



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

National Catholic School of Social Service

Washington, DC 20064

202-319-5458

Fax 202-319-5093

SSS 352

Social Work Theory and Practice I

Spring, 2009

(4 credits)

Instructor: Joyce M.L. Harrison, LICSW

© This course outline is the property of NCSSS
and the instructor and may be distributed with written permission.

I. COURSE PURPOSE

This course, SSS 352, is the first part of the three-semester course continuum in which foundation knowledge, skills, and values for professional social work practice are taught. It prepares students to apply the generalist perspective to social work practice in diverse settings with diverse client systems. The second course, SSS 453, prepares students to apply the generalist perspective to social work practice with individuals within the context of their family and community. The third course, SSS 454, prepares students to apply the generalist perspective to social work practice with groups, organizations, and communities. All three courses are taught in conjunction with students' field education internship. This course is taken concurrently with the Junior Year Observational Field Education, which requires four hours of field work under social work supervision in an agency setting one day a week for twelve weeks. See the Junior Field Manual for more detail.

The goal of this course is to introduce students to generalist social work practice while they are engaged in field observation with some supervised experiential opportunities. Generalist practice is defined as generic and transferable across diverse fields of practice, agency settings, populations and problems. It uses the planned change processes applied to assessment and intervention of systems of all sizes. It is multi-method and multi-theoretical. Generalist practice is the foundational knowledge base for professional social work practice. It stems from the primary mission of the social work profession, "*To enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people, who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty*" (NASW, 1999, p.1).

Building upon the values and ethics of the profession and the field agency's social welfare policies and services, the purpose of this course is to introduce the planned change process of generalist social work practice. Further, the traditional social work practice paradigm that examines the transactions between persons and their environments is expanded to include current knowledge, skills and values related to a strengths perspective and emphasizes culturally competent generalist practice in order to meet the needs of diverse client systems and populations at risk, create effective social services, and promote social and economic justice.

Agency-based case examples, seminar discussion, role play, and class assignments provide the student with opportunities to gain professional and peer feedback regarding their application of professional social work knowledge and skills to client systems.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the *mission* and *purpose* of professional social work.
2. To learn the *values* and *ethics* of the social work profession.
3. To develop beginning knowledge and skills in strengths-based problem-solving generalist social work practice, and its *planned change processes*, as they apply to the needs of client systems of all sizes.
4. To learn *generalist social work practice*, through the field practicum, by linking the agency's field of practice, structure and function, program services, population served, practice interventions, and community context and resources to the planned change process.
5. To identify and analyze major *federal policies* that guide service delivery in the agency.
6. To differentiate *knowledge* from values, *facts* from suppositions, and *inferences* from opinions in generalist social work practice.
7. To develop one's *professional use of self*, including
 - awareness of the student's own thoughts, feelings and behaviors and avoidance of attributing them to the client system;
 - maintenance of professional *boundaries*;
 - application of a *non-judgmental attitude* and acceptance of client system differences in gender, race, color, ethnicity, religion, spirituality, culture, disability and sexual orientation;
 - distinguishing *personal values* from *professional values*; and
 - taking the *initiative* to identify one's own learning needs and acquiring the requisite knowledge and skill through classroom instruction and the field agency internship.
8. To recognize that issues related to *culture, race, ethnicity, economics, gender and age* are included in all stages of the planned change process.
9. To demonstrate increased self-awareness of personal and professional beliefs, attitudes, and values as they influence one's generalist practice with *diverse groups and at-risk populations*.
10. To incorporate *biopsychosocial, spiritual, and strengths perspectives*, as well as resources, in the resolution of problems in social functioning.
11. To demonstrate increased awareness of *social and economic justice* issues as they impact on client system functioning.
12. To demonstrate *responsibility for one's own learning experience* by taking initiative in identifying learning needs during supervision and consultation.
13. To understand *agency documentation* and its role in client system problem resolution.
14. To conduct one's *practice* in a manner *consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics*.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts

- Timberlake, E., Farber, M., Sabatino, C. (2008). *Generalist social work practice: A strengths-based problem-solving approach* (5th Ed.) Boston: Pearson Education, Inc., Allyn & Bacon. [Referred to as Timberlake in the syllabus]
- Royse, D., Dhooper, S.S., & Rompf, E.L. (2006). *Field Instruction: A guide for social students* (5th Ed). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc., Allyn & Bacon. [Referred to as Royce in the syllabus]

NCSSS Junior Year Field Education Manual

Selected readings from professional social work literature will be assigned.

