Course Title and Number: SW 724: Intervention Approaches with Families

Instructor/Classroom:

Contact Information:

Office Hours:

Credits: 2

Co-Requisites: SW 720 & SW 780

Course Description:

Integration of theories of human behavior and select intervention approaches with families

This is the second in a series of three direct practice courses with a focus on integrating advanced theory and evidence-informed knowledge with social work practice skills. Students will learn to implement three approaches that are used widely to help families cope with obstacles and achieve their goals—multigenerational family therapy, structural family therapy, and feminist family therapy. These frameworks incorporate the group practice techniques that students learned at the foundation level, support social work’s emphasis on resilience and strengths, and can be used with families across practice fields. This course will provide students with opportunities for experiential learning and skill building in carrying out these intervention approaches. Ethnicity, culture, gender, and family life course are central in this regard, as students learn to tailor family interventions to the needs of clients. Professional responsibility for ongoing learning and self-development as a reflective practitioner is woven throughout the course.

Linkages with Other Courses:

This course builds on knowledge, skills, and values introduced either in the BSW program or in the foundation year of the MSW program. In particular, this class builds on the knowledge of human functioning and behavior attained in SW 310/610 (HBSE I & II). SW 724 also builds on the generalist practice behaviors mastered in SW 424/624 (SW Methods with Families), as well as evidence-informed theories & approaches presented in SW 440-441/640-641 (Elements of Evidence Informed Practice I & II).
Relevant Competencies and Associated Practice Behaviors:

2.1.1 Identify as a social worker and conduct oneself accordingly
Advanced generalist practitioners identify with the human rights values of the social work profession, the centrality of relationships, and the interconnections between client issues and larger social problems. Advanced practitioners in general practice take leadership in ethically and competently working to improve the wellbeing of clients, families, and communities.

- C1 Initiate and facilitate socially responsive & just practices across systems.
- C2 Provide social work leadership within practice contexts and as a member of the profession.
- C3 Cultivate and apply leadership qualities of self-awareness and other-awareness.

2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice
Advanced generalist practitioners readily recognize the range of complex, multi-dimensional ethical dilemmas that often characterize practice settings. They are adept at utilizing the advanced conceptual frameworks required to explore, navigate and resolve these complex circumstances.

- C4 Is able to critique ethical issues within complex environments to formulate innovative responses and approaches.
- C5 Employ strategies of ethical reasoning in practice settings where policies or values conflict with the delivery of social work services, personal values, or professional ethics.

2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
Advanced generalist practitioners synthesize multiple sources of information as they seek to understand “what is” and clarify “what’s possible” in addressing issues that arise across system levels. In turn, they effectively communicate this information to diverse client, multidisciplinary team, and stakeholder groups.

- C6 Question, evaluates, synthesize and apply information from multiple sources in framing ill defined, ever changing, multifaceted practice issues.
- C7 Question, evaluates, select and implement appropriate assessment, intervention, and evaluation strategies in complex, fluid, multidimensional practice situations.
- C8 Produce practice-ready presentations and documents (i.e., case presentations, intervention demonstrations, journal articles, grant applications, legislative briefs).

2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice
Advanced generalist practitioners recognize that human diversity includes and goes beyond conventional categories of ethnicity or culture and recognizes the intersectionality of human differences. Cultural humility characterizes their professional interactions across system levels.

- C9 Demonstrate leadership in collaboratively examining underlying assumptions and developing inter-culturally effective policies, programs, & interventions.
- C10 Effectively navigate conflicts between diverse identities within and among individuals, families, groups and organizations.

2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment
Advanced generalist practitioners integrate multiple theories about human behavior and the social environment to complete comprehensive assessments and develop and implement intervention plans across system levels. Advanced generalists give equal importance to
understanding individual uniqueness and the broader social issues that support or deter well-being.

- **C16** Integrate understandings from a variety of theoretical perspectives in formulating comprehensive, multidimensional assessments and interventions.
- **C17** Identify and question underlying theoretical and ontological assumptions about human behavior guiding agency practices, programs and policies.

2.1.10 **Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.**

Advanced generalist practitioners are ethical, competent leaders who are able to practice reflectively and autonomously in complex environments across system levels with diverse groups. Advanced practitioners integrate the systems, person-in-environment, and strengths perspectives with an array of theoretical models and intervention approaches to collaboratively frame and address complex issues, questions and problems. Thus, advanced practice involves the continuous, dynamic interplay of engagement, multidimensional assessment, intervention and evaluation processes—across system levels.

