I. COURSE PURPOSE

This course will prepare student social workers to assess and intervene with the families of persons-at-risk. Assuming the value that individuals grow and thrive best within the social environment of their families and communities, students will pursue the goal of strengthening families to prevent unnecessary placement of the person-at-risk in foster care, residential treatment, juvenile detention, shelters, psychiatric hospitals, inpatient medical facilities, nursing homes, or other “more restrictive” environments. Students will become familiar with practice theories and models consistent with a social constructionist paradigm and the strengths and ecological perspectives. They will learn to work with families to mobilize internal strengths and organize external resources to meet their needs and solve their problems. Through experiential exercises and work with case material, students will apply theoretical concepts to help families of diverse populations, especially the poor and vulnerable, to change thinking patterns, learn new skills and adaptive interactional patterns, and mobilize environmental support. This course will help students to redefine individuals and families from being “at-risk” to being “at-promise.”

II. COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requires that students meet ten core competencies, which are operationalized as practice behaviors. Each course is designed to cover one or more of the ten core competencies and some, but not all of
the practice behaviors within a competency. Upon completion of this course, students will able to demonstrate the following practice behaviors within the noted competencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competency #1 Professional Identity:</strong> Identify as a clinical social worker &amp; conduct self accordingly.</td>
<td>Social workers practice with a clear understanding of the professional strengths, capacities, and limitations of clinical social work. Social workers understand how clinical theories from multiple disciplines inform the practice of clinical social work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competency #2 Ethical Practice:</strong> Apply social work ethical principles to guide clinical practice.</td>
<td>Social workers recognize and manage personal biases as they affect the clinical relationship in the service of clients’ well-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competency #3 Critical Thinking:</strong> Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.</td>
<td>Social workers distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom in an ongoing process of assessment and intervention. Social workers include personal reflection in clinical decision making, are adept at differential diagnosis, and articulate both client strengths and vulnerabilities in the diagnostic process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competency #4: Diversity in Practice:</strong> Engage diversity and demonstrate awareness of the complexities regarding identity differences and how they play out in clinical practice.</td>
<td>Social workers use their self-awareness to reflect on and diminish the influence of their personal biases and values in working with others. Social workers recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping the life experiences of clients, themselves, and the working alliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competency #6 Research Based Practice:</strong> Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.</td>
<td>Social workers critically evaluate and utilize theoretical and empirical research relevant to the problems and/or populations seen in clinical practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competency #7 Human Behavior:</strong> Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.</td>
<td>Social workers synthesize and differentially apply theories of human behavior that address the bio-psycho-social-spiritual nature of clients and the social environment to guide clinical practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Competency #10 Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate:
Engage, assess, and intervene with individuals, families, and groups.

### Engagement:
Social workers:
- Develop culturally responsive therapeutic relationships.
- Attend to the interpersonal dynamics and contextual factors that may strengthen or harm the therapeutic working alliance.

### Assessment:
Social workers:
- Use a multi-dimensional assessment that includes bio-psycho-social-spiritual data, as well as client strengths, coping capacity, and readiness for change.
- Co-construct therapeutic goals and clinical objectives to address psychosocial distress, and engage in ongoing reassessment of those goals.

### Intervention:
Social workers:
- Co-construct and select therapeutic interventions that best address the client’s presenting problem and risk factors, and use multiple intervention plans to address compound problems or complex trauma.

---

## III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### A. Required Texts

### B. Recommended Texts
- Duncan, B., Miller, S., & Sparks, J. (2004). *The heroic client: A revolutionary way to improve effectiveness through client-centered, outcome-informed therapy*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. *(This book is available through Amazon for less than $15; the readings are on Blackboard.)*

Revised December, 2014
C. **Course Assignments**

1. **Attendance and Class Presence/Participation**
   Students are expected to complete all assigned readings, arrive on time for class, and be fully prepared to actively participate in all class exercises and discussions. All clinical content in discussions must be kept confidential, in keeping with the Student Confidentiality Agreement.