B. Recommended Texts

- Carter, B. & McGoldrick, M. (2005). *Expanded family life cycle: The individual, family, and social perspectives*. (3rd ed.) Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Saleebey, D. (Ed.) (2006). *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Sweitzer, H. F. & King, M.A. (2004). *The successful internship: Transformation and empowerment in experiential learning* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- Toseland, R. W., & Rivas, R. F. (2005). *An introduction to group work practice* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

C. Other Recommended Resources and Media

National Catholic School of Social Service <http://ncsss.cua.edu/>
National Catholic School of Social Service Office of Field Education web pages:
http://ncsss.cua.edu/degree_field/field
National Association of Social Workers <http://www.socialworkers.org>
Code of Ethics <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>
NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice
http://www.socialworkers.org/sections/credentials/cultural_comp.asp

Please refer to this article for a listing of social work journals:

Thyer, B.A. (2005). A note from the editor: A comprehensive listing of social work journals. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 15(4), 310-311.

D. Course Assignments

Assignment 1: Agency Orientation Paper	Due Date: 1/29/09
Assignment 2: Diversity Awareness Paper	Due Date: 2/17/09
Assignment 3: Agency Profile	Due Date: 3/24/09
Assignment 5: Field Internship (48 hours)	Four hours per week
Final Field Evaluation Form	Due Date: 4/28/09
Final Exam	Last Class: 4/30/09

E.	<u>Grading Policy</u>	
	Assignment 1: Agency Orientation Paper	10%
	Assignment 2: Diversity Awareness Paper	20%
	Assignment 3: Agency Profile Paper	20%
	Assignment 4: Field Work Hours & Evaluation	20%
	Final Exam	15%
	Attendance and Participation	15%

F. Course and Instructor Evaluation

NCSSS requires electronic evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, the evaluation form may be accessed at <http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations> using your CUA username and password. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

G. Attendance and Participation

Students are required to **attend** classes and are expected to participate meaningfully in class discussions. The grade for attendance and participation will be lowered by 5 points for each unexcused absence, unless the student notifies the instructor and requests an excused absence before the class.

***NOTE:** The instructor of this course will have contact with the agency field educators via on-site visits, phone, and e-mail as appropriate. Site visit dates will be identified in consultation with the field instructor and student. Students will also participate as pairs in at least one visit to a different social work practice setting and present in the following class the information they learned.

IV. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

A. Scholastic Expectations

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. All written work should reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA format, and should be carefully proof read by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

B. Academic Honesty

Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to University Policy and appropriate Program Handbooks.

C. Accommodations

Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability. If you have documented such a disability to DSS that requires accommodations or an academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

Class Schedule

Class	Topics and Readings
1	Introduction to Generalist Practice and to Field Education Practicum Field Liaison Facilitating Form Distributed – 1/13/09 Junior Field Instruction Manual Distributed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to course and review of the syllabus• Format of the course• Identification of mutual goals and expectations for course
2	Agency as Context of Practice – 1/15/09 Field Liaison Facilitating Form Due <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion of student's agency setting.• Discussion of roles of field instructor, field liaison/course instructor, procedural chain for resolving problems• Discussion of scope/limitations of duties/practice in placement. <p>– No Class – Inauguration Day – 1/20/09</p>
3	The Foundation for Generalist Practice in Social Work – 1/22/09 Timberlake, Chapter 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generalist Practice in Social Work• The Foundation of Social Work Practice
4	The Foundation, Continued – 1/27/09 Royce, Chapter 1 Guest Speaker: Dr. Ellen Thursby Senior Field Placement Applications Distributed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Generalist Perspective• The General Method
5	Human Diversity and Professional Social Work Practice – 1/29/09 Timberlake, Chapter 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multiculturalism• Social Pluralism
6	Human Diversity, Continued – 2/3/09 Senior Field Applications Completed and Submitted in class Royce, Chapter 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Socio-demographic variability• A holistic framework for sensitivity to human variability
7	Strength-Based Problem Solving Interviews – 2/5/09 Timberlake, Chapter 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The General Method• The Empowerment Perspective• The Strengths Perspective• The Risk and Resilience Perspective
8	Strength-Based Problem Solving Interviews, Continued – 2/10/09 Royce, Chapter 3

