

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

S644 SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE III: FAMILIES (3 crs.)

Instructor: Eldon Marshall, Ph.D., LCSW

Fall Semester 1999

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Section: R518

Room: SL208

Time: 9-11:40

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

Building on basic grounding in family systems theory and comparative understanding of major models of social work with families, students will develop competence in application of the metaframeworks model of practice with couples/families. Practice will be examined along the major metaframework contexts including family organization, interactional patterns, developmental stages/transitions, culture, gender, and ecosystems. An orientation to intervention will emphasize assessment from a strengths perspective, hypothesis formation, intervention planning, therapeutic communication, use of client feedback, and evaluation. The class combines didactic and experiential components with emphasis on application of family practice theory and method.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

It is expected that through regular attendance, participation in class activities, completion of readings and assignments, students should be able to demonstrate:

1. Application of social work values and ethics, including understanding of and respect for human diversity, for advanced interpersonal social work practice with families.
2. Understanding and application of strategies and skills for the promotion of social and economic justice for advanced interpersonal social work practice with families.
3. Critical thinking skills including ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate relevant theoretical frameworks for advanced interpersonal social work practice with families.
4. Understanding of the differential use of communication skills as an advanced interpersonal social work practitioner with a variety of client populations, colleagues, and members of the community.
5. Evaluation and application of findings from relevant research studies to advanced interpersonal social work practice with families.

6. Formulation of plans for evaluating advanced interpersonal social work practice with families.
7. Application of knowledge and skills of advanced interpersonal practice to social work with families.
8. Understanding of the professional use of self in the context of advanced interpersonal social work practice with families.
9. Understanding of the use of supervision and consultation in the context of advanced interpersonal social work practice with families.

COURSE FORMAT AND ASSIGNMENTS

This course is oriented to a comparative understanding of major family models along with the metaframeworks perspective on practice - one that transcends the differing approaches to work with families. Course assignments and requirements will emphasize application of theory and method to practice with couples/families. The instructional format will combine lectures, discussion of readings and practice experiences, written assignments and exercises, and tapes/films of differing approaches to family treatment. (Some changes in the projected course schedule and activities may be necessary to accommodate specific developments in the class process.) Major assignments are outlined below.

I. Examination (30% of grade)

The mid-term examination combines both in-class and take-home components and is oriented to assessing your knowledge and understanding in the areas of family practice theory and method, major models of family therapy, and important ethical dilemmas and research issues. Emphasis will be on knowledge of and competence in the application of metaframeworks theory and method. The take-home portion of the exam will consist of brief essay and application-type questions. It is to be completed independently without consultation from colleagues/classmates. The in-class component will combine objective and short-answer type questions with emphasis on application of theory/method to practice situations. The take-home portion will be distributed on October 9th and will be due on October 16th.

II. Family case assessment and treatment summary or self-change project summary (60% of grade)

Students assigned to families in their field practicum are encouraged to complete a family assessment and treatment plan on one of the families with whom they work. In the event that no suitable cases are available, you are asked to conduct an assessment of your own family and design a self-change project oriented to interactions with select members of the family. Details pertaining to each of these options follow.

A. Family case assessment and treatment summary

This assignment asks you to make application of select aspects of metaframework theory along with methods from differing family therapy models to a given family seen in your field setting. If you choose this option, please submit a brief description of the case on September 18th using the outline distributed in class. In this process you will conduct an in-depth, metaframeworks-oriented assessment of the family and develop a treatment plan relevant to this assessment. Written summaries should address the following areas: 1) prominent internal family systems dynamics, 2) functional/dysfunctional features of the family's organization, 3) significant interactional sequences, 4) major developmental themes with regard to the family life cycle, individual development, and relationships, 5) culture-related resources and constraints, 6) gender issues of significance, 7) larger system resources and constraints, and 8) overall summary of major dysfunctional features along with family strengths/resources. Treatment plans should cover: 1) presenting problems, 2) hypothesis about the problem(s), 3) treatment goals, and 4) intervention methods used. An outline will be provided with detailed guidelines for the assessment, treatment plan, and case summary. Assessments are due November 27th. (Criteria to be used in the evaluation of your paper will be outlined at the outset of the assignment.)

