

**UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Syllabus: SW521 - Clinical Social Work Practice with Individuals  
Fall 2008**

**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/>)

**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, 2008*).

**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 2227 Dunford Hall (865-974-6087). This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

**Course Description**

Clinical Social Work Practice with Individuals is one of the core required methods courses in the Clinical Concentration. Building upon the Foundation courses in social work practice and human behavior, this course examines theory, knowledge, and skills for clinical practice with individuals. The therapeutic process and treatment strategies are examined, incorporating content from psychodynamic and cognitive models. These content areas are compared and contrasted in terms of theoretical assumptions, intervention methods and techniques, and empirical evidence regarding practice outcomes. Attention is given to translating and utilizing practice models in ways consistent with the ecological and strengths perspectives and the application of these to vulnerable and high risk populations. Emphasis is given to the therapeutic process, the use of relationships, and clinical strategies for change. While the focus of the course is on intervention with individuals, clients are seen as influenced by their family and social contexts. A feminist perspective that stresses client empowerment is examined as a means of critiquing theoretical models. The overall goal of the course is to produce social work clinicians who are flexible and able to assess the utility of interventions consistent with social work values and ethics.

## **Course Rationale**

Clinical social workers face complex human situations presented by clients from diverse backgrounds. Social workers must be prepared to make differential assessments and choose intervention strategies that will prove effective with specific client problems. Faced with a plethora of treatment theories, clinicians must have sufficient knowledge to make these critical choices. Guided by an ecological and strengths perspective, social workers must be skilled in strategies that will improve clients' coping behaviors and environmental competence. Psycho-dynamic and cognitive models are examined because they are widely utilized by practitioners; are evident in ample literature and are adaptable to an ecological perspective. This course is designed to provide students with advanced knowledge and skills necessary for clinical practice with individuals.

## **Course Objectives**

By the completion of the course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Describe the scope, nature, and focus of clinical social work with individuals, including issues in establishing effectiveness of treatment.
2. Describe the nature of clinical practice that incorporates ecological and feminist orientations.
3. Describe and analyze different clinical models, e.g. psychodynamic and cognitive, and their utilization in various practice settings and situations.
4. Describe the therapeutic relationship as the medium of intervening and the use of self within this context.
5. Describe and analyze the therapeutic process, including the underlying assumptions about change, knowledge and skills necessary for clinical assessment of individuals and development of treatment plans.
6. Design appropriate clinical strategies and procedures to utilize with individuals, including rationale for decisions, recognition of clients' strengths, and short term intervention.
7. Discuss different client problems and the selection of appropriate strategies, including consideration of the effects of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, and socio-economic class.
8. Explicate an understanding of ethical issues encountered in clinical social work with individuals and the ability to thoughtfully analyze ethical dilemmas that may arise.
9. Discuss the evaluation of outcomes and implications of research for clinical practice for improving practice.