

**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL POLICY & PRACTICE**

**SW727 – SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION  
IN THE FAMILY**

Fall 2016

phone:  
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**I. COURSE PURPOSE**

This course, designed to cover theory relevant to family intervention and focuses on the application of theory into practice. Readings, as well as class time will focus on techniques for intervention. We begin by a focus on the changing face of the American family as a means of understanding the nature of diversity in the practice of family therapy. As family forms change so does the concept of what constitutes normal functioning, which is at the essence of intervention.

Lectures are supplemented by videotapes and role playing of family transactions in a variety of social work situations. This practice elective builds on the working skills taught in first year and developed in second year practice (sw604/614 and 704/714). The focus is on integrating general systems theory with psychodynamic, developmental and neurobiological theories by linking individual, dyadic couples, triadic families and more complex processes of organizations and communities in an effort to develop a comprehensive treatment strategy for families seeking social work services. The core integrating principle is that of attachment; what it is; what makes it work; and how we repair it.

Developmental theory covered in second year practice is further expanded to include the interface of the multiple developmental needs of various family members and how they are structured in culturally diverse family forms. The essence of family therapy is in how these developmental needs complement each other and when they come into conflict, Psychodynamic theory is further expanded by focusing on the complementarity of defenses in interpersonal relationships. Also, recent neurological findings regarding brain chemistry and its impact on attachments keep these theories updated and related to the “biological” level of intervention, as well as in adapting to refine the concepts of attachment. Similarly the role of emotions, often neglected in psychological theory, is discussed from both a theoretical and as well as practical orientation. These paradigms are considered from the standpoint of social work values and ethics (sect. 1 & 4), culturally diverse populations (sect. 4). Social and Economic Justice (sect. 4) and specific populations at risk (sect. 3, 4, 5, 6) as well as expanding clinical intervention to include the support of organizations in meeting the needs of its diverse clientele (sect. 2).

The structure of the course utilizes case examples including role play simulations and videotaped vignettes that highlight the theory being practiced. Students present original

papers focusing on specific populations – which serve to expose the class to various applications of the theory and practice.

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## **II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

1. Developing a knowledge base to understand bio-psychosocial theory and its application to direct practice with individuals, couples, families and large systems.
2. Develop skills of assessment and strategies for intervention in troubled families in a variety of settings.
3. Interpret these theories and skills with sensitivity to minority, gender, cultural and socio-economic differences inherent in social work practice, as well as reflect the values and ethics of social work practice.
4. Incorporate the interface of the family system with the broader “macro” systems of organization and government policy.
5. Incorporate evaluation as part of assessment of efficacy of treatment.

In developing a knowledge base, the course covers a limited number of schools of thought, in an attempt to have the student make comparative analysis in determining which modalities are suited to which populations. The final paper encourages the student to pursue their particular interest in greater depth. The instructor will set individual meetings with the student to focus their paper.

### **Theories covered include:**

1. Evolutionary theory as adapted to families
2. Sociology of families
3. General systems theory, as it has evolved from the sciences and adapted to family systems.
4. Developmental theory – a critical evaluation of psycho-social theories of development and the bias of values implicit in theory.
5. Psychodynamic theory – How it can be made adaptive to an interpersonal paradigm.
6. Object relations theory – Link between the individual and interpersonal process.
7. Constructionist approaches – How theoretical approaches shape the direction of treatment.
8. Communication theory – How individuals signal one another to know how to behave
9. Neurological theory – the impact on the chemistry of attachment, and the effects of psychotropic medication.
10. Attachment theory as it interfaces with different levels of relationships.
11. Policy – As it reflects the norms of society regarding family values
12. Evolutionary Psychology – considering families development from sociological and anthropological perspectives, provides a framework on how and why people may have developed in particular ways.

