SOW 3352.01 & 03 - Practice II: Interpersonal Skills in Social Work

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Course Description: Study and practice of interviewing, group leadership, written communication, and oral presentations, in consensual as well as conflictual contexts of social work.

Course Learning Objectives: By the end of the term, students should be able to:
1. Discuss the relationship of interpersonal skills to generalist social work practice.
2. Explain the relationship of interpersonal skills to both micro and macro intervention.
3. Use interpersonal skills in a manner that demonstrates ethical and professional attitudes and behaviors of practice, such as self-awareness, critical thinking, assertiveness and self-discipline, in given course assignments.
4. Assess the impact of culture, environment, social stressors, social oppression and personal strengths on interpersonal communication.
5. In given assignments, use knowledge regarding cross-cultural and cross-gender communication when working with minority client systems.
6. Develop interpersonal skills that assist one in working with clients of a different race, gender, age, and/or lifestyle.
7. Show competence in using selected interactional skills and tools necessary for social work practice with human systems, including case and class advocacy, interviewing individuals, families, and groups, group leadership, recording and public presentation.
8. Describe selected communication techniques associated with presenting court testimony.
9. Demonstrate the ability to use effective public speaking techniques, particularly to advance social and economic justice.

Evaluation of Learning and Grading:
1. Examinations: 45 Points
   Two (2) exams will be given during the term. Exam #1 (worth 25 points), scheduled as a mid-term test (week 9); will cover Units 1 through 3. Exam #2 (worth 20 points) will occur in finals week and cover material from Units 4 through 8. The exams may contain multiple choice, short answer and essay questions.
2. Client Consensual Interview Assignment: 20 Points
   In pairs, students will videotape and assess in writing a 10-15 minute interview with a "client". Students need to supply their own tapes; appointments can be made in the main office in the School of Social Work to use video equipment in the Social Work Skills Lab. The instructor will provide additional guidelines and the evaluation form for this assignment. The tape and typed, evaluation should be submitted for grading by week 8.
3. Advocacy Assignment: 20 Points
   In the same pairs as the consensual interview, students will identify an issue (students must select different issues) related to a client population from a list that is in your course pack. Each student is to plan and demonstrate in a 10-15 minute videotaped role-play the use of advocacy and conflict
management skills. Each student advocate (interviewer) needs to clearly show his/her ability to “plead” for his/her views on the issue selected. During each role-play, the student respondent (interviewee) will present an opposing viewpoint on the issue that is the focus of the interview. After each role-play, the respondent will review the interviewer’s tape and provide feedback using the written evaluation form. The interviewer will then examine the tape and the respondent’s feedback, provide written comments related to the respondent’s feedback using the evaluation form. Guidelines, the evaluation form and specific information are in the course pack. Due week 14.

4. Professional Presentation Group Assignment: 15 Points
Each student will be assigned to a small group and with other members will plan and make a 15-20 minute group presentation on a topic assigned by the instructor. The topics assigned will focus on various communication skills and techniques in small groups, most notably those used with case and cause advocacy. Group members are expected to demonstrate the use of effective public speaking techniques and strategies when making their presentations. The overall grade received by the group will be assigned to each group member. Evaluation of the presentation will focus on the effectiveness of the group’s overall effort and effectiveness in making the presentation, including organizational skills, time management, and documentation of resources used (e.g., identification of literature references, AV material, etc.) The instructor will assign a presentation topic to each group no later than the fourth week of class; in-class presentations will occur during weeks 12-13.

Tentative Due Dates for Assignments:
1. Consensual Interview Assignment     Section 1: Mon. Feb. 28     Section 3: Thurs. March 3
2. Mid-Term exam                                     Section 1: Mon. March 7     Section 3: Thurs. March 10
3. Advocacy Assignment                                 Section 1: April 11     Section 3: Thurs. April 14
4. Professional Presentations                           Section 1: March 28 or April 4  Section 3: Thurs. March 31/April 7
5. Final Exam                                              Section 1: May 2  Section 3: Thurs. April 28

A final course grade will be based upon the total number of points accumulated by a student on the above evaluations.

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<th>Grade</th>
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<th>Grade Point Value</th>
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Reserve Readings: Reserve readings, where indicated on the following Course Outline and Schedule, are required unless identified as optional selections. Copies of required and optional reserve readings can be checked out at the reserve desk of UCF’s main campus library or accessed via Electronic Reserve.

Course Policies: Please see the BSW Student Handbook for a detailed discussion of the School of Social Work’s class policies and procedures. In addition, note that for this course the following are general guidelines concerning the shared responsibilities of the instructor and students enrolled in this course:

1. All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Students may NOT elect to skip any of the exams, interviews, etc. and accept a lower grade. Students should submit assignments at the
beginning of the class period on the identified due date. **Five (5) points may be deducted from the student's final grade for each assignment submitted late.** No assignment will be accepted after the last day of class.