B. Family-oriented self-change project

This assignment asks you to make application of select aspects of metaframework theory and practice to an assessment of your own family. If you choose this option, on September 11th, you should submit a profile of the family context on which you plan to focus (i.e., current family context or family-of-origin), a brief summary of interactional issues to be addressed, and a preliminary statement of personal change goals on which you project some specific changes in your interactions with members of your family. Please note: This assignment does not expect that you do counseling with your own family, only that you examine your own interactions with family members and consider changes in your behavior that you view as desirable. In the course of the assignment you will also apply the metaframeworks model to an assessment of your family covering the areas outlined in II.A. above. Following the assessment, a summary of your self-change plan should be provided that addresses: 1) problem(s) at focus, 2) working hypothesis, 3) goals set for self, 4) course of action pursued, and 5) evaluation of outcomes along with learning from the experience. (See separate outline for detailed guidelines pertaining to the assessment, self-change

plan, and evaluation.) Your final report is due November 20th.

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

In keeping with course objectives and to assure a common frame of reference for discussion, students will be expected to complete required readings related to designated topic areas. The family therapy literature is vast so readings at best can only be selective. Designating readings as required is in no way intended to restrict what students read; and, in fact, you are strongly encouraged to extend your reading in areas of special interest.

Written work should be of professional quality and meet minimal standards with regard to substance, clarity, and general editorial condition. Grades for work submitted in poor editorial condition will be lowered. Students whose writing skills are deficient should take the initiative to obtain the kind of assistance necessary to meet the requirements for written work.

It is expected that written assignments be submitted on time. Late submissions without compelling reasons and prior arrangements will be lowered one-half grade level and one full-letter grade if more than 5 days late. Incompletes can be given only under compelling circumstances (e.g., serious illness or family crises) and must conform to University guidelines which require that three-fourths of the required course work be completed and at a passing level at the time of request. Requests for incompletes should be submitted to the instructor in writing at the earliest possible date.

Since learning from the class comes from diverse sources including didactics, discussion, guest presenters, family tapes, and experiential exercises, regular attendance is especially important and will be taken into account in grading. Evaluation of class participation will consider the manner and extent to which you:

- 1) attend regularly and on time, 2) share own experiences, viewpoints, and reactions, 3) raise relevant questions and issues, 4) participate in analysis of practices under discussion, 5) give and use feedback constructively, 6) complete written assignments/exercises, and 7) evaluate own performance in an open and discriminating way.

While the Instructor assigns the final grade for participation, at the end of the course students will submit a self-evaluation form pertaining to their participation. Relative to participation, there are four broad, free-standing criteria that bear on one's grade. These include: 1) attendance, 2) quality of participation in discussion and experiential exercises, 3) completion of written exercises, and 4) overall level of professionalism shown. In this class the NASW Code of Ethics provides the standard from which judgments around professionalism will be made. Absences of 4 or more class sessions without compelling reasons will result in an ~~FF~~ for participation. At a minimum, an "A" grade for participation requires that the student contribute to the class in an active and professional manner and evidence regular attendance.

In order to facilitate understanding of practice theory and method along with competence in their application, numerous written exercises are incorporated throughout the course experience. Each one of these should be turned in at the time of completion. While exercises will not be graded, those not submitted or submitted in qualitatively poor condition will be averaged as a zero.

Because this course draws upon the expertise of some guest presenters throughout the semester, changes in the class schedule may be necessary from time to time. Unless otherwise advised, however, it is suggested that you hold to the reading schedule as outlined below.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Students may expect to be graded in accord with the following scale:

A+	97-100	C+	77-79
A	94- 96	C	73-76
A-	91- 93	D	60-69
B+	87- 90	F	59-Below
B	83- 86		
B-	80- 82		

The contribution of each major assignment to the overall grade is as follows:

<u>Contribution</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
30%	Examination
60%	Family assessment/treatment summary or self-change project summary
10%	Class participation

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Bruenlin, D., Schwartz, B., & MacKune-Karrer, B. (1992). Meta-Frameworks: Transcending the models of family therapy. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
2. Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R. (1994). Family therapy: Concepts and methods. New York: Allyn & Bacon.

