CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO  
DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK

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Office Hours- Monday 1-2:45, by appointment, and weekend class Saturdays once a month 12-1  
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Course Syllabus  
SWK 204A-Section, 4 Mondays 3-5:45  
Social Work Practice I

General Description

Social Work Practice 204A is the first required practice course in the graduate social work curriculum. Employing a Generalist Practice Perspective, this course introduces students to social work values, knowledge, and skills essential for beginning social work practice with diverse populations. The course will provide students with a general framework for practice with different size systems: individuals, families, small groups, organizations, community, and society. (Note: Group, Organizational, and Community approaches will be covered in greater detail in SW204B; this course primarily focuses on the skills related to work with individuals and, as appropriate, the family.) There will also be a basic introduction to organizational assessment and work with groups. Fieldwork (and students’ prior) experiences, in conjunction with the reading materials, will form the basis of many course discussions. The shifting, more restrictive economic and political environment in which current practice is being carried out will not be neglected. Certain societal level problems (like the ongoing conflict in Iraq) and national/State/local economic issues may be specifically addressed as they influence (or might influence) practice.

The ecological model and systems perspective, which provide the basic theoretical framework for the course, are oriented toward problem-solving in context and understanding the application of multiple levels of intervention. Other theoretical frameworks integrated into the course include empowerment, resilience, and strength approaches to social work practice. Assessment, planning, intervention, evaluation, termination, and follow-up are part of this process. Multi-level assessment and intervention will be emphasized with particular attention to mastering interviewing, counseling, and system advocacy skills and practice with vulnerable and oppressed populations. Specific practical integration of the course content with the field practicum is achieved through tasks and activities, where field instructors and students collaboratively focus attention on using the skills addressed in the classroom, the
readings, and special assignments (including those noted in the Field Manual or required of IV-E students).

Content in this course is designed to build on content taught in human behavior, social policy, and diversity courses. Theories of human behavior, social policy, and diversity are integrated with key practice theories and concepts in order to provide strength based services across the spectrum of client systems. The impacts of social policies on human behavior and the delivery of services are examined as they arise in course content areas. The importance of professional self-awareness and effective use of self are explored throughout the course. Required readings for this course have been selected, in part, based on the degree to which they are supported by sound empirical exploration of variables found to influence social work practice with individuals and families in diverse situations.

**Organizing Framework**

Social work practice is a dynamic, interactive, multi-level process focused on social justice and working toward social change. The process is guided by the sociopolitical world view that shapes each worker's philosophy as well as professional operating principles such as maintaining appropriate boundaries and use of self and relationship in the helping process. Students are expected to apply their liberal arts training to areas of critical thinking regarding society at-large, people and their problems, and about the complex manifestations of culture. The course explores and seeks to increase the student's understanding of issues in the areas of ethics, cultural anthropology, sociology, economics, political science, and psychology. In addition, students are expected to expand upon their liberal arts preparation in the area of multicultural theory by developing a greater understanding of, and sensitivity to, issues of racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, ablebodiedism, and social and economic stratification.

**Theoretical Framework**

The eco-systems perspective, which provides the basic theoretical framework for the course, is oriented toward problem solving in context and understanding the application of multiple levels of intervention. Other theoretical frameworks and social work processes integrated into the course include empowerment and the strength’s perspective approaches to social work practice. Students will have mastered systems theory, ecological theory, empowerment theory, the person-in-environment model, and the strengths perspective in the foundation practice course 204A/B.
Course Objectives

Knowledge Based Objectives

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the generalist perspective and the ecosystem (ecological system) perspective in analyzing clients’ strengths and challenges as demonstrated through written assignments and class discussions.

2. Acquire the knowledge of the social work process that ranges from assessment and intervention with individuals and families to the evaluation of services delivered as demonstrated through class assignments.

3. Display an understanding of various roles, boundaries, and principles of professional practice, i.e. NASW Code of Ethics, professional use of self, professional functions, and empowerment as demonstrated through class discussions, exercises, and assignments.

4. Understand the basic elements of families, such as roles, boundaries, and power structure, as well as the interaction of these family dynamics within various cultural contexts as demonstrated through class exercises and assignments.

