Part I: Course information
SW 8452-Core Concepts in Clinical Social Work Practice
2 Credits

Faculty contact:
Name: 
Email: 
Phone: 
Office Location: 

Course descriptions:

Short version: This course develops advanced knowledge and practice with interpersonal process skills that are essential for developing and maintaining effective therapeutic alliances and positive intervention outcomes with diverse populations.

Long version: The purpose of this course is to prepare students to understand how the interpersonal approach provides a foundation for clinical social work. Building on knowledge and skills identified in “Assessment and Engagement in Clinical Social Work,” this course moves to intervention planning, focusing on strategies that are effective and culturally appropriate, collaborative with the client, and based in the clinician’s understanding of how change will be facilitated and evaluated across various treatment models. Engagement skills will be expanded to help students understand and observe interpersonal processes that contribute to positive client alliance and positive intervention outcomes. The course will discuss cultural challenges and the process of developing and maintaining an effective cross-cultural treatment alliance. Emphasis will also be placed on the development of self knowledge and skills in self-reflective processes necessary to understand and address interpersonal process dynamics.

Pre-Requisites
1. This is an advanced social work class, and the material presented in this class is at an advanced level. Social Work students enrolled in this course should have completed the foundation classes listed below, or have advanced standing status.
   SW 5051 - Human Behavior and the Social Environment
   SW 5801 - Policies and Programs in American Social Welfare
   SW 8151 - Social Work Practice Methods: Individuals and Systems
   SW 8152 - Social Work Practice Methods: Families and Groups
   SW 8153 - Models of Community Intervention
   SW 8841 - Social Work Research Methods
2. You must have completed or be concurrently enrolled in SW 8451: Assessment and Engagement in Clinical Social Work Practice.
3. If you are not a Social Work student, you need permission of the instructor

Clinical Licensure Hours:
This course contains some clinical content, as required by the Minnesota Board of Social Work for eligibility for the Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW). The number of hours in each required category is listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Differential Diagnosis</th>
<th>Assessment based treatment planning</th>
<th>Clinical Intervention Methods</th>
<th>Evaluation methodologies</th>
<th>SW values and ethics</th>
<th>Culturally specific clinical assessment</th>
<th>Other areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part II: Course outcomes**

**Course Objectives**

After successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Apply evidence informed practice methods for assessing and engaging clients effectively across treatment models.
2. Develop an understanding of the dynamics of establishing a treatment alliance and learn methods for evaluating the alliance from therapist and client perspectives.
3. Provide culturally appropriate, evidence informed mental health assessment and treatment planning for racial and ethnic minorities, individuals living in poverty, and clients experiencing social stress and bias because of their gender or sexual orientation.
4. Demonstrate skill in addressing interpersonal difficulties as they arise in the therapeutic relationship, including the use of motivational interviewing techniques to address obstacles in development of the treatment alliance.
5. Understand and address relational dynamics in the context of client history and the dynamics unique to each therapist-client dyad.
6. Demonstrate growth in self-understanding and capacities for self-reflection necessary for understanding the clinical social worker’s contribution to interpersonal dynamics.
7. Demonstrate competence in helping clients identify strengths, collaborative treatment goals and internal foci for change.
8. Evaluate collaborative treatment planning using reflection, supervision and evidence-based approaches.

**Social Work Practice Competencies**

Successful completion of this concentration course implies that the student has achieved competency in the following advanced practice behaviors:

| Competency: 2.1.2 – Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice |
| Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers: |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behavior</th>
<th>Covered in class through (i.e., activity, reading, content)</th>
<th>Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and analyze value-based and ethical dilemmas that arise in their area of practice, using professional codes of ethical standards and through appropriate professional consultation.</td>
<td>Weeks 12, 13, 14</td>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Competency: 2.1.3 – Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identify and evaluate models of assessment, prevention, intervention and evaluation that are appropriate to their area of practice.</td>
<td>Weeks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10</td>
<td>Assignments 1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EP 2.1.6 – Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstrate ability to evaluate practice and/or programs in an area of concentration</td>
<td>Weeks 11, 12, 13</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Competency: 2.1.7 – Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behavior</th>
<th>Covered in class through (i.e., activity, reading, content)</th>
<th>Assessed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Evaluate and synthesize theories and perspectives of human behavior and the social environment to choose and apply methods of assessment, intervention and evaluation in their area of practice</td>
<td>Weeks, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14</td>
<td>Assignments 1, 2, 3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*only for assessment &amp; intervention ; not for evaluation of practice</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### CMH Competency: 2.1.10 (a)-(b) – Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behavior</th>
<th>Covered in class through (i.e., activity, reading, content)</th>
<th>Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Engage: Use empathy and collaborative interviewing skills to engage clients in identifying their strengths and problems.</td>
<td>Weeks 1, 2, 3, 4</td>
<td>Assignments 1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engage: Establish rapport and maintain effective working relationships with clients in clinical mental health settings.</td>
<td>Weeks, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13</td>
<td>Assignments 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engage: Employ diverse strategies to</td>
<td>Weeks 3, 5, 6, 8</td>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
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</table>
• Assess: Employ knowledge of the DSM-IV, the psychosocial assessment interview, and collateral information from key informants and agencies when appropriate to develop a comprehensive collaborative assessment.