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. REQUIRED READINGS

Course Bulk Pack is available on Canvas

#### B. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly readings are stipulated in class schedule. Those with a (\*) are required – others are available through the instructor. The student is expected to keep current with the readings, reviewed at the beginning of each class. There will be a mid-term exam based on the readings, on the 7<sup>th</sup> class. There will be a final term paper integrating theory into practice. Topics can include, but not limited to:

- 1.) Family Forms – diversity as a reflection of context
- 2.) A comparison of two or more models of family therapy as applied to a case.
- 3.) A look at specific problems from a family point of view, e.g., substance abuse, disabilities, eating disorders etc.
- 4.) Diversity of family structure e.g. Single parent families, blended families, gay & lesbian families
- 5.) Cultural diversity in families; e.g. African American families, Hispanic families, Jewish families and Asian families, etc.
- 6.) Political assessment of family theories from:
  - a.) feminist point of view
  - b.) afro-centric point of view
  - c.) socio-economic point of view
- 7.) Family intervention in a particular setting – a hospital, child welfare agency, school.
- 8.) Relationships between family theory & family therapy...how theory informs the goals of practice.
- 9.) Neuroscience and therapy

The goal of the final term paper is to apply your particular area of interest to the area of family therapy. A hard copy of your paper, 12 pages in length will be due the third from last class.

#### C. GRADING POLICY

Grades will be based equally on mid-term exam and final paper. Criteria for grading will be discussed in class. The student is expected to attend class. More than two absences will lead to a lowering of grade. Also timely submission of assignments is required. Late submission will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor, and will effect grading.

## IV. CLASS SCHEDULE

We will begin with Addressing Attachment as the cornerstone of relationships and use Systems Theory in considering how each level of the system, individual, couple family, organization, relates to the other. This requires an appreciation of the overlap between psychodynamic concepts and systems theory. In this way the student will be challenged to consider assessment and treatment from an individual as well as interpersonal perspective..

### Week # 1 FAMILY INTERVENTION – A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

- A. Concepts and intervention will be defined on a continuum, from behavioral approaches on one extreme to psychodynamic approaches on the other.  
Differing theories will be considered with a focus on:
- 1.) What is meant by intervention? What is to be changed? What are the goals of treatment?
  - 2.) What is the explicit or implicit implication of normal or functional adaptation?
  - 3.) What is the role of the therapist?
    - a. directive
    - b. passive
    - c. coach
    - d. level of use of self
  - 4.) Approaches could include:
    - a. behavioral
    - b. cognitive
    - c. narrative/post modern
    - d. structural
    - e. multi-generational
    - f. psychodynamic
    - g. emotionally based
    - h. biologically based

B Attachment- what is it?

- a. Attachment and intersubjectivity

### READING

- \*<sup>1</sup> 1.) Kilpatrick, A. (1999) Levels of Family Need , ch.1 Working with Families

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<sup>1</sup> Reading will be made available in class.

2.) Hazan,C. (2004), “What does it mean to be attached?”in Rhodes.W. Adult Attachment, Guilford.

3.) Hughes, D. (2007), Attachment Focused Family Therapy, Ch.1, Attachment and intersubjectivity., ch2, Family Treatment, an overview..WW Norton

4) Ammaniti, M. (2014) A New take on Intersubjectivity, ch.1 The Birth of Intersubjectivity

## Week # 2 THE STRUCTURE OF AN INTERVIEW

We’ll begin with a structural/ strategic approach which is noted for short term interventions, keeping in mind issues of attachment

### READINGS

\* 1.) Silver, W. (1993) “Techniques of Structural Family Therapy,”  
*In Innovations in Practice, Sarasota*

. \*2) Haley, J. (1996) “Conducting the first interview”, *In Problem Solving Therapy.*  
Josey Bass

3) Janzen,C.(2006) “Theoretical and Treatment Approaches to Evidence Based Family Treatment”, Family Treatment, Evidence Based Practice With Populations At Risk. Brooks/Cole

4) Fenell D. (2012) “The Family as a Living System’ ch.5, Counselling Families

5) Dorfman, R., ed. (1988). Paradigms of Clinical Social Work. New York.  
Brunner/Mazel.

