

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

**SW 538 Social Work Practice with At-Risk Populations
Section #003 - 2 credits
Spring - First Session
Wednesday's 1:00-4:50 pm**

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Office Hours:

Mondays 11:30am - 12:30pm & 5-7:00pm

Wednesdays 11:30am-12:30pm

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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 (www.utk.csw.edu).

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*, 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

This is a required foundation course. This course provides in-depth study of evidence-informed and evidenced-based practice models with at-risk populations. Assessment and interventions focus on individuals, groups, families, and communities.

Course Rationale

This is a 2 credit course that builds on the foundation introductory practice course in applying generalist practice to complex social problems and issues. Knowledge, values, and skills in advocacy and evidence-based intervention methods for practice with individuals, small groups, and families, and communities are essential to influence social change and empowering clients/client systems and populations at-risk. The course emphasizes assessment and intervention with client systems inclusive of their risk, protective factors and strengths in the context of the supports and demands of their environment.

Course Competencies

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

1. Assess complex client systems from an ecological perspective for practice with individuals, small groups, families, and communities with an emphasis on diverse strengths, resources, natural support systems and using culturally affirming communication and available evidenced-based, culturally affirming assessment tools. (Practice- F.2, F.3, F.4; CT/EBP-F.1, F.4; Diversity- F.1, F.3, F.4; Research-F.1. *(content: skills and strategies for assessing clients/client systems, problems, issues, and organizations; culturally affirming communication and assessment; critical analysis of assessment tools for evidence-bases and culturally affirmative elements; assessing family dynamics, roles, and patterns; information technology to locate evidence-based assessment tools).*
2. Evaluate the limitations and strengths of practice models and interventions and identify best practices appropriately in work with diverse client systems, families and small groups (Practice-F.6; CT/EBP-F.1, F.3; Diversity-F.4, F.6; Pops at-risk & SJ-F.1; Research- F.1). *(content: generalist group work (i.e., group dynamics, processes, roles); intra-, inter- and inter-disciplinary teams; generalist family-centered, strengths-based, evidence supported interventions; using information technological resources to identify evidence-based interventions; family configurations (e.g., single parent, step-, aging, GLBTQ) and issues (e.g., child maltreatment and abuse, mental and physical health, immigration/legal status, death and dying, disability(ies), poverty, violence); intra-, inter- and inter-disciplinary teams).*
3. Recognize, analyze, and tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical dilemmas that arise in practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities. (Values/ethics-F.1, F.2; CT/EBP-F.4; Pops at-risk & SJ-F.4). *(content: NASW Code of Ethics, International Code of Ethics; ethical principles; professional values; analysis of ethical dilemmas; designing resolution strategies; utilizing supervision appropriately for analysis and resolution of ethical dilemmas).*
4. Identify evidence-based prevention principles and approaches to wellbeing and social and economic justice across client systems. (Practice-F.9; CT/EBP-F.5; Pops at-risk & SJ-F.3). *(content: public health/risk and resilience framework (Fraser); EBP prevention models of practice; precautionary Principle (Public Health) and traditional scientific risk assessment methodologies; at-risk populations (e.g., HIV, suicide, community, and domestic violence, and substance abuse; using information technology to identify evidence-based principles and approaches).*
5. Describe how advocacy and social change are applied to advance well-being, human rights, and social and economic justice in communities, and how and when to apply such generalist strategies across larger systems. (Practice-F.5, F.10; Pops at-risk & SJ- F.4., F.6; Values/ethics-F.1). *(content: models of community practice, planned social change, and empowerment (e.g., grassroots, neighborhood, and community organizing); generalist roles, strategies and tactics in organizing functional communities, community social and economic development, program development, community liaison, social planning, coalition building, political and social action; social movements and their core components for progressive change (i.e., social work roles, scope of concern, constituencies, target systems, desired outcomes).*

Section#003 Course Outline

Required Textbooks:

Dworkin, J. (2005). *Advanced Social Work Practice: An Integrative, Multilevel Approach*, Pearson Education, Inc.

Fadiman, A. (1998). *The Spirit Catches You when You Fall Down: A Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures*. New York. Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

***Journal articles will be posted on your BlackBoard class website.

Strongly Recommended Text:

Szuchman, L. T. & Thomlison, B. (2008). *Writing with Style: APA Style for Social Work*, Wadsworth Publishing; 3rd edition.

Summary of Course and Expectations

This course will include lectures by the instructor, case studies that facilitate class discussions, group class projects, student case presentations and a final exam. Course assignments are designed to build and synthesize critical thinking, knowledge and skills over the course of the semester.

