

**COLLEGE OF ST. CATHERINE AND
THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
MSW PROGRAM**

SYLLABUS

I. COURSE TITLE: **GRSW 501 02: Theory and Practice of Social Work I**
Fall 2009
SCB 325

COURSE VALUE: Three Semester Credits

INSTRUCTOR: Mari Ann Graham, Ph.D.
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TEXTS:

Generalist Social Work Practice: An Empowering Approach, Miley, K., O'Melia, M. & Dubois, B., Allyn & Bacon (ISBN 0205381227)

Family Practice: Brief Systems Methods for Social Work, Franklin, C. & Jordan C., Brooks/Cole Publishing

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides the first year MSW student with the knowledge and skills needed for generalist social work practice. Students develop communication and interviewing skills, which are used in work with client systems of all sizes. Basic content on working with family systems is also presented. It is taken concurrently with a field placement, which serves as a practice lab for applying theory and skills learned in the classroom. This first course focuses on understanding the generalist and integrative models of practice, social work values and ethics, the strengths perspective, empowerment principles and basic principles of family systems theory. Student self-awareness and self-assessment are especially important since they facilitate the development of an authentic style of practice.

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

This course is based on the generalist and integrative models of social work practice, the strengths perspective and systems theory. Feminist theory and narrative theory are also explored.

IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, students will have attained the following knowledge and skills:

A. Knowledge of:

1. The integrative model of social work practice.
2. The core purposes, values and ethics of the social work profession with particular attention to how these fit with personal values and ethics.

3. The generalist model of social work practice (dialogue, discovery & development).
4. The strengths perspective and empowerment principles with particular applications to diverse and at-risk populations including the elderly.
5. Social justice as an organizing principle for clinical social work practice.
6. Basic principles of family systems intervention.
7. Gathering and assessing data about client resources from a strengths perspective as it relates to diversity in age, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, as well as social, cultural, racial, spiritual and class background.
8. Practice evaluation - its importance to social work practice and a cursory overview of selected materials.

B. Skill in:

1. Active listening techniques (furthering responses, paraphrasing, empathic responding, summarizing), judicious use of questions, confrontation, and self-disclosure.
2. Developing professional relationships characterized by mutuality, collaboration, respect for the client system, and authenticity of the social worker.
3. Critical self-reflection, self-assessment, and use of self in practice.
4. Applying the generalist perspective to a variety of client populations including but not limited to poor people, women, and the elderly.
5. Application of the strengths perspective and empowerment principles to survivors of abuse, various ethnic groups, the economically poor, and the elderly.
6. Assessing client's strengths and their resources focusing on issues of social class, gender, race and ethnicity.
7. Identifying the impact of problems on family systems and developing strategies for family systems intervention.
8. Evaluating one's own practice.
9. Defining the impact of problems on family systems and developing strategies and goals for family work.

V. CONTENT OUTLINE:

- A. The generalist and integrative models of social work practice
 - 1. Generalist social work practice (dialogue, discovery & development)
 - 2. Integrative model of social work practice (social work interventions with systems of all sizes)
 - 3. Core purposes, values and practice principles of the profession
 - 4. Systems theory
 - 5. Strengths perspective
 - 6. Empowerment principles
 - 7. Cultural competence

- B. An Empowering Approach to Generalist Practice
 - 1. Overview
 - 2. Dialogue
 - a. Forming partnerships
 - b. Articulating challenges
 - c. Defining directions
 - 3. Discovery
 - a. Identifying strengths
 - b. Analyzing resource capabilities
 - c. Framing solutions
 - 4. Development
 - a. Activating resources
 - b. Creating alliances
 - c. Expanding opportunities
 - d. Recognizing success
 - e. Integrating gains

- C. Skill Development
 - 1. Nonverbal attending and client observation
 - 2. Verbal following
 - 3. Empathic responding
 - 4. Paraphrasing
 - 5. Use of questions
 - 6. Uses of self-disclosure
 - 7. Dealing with resistance
 - 8. Confrontation
 - 9. Applying strengths perspective
 - 10. Applying empowerment principles

- D. Family Systems Intervention
 - 1. Introduction to family work

2. Family Systems Theory
 - a. structural approach
 - b. communication/interactionist approach
 - c. basic principles
3. "Investigative stance" of family systems worker
4. Joining with families
5. Strategies and goals in family systems work.

VI. PROPOSED ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Two Self-Assessments

- Self-assessment of values
- Self-assessment of skills

Students will do an assessment of their personal values and how well they fit with social work values and ethics, where there are likely to be conflicts, and how they might deal with these as they arise.

Students will be given some class time to practice the skills covered in the readings, and make audio-taped recordings of interviews, which become raw data for an assessment of their skills.

Both of these self-assessments include identification of strengths and challenges as well as strategies to enhance professional growth. Due dates and more specific requirements to be negotiated with students.

B. Application Assignment to be negotiated with students

VII. EVALUATION AND GRADING:

The instructor will provide feedback on student self-assessments and application assignment that is personally/professionally relevant and hopefully, contributes to the ongoing development of the student.

Students will be given the opportunity to revise and resubmit assignments as needed in order to obtain the grades they desire.

Specific grading criteria will be negotiated with students.

VIII. COURSE SCHEDULE:

Readings and assignments will be negotiated with students and announced well in advance. Students will be expected to read the required texts and complete assignments as negotiated. The pacing of the

readings as well as the due dates for assignments will be negotiated and a written schedule of due dates, reading assignments and proposed in-class activities will be distributed shortly thereafter.

The collaborative teaching/learning method used in this course is consistent with social work ideology and practice principles related to empowerment. It seems only fitting that students have an opportunity to actually *experience* an empowering learning process.

