

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

SW 523 – Clinical Social Work Practice with Families  
Course Outline  
Spring, 2004

Instructor: Marilyn Paavola, LCSW  
[mpaavola@utmem.edu](mailto:mpaavola@utmem.edu)  
448-5944

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EVALUATION PLAN:**

**Class sessions** will include lectures and discussions to clarify and supplement assigned readings. Additionally, use will be made of role-playing and simulation, videotape review, case summary analysis, and other learning activities designed to amplify the application of concepts and techniques in clinical family practice. Students are expected to attend class and to prepare for the sessions by reading and thinking about assigned materials.

Written assignments, participation, and grades are related as follows

- Class attendance/participation..... 15%
- Assignment 1..... 25%.....Due Mon, Mar 1<sup>st</sup>
- Student written analysis and evaluative critique of simulated family experience..... 20%.....class family presentation
- Student role in class presentation on simulated treatment process with their “contrived family”..... 40%.....April 19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>

**Use of or reference to actual case material** in class/simulation settings and written work should be made in a manner that thoroughly disguises the identity of the client(s). Discussion of actual case material must be held in the strictest confidence.

**TEXTS:**

(Required) Dorothy Stroh Becvar and Raphael J. Becvar (fifth edition, 2003). *Family Therapy: A Systemic Integration*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

(Supplemental) Ann Hartman and Joan Laird (1983). *Family-Centered Social Work Practice*. New York: Free Press.

## COURSE CONTENT OUTLINE:

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Topics/Readings</u>	<u>Simulation Family</u>
1	Jan. 12	Course Introduction and Overview	Concept Explained
2	Jan 19	Holiday – No Class	
3	Jan. 26	Special Topic: The Genogram. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monica McGoldrick/Randy Gerson, Ch. 2, “Developing a Genogram to Track Family Patterns”</li></ul>	Selection of “SIMFAMS”
4	Feb. 2	The distinctiveness of relational, or relationship, therapy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Becvar/Becvar, Ch. 1, “Two different world views”</li></ul> Fifty years of evolving ideas on the relational perspective. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Becvar/Becvar, Ch. 2, “The historical perspective”</li><li>• Hartman/Laird, Ch. 1, “A family focus in social work practice”</li></ul>	Guidelines amplified.  Discuss preferences for type of family that is to be the focus of future work.
5	Feb. 9	Systems theory: toward the cybernetics of cybernetics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Becvar/Becvar, Ch. 3, “The paradigmatic shift of systems theory”</li><li>• Hartman/Laird, Ch. 4, “An epistemological framework”</li></ul> The challenge of second-order therapy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Becvar/Becvar, Ch. 4, “Postmodernism and Family Therapy”</li><li>• Hartman/Laird, Ch. 5, “Family theory for family-centered practice”</li></ul>	Simulation family groups discuss evolving individual genograms as peer consultants.  Determine individual roles for future work in simulated family.  Inform instructor of decisions (brief written synopsis)
6	Feb. 16	Initial contact with the family: A new context. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Becvar/Becvar, Ch. 5, “Therapeutic Intervention and strategies”</li><li>• Hartman/Laird, Ch. 7, “Getting started: Contracting and interviewing”</li></ul>	Practice the initial interview with Simulation family. Amplify problems, goals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Each student should get a chance to interview the family</li><li>◆ Begin construction of simulation family genogram.</li></ul>
7	Feb. 23	Family strengths and family vulnerabilities at the level of process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Becvar/Becvar, Ch. 6, “Family process”</li><li>• Boyd-Franklin, Ch. 1, “Black, Afro-American families in therapy: An Overview”</li></ul>	Appraise the strengths of the family. Note evidences of family resiliency. Imagine how the family can “invent” its own optimal solutions and emerge hardier.