OUTLINE AND READINGS*

Session #1: 8/28/00	Introduction to Course Pre-Course Assessment Videotaped family analysis
Session #2 9/4/00	No Class - Holiday

Session #3: Becoming a family practitioner
9/11/00 Understanding family systems

Self-change plans due

Required readings:

Bruenlin, et al., A conversation about metaframeworks, pp. 3-18.

Bruenlin, et al., The metaframeworks perspective, pp. 19-56.

Carter, B. (1986). Success in family therapy. Family therapy networker, July-Aug., pp. 16-23.

Nichols/Schwartz, The foundation of family therapy, pp. 1-12.

Nichols/Schwartz, The evolution of family therapy, pp. 13-62.

Nichols/Schwartz, The fundamental concepts of family therapy, pp. 119-137.

Pinsof, W. (1999). Choosing the right door. Family therapy networker. Jan-Feb., pp 48-66.

Session #4
9/18/00

Metaframeworks overview

Case assessment plans due

Required readings:

Bruenlin, et al., A blueprint for therapy, pp. 281-316.

Bruenlin, et al, A case in point, pp. 317-353.

Nichols/Schwartz, Integrative models, pp. 423-446.

Session #5:
9/25/00

Conversing with families

Initial sessions

Hypothesizing and treatment planning

Required readings:

Bruenlin, et al., Patterns of sequences, pp. 90-124.

Bruenlin, et al., Leadership, balance, and harmony, pp. 125-157.

Cimmarusti, R. & Lappin, J. (1988) Beginning family therapy. Stages: Patterns of change over

time. New York: Bruner/Mazel, pp. 16-25.

Papp, P. (1983). Hypothesizing. The process of change. New York: Guilford Press.

Session #6
10/2/00

Brief treatment
Stages of treatment
Intervention methods

Bruenlin, C. & Cimmarrusti, R. (1993). Seven opportunities for brief therapy: A recipe for rapid change. In L.R. Wolberg & M.L. Aronson (Eds.), Group and Family Therapy. New York: Bruner/Mazel, pp. 282-289.

Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R. (1995) Stages of family therapy. Family therapy: Concepts and methods. New York: Allyn and Bacon, pp. 196-208.

Session #7:
10/9/00

Cultural context of practice

Take-home examination distributed

Required readings:

Bruenlin, et al, Unifying diverse parameters: The multicultural metaframework, pp. 193-236.

Bruenlin, et al, Reweaving feminism and systems: The gender metaframework, pp. 237-280.

Session #8
10/16/00

Comparative models of family therapy

Model: Internal family systems

Required readings:

Bruenlin, et al., Of mind and self: The internal family systems, pp.57-89.

Bruenlin, et al., Refining the metaframeworks, pp. 354-372.

Schwartz, R. (1992). Rescuing the exiles. Family Therapy Networker, May-June, 26-31.

Take-home examination due

Session #9
10/23/00

Model: Structural

Required readings:

Nichols/Schwartz, Structural family therapy, pp. 241-270.

Session #10

Model: Strategic/systemic

10/30/00

Required readings:

Nichols/Schwartz, From strategic to solution-focused: The evolution of brief therapy, pp. 355-379.

Session #11:
11/6/00

Model: Systems (Bowen)

Required readings:

Nichols/Schwartz, Bowen family systems therapy, pp. 141-176.

Session #12
11/13/00

Model: Solution-focused

Required readings:

Nichols/Schwartz, From strategic to solution-focused: The evolution of brief therapy, pp. 380-396.

De Shazer, S. et al. (1986). Brief therapy: Focused solution development. Family Process, 25, 207-222.

Session #13
11/20/00

Model: Cognitive behavioral

Required readings:

Nichols/Schwartz, Cognitive-behavioral family therapy, pp. 271-306.

Self-change project summary due

Session #14
11/27/00

Model: Narrative

Required readings:

Nichols/Schwartz, Narrative therapy, pp. 397-419.

Post-test assessment (to be completed in class)

Family case assessment due

Session #15
12/4/00

Research orientation to family practice
Evaluating one's own practice

Required readings:

Nichols/Schwartz, Family therapy research: Science into practice, practice into science, pp. 503-526

Session #16
12/11/00

Ethical issues/dilemmas
Professional development
Course evaluation

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