- Professional Relationship
- The General Method Interview

9 Engagement - 2/12/09

Timberlake, Chapter 5

- Establishing Professional Relational Boundaries
- Identifying Problem, Need, and Strengths
- Recognizing Feelings and Reactions
- Increasing Client System Investment
- Determining Goals

10 Engagement, Continued

Diversity Awareness Exercise Due – 2/17/09

Royce, Chapter 4

- Making Initial Plans
- Monitoring the Engagement Phase
- Working with Different Systems
- Using Social Work Foundation Knowledge in Engagement
- Human Diversity in Engagement
- Introduction of On-going cases

11 Data Collection – 2/19/09

Timberlake, Chapter 6

- Gathering Data
- Informed Consent
- Maintaining Confidentiality
- Facts versus Assumptions
- Basic Categories for Data Collection
- Recording Data
- Monitoring the Data-Collection Process

12 Data Collection, Continued - 2/24/09

Selection and planning for field trip to another agency

Royce, Chapter 5

- Working with Different Client Systems
- Using Social Work Foundation Knowledge in Data Collection
- Human Diversity in Data Collection
- Ongoing Cases

13 Assessment and Contract Planning – 2/26/09

Timberlake, Chapter 7

- Assessment Process
- Assessment Statement
- Problem Prioritization
- Goal Setting
- Contract Planning
- Monitoring the Assessment and Contract Planning Process

Spring Break – No Class – 3/3/09 & 3/5/09

14 Assessment and Contract Planning, Continued – 3/10/09

Royce, Chapter 6

- Working with Different Client Systems
- Using Social Work Foundation Knowledge in Assessment and Contract Planning
- Ongoing Cases

15 Intervention in Micro and Mezzo Generalist Practice - 3/12/09

Timberlake, Chapter 8

- Overview
- Counseling with Individual and Family client systems
- Information and Referral
- Crisis Intervention
- Small Group Intervention
- Case Management and Teamwork
- Designs for Micro and Mezzo Interventions
- Monitoring Intervention

16 Intervention in Micro and Mezzo Practice, Continued – 3/17/09

Royce, Chapter 7

- Working with Different Client Systems
- Using Social Work Foundation Knowledge in Assessment and Contract Planning

17 Intervention in Macro Generalist Practice – 3/19/09

Timberlake, Chapter 9

- Macro Practice Knowledge and Skills
- Social and Political Advocacy
- Social Planning and Community Development
- Locality Development
- Internal Organization Change
- Designs for Macro Intervention
- Monitoring Interventions in Macro Practice

**18 Intervention in Macro Generalist Practice, Continued – 3/24/09
Agency Profile Paper Due**

Royce, Chapter 8

- Working with Different Client Systems
- Using Social Work Foundation Knowledge in Macro General Practice
- Ongoing Cases

19 Building Empirical Evidence for Practice – 3/26/09

Timberlake, Chapter 3

- Reasons for Evaluation
- Brief History and Scope of Practice Research
- Steps in Building Empirical Evidence
- Essential components of Building Evidence
- Development of a Scientific Approach

20 Building Empirical Evidence for Practice, Continued – 3/31/09

Royce, Chapter 9

- Common Strategies for Engaging in Practice Evaluation

- Summary

- 21 Evaluation – 4/2/09**
Research as a Tool of Macro Practice & as a Method of Practice
 Timberlake, Chapter 10
- Goal Analysis
 - Contract Review
 - Planned Contract Reformulation
 - Evaluation Questions
 - Ongoing Evaluation

