

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Fall, 1993

Cox
S633

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE III: AGED

The 1981 White House Conference on Aging pointed out that,
"The quality of service available to older adults
depends directly on the quality of personnel who provide them."

I. Course Rationale and Description

Serious commitment to the aged population by social work is a recent phenomenon. Although the majority of elderly persons are self-sustaining, a significant number require a broad range of social work services. Practitioners are finding increased numbers of elderly and their families among their clientele and while this suggests the need for all students to have an understanding of aging, some will need specialized knowledge.

The purpose of the Interpersonal Concentration in Aging is to help students, with a particular interest in this area, to develop competence for practice within an interdisciplinary, organizational context of service delivery to elderly populations. Attention will be paid to the nature of practice with the elderly developing within a variety of service delivery systems. Building upon the foundation year, this course will assist the student in the utilization of problem-solving processes which address the unique needs and circumstances of the aged. In addition, included for consideration are the skills required for interdisciplinary collaboration relative to a service delivery system and interventive strategies directed at service providers as well as client systems.

Emanating from this course should be an increased understanding of advanced practice as it relates to steps in (1) case management: assessment, goal setting, care plan implementation, and case evaluations; (2) collaborating with other professionals and assessing organizational influences; (3) developing and delivering service to oppressed groups (e.g., older women and minorities).

II.A General Objectives

Applicable to all service delivery Practice III courses are the following objectives stated in terms of the competence that students are expected to achieve:

1. To develop understanding of the special role and function of social work in a specific service delivery system.
2. To develop understanding of the themes and areas of professional knowledge that form the context of, and characterize, social work practice in a specific service delivery system.

3. To develop understanding of, and an ability to practice within, the organizational structures and processes that characterize a specific service delivery system congruent with social work values.
4. To develop understanding of, and skills in, consultation and other types of participation as a member of an interdisciplinary team in a specific service delivery system.
5. To develop capacity to engage in the problem-solving process to implement social work purposes, including prevention, in a specific service delivery system incorporating the ability to accurately assess client problems, enlist client participation and facilitate/implement the intervention process.
6. To develop capacity to select and apply differentially principles and strategies from various theoretical models within a specific service delivery system consistent with social work ethics.
7. To develop capacity to intervene on multiple system levels to achieve desired change, including the mobilization of specific service delivery organizations as change agents.
8. To develop capacity to intervene directly with, and on behalf of, minorities of color, women and other oppressed groups through engaging in organizational change, policy formulation, client advocacy as well as direct practice in a specific service delivery system.
9. To develop capacity to integrate research skills in research and practice in a specific service delivery system including the ability to utilize appropriate research as a consumer, identify researchable topics, and to participate in actual research projects.

II.B Course Specific Objectives

Upon completion of the course requirements, students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of:

1. An understanding of the special role and function of social work in service delivery systems which carry major responsibility for the elderly.
2. A range of interventive approaches for work with elderly individuals and their families.
3. Interventions used on behalf of minorities of color, women and other oppressed groups, including engaging in organizational change, policy formulation, client advocacy as well as direct practice in the service delivery system.

4. The problem-solving processes of social work practice in the service delivery system, incorporating the ability to accurately assess client problems, enlist client participation, facilitate and implement the intervention as well as attention to prevention.

Additionally, students should also demonstrate, through application in specific case situations, an ability to:

1. Differentially select methods of social work intervention appropriate for a given problem.
2. Identify themes and areas of professional knowledge that form the context of, and characterize, social work practice in service delivery systems providing for the elderly.
3. Analyze the interdisciplinary team process.

And finally students should demonstrate a value orientation which suggests an ability to:

1. Constantly be aware of one's own feelings and seek to modify attitudes in oneself or within the general culture which are ageist.
2. Give careful consideration to the ethical issues which surround practice with the elderly.
3. Seek new knowledge of practice approaches and issues in the rapidly developing field of aging.

Course Texts

Robert L. Schneider and Nancy P. Kropf (Eds.) 1992. Gerontological Social Work. Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers.

Francis J. Turner (Ed.) (1992). Mental Health and the Elderly. New York: The Free Press.

III. Methods Of Achieving The Objectives

A variety of teaching-learning methods and experiences will be used throughout the semester in an effort to address course content and to help students meet course objectives. Activities will include lectures, class discussions and select agency visits. Disguised case materials, simulations, and audio-visual materials will be utilized as appropriate to clarify particular subject areas. Similarly, experiences of the students and the instructor will be relied on for illustrative purposes.

