

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

**Syllabus: SW-523 - Clinical Social Work Practice with Families  
Spring 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 Work MSSW Handbook (<http://www.csw.utk.edu/mssw/>).

**The 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*, 2004).

**Disability:**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the University of Tennessee 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 focuses on the family as a unit of assessment and intervention in clinical social work practice. Concepts related to understanding and analyzing family dynamics and interactional patterns as understood from the perspective of major family therapy models are presented. Techniques of intervention are considered in terms of their application to families with varied system and individual problems and to families from varied social and cultural backgrounds and of varying configurations. Consideration is also given to family-centered practice in different social work fields of practice and settings, and to the influence of the therapist's own experiential family on one's intervention style.

**Course Rationale:**

Social work has traditionally emphasized the influence of the environment and interpersonal relationships on human behavior. Clinical practice with families is both a natural extension of this stance and integral to social work practice from an ecological/systems perspective.

**Course Objectives:**

By completion of the course, a student is expected to be able to demonstrate:

1. Knowledge of major concepts used in understanding the dynamics of family interaction and a family-centered approach to social work practice from an ecological/ systems perspective;
2. an understanding of diverse family patterns related to factors such as race, ethnicity, social and economic class, gender, and sexual orientation that may affect interactional patterns both within the family and in their exchange with community systems, including agencies and clinical practitioners;
3. knowledge of selected major approaches to clinical practice with families (e.g. intergenerational, structural, strategic, solution-oriented) as well as techniques associated with these approaches;
4. the ability to assess both the strengths and vulnerabilities of families, and establish intervention contracts which encourage families to select their own optimal solutions;
5. the ability to develop interventions, based upon sound assessment, that are directed toward achieving the purpose and goals of clinical work with families;
6. an understanding of major ethical issues associated with clinical practice with families, and the ability to formulate decisions consistent with the ethical guidelines of the profession of social work;
7. an understanding of how to evaluate the effectiveness of clinical practice with families;
8. an understanding the significance of experiences in one-s own family of origin, and how these impact clinical social work with families.