- 22 Evaluation, Continued – 4/7/09**
Guest Speaker: To Be Announced
- Working with Different Client Systems
 - Using Social Work Foundation Knowledge in Macro General Practice
 - Ongoing Cases

Holy Thursday – No Class – 4/9/09

- 23 Termination – 4/14/09**
 Timberlake, Chapter 11
- The Meaning of Termination
 - Core Tasks in the Termination Process
 - Monitoring the Termination Process
 - Working with Different Systems
 - Reactions of Social Workers

- 24 Termination, Continued– 4/16/09**
- Developing Sensitivity and Skills
 - Using Social Work Foundation Knowledge in Termination
 - Human Diversity in Termination
 - Ongoing Cases

- 25 Senior Thesis Discussion – 4/21/09**
 Guest Speaker: Dr. Mayer

- 26 Review and Integration of the Planned Change Processes – 4/23/09**

- 27 Course Summarization – 4/28/09**
Integration and Identification as a Social Worker
Field Hours and Field Evaluation Due
- Review for Final Exam
 - Imagining the Future

- 28 Who we are, Where we've been, What's next – 4/30/09**
Final Exam

Course Evaluation

- Identify three successful events that occurred in your field placement.
- Identify one thing you would want to have been done differently.

Assignment 1: Agency Orientation Paper

Due Date: 1/29/09

Introduction:

The purpose of this assignment is to facilitate the process of you learning about your field placement. You should discuss this assignment with your field instructor as part of supervision. You will address these questions in greater depth on Assignment 3.

Please use the following to help frame your response to the assignment:

- “Fields of Practice” refers to the distinctive agency settings, client populations, and social problem areas in which social workers are employed.
- Agency settings may be public or private agencies, government or nongovernmental organizations, or distinctive organizations such as the workplace, hospitals, and military bases.
- Agency structure and function define the social worker’s practice.
- Agency policy defines who is served, in what manner, and under what conditions.
- Social problems refer to the need, issue, challenge, or problem with which the social worker intervenes, such as affordable housing, doctors who take Medicaid payments, learning disabilities, or drug abuse.
- Client populations may be related to age, such as infants and children, ethnicity such as Hmong, or groups such as immigrants or refugees.

Assignment:

Prepare a two-page introduction to your agency by providing the following information:

Name and location of the agency

Mission of the agency

Programs or services offered by your agency

Program or service where you will be placed

Title of your field instructor’s position

Role or job description of your field instructor’s position

The client population served by your program or service

(Note: Assignments are expected to be submitted to instructor on the due date unless special arrangements are made in advance. The grade will be lowered 5 points if late without a special arrangement. No extensions will be given if requested on the date due).

Assignment 2: Diversity Awareness Paper

Due Date: 2/17/09

Introduction:

During the semester, students will be exposed to various ideas and experiences of others that may be challenging to their worldview and personal beliefs and values. As developing critical self-awareness is a major objective of professional social work education, this assignment is designed to help students consider reactions/responses they have to field placement and classroom experiences. The rationale for this paper is twofold. First, this exercise is meant to help you distinguish between your personal views and your professional views. Second, it is meant to help you identify possible errors in data collection, assessment, and intervention planning when personal rather than professional views are used.

Assignment:

Prepare a 4-5 page paper using APA format.

The point of this assignment is to turn “the eye inward” and conduct an honest self-assessment. This paper will be kept confidential and will not be graded on the content of the information. You will be graded on your ability to move beyond description of the experience to demonstrate self-awareness based on thoughtful reflection and critical self-assessment.

Describe an experience in this class or in your field internship that has been significantly different than your own in relation to age, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion/spirituality, physical ability, or immigration status.