2. Course learning methods will stress classroom discussion, small and large group experiential exercises, and use of audiovisual aids. Students are expected to attend each class session and to participate in classroom activities. Students are responsible for documenting their attendance by signing a class roll that will be distributed by the instructor during each class meeting.

3. **More than three (3) absences during the semester may result in lowering of the final grade for the course.** Excessive partial absences (i.e., leaving class early) may also result in lowering of the final grade. (See the BSW Student Handbook for more information on attendance requirements.)

4. The instructor reserves the right to make announced changes in course requirements, schedule and assignments.

5. Final grades can be mailed to those students who provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The instructor cannot provide a student with his/her final grade by phone nor can final grades be posted in the School of Social Work. To ensure confidentiality of graded material, papers and exams cannot be left by the instructor for pick up by students in the School of Social Work Office.

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**Course Outline and Schedule**

**Weeks 1-2  Unit 1 - Fundamentals of Communication for Social Work Practice**

**Unit Learning Objectives:**

1. Discuss the relationship of interpersonal helping skills to generalist social work practice.
2. List the types and uses of social work interviews.
3. Examine difficulties that may occur when communicating across cultures.
4. Distinguish between consensual and conflictual interviews.
5. Identify micro and macro situations where consensual and conflictual interviews occur in social work.
6. Define selected communication terms.
7. Discuss basic elements of verbal and non-verbal messages.

**Content:**

1. Course overview and requirements.
2. Interpersonal skills for generalist practice.
   a. Types and purposes of oral interviews in social work.
   b. Other kinds of social work communications.
3. Cross-cultural communication: problems and issues
4. Selected communication concepts as applied to social work practice.
5. Overview of Communication
6. Variables affecting communication.
7. Consensual and Conflictual contexts of communication in social work practice.
8. Selected communication techniques: e.g., observing, attending, active listening, reflective responding, questioning, summarizing, etc.

**Readings and Video Segments:**

**Week 1**

1. Murphy, B. & Dillon, C.  Chapter 1, “A different kind of talking”  
   Chapter 3, “Attending and listening”
2. Kadushin.  Chapter 3, “Listening: A basic communication skill” (reserve)
3. Videotape: “Interviewing in Action” 1.1-4.4

**Week 2**

1. Murphy, B. & Dillon, C.  Chapter 2, “Getting started”  
   Murphy, B. & Dillon, C.  Chapter 4, “Support and empathy: A sustaining presence”
Weeks 3-7  Unit 2 - Consensual Interviews: Interpersonal Skills in Social Work Practice

Unit Learning Objectives
1. Discuss the dimensions of a relationship within an interview.
2. Describe the phases of the interview process.
3. Explain the purposes/uses of selected recordings in social work interviews.
4. Simulate consensual social work interviewing.
5. Conduct and assess in writing a videotape interview within a consensual context.

Content:
1. Consensual contexts for social work interview.
2. Interview and interpersonal relationship components.
3. Interview conditions, settings, recording, problems, obstacles.
4. Stages of the interview: introductory, developmental, ending
5. Guiding and structuring interviews
6. Things to look for in interviews
7. Interviewing techniques of Kadushin
8. Behaviors to avoid when interviewing

Readings and Video Segments:

Week 3
Section 3 Thursday ONLY: No class – Instructor at an educational meeting.

Weeks 3 & 4
1. Murphy, B. & Dillon, C.  Chapter 5, “Exploration and elaboration”
   Chapter 6, “Assessment, goal setting, contracting, and evaluation
2. Kadushin. Chapter 6, “Problem exploration phase” (reserve)

Week 5
1. Murphy, B. & Dillon, C.  Chapter 7, “Gaining new perspectives”
   Chapter 8, “Changing behaviors”

Week 6
   Chapter 11, “The Clinical relationship: Addressing self-disclosure and other boundary issues”

Week 7
1. Murphy, B. & Dillon, C.  Chapter 12, “Endings and transitions”
   Chapter 13, “Professional issues: Ongoing education and self-care”

Week 8 Unit 3 - Interviewing People from Diverse Backgrounds

Unit Learning Objectives:
1. Explain how culture, environment, gender, sexual orientation and age may effect communication.
2. Describe how social oppression and other social stressors may effect cross-cultural interviewing situations.
3. Show sensitivity to interviewee diversity.
4. Demonstrate skills for interviewing people who are significantly different from the interviewer.
5. Client Consensual Interview Assignment Due.
Content:
1. The impact of culture, environment and social oppression on communication.
2. Applying knowledge of diversity to interviews.
   a. Race.
   b. Ethnicity
   c. Gender.
   d. Generation
   e. Class
   f. Lifestyle
   g. Sexual orientation