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## Week # 3 TECHNIQUES FOR ASSESSMENT AND TECHNIQUES FOR INTERVENTION

### READINGS

\* 1.) Minuchin, S. (1974) *Families and Family Therapy* Ch 7 and 8, “Framing the Therapeutic System” and “Restructuring the Family,”Harvard U Press

2) Haley,J, “Symptoms as tactics in human relationships” In Strategic Therapy

3)Williams, Lee (2011) “Assessing Family Interaction”, Essential Assessment Skills for Couple and Family Therapists. Guilford Press

## # 4 COMMUNICATIONS AND FAMILY THERAPY

Man’s unique ability to communicate symbolically is at the core of the definition of intimacy, covering concepts of self and consciousness. This section considers mans’ capacity to make meaning as central to our work. We will also review post modern theory of meaning as well as consider application of communication theory to practice.

### READINGS

\* 1.)Watzalawick, Paul (1967). *Pragmatics of Human Communication.*

W.W. Norton “Some tentative axioms of communication”, “Paradoxical Communication”

- 2.) Wachtel, P. (2011) "Reframing, relabeling and paradox" ch.12 Therapeutic Communication
- \* 3.) Walsh, F. (2003), *Normal Family Processes*, ch.18, Gottman Laboratory Studies, Guilford Press
- 4.) Satir, V. (2002) Communications Family therapy, In W. Walsh, *Essentials of Family Therapy* Love Publications
- \* 5.) Gottman, J. (2001) *The Relationship Cure*, ch1. How we connect emotionally

Week # 5 COMMUNICATION STYLES & PERSONALITY - A COGNITIVE / INTRAPSYCHIC VIEW

The concept of personality links cognitive and behavioral and communication theories, with psychodynamic theories...a link to integrating individual and family systems concepts

READINGS

- 1) Montgomery, A. (2013) "Personality Disorders as Affect Management Strategies" *ch.5 Neurobiology Essentials for Clinicians*
- \*2.) Johnson, S. (1994) *Character Styles*, WW Norton
- \*3.) Beck, A. (1990) *Cognitive Therapy of Personality Disorders*, ch2, Guilford

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Week # 6 ATTACHMENTS – PHYSIOLOGICAL / PSYCHOLOGICAL / SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL EXPLANATIONS

The concept of development, covered in advance practice, will be expanded to incorporate the complementarities of developmental processes of family members and how family structures allow or inhibit growth. Development will be considered from a biological as well as psycho-social perspective. It will also be considered on a cross cultural basis. Considering attachment patterns beyond western cultures. It will also consider differing life course trajectories across cultures.

The second section will focus on what neuroscience tells us about attachment, and what interfaces with optional attachment. We will consider treatment implications of this new area, particularly its impact on emotions.

READINGS

- 1) D. Hughes, Baylin (2012) "Parenting is a brain thing", ch1 Brain Based Parenting
- \* 2 ) Johnson, S. (2005) "Emotion and The Repair of Close Relationships" In Pinsoff, *Family Psychology*, Oxford U. Press

- 3.) Cozolino, L. (2002) "Neuroscience and Psychotherapy"
- 4 ) Cosmides, L (2004). "Evolutionary Psychology and the *Emotions*," *In Handbook of the Emotions*, Oxford U.Press
- 5) Badenoch,B. (2008), *Being a Brain Wise Therapist*, ch. 19,20.WW Norton
- 6) Fishbane, M. (2015). "Neurobiology and Family Processes." In Advancing Family Systems: Research and Practice.

#### Week # 7 EMOTIONALLY BASED FAMILY THERAPY

Attachment therapy as well as neuroscience findings have given an academic base to the neglected study of emotions and its impact on relationships.

##### READINGS

- 1)Panksepp, J. (2007) "The Neuroscience and Neuroeffective Psychology of the Prosocial Brain"
- 2) Duck, S (2007) "Attachment and Emotion", Human Relationships, Sage
- 3) Fishbane,M. (2013) "The Emotional Brain" ch.3 Loving with the Brain in Mind

#### Week # 8 OBJECT RELATIONS FAMILY THERAPY and the CONCEPT OF MIND

Object relations theory bridges psychodynamic and systems theory through the concepts of projective identification. This concept serves to connect the chasm between psychodynamic and family systems concepts

##### READINGS

- \* 1.) Silver, W. (1994) "Beauty & the Beast, Object Relatives Therapy and the Intersystem Model"(Review from 714)
- \* 2.) Slipp, S. (1993) Object Relations Family Therapy, Ch 4, 10 Jason Arrunson
- 3.) Scharff D. (1991) "Techniques of Family Therapy" In *The Primer of Object Relations Therapy*, Jason Aaronson
- \* 4.)Atkinson, B. (2005) "Wired for Love" In *Emotional Intelligence in Couples Therapy*, ch.2, WW Norton
- 5)

#### Week # 9 PAIR BONDING & INTIMACY – A DEFINITION OF LOVE

Intimacy is at the core of the contemporary marriage, though this was not always true. We will look at marriage over time and across cultures and consider the future of marriage.

