



McMaster University
School of Social Work
Winter Term, 2014
Thursdays, 2:30 – 5:30 p.m.

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or by appointment

SOCIAL WORK 4X03 SOCIAL WORK WITH FAMILIES

COURSE OUTLINE

The purpose of this course is to deepen your understanding of social work with families. In most areas of practice, social workers are required to work with families and/or recognize the influence of families on the lives of individuals. The course will consider the impact of society's expectations of families as well as the impact of social structures on families. Recognizing that there are a variety of family forms, definitions and experiences, it will highlight some of the values and biases about families in Canadian society.

The course will focus on analysis and skill development. The content assumes that you have a basic understanding of practice from a social justice perspective and that your analysis and practice interventions will be based upon this social justice perspective. The course will cover a number of theories and practice approaches that help social workers understand and work from a family centered approach. Students are encouraged to critically examine family practices.

The course discussion will be guided by the School of Social Work philosophy:

As social workers, we operate in a society characterized by power imbalances that affect us all. These power imbalances are based on age, class, ethnicity, gender identity, geographic location, health, ability, race, sexual identity and income. We see personal troubles as inextricably linked to oppressive structures. We believe that social workers must be actively involved in the understanding and transformation of injustices in social institutions and in the struggles of people to maximize control over their own lives.

Course Objectives:

1. To develop an understanding of families in their social context.
2. To integrate theory and practice.
3. To develop family assessment and intervention skills that reflect social work's commitment to social justice.
4. To deepen awareness of how one's own experiences and social location influence how one sees individuals and families.

Course Format:

The course will provide a variety of learning experiences including lectures, small and large group discussions, role plays, experiential exercises, guest speakers and/or films. Classroom discussion is expected and students are encouraged to bring examples from their practice and life experience to illustrate or enrich the material.

Attendance:

This is a required course in the social work undergraduate program and is designed to prepare you for generalist practice. Since much of the learning will involve classroom discussion and exercises, attendance is compulsory. **Students must attend at least 80% of the classes. Please notify the instructor of any absences and submit the on-line student absence form if you are ill and cannot attend class.**

Student Responsibilities:**Students are directed to the School's Social Media Policy**

Students are expected to contribute to the creation of a respectful and constructive learning environment. Please read the material in preparation for class, attend on time and remain for the duration of the class. A formal break will be provided in the middle of each class.

In the past, students & faculty have found that non-course related use of laptop computers and hand-held devices during class to be distracting and at times, disruptive. Consequently, students are expected to only use such devices for taking notes and other activities directly related to the lecture or class activity taking place. Please try to remember to turn off your cell phone before class starts.

Please check with the instructor before using any audio or video recording devices in the classroom.

Required Readings:

Course Pack available in McMaster Bookstore.

Readings:

Your course readings are from text books, journals and websites. Some readings may not be available if the library does not have access to the text.

Supplementary Readings:

Collins, D., Jordan, C., Coleman, H. (2012) **An Introduction to Family Social Work** Nelson.

Goldenberg, I. & Goldenberg H. (2008) **Family Therapy, An Overview**. Belmont, California: Brooks Cole/Wadsworth.

McGoldrick, Monica & Gerson, Randy. (1985). **Genograms in Family Assessment**. New York: Norton

McGoldrick, M. & Hardy, K.V. (2008) **Re-visioning Family Therapy**. New York: Guilford.

Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R. (2009) **Family Therapy, Concepts and Methods**. Needham Heights Ma: Allyn & Bacon.

Van Hook, M.P. (2008) "Introduction to Resilience-Based Practice". **Social Work Practice**

with

Families, A Resiliency Approach. Lyceum.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (subject to revision):

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
Jan. 9	Introduction: Practice with Families Social Context Warning about readings	
Jan. 16	Understanding Families	Nichols, M.P. (2011) "The Fundamental Concepts of Family Therapy" in <u>The Essentials of Family Therapy</u> . Ch.4
Jan. 23	Assessment: Ways of trying to understand families	Thomlinson, B. (2002) "Family Assessment" in <u>Family Assessment Handbook</u> . Ch. 4 Miller, I.W., Ryan, C.E., Keitner, G. I., Bishop, D.S. & Epstein, N.B. (2000) "The McMaster Approach to Families: theory, assessment, treatment and research." <u>Journal of Family Therapy</u> . 22:168-189.
Jan. 30	Practice Theory: Intergenerational Approaches Understanding history & intergenerational influences	Green, J. B. (2003) "Intergenerational and Psychodynamically Based Family Theory and Therapy" <u>Family Theory & Therapy: Exploring an Evolving Field</u> . Belmont, Ca: Thomson Brooks /Cole. Ch.5. Price, S.J., Price, C.A. & McKenry, P.C. (2010) "Families Coping with Change" In S.J. Price, C.A. Price & P.C. McKenry (eds) <u>Families and Change</u> . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Ch. 1.
Feb. 6	Understanding history and social context: Impact on families	Brave Heart, M.Y.H. (2000) "Wakiksuyapi: Carrying the Historical Trauma of the Lakota" <u>Tulane Studies in Social Welfare</u> .245-266.

	ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE	<p>Patel, N. (2007) "Aboriginal Families, Cultural Context and Therapy" <i>Counselling, psychotherapy, and Health</i>, 3 (1), 1-24.</p> <p>Falicov, C.J. (2008) "Transnational Journeys" in M. McGoldrick & K.V. Hardy (ed) <u>Re-visioning Family Therapy</u> New York: Guilford. Ch. 2.</p>
Feb. 13	<p>Conversations with Families Engaging Families and Interviewing</p> <p>What do I do after I say hello?</p>	<p>Ragg, D.M. (2006) "Exploration and Data Collection" in <u>Building Family Practice Skills</u>. Ch. 4.</p> <p>Collins, D. Jordan, C, & Coleman, H. (2007) "The Beginning Phase" in <u>An Introduction to Family Social Work</u>. Belmont, Ca: Thomson Brooks/ Cole. Ch. 4</p>
Feb. 20	MID-TERM BREAK	
Feb. 27	Assessment and Planning	<p>Ragg, D.M. (2005) "Moving from Assessment to Treatment" in <u>Building Family Practice Skills</u>. Ch. 6.</p> <p>Hanna, S. M. (2007) "The Next Step: From Problem Definition to Treatment Plan" <u>The Practice of Family Therapy</u>. Thomson Brooks /Cole.Ch. 6.</p>
Mar. 6	<p>Practice Theory: Family Structural Approach</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE</p>	<p>Cleveland, P. (1999) "Structural Family Interventions" in Kilpatrick, A. C. and Holland T. (eds.) <u>Working with Families: An Integrative Model</u>. Needham Heights, MA.: Allyn & Bacon. Ch.7.</p>
Mar. 13	Practice Theory: Cognitive Behavioural	<p>Dattilo, F.M. (2010) "Cognitive-Behavioural Techniques" in <u>Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy with Couples and Families</u>. New:York: Guilford.</p>

Mar. 20	Practice Theories Solution Focused Narrative Approach	Goldenberg & Goldenberg (2008) “Social Construction Models I: Solution-Focused Therapy & Collaborative Therapy” <u>Family Therapy: An Overview</u> . Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/ Cole. Ch.14
Mar. 27	Practice Theory: Narrative Approach	Nichols, M. & Schwartz, R. (2001) “Narrative Therapy” <u>Family Therapy Concepts and Methods</u> . Needham Heights, MA.: Allyn & Bacon. Ch.12.
April 3	Review and Endings Integrative models ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE	Nichols, M. (2010) “Integrative Models” in <u>Family Therapy Concepts and Methods</u> . Needham Heights, MA.: Allyn & Bacon. Ch.14

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:

Written Assignment Expectations:

1. The assignments must be typed and double spaced (12 pt font). One inch margins. Hard copies must be submitted. Electronic copies of papers will not be accepted.
2. The assignment must be properly referenced (APA style).
3. All written work will be marked on grammar, clarity of writing, and organization as well as content and analysis.
4. Be sure to **keep a copy of your assignment**.
5. The assignment must be submitted in class at the beginning of class on the due date unless authorized by the instructor. **Late papers will be penalized 5% per day.**
6. In exceptional circumstances an extension will be granted if discussed and agreed upon prior to the due date. If the extension is granted because of illness, a Doctor’s note should be submitted with the assignment.

1. GENOGRAM AND TIME LINE

Choose a family that you know well. This may be your own family, a family from your practice, or a friend’s family. Where relevant (eg. A family from practice) change all identifying information. It is particularly helpful to apply the assignment to your own family but this is not required.

- Provide a brief narrative about the family (max. one page) that introduces the family and contextualizes their experiences. This should include a description of their social locations.