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Topics/Readings</u>	<u>Simulation Family</u>
8	Mar 1	<b>Assignment 1 Due .</b> Behavioral/Cognitive approaches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becvar/Becvar, Ch. 12.</li> </ul>	Discuss findings of assignment with group.
9	Mar 8 – 12	Spring Break – No Classes	
10	Mar 15	Intergenerational theory and techniques. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becvar/Becvar, Ch. 7, “Psychodynamic approaches” NOTE: Emphasis will be on Bowenian intergenerational theory</li> <li>• Boyd-Franklin, Ch. 7, “Major family therapy approaches and their relevance to the treatment of Black families.</li> <li>• Hartman/Laird, Ch. 10, “Assessment in time: The intergenerational perspective”</li> <li>• Hartman/Laird, Ch. 11, “The intergenerational family system as a resource for change”</li> </ul>	Evaluate suitability of Bowenian approach for work with one or more members of the simulation family.  Practice interpreting genograms of the simulated family.  Discuss practice intervention possibilities.
11	March 22	Family structure and functioning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becvar/Becvar, Ch. 9, “The structural approach”</li> <li>• Hartman/Laird, Ch. 12, “Inside the family: Inner system assessment”</li> <li>• Hartman/Laird, Ch. 13, “The family unit as a resource and target for change”</li> </ul>	Evaluate suitability of structural approach for work with simulation family.  Construct the structural map of the simulated family. Interpret the meaning of the map, in terms of intervention Possibilities, and practice these.
12	March 29	Is “manipulation” unavoidable? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becvar/Becvar, Ch. 11, “Strategic approaches and the Milan Influence”</li> <li>• Hartman/Laird, Ch. 14, “Persistence, coherence, and paradox”</li> </ul>	Evaluate the suitability of the strategic approach for work with simulation family Develop strategic intervention(s) possibilities, and practice these.
13	April 5	Review of newer models of intervention. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nichols/Schwartz, Ch. 11 NOTE: Emphasis will be on Solution-focused approach</li> </ul>	Evaluate suitability of solution-Focused approach for work with simulation family.  Practice solution-focused therapy.
14	April 12	Monitoring Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becvar/Becvar, Ch. 15, “Assessment and Research”</li> <li>• Boyd-Franklin, Ch. 15, “Conclusion</li> </ul>	Develop a measurement plan for the simulation family re: a single major intervention.

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Topics/Readings</u>	<u>Simulation Family</u>
		and implications for future clinical work and research”	Discuss the single case evaluation design.
15	April 19	Simulation family presentations: NOTE: <b>Written analyses</b> of the simulated family experiences due on the date of the in-class presentations.	
16	April 26	Simulation family presentations. Student evaluations.	

### **CRITERIA FOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

1. This assignment is related to the first few sessions of your family group. It should, however, be done by each individual student. After the assignment is turned in to the instructor it is suggested you share your ideas with the group to enhance planning for your continued family interviews. Prior to the first family interviews, select and read 4 journal articles or book chapters about family therapy with the topic or problem selected by your family group. These should be in addition to course assignment. Following the first two interviews develop a paper which covers the following topics.
  - a) Identify the patterns within the family system which should be addressed in treatment.
  - b) Identify family strengths (system and individual).
  - c) Suggest a plan of treatment with emphasis on system changes and the way your plan will address the presenting problem. (The problem should clearly be linked to the systemic patterns, i.e. rules, boundary issues, family of origin issues, etc.)
  - d) What are some techniques you think might work in helping the family achieve goals and that you would like to try in your “family” group. Give the rationale for your choices.
  - e) Discuss and relate your plan to the major points in your reading on the topic to your discussion.
  - f) Finally, identify and discuss some specific aspects of the treatment process you would like to work on in your role play and discussions with your family group (for example skills, transference/countertransference issues, etc.).

**Paper should be at least 3 pages but no more than 5 pages in length. A separate bibliography should also be attached. (25% of course grade, double spaced, APA format).**
2. **Student analysis of simulated family experience:** Each class member will participate in an ongoing process, “simulation family group.” This experiential component will assist with the integration of theory and technique by affording students the opportunity to design and study a contrived “family” over the span of several weeks. “Family members” will determine their family composition and presenting problem(s), and will utilize weekly in-class opportunities to assess and “treat” the system/individual problem(s) through role play and role reversal of both therapist(s) and family member(s). There will be opportunity to “try out” intergenerational, structural, strategic, and solution-focused assessment and treatment options.  
A **5-page analysis** of one’s individual experience in the group, in terms of preparation to do clinical work with families as a differentiated therapist, is due on the date of the in-class simulation family presentation **(20% of course grade, double spaced, APA format).**
3. **Group class presentation:** Simulation family groups are to prepare and present to the class a “family interview” (or excerpts from several interviews with the family and/or subsystems). Presentations should clearly demonstrate the application of techniques of intervention selected to facilitate the therapeutic process, and be based on an assessment of “the problem” (both system and symptom) and the interaction and dynamics of the simulated “family.” The class

presentation should include discussion of an analysis of the interactional process which identifies clearly the approach(es) to family therapy utilized in assessment and intervention, plus any significant ethical or technical issues which were dealt with (for example: membership, co-therapy relationships, worker role, countertransference, cultural/racial/gender/sexual orientation factors, young children in the interview, resistance, confidentiality, multigenerational factors, etc.).

**Presentation and discussion** should be **approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes** in length.

Groups should distribute a specialized **topical bibliography**, and may use explanatory handouts. **Videotaping (VHS format)** the interview(s) for in-class review is strongly encouraged. Presentations are scheduled for April 16 and 23, plus April 30 (**40% of course grade**).

4. Class **attendance/participation**: It is imperative that class members be prepared for, attend, and actively participate in class sessions. This is especially important since the simulation family groups will regularly meet during class time to discuss and practice clinical techniques (**15% of course grade**).