assure privacy and the ability to focus on the interview. **The social worker needs to bring an audio recorder to tape record each of the three interview sessions.** After each of the first three sessions, the social worker should review the tape of the interview and complete a summary assessment of the interview process (form to be handed out in class). After the second session, the social worker completes a “process recording,” which requires you to transcribe a portion of the session and analyze in detail the content and process (to be discussed further in class). As social worker in this exercise you will gain experience in interviewing and preparing a social history. As “client” you will gain some insight in what it feels like to “tell your story” and share personal information with another person. Be alert to issues of confidentiality in this exercise. The tapes and the social worker’s notes need to be maintained in a secure place. The tapes should be erased or destroyed at the end of the exercise.

October 15: Summary assessment of first interview and process recording of second interview to be turned in for feedback.

October 31: Social worker file including summary assessments, process recording, social history and a copy of the social worker/client evaluation due (75 points)

Personal Gendergram (Due November 7) Prepare a gendergram that examines life stages, important relationships, and the messages you learned about what it means to be male and female in your family and community context. Follow the gendergram model presented by White and Tyson-Rawson in Fac Pack #19, “Assessing the dynamics of Gender in Couples and Families.” (25 points).

Classroom and Community Participation: Given the practice orientation of the course, members are expected to participate in both classroom and community-based learning activities. These include in-class roles plays and simulation exercises -some of which may be video-recorded and critiqued; facilitation of class discussions; and visits to and activities associated with the Poverello Center. For example we may assist in serving meals and visiting with residents, providing information and referral regarding community resources; and engaging in advocacy for and with residents. Class members may have differing forms of participation depending on learning goals and schedules. Participation will be evaluated collaboratively by student and instructor (50 points).

Midterm Exam: There will be a one-hour short essay exam on Monday October 22, covering course readings for the first half of the semester. (50 points).

Determination of Course Grade:

Difference, Diversity and Family Essays(25 pts each)	75
Movie Review	25
Gendergram	25
Social Worker File/ Social History	75
Midterm Exam	50
Classroom and Community Participation	50
Total	300

Points Earned	Grade
276-300	A
254-275	B
230-253	C
205-229	D
<205	F

Final Exam: Tuesday, Dec 18, 8:00-10:00 am (Optional). The final exam will be a one-hour short essay exam covering readings from the second half of the semester. If you are satisfied with your course grade based on the above assignments, you do not need to take the final exam. The final exam is an opportunity to improve your course grade, based on 350 rather than 300 points.

SW 350.02 Class Schedule and Readings Assignments

Note: Reading assignments are subject to change as the class develops, new topics of interest

emerge, and guest presentations are arranged.

Sept 5: Overview of Course

Introduction to course content, process, and expectations.

Readings: *Techniques*, Ch. 1 and 2. Fac Pack: #1 Friere, “A Critical Understanding of Social Work,” #2, Witkin, “Human Rights and Social Work,” #3 “Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

Sept 10: Justice-oriented social work practice with individuals and families

Introduction to the “Just Practice” perspective: meaning, power, history, context and possibility. Challenges of social justice and human rights.

Readings: *Techniques* Ch. 3, 4; Fac Pack #4 “Guiding Principles,” #5, “The Generalist Perspective”

Sept 12: Social Work Principles, Roles and Contexts of Practice

Generalist perspective and guiding principles. The concept of roles and “positionality.”

Relationship of roles to organizational and community context.

Readings: *Techniques* Ch. 5, 8. Fac Pack: #7, “Assessing First Contacts.”, #10, “An Empowering Approach to Generalist Practice,” #11 “Key elements of a strengths perspective.”

Sept 17: Starting from Strengths

Understanding and applying a strengths perspective. Review basic communication skills.

Readings: Fac pack #13 “Assessing Client Strengths,” #14, “Empowerment Techniques: Practice with Individuals.”

Sept 19: Building on Strengths

Challenges of a strengths perspective. Strengths in community and cultural context. Possible community site visit.

Readings: *Techniques* Ch. 5 (review); Ch 10.9/ Fac Pack #16, Rhodes, “Social Work Challenges: the Boundary of Ethics.”

Sept 24: Ethics and Values in Social Work Practice

The practice of valuing; ethical and political principles; self-awareness and acceptance of others.

Reflections on possibilities for community involvement. Challenges to a strengths perspective.

Readings: *Techniques* Ch. 6. Fac Pack #8, “A comparison of approaches to social work practice;” Fac pack #9 “Comparing the problem-solving and empowering approach;”

Sept 26: Frameworks for Practice I

Connecting values and knowledge. Examination of dominant social work frameworks, assumptions, and implications for practice. “Just Practice” perspective cont.

Readings: *Techniques* Chapter 11. Fac pack #6, “Phases in the Change Process.”

Oct 1: Getting Started: Engagement and Relationship Building

Preparation for social work relationships. Communication and barriers. The beginning phase of helping process.

Readings: Fac Pack #17 Germain, “Emerging Conceptions of Family Development,” #18, Lorber, “Night to his day;” #21, Rodriguez, “Complexion.”

Oct 3: Frameworks for Practice II: Alternative Perspectives

Feminist perspectives; narrative and “constructivist” views; the “Just Practice” perspective, cont..