Students are expected to complete and think about assigned readings in preparation for each class section, participate in class discussions and activities using class readings and field and life experience, complete all assignments on time. Late assignments will be initially be marked down three points and one point following for each day it is late. After the 5th day the assignment will receive a Zero. Written materials are to be word processed and double-spaced. Application of APA guidelines is mandatory. Students will be evaluated in three assignment areas, class participation regarding weekly activities and a final exam.

Your grade in this class is based on:

- *** Weekly participation regarding activities and discussions (20 points)
- *** Group presentation of case study (15 points)
- *** Group project and presentation on evidence based programs for high risk groups (15 points)
- *** Reflection Paper (20 points)
- *** Final Exam (30 points)

The grading scale for the course is:

95 - 100 A Superior performance

90 - 94 B+ Better than satisfactory performance

85 - 89 B Satisfactory performance

80 - 84 C+ Less than satisfactory performance

73 - 79 C Performance well below the standard expected of graduate students

66 - 72 D Clearly unsatisfactory performance, cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements

< 66 F Extremely unsatisfactory performance, cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements (descriptions are from the UT Graduate School catalog)

Class Presentation of Case Study

Students will be assigned to small groups who will be responsible for creating a 20 minute powerpoint presentation of a case study that will focus on social work practice with one or more of the following – individuals, small groups, families, organizations, and/or communities. The presenters must be able to 1) assess complex client *systems from an ecological perspective* with an *emphasis on diverse strengths, resources, and natural support systems*; 2) Discuss issues that should be addressed in developing appropriate intervention(s); 3) *facilitate class discussion* of the case and *defend chosen intervention(s) for addressing the problem(s)* in the case.

Guidelines for preparing the group presentation of case studies:

1. Review the theories and learning objectives associated with each case study.
2. Keep the learning objectives and theories in mind as you answer each or the required questions under the “Activities” that follow the case study. Be sure that each item of the question is addressed.
3. Conduct a literature review/search and locate evidence interventions that may be helpful in addressing the problem(s) in your particular case and rationale for choosing this intervention.
**Note there are also some good resources to review under the suggested readings section at the end of the case study. These resources are not however to take the place of the literature review.
4. Create a small handout (other than your powerpoint) for your classmates to emphasize key points of your presentation.
5. Orally present your findings to class and facilitate a class discussion of the case. (20 minutes)
6. Create a class activity to emphasize key points of the powerpoint. (up to 10 minutes)

Grading

Students will be asked to assess each of their group member’s effort, participation and quality of team cooperation. Information provided by group participants, the quality of content and the professionalism of the presentation and presenter will all be taken into consideration for individual grades that the instructor.

Guidelines for Group Project and 30 minute Powerpoint Presentation

Select a high risk group and upon the instructor’s approval:

- 1) Search evidence based websites on prevention for your identified high risk population.
- 2) Identify evidence based models of practice, principles and approaches for working with this population.
- 3) Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of using the identified models. (Limit 3 models).
- 4) Critique the usefulness, accuracy and value of each of the websites for lay users and social workers.
- 5) Summarize what impact this experience had on you as a practitioner as well as your thoughts on the importance of using evidence based practice.
- 6) Create a handout that provides your classmates with helpful resources for the population your group has chosen to address.

Final grades for group presentations will be based on the quality (evidence based) of the

information given within the presentations, level of participation which will be assessed by group members, and the instructor. Each group member is expected to actively participate within the presentation.

Guidelines for The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down

Reading *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* is an opportunity to expand your knowledge of a unique culture and explore the intersection of professional disciplines, professional and cultural competence, spirituality and health, social work values and ethics, as well as social work approaches which address the strengths and needs of a young child who develops a chronic illness. This assignment will 1) allow students to reflect on as well as compare and contrast effective and ineffective cross-cultural interventions 2) explore their world-views and 3) grapple with ethical dilemmas that can present themselves while working with people from other cultures and professional disciplines.

After reading the book, write a 3 to 5 page, APA, double spaced reflection paper (excluding title and reference page) and address the following items:

1. Identify two systems (individuals, families, groups, organizations) which you would assess as culturally insensitive or ineffective. Provide specific examples related to their interactions with or on behalf of the Lia and her family to support your choices. Discuss the action(s) or behavior(s) and the outcome.
2. Then do the same by identifying two systems that you found to be culturally sensitive or effective. Provide specific examples of their interactions with or on behalf of Lia and her family to support your choices. Discuss the action(s) or behavior(s) and the outcome.
4. Using the strengths perspective, identify Lia's strengths and explain your reasoning for your analysis.
5. Identify what social work interventions were helpful in the story? Explain why you think so.

(Note the following are study questions taken directly from *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*)

6. In her preface, the author says that while she was working on this book, she often asked herself two questions: "What is a good doctor?" "What is a good parent?" How do you think she might have answered her own questions? How would you answer them?

7. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* revolves around a small child who for much of the book is too young to speak for herself, and at the end is unable to. Do you nonetheless feel you know Lia Lee? Do you believe that even though she cannot walk or talk, she is a person of value--and if so, why?

8. The only American who fully won the Lees' trust was Jeanine Hilt, their social worker. Why did Jeanine succeed where so many others had failed?

9. Were you surprised by the quality of care and affection given to Lia by her foster parents? How did Lia's foster parents feel about Foua and Nao Kao? Was foster care ultimately to Lia's benefit or detriment?

10. Discuss any personal reactions that you had as you read this book. What were some of the issues you struggled with? What issues did this book help you to resolve? What questions does this book raise for you? Finally, how has this story affected you overall and what impact will it have on how you think about the social work practice with others?

Final Exam

The final exam will include, but not be limited to, questions on the following topics: using culturally-affirming communication in social work practice; identifying evidence-based prevention principles and approaches to well-being and social and economic justice across client systems; describing how advocacy and social change are applied to advance well-being, human rights, and social and economic justice in communities, and how and when to apply such generalist strategies across larger systems.

Course Content Outline

January 7, 2008– Class 1- Individuals /Families/Small Groups

Assessment of and multi-level interventions with complex problems facing individuals & families from an ecological perspective; identification and critique of best practices in assessing and intervening with individuals, small groups, & families; information technology to locate evidence-based assessment tools; family configurations (e.g., single parent, step-, aging, GLBTQ) and issues (e.g., child maltreatment and abuse, mental and physical health, immigration/legal status, death and dying, disability(ies), poverty, violence).

Class content- Overview of course and assignments; group assignments; sign up for presentations of case studies; discussion of problem-based learning; small group discussions of case studies

Required readings

In class case study: 2-1: Strengths-based and Solution-focused Narrative Intervention (pp. 12-16). Activity questions 1-5 will be reviewed within an entire class discussion using the guidelines for your upcoming class presentations for your case study.

Dworkin (2005) Chapter 1 – Problem-Based Learning and the Case Study Method pp 1-8.

Henggeler, S.W., Schoenwald, S.K. & Swenson, C.C. (2006). Methodological critique and meta-analysis as Trojan horse (letter to the editor). *Children and Youth Services Review*, 28, 447-457.

Littell, J.H. (2005). Lessons from a systematic review of effects of multisystemic therapy. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 27, 445-463.

Littell, J.H. (2006). The case for Multisystemic Therapy: Evidence or orthodoxy? *Children*

and *Youth Services Review*, 28, 458-472.

January 14, 2008– Class 2- Individuals /Families/Small Groups

Assessment of and multi-level interventions with complex problems facing individuals & families from an ecological perspective; identification and critique of best practices in assessing and intervening with individuals, small groups, & families; information technology to locate evidence-based assessment tools; family configurations (e.g., single parent, step-, aging, GLBTQ) and issues (e.g., child maltreatment and abuse, mental and physical health, immigration/legal status, death and dying, disability(ies), poverty, violence)

Required readings

Weekly in class case study 5-2: Resettlement of A Jewish Refugee Family from the Former Soviet Union (pp. 61-64). Complete “Activities” questions 1-5 for class discussion

*Birman, D., Trickett, E. & Buchanan, R.M. (2005). A tale of two cities: Replication of a study on the acculturation and adaptation of immigrant adolescents from the former Soviet Union in a different community context. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 35, 83-101.

*Chung, I.W. (2006). A cultural perspective on emotions and behavior: An empathic pathway to examine intergenerational conflicts in Chinese immigrant families. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 87, 367-376.

January 21, 2008 – Class 3 - Organizations and Small Groups

Assessment and multi-level interventions with organizations from an ecological perspective; identification and critique of best practices in assessing and intervening with organizations; information technology to locate evidence-based assessment tools; generalist group work (i.e., group dynamics, processes, roles).

Required Readings

Weekly in class case study: 7-4 Restoring organizational functioning: Challenge for a new executive director (p. 93- 95). Complete “Activities questions 1-4 for class discussion.

*Mulroy, E.A. & Lauber, H. (2004). A user-friendly approach to program evaluation and effective community interventions for families at risk of homelessness. *Social Work*, 49, 573-586.

*Peterson, N.A. & Hughey, J. (2002). Tailoring organizational characteristics for empowerment: Accommodating individual economic resources. *Journal of Community Practice*, 10, 41-59.

January 28, 2008 - Class 4 - Communities

Assessment and multi-level interventions with communities from an ecological perspective; identification and critique of best practices in assessing and intervening with communities; information technology to locate evidence-based assessment tools; generalist group work (i.e., group dynamics, processes, roles).