- Complete a genogram (at least four generations). It will be helpful to you if this is the family you will discuss in Assignment 3. A genogram should portray health, emotional and social histories. It should be detailed and give a quick picture of the family. It should reflect important and relevant information such as personality descriptors, idiosyncratic roles assigned by the family, health, occupations, important aspects of the individual's experience etc. Consult the course readings about genograms. Clearly identify the meaning of all the symbols used in the genogram.
- Create a time line marking important events in the family's life (four generations) related to important socio-historical times. Consider the important cultural, political, economic events relevant to the family. Be sure to make the connection between the family's life events and the socio-historical times. How did the social context affect/influence the family? How did the family react to events? Develop a one or two page summary of this analysis.
- In one or two pages summarize the most important patterns, reactions, dynamics you observed. How does the history and experiences of previous generations affect current family and individual functioning?

Length: 4 pages

Due: February 6

Weight: 20%

2. FAMILY INTERVIEW:

The purpose of this assignment is to provide an opportunity to interview a family and to review your practice. It provides an opportunity to apply theory to practice and to complete a self assessment regarding your success. It also allows you to consider alternative strategies when working with families.

Record (video or audio) a 40 – 60 minute family interview where you are the social worker. If possible, use an interview from your practice (ensuring that all permission forms are completed), if not possible, recruit people to function as a family of at least three people.

Complete a process recording of three sections of the interview. The sections selected should reflect your application of three different specific **family** interviewing techniques discussed in the readings and lectures in this course. It should go beyond basic interviewing skills learnt in SW2A06.

The process recording (of only three sections of the interview) should include:

- An introductory paragraph providing demographic information on the family, the presenting problem/issue and the social work organization in which you practice (or in which you set this role play).
- The dialogue i.e. word for word what is said.
- State what interviewing techniques you chose to use citing references from the readings. Comment on why you chose the interviewing techniques.
- A brief reflection i.e. comments on how you were feeling and how your own social

location, values, experiences with your own family affected your work in each of your chosen sections of the interview.

- Describe what happened in the interview as a result of each intervention/ use of each interviewing technique. Is this what you intended to happen? What is your understanding of what happened as a result of the intervention/technique?
- State what you would do differently if given the opportunity to do the interview again and why
- Cite references from the readings that contributed to your analysis.
- On a separate sheet of paper, summarize what you learned about yourself and about interviewing a family from this exercise.

Submit the tape/disc/digital recorder. If using a tape, ensure that the tape is clearly set at the specific point where you began the first written dialogue and indicate in writing where we will find the next two sections. If using a digital recorder, indicate where we will find the dialogue. **See below for suggested format.**

Length: 5 – 8 pages

Due: March 6

Value: 25%

A suggested format for assignment # 2:

Dialogue	Technique & Why you used it?	Reflection on your own processes	What happened? Was this what you anticipated? What is your analysis	Alternative responses and why
<p><u>C1</u> I can't sleep at night worrying about money ... <u>C2</u> It's your fault... <u>Wk</u> On a scale of 1-10 rate how upset are you?</p>	<p>Scaling Question: a scaling question, common in solution focused practice is designed to (Goldenberg & Goldenberg 2008 p.?))</p> <p>I used it to gage how worried she was and to help the rest of the family understand how she was feeling. I also thought that it would give me an idea of how worried she was and help to set up a solution.</p>	<p>I was thinking about my own family values about money. Knew I was judging them. Wanted to avoid their argument.</p>	<p>I focused on the individual and this took us away from the family focus and made her worry about money as the problem. Collins et.al (2007) suggest that it is important to focus on the family relationships...</p> <p>The scaling question just kept them arguing about who was most upset and to blame.</p>	<p>It would have been more helpful to focus on their understanding of each others' worries i.e. focus on their relationships. Also I should have taken the focus away from the family money problems & their blame of C1 and focus on social inequities. (Collins 2007 et al p.?, Nichols & Schwartz 2001 p.?) Perhaps I could have made a comment like "you mention money...you seem to make it C1's problem as if she is not managing money correctly yet it is clear that you are not getting enough to live on from ODSP. So many people living on government assistance live with this tension"</p> <p>I should have used circular questions. (Hanna 2007 p.?) e.g.... to get at the relational issues and the meaning of money to the family (Nichols & Schwartz 2001 p. ?)</p> <p>To provide hope and to take blame away from C1, I could have addressed their resilience and strengths by saying.... (Van Hook p.?)</p>

3. APPLICATION PAPER:

The purpose of this paper is to reflect the process you will go through when trying to understand and plan for your work with a family. It has two parts, the first, Analysis is similar to the thinking process you will go through when you see a family. It is designed to help you understand a family using the theories studied in this course. The second part, Assessment, is similar to what is expected of you in practice, that is, to provide a written or verbal assessment and work/treatment plan that can be used to guide your work with the family or to share with colleagues, the family, court, a referral agency or to leave in an agency record.