Readings: *Techniques* Ch. 12; Fac Pack #13, “Assessing Client Strengths” (review); Fac pack #15, “Politically Progressive Social Work,” Fac Pack #19 “Assessing the Dynamics of Gender in Couples and Families.”

Oct 8: Co-learning and assessment

Assessment as a collaborative process. Values, assumptions and assessment. Recognizing strengths and difference. Tools for assessing individuals and families in context: Social assessment report, social network maps, social support assessment, etc.

Readings: *Techniques*, Ch. 12, cont. (selected sections) Fac Pack #20, “The Use of Culturagrams”, #22, “On the Meaning of Plumbing and Poverty,” #25 “Developing Cross-Cultural Communication Skills.”

Oct 10: Co-learning and Assessment, continued

The power and meaning of poverty – implications for assessment. The culturagram and other approaches to recognizing difference and diversity in assessment. Life History Grid; Examination and critique of assessment tools

Readings: *Techniques* Ch. 13. (selected sections) Fac Pack #26 “Practice Principles for Engaging Families.”

Oct 15: Work Phase: Action and Accompaniment

Planning and participation; decision making, goal setting, activating change efforts. Maintaining support, monitoring progress, and accompanying the process.

Readings: *Techniques* Ch. 14 (selected sections). Fac Pack #23, “Indigenous People in a Multicultural Society,” #24, “Working with the Oglala Lakota.”

Oct 17: Work Phase Action and Accompaniment, continued

Strategies and techniques of intervention; focus and structure; pacing and timing; feeling and content. Organizational context of practice.

No Readings for Oct 22: Prepare for Midterm exam.

Oct 22: Reflecting on the Learning experience

Mid term exam. Taking stock of where we have been and where we are going

Readings: *Techniques*, Ch. 15 (selected sections). Fac Pack #42 “How to end the counseling relationship,” #46 “Client Evaluation of Social Worker.”

Oct 24: Action and Reflection: Assessing the process and outcomes of change efforts

The Dialectics of change: action and reflection. The Ending Phase: Evaluation, reflection and

celebration. Endings as points of departure for new beginnings.

Readings: Library Reserve Readings: Campbell Hale, “Daughter of Winter,” and Simpson, “Lawns.” Fac pack #27 Potential Family Strengths,” #28 “Values and Beliefs of the Family Strength Perspective.” #29 “Techniques for Developing Relationships.”

Oct 29: The Family: Structure, Power, and Process

The meaning and power of family. Theoretical perspectives and implications for practice. Roles, rules and relations.

Readings: Fac Pack #34, “How I made Peace with the Past,” #35, “Working with Parents of Gay and lesbian Children.”

Oct 31: Engaging Children and Youth

In-class exercises for engaging children and youth as participants in the change process. Challenges facing children and youth in foster care.

Readings: Review Fac Pack # 17, #26-29.

Nov 5: Families, Communities and Cultural Practices

Understanding and working with families in context – Kinscripts, culturagrams, family resource centers. The challenges of poverty. Organizational and community context of practice.

Readings: *Techniques*, Ch 14 (14.27; 14.28; 14.32). Fac pack #32.

Nov 7: Skills of Practice: Responding to crises

Recognizing crises and intervening. Risks and resources. From crisis to healing, growth and advocacy. Organizational and community contexts of practice.

Readings: *Techniques* Ch. 14 (14.10; 14.11; 14.12). Fac Pack # 30, 31.

Nov 14: Skills of Practice: Addressing Anger, Respecting Resistance

Understanding and respecting resistance in context. A conflict model for work with resistant and involuntary clients. Negotiation vs. mediation. Strategies for conflict resolution.

Readings: Fac Pack # 38, “People with Disabilities and Social Work,” #39, “Disabled Village children.”

Nov 19: Contexts of Practice: Persons with Disabilities

People with disabilities and social work. Advocacy and empowerment. Learning about campus and community resources.

Readings: Fac Pack # 35, “Working with Parents of Gay and Lesbian Children,” #36, “Strategies for eliminating homophobia,” #37, “Ways to fight prejudice and discrimination.”

Nov 26: Contexts of Practice: Gender, Sexuality and Difference

Gender and sexuality: challenging dichotomies of difference. Heterosexism in theory and practice. Advocacy and empowerment. Learning about campus and community resources.

Readings: Fac Pack #33 “Social Work and Substance Abuse Treatment.”

Dec. 3: Contexts of Practice: Substance Abuse and Addictions

Substance abuse: Diverse perspectives and implications for practice. Stress and self-awareness.

Readings: Fac pack #40, “Text and Turbulence,” #41, “Young People as Competent Community Builders.

Dec. 5: Working with Youth: Problems or Resources?

Challenging views of youth as pathology. Examples from instructor’s research in U.S. and Latin America on youth-driven organizing efforts and youth as agents of community change

Readings: Fac pack #1-3 (review).

Dec. 10: Social Work and Human Rights: Challenges and Possibilities

How do we integrate human right in practice with individuals and families? Linking social service, social justice and social change. Helping versus influencing. Organizational context and change from within.

No Readings.

Dec 12: Reflection, Evaluation and Celebration

Reflecting on the journey. Course evaluations.