Value Based Objectives

1. Display sensitivity to social and economic justice as it relates to issues of age, race, ethnicity, and culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability. as demonstrated by course discussions, assignments (class and field), and class exercises.

2. Begin to internalize the philosophy, values, and ethics of the profession. as demonstrated by in-class small group discussions and assignments (both classroom and field).

4. Begin to internalize the principles of self-determination, respect for human dignity and client individuality. as demonstrated by class participation and sharing field-related experience

5. Display an understanding of a continuum of traditional to acculturated values, norms, beliefs, and behaviors of various ethnic and other minority groups within the region. as demonstrated through course assignments, field experiences, and class discussions.
Skills Based Objectives

1. Articulate social justice and advocacy issues as they relate to vulnerable, diverse, at-risk, or oppressed populations as demonstrated through class discussion, written assignments, and field experiences.

2. Master the principles of engagement, interviewing, assessment, intervention, evaluation and termination with individuals (and to some degree) families as demonstrated through class discussion, field experience, and written assignments.

3. Assess individuals and families through the use of various established assessment tools, including ecomaps, genograms, and bio-psycho-social assessments as demonstrated through course assignments (and field experience, as appropriate).

4. Integrate specific classroom content with field practicum experiences as evidenced through classroom exercises, field assignments, and course assignments.

5. Describe and explore a sense of self through a description of ethnicity, religious philosophy, personality traits, and personal values as demonstrated through class exercises and course assignments.

6. Apply the principles of confidentiality, professional boundaries, and use of self in the helping process as evidenced through class assignments and field assignments.

7. Critically analyze and apply theory-based intervention strategies as demonstrated through course assignments and field activities.

Course Format

This course is conducted on a lecture-discussion-laboratory basis. Students are expected to have read all assigned readings prior to class sessions. Student preparation and participation are integral parts of this learning process. Students will lead and participate in exercises and group discussions about practice and practice issues. This will provide a special opportunity to integrate the field experience with classroom learning. Small group discussions, one-to-one exercises, and case presentations from field sites may be utilized. Students presenting field material should safeguard client confidentiality.

The case study method and problem based learning will be the primary teaching methods. The detailed case studies as well as the cases brought in by faculty, field instructors and students will provide means for students to develop critical thinking and practice skills in a classroom setting. The case material presented in class may be used for class discussions, in-class experiential exercises and for written and oral assignments. The cases will not only provide a bridge between the classroom and the student's field experience, but will allow the student to explore a wider variety of client systems and practice settings than may be encountered through field placements alone.
Course Requirements

1. The course outline is to be shared with the field instructor as soon as possible after the student's entry into the field, in order to provide guidance for both field instructor and classroom instructor in supporting the fullest possible integration of field and classroom.

2. You are expected to attend all class sessions for the entire session, arriving on time and leaving at the end of the session. In a practice class much of the learning takes place during class. Exceptions may be made in advance with the approval of the instructor only in extraordinary circumstances (e.g. severe illness). Make-up work may be required. Absences without approval and or repetitive lateness will result in grade reduction.

3. Participation in classroom assignments, discussion, and exercises. This includes completion of readings prior to the class for which they are due. You are strongly urged to team up with other students in order to share responsibility for reading assignments. Completion of case study activities prior to class. Completion of all written assignments on time. Completion of all coursework by the last class session.

4. Each student will develop a personal learning plan based on the course syllabus and their own individual learning needs. This will include topics and readings that they will concentrate on during the semester.

5. Students who have a disability that requires special accommodation must inform the instructor at the first class session and provide written recommendations from the Office for Students with Disabilities.

6. All students are expected to obtain an e-mail account and to check their e-mail regularly. Some class communications will be through e-mail.

7. Plagiarism. Any form of cheating or plagiarism will result in a disciplinary action and/or a failing grade for the course. The university protocol for handling cheating or plagiarism will be followed. Please read the university policy on Academic Honesty http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umanual/UMA00150.htm Any incident of plagiarism will be reported to the Division of Social Work Graduate Director and to the University Office of Student Affairs. Dishonesty, deception and fraud are violations of the NASW Code of Ethics.