This collaborative method maximizes student input and responsibility in the learning process. It allows flexibility and responsiveness with respect to the unique needs of each class. It requires both flexibility and discipline of both students and the instructor so that the course objectives are accomplished and course content is not compromised .

This blend of flexibility and accountability may be welcome to some and troublesome to others. It may also seem deceptively "easy" when in fact it requires a high level of commitment from both instructor and students.

Students are responsible for securing due dates, reading assignments, etc. in the event they miss a class so that they are adequately prepared for each class and lab. The instructor is responsible for keeping sessions focused and for bringing energy and creativity to the learning process. Both students and instructor bring their experiences to the process and are expected to use them constructively. Students are not presumed to be "blank slates;" the instructor also learns from the students. The essence of this model is: **we learn from each other**. Students learn from each other as well as from the instructor, and vice versa. These are not easy roles, but the payoff is a dynamic, interactive process, which closely resembles the empowering, generalist approach to social work practice.

Please, raise issues of process in class as you feel the need arise. Or, if it is more comfortable, speak with the instructor outside of class to clarify any concerns.

A draft schedule is attached to facilitate our planning.

IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Complete bibliography for this course is on the School of Social Work web site at:
www.stthomas.edu/socialwork

X. DISABILITY STATEMENT, PANDEMIC POLICY, ATTENDANCE POLICY and INCOMPLETE POLICY

Disability Statement

Classroom accommodations will be provided for qualified students with documented disabilities. Students are required to contact the Enhancement Program at the University of St. Thomas and Resources for Disabilities at St. Catherine University about accommodations for their courses within the first two weeks of the term. Appointments can be made at the Enhancement Program by calling 651-962-6315 or the Resources for Disabilities office at 651-690-6563. For further information you can locate the Enhancement Program on the web at <http://www.stthomas.edu/enhancementprog/> Resources for Disabilities at <http://minerva.stkate.edu/offices/academic/oneill.nsf>.

Pandemic Policy

The School of Social Work is committed to a healthy campus community. During the 2009-2010 academic year, there will be ongoing concerns regarding the prevalence among university faculty, staff and students of both the H1N1 virus and seasonal influenza. To help limit the spread of these illnesses, the Center for Disease Control has provided college campuses the following recommendation: students, faculty, or staff with influenza like illnesses (temperature of 100.0 or greater, plus a cough or sore throat) are directed to self-isolate (or stay home) for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine. In the event that MSW students are unable to attend classes due to this self-isolation recommendation, they should consult the university's pandemic web site <http://www.stthomas.edu/pandemic/plan/default.html> and complete an on-line form informing professors of their absence. In accordance, faculty will provide opportunities for these students to participate in alternative educational delivery due to this illness.

Attendance Policy

Professional education involves experiential and collaborative learning and the development of high standards of personal and professional responsibility. Each student is a valuable resource in the learning experience. Course content and class activities are fundamental to effective social work learning. Students are expected to attend class, arrive on time, be prepared, and participate. Attendance will be recorded in each class. Because attendance is so important, it will contribute to the final grade (15%). Students who demonstrate good attendance are therefore rewarded for their effort.

Incompletes:

If you are forced by emergency circumstances to request an "incomplete", we will negotiate and sign a written agreement setting forth the requirements and time line for completing the course. Requests for such an option must be student-initiated. As stated in the Student Handbook, incompletes can only be awarded if the student has completed a minimum of one-half the required coursework at a "B" quality or above. You would need to approach me at least two weeks before the end of the course. An incomplete cannot extend beyond May 1, 2010; if it does, it reverts to an "F". An incomplete would ideally be completed prior to the beginning of spring semester.

GRSW 501: Theory & Practice Course Schedule

Week 1	<p>Introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching & learning Philosophy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Creating safe space in the classroom; difference between safety and comfort – Relevance of these principles to social work practice • Course Overview • Integrative model of practice; generalist model 	NO ASSIGNED READINGS
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core purposes and values of the profession, practice principles & social work roles • Systems "seeing" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Principles of systems theory 	Miley et al., chapters 1-3 *DO first taping (45 minute interview w/friend or peer about anything of their choice); Set it aside
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths perspective and empowerment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Assumptions and practice principles – Guided Fantasy 	Miley et. al., chapters 4-5
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulating challenges (generalist skills) • Listening & responding • Response continuum • Empathic responding ** • Response challenges: anger, silence, questions, feedback 	Miley et. Al., chapter 7
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In class practice session 	** Values Paper Due **
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second in class practice session 	NO NEW READING ** Values Paper Due **

Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forming partnerships (engagement/relationship building) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client motivation and resistance Identify strengths 	Miley et al., chapters 6, 8 & 9
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzing resource capabilities (assessment) Framing solutions (goal setting) Activating resources and creating alliances (intervention) Expanding opportunities 	Miley et al., chapters 10-12 & 14
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Systems Interventions Basic principles Structural Family Therapy 	Franklin & Jordan, chapters 1 & 2
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Systems Intervention MRI, Strategic & Milan Family therapy Behavioral & Cognitive-Behavioral Family Therapy 	Franklin & Jordan, chapters 3 & 4 * Skills self-assessment *
Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Construction & Narrative Family Practice Psychoeducational Family Therapy 	Franklin & Jordan, chapters 6 & 7 * Skills self-assessment *
Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Systems Applications/Presentations Ethnic Families GLBT Families 	Franklin & Jordan, chapters 10 and 11
Week 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Systems Applications/Presentations Gender Issues Family Practice and Family Policy 	Franklin & Jordan, chapters 12 & 13
Week 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW Evaluation and Research 	Miley et al., chapters 15-16
Week 15	<p>Integrating gains (termination)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ending our work together Course evaluations 	** Application Assignment DUE