Choose a family to write about (you need not be limited by traditional definitions of “family”).

You may choose to focus this paper on one of the following:

- a family you are working with ... Or
- a family you know well ... Or
- a family represented in a movie (only movies selected/approved by the instructor may be used)... Or
- *your own family *

There are two sections to the assignment:

Section 1) Analysis (20)

a) List the family members, and significant demographic information. Identify what social work setting would be involved with the family.

b) Briefly describe the family. Comment on the family’s social locations and how societal structures influence its functioning.

c) Summarize your understanding of the “foundation theories” family systems theory and social constructionism in one paragraph each.

d) Write a detailed analysis of the family using at least two concepts from each of the following practice theories:

- Intergenerational
- Structural
- Cognitive Behavioural
- Narrative

Write this from an academic position, using references. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate your ability to use theory to further your understanding of the family. Your analysis should reflect that you think holistically about the family be sure to link concepts to examples from or about the family.

Section 2) Assessment & Plan

Assessment (20)

Write an assessment of the family and a plan (assume you have discussed the assessment and the plan with the family). Imagine you are writing this **assessment** so that it may be included in an agency record and therefore you would not use references.

Plan (5) Remember that a **plan** is based on the analysis and the assessment and therefore, the plan should reflect your understanding of the family. The plan is part of an assessment.

Therefore write the plan as if it will be included in an agency record. State the goals and objectives and strategies/interventions to accomplish the goals and objectives. Consult Ragg, Thomlison, Miller et.al. and any assessment & plan outlines/information provided in class.

Guidelines for application paper:

- Please leave yourself enough time to complete this assignment.
- Where appropriate, change all identifying information. This is required if you are writing about a family you know through your field placement or your work.
- *.If you wish to use your own family as the subject of the assignment, there are some special considerations. It is a very useful exercise to explore one's family as it can deepen self-awareness and improve practice skills, however, sometimes it can be upsetting. Allow enough time for you to process the information and insights. Since one can not be a social worker to one's own family, you will have to imagine that there is a particular issue or theme that your family wishes to consult a social worker about in order to develop a plan.
- If you wish to receive feedback on the assignment and to have it returned, please submit a stamped self-addressed envelope when you submit the assignment.
- **Length:**
 - Section 1: 10 – 12 double spaced pages**
 - Section 2: 3-6 double spaced pages**

Due: April 3 in class

Value: 45%

4. CLASS PARTICIPATION

Participation grades are based on constructive contribution to the overall class environment. This includes active participation in class discussions, small group exercises, providing a critical analysis of the course content and material, volunteering for role plays, asking questions, sharing experiences, reflecting on links to practice, listening respectfully to others, and generally communicating ideas and feelings. It is important to remember that constructive contribution does not mean dominating the discussion.

Value: 10%

PRIVACY PROTECTION

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last 5 digits of the student number as the identifying data.

Papers will be returned in class unless you are told differently. If you are not available to pick up your paper in class, please arrange with the instructor to pick up your paper or submit a stamped self addressed envelope.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. This is additionally important because you are entering a profession where ethics guide practice. The academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is the student’s responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, <http://www.mcmaster.ca/univsec/policy/AcademicIntegrity>.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- a) plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained;
- b) improper collaboration in group work; or
- c) copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

SUPPORT SERVICES/ LEARNING SUPPORTS

Please let me (your instructor) know if there are any specific supports that may be useful to your learning in this class. Where possible, I will try to provide support. The **Student Accessibility Service** offers consultation about effective learning strategies, essay writing, and study habits; accommodations, assistive technology, advocacy and general support for students with disabilities. Contact: sas.mcmaster.ca MUSC B107

If you have a disability and are registered with SAS, they will help you sort out what accommodations would be helpful to you so that you may successfully complete this course. Additionally, they will provide you with a letter for me requesting accommodation. Please feel free to contact me about this so that we can work out a plan that will support your learning.

The **Student Wellness Centre** provides health services including personal and psychological counseling and academic success counseling. wellness.mcmaster.ca MUSC B101 and B106

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Email Forwarding in MUGSI: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/emailforward/emailforward.html>

*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link
(Approved at the Faculty of Social Sciences meeting on Tues. May 25, 2010)

COURSE MODIFICATION POLICY

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.