Required Readings for session

Weekly in class case study 7-2: Integrated services in American Indian country (p. 85-88). Complete “Activities questions 1-4 for class discussion.

- *Checker, M. (2007). “But I know it’s true”: Environmental risk assessment, justice, and anthropology. *Human Organization*, 66, 112-124.
- *Finifter, D.H., Jensen, C.J., Wilson, C.E. & Koenig, B.L. (2005). A comprehensive, multitiered, targeted community needs assessment model. *Family and Community Health*, 28, 293-306.
- *Heflinger, C.A. & Christens, B. (2006). Rural behavioral health services for children and adolescents: An ecological and community psychology analysis. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 34, 379-400.

February 5, 2008 - Class 5

Client systems/trans-disciplinary teams/ public health/risk and resilience framework.

Evidence-based prevention principles and approaches across client systems; intra-, inter- and trans-disciplinary teams; public health/risk and resilience framework; prevention approaches with at-risk populations (e.g., HIV, suicide, community, and domestic violence, and substance abuse).

Required Readings

Weekly in class case study 6-1: Dealing with end-stage illness: Cultural issues and the interdisciplinary team (pp. 69-71). Complete “Activity questions 1-5 for class discussion.

- *Bronstein, L.R. (2003). A model for interdisciplinary collaboration. *Social Work*, 48, 297-306.
- *Okamoto, S.K., LeCroy, C.W., Tann, S.S., Rayle, A.D. Kulis, S., Dustman, P. & Berceci, D. (2006). The implications of ecologically based assessment for primary prevention with indigenous youth populations. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 27, 155-170.

February 11, 2008 – Class 6

Client systems/trans-disciplinary teams/ public health/risk and resilience framework

Evidence-based prevention principles and approaches across client systems; using information technology to identify evidence-based principles and approaches; precautionary principle (Public Health) and traditional scientific risk assessment methodologies.

Required Readings:

Weekly in class case study: 7-1 Primary Prevention to Promote Effective Parenting: The Parent University (pp. 80-84). Complete “Activities” questions 1-4 for class discussion.

- *Glisson, C. & Schoenwald, S.K. (2005). The ARC organizational and community intervention strategy for implementing evidenced-based children’s mental health treatments. *Mental Health Services Research*, 7, 243-259.
- *Jenson, J.M. (2006). Advances and challenges in preventing childhood and adolescent problem behavior. *Social Work Research*, 30, 131-134.

*Mann, E.A. & Reynolds, A.J. (2006). Early intervention and juvenile delinquency prevention: Evidence from the Chicago Longitudinal Study. *Social Work Research*, 30, 153-167.

February 18, 2008-Class 7- Advocacy & Social Change Strategies

Advocacy and social change strategies that advance well-being and social and economic justice with individuals and in organizations & communities; models of community practice, grassroots, neighborhood, and community organizing; community social and economic development, program development, community liaison, social planning, coalition building, political and social action; social movements and their core components for progressive change (i.e., social work roles, scope of concern, constituencies, target systems, desired outcomes).

Required Readings

Weekly in class case study 4-3: Saving *STOP*: A community-based program to reduce jail recidivism among the mentally ill (pp. 52-55). Complete “Activities” questions 1-4 & 6. (Note: one page statement is not required for #2) for class discussion.

*Botvin, G.J., Griffen, K.W. & Nichols, T.D. (2006). Preventing youth violence and delinquency through a universal school-based approach. *Prevention Science*, 7, 403-408.

*Icard, L.D. Bourjolly, J.N. & Siddiqui, N. (2003). Designing social marketing strategies to increase African Americans’ access to health promotion programs. *Health and Social Work*, 28, 214- 223.

Jacobson, M. & Rugeley, C. (2007). Community-based participatory research: Group work for social justice and community change. *Social Work with Groups*, 30, 21-39.

Reflection Papers Due

February 25, 2008-Class 8 – Ethical Dilemmas

Recognizing, analyzing, and resolving ethical dilemmas with individuals, families, groups, and communities; NASW Code of Ethics, International Code of Ethics; ethical principles; professional values; utilizing supervision appropriately for analysis and resolution of ethical dilemmas.

Required Readings:

Weekly in class case study 3-2: Outreach to homeless youth at-risk (pp. 37-39). Complete “Activities” questions 1-7 for class discussion.

Miley, K. & DuBois, B. (2007). Ethical preferences for the clinical practice of empowerment social work. *Social Work, Health, and International Development*, 44, 29-44.

International Federation of Social Workers- Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles
<http://www.ifsw.org/en/p38000398.html>

Final Exam