1. What was your immediate reaction to this experience?
What is your reaction as you think back on it now?
2. Explain what it is about you that predisposes you to this reaction.
For example, can you connect your reaction to previous personal or professional experiences, family or cultural heritage, societal messages, prejudices, biases or lack of knowledge/exposure?
3. Identify specific strengths and/or limitations of your personal and professional development that are revealed in your self-reflection in question #1?
4. For each strength or limitation identified, list an implication for further growth and how you specifically plan to support this growth.
5. How might this reaction impact data collection, assessment, or intervention with clients?

(Note: Assignments are expected to be submitted to instructor on the due date unless special arrangements are made in advance. The grade will be lowered 5 points if late without a special arrangement).

Assignment 3: Field Agency Profile Paper

Due Date: 3/24/09

Introduction:

The purpose of this assignment is to help you obtain a comprehensive understanding of the agency in which you are placed for your Field Education. This includes its place within a field of practice, its organizational purpose, structure and function, and your program or service unit. It is designed to give you a foundation for understanding what it is like to be a worker with a client in your agency/program.

Assignment:

Prepare a twelve-page, doubled-spaced paper, excluding charts, using APA format.

- Follow this outline precisely.
 - Interview key people who will help you find the information for this assignment.
 - Add charts that the agency uses, if possible; for example, add budget or organizational charts. (Do not insert charts in lieu of the narrative presentation).
 - Use the latest available data such as an annual report.
- A. Agency Mission, Value Base - Public Law and Policy:
1. Discuss your agency's mission, goals and objectives.
Discuss the values that underlie the mission, goals, and objectives.
 2. Values are institutionalized through public laws.
Identify relevant public law that impacts your agency and its programs.
 3. How do the agency values compare with your values?
- B. Funding:
1. How is the Program funded?
 2. What are the various sources of funding?
Are the funds sufficient to meet the needs of the agency?
 3. How does the agency solicit funds?
 4. What are some of the funding problems, if any?
- C. Organizational Structure:
1. Identify and describe the specific program in which you work.
 2. Describe the Executive structure of the Agency.
Present the Advisory Board or Board of Directors using an organizational chart, if available. Use position titles not employee names to discuss the executive structure.
 3. Describe the administrative structure of the agency.
 4. Describe the composition of the professional staff of your program including the different professional disciplines, if appropriate. Include required language proficiency. Include the minimum educational credentials required.
 5. Describe the administrative support staff and their function.

D. Population Served:

1. Describe the clients served in your program including the following: Geographic boundaries, Age groups - use percentages, Gender - use percentages, Racial and ethnic composition - use percentages, Socioeconomic class - use percentages.
2. Identify the specific problems clients bring to the program.
3. Which clients are not eligible for services?
4. Describe the predominant referral services.

E. Community Involvement:

1. How does your agency interface with the community it serves?
2. Name significant institutions, agencies or groups linking your program with the community.

F. Select a real client or select a typical client the agency serves. Do not use the client's real name. Describe the client's path to getting what she/he needs.

1. How did the client get referred?
2. Who was the referral source?
3. What is the client's problem or need?
4. Name and describe the forms that need to be completed? Include a sample.
5. What services are available? What days or hours are they available? What services are not available but requested or needed?
6. Describe the referral network you would use to assist with your client's request.
7. Describe the agency's physical environment. Is it accessible in terms of location, transportation, handicapping conditions? Is the office inviting and welcoming?
8. What is the outcome of the client's request for service? What was the time line between request for service and the actual delivery of service?

G. Evaluation:

1. What data, information or empirical measures does the agency use to evaluate its program or practice? Effectiveness? How often do they evaluate themselves?
2. Describe your observations of the agency's effectiveness in meeting its goals. List at least three strengths and three limitations of the program. Describe any changes you would make if you were the Program Director.

H. Observations:

1. Describe how your experience with your agency has influenced your decision to enter the Social Work field.
2. Describe what you learned about yourself from your experiences at the agency.
3. Describe any concerns and suggestions you have about your field placement.

(Note: Assignments are expected to be submitted to instructor on the due date unless special arrangements are made in advance. The grade will be lowered 5 points if late without a special arrangement).