   Missing more than two class sessions will result in a significantly reduced grade. The only exceptions are student illness (with doctor’s note), illness of immediate family member, accident/hospitalization, or death of immediate family member. Arriving late or leaving early (30 minutes or more) will be considered an absence.

   Class participation requires the student to have carefully read all the materials in advance, and be fully present and engaged for the entire class meeting. When in class, all pagers, cell phones, and other electronic devices should be turned off or set to silent operation. Computers or tablets should be used in class to further learning **only**, and not for other purposes.

2. **Family Assessment**
   Completion of a take-home strengths-based family assessment and an ecomap of a familiar family  
   **DUE:** Class #6

3. **Interview Questions**
   Completion in class of strengths-based questions based on an in-class video interview  
   **DUE:** Class #9

4. **Final Exam**
   Process oriented take-home based on observation of an in-class video of a family  
   **DUE:** Class #13

D. **Grading Policy**

Grades will be based on the CUA Grading Policy as described in the Graduate Announcements. Assignments submitted late will be deducted one letter grade, unless you receive a specific extension from the instructor in advance. No credit will be given for assignments submitted more than a week after the due date. The assignments described above will be the basis for the final grade. Grades will be based on the extent to which students achieved course objectives as demonstrated by the quality of course assignments and class participation. The following weighting of course assignments will apply:
1. Attendance & Participation 20%
2. Assignment—Family Assessment 20%
3. Assignment—Interview Questions 20%
4. Assignment—Final Exam 40%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numeric Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 – 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 – 69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E. Preparation, Attendance & Participation
Students are required to attend classes and are expected to participate meaningfully in class discussion/exercises and online forums as required. The class participation grade will be determined by the instructor’s perception of the student’s preparation for and contributions to class discussion/activities. Different students will make different kinds of contributions. Some will have an easy time with spontaneous interactions while others will be more comfortable making planned statements about key ideas from the readings or other sources. Both types of contributions are valued.

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. Additionally, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

IV. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements, or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements (http://ncsss.cua.edu/courses/index.cfm), including scholastic and behavioral requirements.

NCSSS is committed to creating an open and inclusive learning environment where all members— including students, faculty, administrators, and staff—strive to listen to and learn from one another. We recognize that in a multicultural society it is inevitable that issues or tensions relative to diversity and different life experiences will arise. It is how we handle these events that matters. Therefore, when such issues occur—inside or outside of the classroom—we agree to engage in respectful and
productive discussion with one another until learning is enhanced and understanding is deepened by all involved.

A. **Scholastic Expectations**
   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. **Behavioral Requirements:**
   Students are expected to maintain accepted standards of professional conduct and personal integrity in the classroom. Students should:
   • Attend all classes and contribute constructively to the classroom culture,
   • Recognize and avoid behavior that jeopardizes the learning/teaching environment of other students or the instructor,
   • Demonstrate competence in planning academic activities and in following through on those plans,
   • Reasonably respond to and respect others’ reactions to one’s comments or actions in the classroom,
   • Use an appropriate level of class time and instructor’s time and attention in and out of class, and
   • Behave in a manner that is consistent with the ethical principles of the social work profession.

C. **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 (http://graduatestudies.cua.edu/currentstudents/academintgrt.cfm) and appropriate Program Handbooks.

D. **Confidentiality**
   Each student is expected to adhere to the Confidentiality Agreement that is signed at the beginning of every semester. This agreement covers “practice materials” in classes, supervisory sessions, case conferences, seminars, and other educational settings within the NCSSS BSW or MSW programs are for professional learning purposes only and are subject to strict professional standards of confidentiality. These same standards of confidentiality also extend to various forms of written communication and peer consultation.