Week 4
Assignments 1, 3

• Assess: Conduct risk assessment according to ethical and legal standards pertaining to child maltreatment, homicide, suicide and other life threatening circumstances.

Week 4 Activity

• Assess: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to determine a range of potentially effective and appropriate interventions to improve practice outcomes related to clinical social work practice in mental health.

Week 11
Assignment 3

• Intervention: Use appropriate evidenced-based interventions to help clients resolve identified and agreed upon problems.

Weeks 11, 12, 13
Assignment 3

Part III: Course requirements

Assignments

There will be three assignments for this course:

1. **Diagnostic assessment**: Using the format discussed in Assessment and Engagement in Clinical Social Work and outlined in Cooper and Lesser, chapter 4; write a collaborative psychosocial assessment of an adult client. This assessment can be with the same client from the earlier course, or a new client. Make sure to include all dimensions of a clinical assessment, especially the relational or interpersonal components of this case. An

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outline of relevant topics will be provided. This assignment will become the basis of your final assignment; it will not be graded but you will receive 5 points toward your final grade for completing this assignment by week 3 of this course. 5 pages double-spaced.

2. Process recording: Using material provided, evaluate a process recording between client and a clinician. You can choose either an adult or child client. When possible, the process recording should be done on the basis of a recorded interaction. The purpose is to identify interpersonal exchanges and experiences that promote clinical work. An outline will be provided to help you do this assignment. Please also attach a process note following Appendix A in the Teyber book. 5/7 pages double-spaced.

3. Final Case planning paper: Using the assessment skills practiced in the anchor course to build a case plan from the assessment (assignment 1) of a current adult case. For those of you working with children, use an adult who is parenting. Make sure to include DSM-IV diagnoses (five axes) and a succinct case formulation. The case plan must include rationale for intervention; evidence of collaboration or treatment alliance; recognition of client’s strengths as well as obstacles to good outcomes; systems support or interferences; and plan for evaluating case outcomes. Finally, reflect on this process of change, as you have experienced it as the clinician and comment to how you observed the client responding to the interpersonal exchanges that occurred with you as the clinician.

Grading Methods for Papers
Exceptional – given for work that is complete, accurate, creative, extremely clear, and completed in a manner that is above graduate school expectations. Loosely equal to an A-to an A+.
Graduate Level – represents work that is at the expected level of proficiency, and could be shown with pride to a field instructor or clinic supervisor. Roughly equal to a solid B or B+.
Good – A grade of “good” means that the student’s work has many strengths, but lacks the total quality expected by the professor. As an example, outstanding sections of an assignment may be offset by other parts that reflect problems in clarity, accuracy, or completeness. Loosely equal to a letter grade of B-.
Improvement Needed – Work that is below graduate level expectations, and has only a few or minor strengths will receive a grade of “improvement needed.” Loosely equal to a letter grade of C to C+.
Deficient – A grade of deficient is given when the student’s work is incomplete or lacking overall in quality or accuracy. This grade indicates that the work is not approaching graduate level expectations, Loosely equal to a grade of D- to C-.

You may rewrite any assignment that falls in the “improvement needed” or “deficient” categories.

Grade Distribution and Assignment Weighting
The grade weight and due date for each assignment is listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial Assessment</td>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Recording</td>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Planning Paper</td>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation and Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part IV: Course Content

Part I: Introduction to Interpersonal Process in Clinical Social Work Practice

Week 1: Introduction to Core Concepts in Clinical Process

Topics: 
- Overview of course content
- What is clinical process?
- What defines an effective process across psychotherapy models?

Activities: 
- Discussion of course content
- Student introductions
- Discussion of student questions about clinical process

Required readings:


Recommended:


Week 2: Understanding Interpersonal Process across Treatment Modalities

Topics: 
- What is interpersonal process?
- What are interpersonal process interventions?
- Interpersonal process as a foundation of clinical social work practice

Activities: 
- Small group discussion: come prepared to discuss Chapter 1, Section C and Part II in Workbook
- Discuss your own experience of being in an interpersonal exchange with a client. What was easy and what was challenging or confusing?
Large group discussion and clarification of terms

Required readings:


Week 3: Establishing, Maintaining and Evaluating the Working Alliance

Topics: The therapeutic alliance
Boundaries, ethics and cultural awareness, forming cross cultural treatment alliances

Activities: Discussion of articles
Practice with Interviewing
Practice with Assessing the Alliance using therapist and client versions of Working Alliance Inventory
APA film on boundaries

Readings:


Additional handouts on client and therapist versions of working alliance

Recommended reading:


Week 4: Translating Assessment Formulations into Collaborative Treatment Plans

Topics: Creating collaborative treatment plans, getting on the same page
Using inventories and Assessment tools
Identifying clients’ strengths and level of care needs

**Activities:**
- Practice doing a collaborative review of DSMIV diagnosis and assessment formulation using the assessment that you turned in on week 3. Use the invisible consultant model and offer feedback from the perspective of client, therapist and observer/consultant.
- Large group discussion of readings and practice
- Practice with common diagnostic inventories: Beck Depression Inventory, Medica/UBH Wellness Assessments

**Readings:**


**Week 5: Understanding Internal and Interpersonal Experiences through Relational Process**

**Topics:**
- What are theories of change?
  - Developing working hypotheses about how change occurs and what obstructs change
  - Making useful, evidence informed process comments; moving from diagnostic content to experiential content

**Activities:**
- Practice with internal focus role play
- Practice with process comment role play
- Large group discussion of how interpersonal exchange enhances understanding of feelings and beliefs

**Readings:**


Part II: Understanding Relational Dynamics and Reparative Experiences in Interpersonal Process

Week 6: The Impact of Development on Relational Dynamics

Topics: Integrating client history and relational patterns
Working with client’s perceptions of the past as influencing current functioning

Activities: Practice with cases in small groups, identifying relational patterns
Discussion of neurobiology of brain functioning as it impacts the persistence of patterns

Readings:


Recommended reading:


Week 7: Relational Dynamics in Interpersonal Process

Topics: Bringing relational patterns into the clinical encounter
Using patterns to understand and change present difficulties

Activities: Practice identifying relational patterns role play
Practice with transference
Practice identifying cognitive beliefs in relational context

Required readings:
Week 8: Relational Dynamics with Children and Adolescents: Emerging patterns and parent functioning

Topics: Recognizing emerging relational patterns in children and adolescents
Discerning reality from fantasy
Developmental distortions versus external experiences
How do clinicians support relational constancy

Activities: Practice with case discussion in small groups

Required readings:


Additional readings may be assigned.

Week 9: Understanding Reparative Experiences in Interpersonal Process

Topics: Strategies for bringing client’s conflicts and beliefs into the therapeutic process
Addressing conflicts in process, working with transference
Understanding and processing a corrective experience

Activities: Practice with small group discussion of case material
Practice with reparative experience role plays

Required readings:


Workbook case studies, chapters 8

Additional readings on working through transference may be assigned.

Week 10: Understanding Reparative Experiences in Interpersonal Process, continued

Topics: Strategies for bringing client’s conflicts and beliefs into the therapeutic process
Addressing conflicts in process, working with transference
Understanding and processing a corrective experience

Activities: Practice with small group discussion of case material
Practice with reparative experience role plays

Required readings:


Workbook case studies, chapters 9

Additional readings on working through transference may be assigned

Week 11: Stages of Intervention work: beginning, middle and ending

Topics: Tasks and characteristics of work in each stage
Ongoing assessment, including new data and maintenance of alliance
Modifying interventions, process evaluation, documentation

Activities: Discuss changes in process defining beginning, middle and ending of interventions. How do clinical social workers know what to do each session, where clients are in the work? Use case examples to identify stages of treatment. What will you reflect on in some stages and not in others? How is the alliance affected by timing of interventions?

Required reading:


Case examples will be provided

Week 12: When cases feel stuck: resistance, maladaptation, competing goals, rupture and repair in alliance

Topics: Resistance as trying to cope with familiar patterns
Use of motivational interviewing to address resistance/competing goals
Addressing/assessing willingness to work, new learning
Use of supervision to address stuckness

Activities: Discussion of your own difficult cases, how resolved, how might address now
Practice with case vignettes

Required reading:


Recommended reading:


Week: 13: Working-through and Termination in Interpersonal Process

Topics: Negotiating termination, when interventions stop
        Evaluating practice
        Boundaries related to the completion of clinical work
        Transferring change to the client’s community: family, work and social changes

Activities: Role play termination sessions and boundary conflicts

Required reading:


Week 14: Supervision and Consultation-the clinician’s best support

Topics: Describing types of supervision
        Role of the supervisee: what to bring to supervision
        Importance of professional reflection
        Consultation that involves expertise
        Consultation groups and formats
        Translating new insights back into case plan: talking to clients
        Ethical dilemmas and boundaries in supervision
Activity: Role play supervision models: using case examples provided by the instructor, actively take on the role of the client, clinician, and supervisor

Required reading:


Additional readings on the supervisory experience will be assigned.

**Week 15: Final Review of Course**

Topics: Course Evaluation
Outside speaker on options for supervision toward licensing
Additional questions on termination/supervision

Activity: Course evaluation
Review of final papers
Speaker

Required reading: no required reading

**Additional Bibliography:**