8. Ethical Practice. As developing social work professionals, it is expected that students will become familiar with and adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics. (The code can be found at www.hhs.csus.edu/sw/ Go to Social Work Links and click on NASW Code of Ethics). This code for professional behavior should guide your actions in class and in the field agency setting. Ethical violations (e.g., disrespect for colleagues or clients) may result in failure of this course, particularly if the instructor has previously advised a student of the violation(s).
9. Cell phones must be kept off during class. Laptops may be used only for taking notes during class time.

10. Concurrent registration in SWK 295A is required.

11. All students are expected to keep up with current events in the social services by reading the newspaper of their choice on a regular basis. This can be done on the web.

Assignments

All assignments must be turned in on time. There will be grade reduction of one grade per day for late papers. If you need help or have questions, do not hesitate to contact me. Except for the final paper, papers may be rewritten one time in order to improve a grade if paper was handed in on time or early. A draft of the final paper may be handed in for feedback before turning in the final copy. Please make an electronic backup copy of all your papers and keep a duplicate hard copy for yourself.

All papers must use accurate APA citations and references. For help please refer to the Division’s online writing guide at [www.hhs.csus.edu/sw/](http://www.hhs.csus.edu/sw/) Then click on Social Work links and scroll down to Social Work Online Writing Guide. The reference by Szuchman listed below in recommended references is also excellent and worth purchasing. Writing and organization will be considered in grading of all papers. For individual tutoring contact the Division of Social Work Writing Program at 278-7187.

1. Ethics paper- Receive session 1 (9/11, due session 3 (9/18) 10 points

2. Midterm - part I take home (Receive session 6-October 7, Due session 7, October 14th and part II in-class (Session 7, October 14th ). Will be based on readings through session 7 and class discussion through session 6. 25 points

3. Practice Biopsychosocial assessment- due week 10 11/13 ungraded

4. Final Paper Biopsychosocial assessment- due December 4 (see handout). 30 points

5. Three self-reflection journals based on your field practice should be kept and turned in at sessions 4 (10/2) 8 (10/30), 12 (11/27). 10 points

6. Presentation to the class of a case scenario. 10 points

7. Case studies- case studies will be used during several class sessions. Please bring the case study to class. You are expected to read the case study prior to class session and come prepared to engage in case study activities in small groups with other class members.
Grading Criteria

1. Attendance and Participation 15%
2. Brief paper 10%
3. Journals 10%
4. Presentation 10%
5. Midterm 25%
6. Final Paper 30%

Grading

** Students must complete all assignments on time. If, due to unforeseen circumstances you need to make special arrangements with the instructor to complete your work, this must be done in advance and no later than one week prior to the due date.


The instructor may change the course syllabus based on student learning needs.

Texts (204a,b)

Required (To Purchase for both semesters)

Books


Class Reader (electronic, on line at CSUS library reserve book room, use handout instructions to access)
Recommended


Course Outline

Week 1, September 11

Overview of the course, course requirements. Review of assignments. Personal learning plan. Field requirements. Helpful hints and use of APA guidelines for writing papers. Writing expectations, on-line writing resources, tutoring.

Profile of the social work profession today. Generalist practice. The political, economic, and social context of social work practice. Hurricane Katrina, War in Iraq, etc. The role of the agency/organization.


HIPAA Handout, brief paper assignment
Hepworth, Chapter 1 13-22, & 2 28-32 (Challenges & domain)

**Week 2, September 18**

**Value base of professional practice. Values clarification**

**Brief paper due**

**Code of ethics-social justice commitment, confidentiality, boundaries**

Hepworth, Chapter 1, Introduction 3-12, Chapter 4, Values 54-78.
Reamer, F. in Roberts and Greene, 33. Ethical issues in social work, 65-69

**Code of Ethics** (The code can be found at [www.hhs.csus.edu/sw/](http://www.hhs.csus.edu/sw/) Go to Social Work Links and click on NASW Code of Ethics).

Field discussion, discussion of readings, ethics examples.

**Week 3, September 25**

**Practice Foundations and Frameworks-Theories of Social Work**

Hepworth, Chapter 2, Direct practice: domain, philosophy, and roles, 23-32.