2.1.10a **Engagement**

- **C23** Attend to the interpersonal dynamics, cultural & contextual factors that support or threaten client-worker relationships.
- **C24** Establish a relationally based process that encourages clients to be equal participants in the establishment of intervention goals & expected outcomes.

2.1.10b **Assessment**

- **C25** Adapt, modify & use multidimensional tools in conducting comprehensive, culturally effective, integrative case assessments.
- **C26** Identify client system strengths and coping capacities.
- **C27** Assess client system readiness for change.
- **C28** Select and modify intervention strategies based on continuous evaluation & assessment.

2.1.10c **Intervention**

- **C29** Critically evaluate, select and apply best practices and evidence-informed interventions.
- **C30** Capable of autonomous practice, in competently applying appropriate intervention techniques for a range of presenting issues, problems, or questions.
- **C31** Develop and implement collaborative multidisciplinary interventions.

2.1.10d **Evaluation**

- **C32** Use process and outcome evaluation findings to inform and shape the ongoing development of social work interventions.
- **C33** Work collaboratively with evaluators/researchers in identifying questions emanating from practice, as well as assessing intervention efficacy and effectiveness.
Course Objectives/Educational Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students will be able to …

1. Provide strengths based, person-in-environment social work perspective as a member of a multidisciplinary team (assessment, treatment planning, documentation, team staffings, referrals).

2. Students will demonstrate professional use of self as evidenced by an understanding of the core conditions required for change, an understanding of transference and countertransference and the ability to seek and use feedback, supervision and consultation.

3. Apply models of ethical reasoning to explore and resolve dilemmas encountered.

4. Incorporate career-long learning into their practice—through a professional development plan delineating strategies for reflective learning, consultation and supervision, and keeping updated on current theory and research about interventions with individuals.

5. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of multiple theoretical perspectives and differentially apply them to client family situations.

6. Integrate understandings from a range of theoretical perspectives in assessing and applying intervention plans for families.

7. Develop skills in building a therapeutic relationship including developing self-awareness, affect management, cultural humility and effective relationship building techniques with families.

8. Students will demonstrate the ability to conduct comprehensive assessments that identify strengths as well as weaknesses, risks as well as protective factors, are interculturally effective, and include an assessment of the individual’s readiness for change.

9. Students will autonomously navigate diverse ambiguous and changing practice contexts through ongoing assessment of their work with families.

10. Students learn how to apply a range of intervention models in working with families.

11. Students are expected to learn the evidence behind a range of intervention models and to understand the pro and con positions on the empirically supported intervention movement.

12. Students will evaluate the impact of interventions on families.

Instructional Methods

In addition to in class lectures and readings, this course will implement a variety of experiential/collaborative learning techniques. A sampling of these techniques includes: in-class and online discussions, role playing, small group activities, and videos.

Course Policies

- **Class Attendance and Participation:** As much of the learning in this class is dependent upon class member contributions, you will be expected to come prepared and ready to actively participate in every class meeting. Active participation will include: involvement in class activities and discussions, timeliness to class, and collegial conduct.

  Students who miss 2 class sessions will lose 10 points. Students who miss 3 class sessions will lose 15 points. Those students who miss 4 or more class sessions will receive a grade of “F” for the course.

- **Disabilities:** Students who have documented disabilities that may affect their learning or performance in this class should contact the UNR Disability Services Office (Thompson
Student Services Building, Suite 100; (775) 784-6000; mzabel@unr.edu). The instructor will make those accommodations that are requested in writing by the aforementioned office.

- **Academic Success Services:** Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-4433) or www.unr.edu/mathcenter/, Tutoring Center (784-6801 or www.unr.edu/tutoring/), and University Writing Center (784-6030 or www.unr.edu/writing_center). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

- **Academic Dishonesty:** “Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses” constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course, or giving an F for the assignment. For more details, see the UNR General Catalog.

