

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

Syllabus: SW-530 Seminar in Clinical Social Work: Play Therapy  
Fall 2005

**HONOR STATEMENT**

An essential feature of the University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the university, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. (*Hilltopics* 2005)

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct code that is in the College of Social MSSW Handbook. (<http://www.csw.utk.edu/mssw/>)

**DISABILITY**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library (865-974-6087). This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces the social work student to the art of play therapy, a child-centered, developmentally-customized approach to assessing and intervening with child clients. Students are introduced to the history of the field, the theoretical frameworks underpinning play therapy, and pioneers of play therapy, past and present. The course assumes and builds on a thorough understanding of child development. The continuum of non-directive vs. directive play therapy approaches will be discussed and demonstrated.

**COURSE RATIONALE**

The social work profession has a long history of preparing social workers to work effectively with particular populations. Specifically, social work practice includes work with children of various backgrounds and experiences. The functioning problems that children have as a result of trauma, neglect, abuse, social deprivation, domestic violence, etc. often result in problems in children's developmental progress. Professionals have become increasingly convinced that play therapy is the most developmentally appropriate approach to working with children. Social workers using play therapy are better equipped to help children of various ages and backgrounds work through various traumatic experiences.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

By completion of this course, students are expected to be able to (through course activities, assignments and/or exams):

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the major points in the historical development of play therapy as well as its major contributors.
2. Identify and discuss directive vs. non-directive approaches used in play therapy and various theoretical perspectives along that continuum.
3. Identify major current proponents and practitioners of play therapy.
4. Discuss the major developmental theories and utilize those theories in assessment, diagnosis, and the design of interventions for child clients, particularly those from high risk and vulnerable populations and/or characterized by varying race, ethnic, age, gender, socio-economic, spiritual and sexual orientation backgrounds.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of a variety of specific play therapy modalities and techniques.
6. Critically evaluate the applicability of play therapy to various high risk and vulnerable clients.

Recognize, analyze and resolve ethical dilemmas that may arise in play therapy.