- Marriage over time and culture
- Personality and Intimacy

- Intervention in couple's therapy

### READINGS

- \* 1.) Coontz, S. (2006) "*Marriage, a History*" Ch 15 – 17, Viking
- \* 2.) Knox, D (2005) "Love in Relationships, In *Choices in Relationship*", ch 5  
Thompson
- 3.) Bridgeman, B.(2003) "Courtship & Reproductive Adaptation" In *Psychology and Evolution* Sage
- \*4) Hamel, J. (2008) *Intimate Partner and Family Abuse*, ch.8, Springer publ.

### Week # 10 INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF PSYCHIC TRAUMA – INTEGRATING TRANSGENERATIONAL AND PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORIES

The concept of how patterns are transmitted across generations has fascinated family theorists and therapists. This is again an attempt to understand the overlap of psychodynamic and behavioral patterns over time.

### READINGS

- \* 1.) Slipp, S. "Intergenerational Transmission and Psychic Trauma"
- 2) Hamel J.(2008) op.cit. ch.10, The Movable Genogram
- 3) Cowan, P. (2001) "A Couples' Perspective on the Transmission of Attachment Patterns," *Adult Attachment and Couple Psychotherapy* Brunner Routledge.
- 4) Wolynn, M. (2016). "It Didn't Start with You." Vilana Press: New York.

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### Weeks # 11 & 12 DIVERSITY IN FAMILIES: AN OVERVIEW OF RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER AND CLASS AND HOW THEY ARE EXPRESSED IN DIVERSE FAMILY STRUCTURES

This class picks up on content of other classes, but focuses on the nature of diversity, and how it frames what we call a family, and how treatment must incorporate different belief systems

### READINGS

- 1.) Carling, Alan (2002) *Analyzing Families* Ch 2 "A Portrait of Western Families" London, Routledge
- 2.) Russell D. (2012) "The Multigenerational Family Constellation" ch.6  
Guadalupe K, Diversity in Family Constellations.



- \*3) Jones Thomas, A. (2010) Understanding Culture and Worldview in Family Systems, ch 3. Rasheed J. Readings in Family Therapy
- 4.) Knox, David (2005) *Choices in Relationships* “Theoretical Framework for Marriage and Family” p. 19 -29
- \* 5.) Edwin, K. (2006) *Promises I Can Keep*, U of PA Press, Introduction and Conclusion
- \* 6) Pederson,P. (2008) *Counseling Across Cultures*, ch. 24, Sage
- 7) Mcgoldrick,M.(1998) *Revisioning Family Therapy*, ch.20, *African American Couples in Therapy*, Guilford
- 8) Sue,V. (2003), *Multicultural Social Work Practice*, “Formation of Worldviews” John Wiley

### Week # 13 RESEARCH AND FAMILY THERAPY

The history of family therapy has as most therapy, been value rather than evidence based. The contemporary practitioner must be sensitive to what research can tell us about what constitutes effective practice.

#### READINGS

- \* 1.) Knox, E (2005) op.cit. “Evaluating Research in Marriage and Family” ch 2
- 2) Gottman,J. (2005) “The Mismeasure of Therapy” In *Pinsoff, Family Psychology* Oxford U.Press
- 3.) Roberts, A. (2006) Foundations of Evidence Based Social Work Practice, Oxford U Press Ch 316
- 4) Bengston V. (2005) *Sourcebook of Family Theory and Research*, ch.1, *Theory and Theorizing in Family Research* Sage

### Week # 14 PRESENTATION OF PAPERS