Instructor's Responsibilities

1. Facilitate an environment that is conducive for the adult learner including supporting self-directed learning;
2. Design weekly lectures;
3. Arrange for agency visits, speakers, films and video materials;
4. Read and provide timely feedback on all written materials submitted;
5. Be available to students for consultation and advisement;

While there will be structured opportunities for feedback to the instructor, reactions and suggestions are welcome at any time.

Student's Responsibilities

Students will demonstrate through participation in classroom discussions their understandings of readings and other materials which relate to the course objectives. In addition, mastery of the basic concepts which support the course objectives are to be exhibited in the successful completion of:

- (1) An analysis of two case histories which entail: (a) developing an assessment of the case; (b) a plan of intervention; and (c) a means for evaluating the effectiveness of the approach (this analysis will be based upon information gathered from lectures, assigned readings and student-identified supplemental readings);
- (2) A mid-term exam designed to measure basic understandings of practice with older adults.
- (3) A final comprehensive oral examination that facilitates the students' full explication of key course objectives.

The case analyses are 30% of the grade as is the Mid-term exam. The Final Examination constitutes 40% of the grade.

IV. Course Outline Topics and Required Reading.

Class 1 August 31	<u>Introduction to the course</u> and a review of basic premises related to older adult behavior and practice implications considered in earlier course work.
Class 2 Sept. 7	<u>Developing a framework for practice with older adults.</u> Dispelling the myths surrounding old age in order to develop effective practice is the focus of attention for this unit. Chapters 1 - 5, Schneider Chapters 1 & 2, Turner
Class 3 Sept. 14	<u>Medication Problems and Substance Abuse.</u> Increasingly attention has been drawn to the problems of misuse of prescribed and "over-the-counter" medications by older adults. Sometimes, the misuse of medications are exacerbated or compounded by other drug use including alcohol. Chapters 16 & 17, Turner.

- Class 4
Sept. 21 Psychosexual Issues and Aging.
Professional, not unlike lay persons, often have difficulty envisioning older adults as sexual beings and therefore avoid any examination of issues in this area.
Chapter 18, Turner.
- Class 5
Sept. 28 Developmental Disability and the Older Adult.
Only recently has any attention been given to the growing number of older adults with developmental disabilities. Concerns are being raised as to their ability to function independently as the burden for their care becomes prohibitive for aged parents.
Chapter 8, Turner.
- Classes
6 & 7
October
5 & 12 Alzheimers Disease and Other Family Issues.
Often called "the Disease of the Century", Alzheimers not only affects the victim, but the family as well. Practice approaches for work with the victim and the family are considered in this unit as are other family issues such as elder abuse related to aging.
Chapters 4 and 21, Turner.
- *First "Case Study" is due on October 12th.
- Class 8
October 19 Practice in Specific Service Settings.
Some of the specific interpersonal practice roles are examined in the context of five service settings: home health and community service; hospitals; long-term care facilities and mental health and family counseling agencies.
Chapters 6 through 8, Schneider.
- Class 9
October 26 Mid-term Examination.
- Class 10
November 2 Approaches to Working with Special Populations.
In this unit consideration is given to developing practice approaches which address the needs of older adults who are members of oppressed groups; women, minorities, gays and lesbians.
Chapters 9 and 10. Schneider
- Classes
11, 12 & 13
November
9 & 16 Depression, Anxiety Disorders and Suicide
One of the most prevalent mental health issues among the elderly is depression. Frequently associated with depression are anxiety disorders and suicidal ideation. Recognition of the symptoms, along with an understanding of effective interventions are critical.
Chapters 9, 10 and 20. Turner.
- Fears, Phobias and Anti-social Behavior.
Recognition of fears and phobias as well as anti-social behavior in older adults can be difficult as they are often viewed as "behaviors of old age." Intervention is not only helpful but can be life-saving.
Chapters 14 and 15, Turner.

- Class 14 Fears, Phobias and Anti-Social Behavior.
Nov. 23 A visit to the court which handles many of the guardianship"
cases is planned as a way of viewing first-hand some of the legal
issues practitioners working with older adults will face.
- Class 15 Presentations of the Second Case Analysis
Nov. 30 * Second "Case Study" due to instructor on or before November 23.
- Class 16 Multidisciplinary Teams and Practice with the Aged/Course Wrap-up
December 7 and Evaluation.
The role of the social work practitioner as a member of a multi-
or interdisciplinary team is explored in this last unit, followed
by a course summary and evaluation.
- Class 17 Final Examination
December 14