Roberts and Greene

**Week 4, October 2**

**Interviewing as basis of all levels of practice.**

**Journal due**

Lukas, Chapter 1-How to conduct the first interview with an adult,  
Chapter 2-Looking, listening, and feeling: the mental status examination,  
Chapter 3-How to think about your client’s health: The medical history

Hepworth, Chap. 3 Overview of helping process,  33-53  
Chapter 5 Building blocks of communication, 81-131  
Chapter 6 Verbal following, exploring, focusing, 132-162.

Case Study-Lily Phim,  Role Play

**Week 5, October 9**

**Interviewing, cont. adults, children and adolescents**

Lukas, Chapter 5-How to conduct the first interview with a child, Chapter 6-How to take a developmental history   
Hepworth, Chapter 7, Eliminating counterproductive communication patterns, 163-178  
Kagle J., in Roberts and Greene,  5. Record keeping, 28-33

Role play. Case studies- A school based program for teen parents, Outreach to homeless youth at risk.  Presentations

**Week 6 October 16**

**Multilevel Assessment, How to write a bio-psychosocial assessment, Ecological approach, PIE, ecomap, Emphasizing strengths in assessments, Diversity issues**

Hepworth, Chapter 8, Assessment, exploring and understanding problems and strengths 179-205
Roberts and Greene

Read through biopsychosocial assessment (e-mail handout).

Case Study, Role Play

Week 7, October 23

Assessment continued

Take home midterm due

Hepworth, Chapter 9, Assessment, intrapersonal and environmental factors 213-238.
Lukas, Chapter 13, How to write an assessment.

Laboratory, role play, case study.
Field discussion

Week 8, October 30

Assessment principles with couples and families.

Journal due
Midterm Part II in class, one hour.

Hepworth Chapter 10, Assessing family functioning, 240-283
Lukas, Chapter 4, How to conduct the first interview with a family; Chapter 7, How to conduct the first interview with a couple.

Roberts and Greene
McGoldrick, M., 42. Using genograms to map family patterns, 233-245,
Congress, E., 10. Using the culturagram with culturally diverse families, 57-63.

Case study- Resettlement of a Jewish family from the former Soviet Union.
Presentations

Week 9, November 6
Intervention, Early Phase, The Professional Relationship.
Communication skills, Social worker's use of self, Cross-cultural relationship issues
Social work values and ethics as they may emerge in direct practice

Hepworth, Chapter. 12, Negotiating goals and formulating a contract; 313-354; Chapter 13, Planning and implementing change oriented strategies.354-408

Case Study, Presentations

Week 10, November 13
Intervention, Middle phase

Practice biopsychosocial assessment due.

Hepworth, Chapter 17, Additive empathy, interpretation, and confrontation , 521-541; Chapter 18, Managing barriers to change 409-567.

Case Study, Presentations

Week 11, November 20
Advocacy, community and social change.

Hepworth, Chapter 14, Developing resources, planning and advocacy as intervention strategies, 409-456.

Roberts and Greene
Reich, M. 99. Legislative advocacy to empower oppressed and vulnerable groups; 545-550.

Case studies- Saving STOP: A community based program to reduce jail recidivism. Northeast Valley: A Latino community overcoming vulnerability.

Presentations
Week 12, November 27

Endings and termination, dynamics and skills of ending, different reasons for ending services, grief and loss issues, transitions, on-going growth (client & worker), follow-up, evaluation.

Journal due

Fortune, A. in Roberts and Greene 84. Terminating with clients, p. 456-463.

Video-handout with discussion questions, Presentations

Week 13, December 4
Violence, Abuse, Substance Use, Mandated reporting (child and adult protection)

Final Paper due

Lukas, Chapter 8-How to determine whether a client might hurt somebody—including you, Chapter 9-How to determine when a client might hurt herself, Chapter 10-How to determine when a client is a substance abuser, and Chapter 11-How to assess children for neglect, abuse and sexual abuse,

Hepworth Chapter 9, 210-213. Assessing use and abuse of medications, alcohol, and drugs.

Speaker, Case studies- Response to school violence: A community based approach, Outreach to homeless youth at risk.

Week 14- December 11

Practice with individuals and families affected by HIV and AIDS, lesbian, gay and transgendered clients. Summary, wrap-up.
Roberts and Greene

Updated 8/26/06