Readings:
Week 8

Week 9 Mid-Term Exam (Units 1-3)

Week 10 SPRING BREAK - No Class

Week 11 Unit 4 – Facilitating Groups, Leadership in Groups, and Interviewing Families

Unit Learning Objectives:
1. Discuss the effects of structure, purpose, process and atmosphere on small group communication.
2. Assess the influence of various communication patterns and leadership styles in groups and families within given course assignments.
3. Apply communication theory when interviewing in treatment and task groups.
4. Describe selected approaches for leading groups and managing group conflict, in given case situations.
5. Identify techniques for effectively conducting meetings in the agency and other organizations, the community, etc.
6. Describe the social worker's role in engaging a family, dealing with the initial resistance of its members, and communicating with family members in the initial stages of treatment.
7. Apply communication theory to interviewing different types of family systems, particularly ethnic minority families and nontraditional families.

Content:
1. Purpose and types of groups in social work.
   a. Treatment/remedial groups.
   b. Task groups.
   c. Social action groups.
   d. Reciprocal groups.
   e. Other types of groups.
2. Group structure, purpose, process and atmosphere: impact on communication.
3. Communication patterns and problems in groups.
   a. Subgroups, scapegoats and isolates.
   b. Dominating members, complainers, distractors, etc.
   c. Groupthink and hidden agendas.
4. Directing and participating in groups.
   a. Leadership styles.
   b. Communication techniques: attending, seeking and giving information, rewarding, responding to feelings, focusing, summarizing, etc.
5. Dealing with conflicts and communication problems in groups.
   a. Contracting.
   b. Gatekeeping.
   c. Confronting.
d. Modeling.

e. Mediating.

f. Others (e.g., time-out, expulsion, grouping, sanctions).

6. Interviewing families as a special type of group.

Readings:

Week 11


Weeks 12-13 Unit 5 - Conflictual Interviews: Micro and Macro Applications

Unit Learning Objectives:

1. Compare case and class advocacy in social work practice.

2. Demonstrate selected skills of assertiveness, confrontation and conflict resolution.

3. Demonstrate interviewing skills with micro and macro target systems that are reluctant, hostile and dominating.

4. Simulate conflictual social work interviewing.

Content:

1. Conflictual contexts of social work interviewing.
   a. Investigative interviews.
   b. Advocacy communications (case and cause) in conflictual situations.
   c. Review from "Generalist Practice" of hostility, resistance, and conflict in client and non-client interviews.

2. Selected skills in conflictual contexts.
   a. Assertive communication.
   b. Bargaining.
   c. Confrontation.
   d. Conflict management and resolution.
   e. Others.

3. Skill applications to micro and macro systems (e.g. reluctant agency staff, dominating supervisor), particularly the use of critical thinking skills.

Readings:

Week 12


Week 13


2. Professional Presentations begin week 12

Week 14 Unit 6 - Professional Presentations in Social Work

Unit Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the importance of public speaking with clarity, brevity, and accuracy.

2. Describe various types of public presentations and their social work uses.
3. Prepare a group public presentation on an assigned topic that is relevant to social work practice.
4. Demonstrate an understanding and importance of public presentations in representing an agency or when speaking for a specific purpose.

**Content:**
1. Purposes of public presentation: to inform, persuade
2. Use of public speaking in advocacy
3. Critical presentations factors: credibility, agency support, delivery, communicating to advocate
4. Modes of delivery: impromptu, reading, etc.

**Readings:**

**Week 14**
2. **Advocacy Assignment due Week 14.**

**Week 15**

**Unit 7 - Testifying in Court: A Special Case of Conflictual Communication in an Setting in Social Work Practice**

**Unit Learning Objectives:**
1. Discuss the role of the social worker within the court system.
2. Explain the importance of effective verbal and written communication skills for social work practice within the legal system.
3. Describe preparatory skills for the social worker as a witness.
4. Recognize selected legal maneuvers to discredit one's testimony.
5. Demonstrate selected skills for providing professional court testimony.

**Content:**
1. The social worker as expert witness and the legal system.
   a. Legal terminology.
   b. Roles: social worker, judge, state attorney, defense, others.
   d. Direct and cross-examination.
   e. Evidentiary objections.
   f. Jury versus judge trials.
2. Preparatory skills and techniques for the social work witness.
3. Legal "tricks" to discredit testimony.
4. Selected skills of court testifying.

**Readings:**

**Week 15**

**Week 16**

**FINAL EXAM**

**References**