- **Audio or Video Recordings:** Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents’ policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

**Course Requirements**

**Required Text:**


http://0-ctiv.alexanderstreet.com.innopac.library.unr.edu

**Assignments:**

**Video Observation:** (Students will review a video from the Knowledge Center that depicts that particular family therapy approach being discussed over a particular three-week period. The student will then be responsible to critique the family therapeutic approach for that particular film and turn in to the professor as a written assignment. Guideline questions might encompass: What was the key points to the film? What techniques and/or strategies were most effective and why? What techniques were least effective and why? What did you learn about the therapeutic approach implemented in the film? If you were the client, how would you feel with the approach being utilized (Explain)? What questions do you have as a result of viewing this film? How did you react overall to the film (Explain)

**Role Play & Fish Bowl Exercises:** Students will participate in “fish bowl” and role-play exercises for each of three intervention approaches presented.
Self-reflection Written Assignment: Students will critically apply concepts associated with reflective social work practice as identified through questions identified in the textbook (instructor will identify weekly which questions students are to respond)

Peer Assessment: This advanced practice course provides a forum in which students learn to apply three different social work intervention approaches with families. To achieve this, a collegial learning environment—involving a high degree of thoughtful discussion and peer feedback—is critical. Therefore, on time, well-prepared participation constitutes 15% of the course grade.

Video Assignments: Students will participate in “fish bowl” and role-play exercises over the course of the semester in the use of three different intervention approaches. Towards the end of segment dealing with each intervention approach, students will participate in a videotaped mock social work interview. These simulations will be evaluated in regard to the student’s demonstrated ability to integrate and apply the skills and knowledge learned to the simulated practice scenarios.

Theory Driven Articles: Throughout the Bitter Textbook, various family theories will be discussed. Depending on the week in which a particular theoretical approach or approaches are discussed, each student is expected to search out the current literature (USE OF THE KNOWLEDGE CENTER WOULD HELP HERE) and read one article (any article should be published after 2000) that pertain to that particular theoretical approach and write up a summary critique for that particular article. I will at times randomly select a student or two to present the article to the class with the class offering a critique along with questions to the presenter.

Final Integrative Paper: In consultation with the instructor, each student will identify a practice-relevant issue of importance for work with families. This paper provides students an opportunity to develop an in-depth understanding of the key practice question(s) associated with the issue identified. The paper should include an integrated critical appraisal of the scholarly literature that demonstrates an understanding of diverse research methodologies and findings and the ability to synthesize and draw one’s own conclusions about the status of this practice issue. This critical analysis should address the methodological strengths and limitations across the body of research reviewed.
Grading

Grades will be awarded based upon your performance on the aforementioned assignments.

- Student reaction to selected video: 20%
- Role-play and fish-bowl exercises: 15%
- Self-reflection written assignments: 15%
- Peer Assessment of experiential exercises: 15%
- Theory Driven Articles: 10%
- Final Integrative Paper: 25%

Sample Course Calendar

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 8/29</td>
<td>Course Overview and Introductions</td>
<td>Rationale for course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2 9/5</td>
<td>General Family Systems Theory I</td>
<td>Bitter text, Part I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3 9/12</td>
<td>General Family Systems Theory II</td>
<td>Family Video Exercise to be turned in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4 9/19</td>
<td>Psychodynamic Family Therapy</td>
<td>Bitter text, Chapter 4</td>
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<td>Bowen’s Multigenerational Family Therapy</td>
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<td>Week 5 9/26</td>
<td>Psychodynamic Family Therapy</td>
<td>Bitter text, Chapter 5</td>
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<td>Adlerian Family Therapy</td>
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<td>Week 6 10/3</td>
<td>Psychodynamic Family Therapy</td>
<td>Bitter text, Chapter 6</td>
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<td>Human Validation Model</td>
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<td>Week 7 10/10</td>
<td>Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Types I</td>
<td>Bitter text, Chapter 15</td>
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<td>Cognitive-Behavioral Family Therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8 10/17</td>
<td>Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Types II</td>
<td>Cognitive-Behavioral Family Therapy (Continue)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9 10/24</td>
<td>Behavior Health Intervention</td>
<td>Instructor will provide links for this behavioral</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>Dialectical Behavioral Therapy intervention</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>11/7</td>
<td>Narrative Therapy Approaches I Bitter text, Chapter 10</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>11/14</td>
<td>Narrative Therapy Approaches II Bitter text, Chapter 11</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>11/21</td>
<td>Narrative Therapy Approaches II! Bitter text. Chapter 12</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>11/28</td>
<td>Narrative Therapy Approaches III Postmodern Family Therapy</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>12/5</td>
<td>No Class Thanksgiving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 16</td>
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<td>Wrap up Integrative Paper to be turned in</td>
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</table>

References


a clinical setting: families that do better or do worse in therapy. *Family Process, 35*(3), 347-361.