   Adherence to these standards means all students refrain from communicating beyond the classroom setting about practice material that is presented in class. Students will also refrain from using social media outlets (blogs, twitter, Facebook, etc.) or email to discuss practice settings, program responsibilities and projects with individuals who are not in teaching or supervision roles directly related to the situation.
E. 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, you much present that documentation to your instructors and arrange a meeting with as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.
V. CLASS SCHEDULE

Class 1  Introduction to the Course: A “Culture of Strengths” with the family as the unit of change; the strengths model of change rather than the medical model

Required Reading

Recommended Reading

Class 2  Family Centered Social Work Practice: Coming from a resilience perspective; family-in-environment model; introducing questions as interventions

Required Viewing
[See Ecomap under Engage heading—view other sections to see how the ecomap fits into engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation.]

Required Reading
Recommended Reading

Class 3
Joining and Assessing Families: Coming from a perspective of not-knowing, non-expert to form the therapeutic alliance; common factors in change; privileging the family’s theory of change

Required Viewing
Beginning with a family: http://www.psychotherapy.net/video/solution-focused-child-therapy
DeJong & Berg video with text: Clips 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 (Available in Mullen Library under reserve for Blome SSS 822)

Required Reading

Recommended Reading
Class 4  Getting Started: Introduction to Solution-Focused Brief Family Therapy; solution focused questions

**Required Viewing**
DeJong & Berg video with text: Clips 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 *(Available in Mullen Library under reserve for Blome SSS 822)*
Solution focused techniques videos: view three including “What to Avoid”:  
http://www.handsonscotland.co.uk/topics/techniques/video%20solution/Introduction_page.htm

**In class viewing:** Video: “I Love My Kids” with Insoo Kim Berg

**Required Reading**

**Recommended Reading**

Class 5  Social Constructionism and Change: The miracle question, looking for exceptions, framing and reframing, patterns of communication with more than one person, empowerment

**DISTRIBUTE FAMILY ASSESSMENT ASSIGNMENT**

**Required Viewing**
DeJong & Berg video with text: Clips 20, 21 *(Available in Mullen Library under reserve for Blome SSS 822)*

**Required Reading**
Recommended Reading

**Class 6**

**Formulating Feedback for Clients: Interviewing in involuntary situations, post traumatic growth (PTG inventory)**

**FAMILY ASSESSMENT DUE**

**Required Viewing**
Promising Practices Network on Children, Families, and Communities. Read all four ‘proven programs’:
http://www.promisingpractices.net/programs_topic_list.asp?topicid=16
Complete the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (the system will score it for you at the end) at: http://cust-cf.apa.org/ptgi/index.cfm

**Required Reading**

**Recommended Reading**

---

**Class 7**

**Telling the Story: Introducing the model of Narrative Therapy; narrative questions; externalization**

**Required Viewing**
*In class viewing:* Video “Narrative Therapy” with Steve Madigan

**Required Reading**
**Recommended Reading**


**Class 8**

**Co-Constructing a Preferred Story: Subjective reality**

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


**Class 9**

**Motivation: Motivation as readiness to change; the mandated client; rejecting resistance; embracing motivation; motivational interviewing**

**INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT IN CLASS**

**Required Viewing**

Working with involuntary clients:


**Required Reading**


Recommended Reading

Class 10  Application to Families with Young Children: Child behavior as a locus of risk to family integrity; incorporating developmental theories with strengths and solutions; encouraging and reinforcing success

Required Viewing
DeJong & Berg video with text: Clips 15, 16 (*Available in Mullen Library under reserve for Blome SSS 822*)

*In class viewing:* Video “Solution-Focused Child Therapy” with John Murphy

Required Reading

Recommended Reading

Revised December, 2014
Class 11  Application to Families with Adolescents: Engaging adolescents by addressing motivation to change

Required Reading

Recommended Reading

Class 12  Consolidating Strengths-Based Theory and Practice: Concepts and skills; observing a family with new eyes

Required Viewing
*In class viewing: Final Exam Video:* “No More Lectures” with Insoo Kim Berg

Required Reading

Recommended Reading

Class 13  Application to Diverse Families: Return to client’s theory of change; client group’s reality; solution focused and narrative questions

***TAKE-HOME FINAL DUE***

Required Reading

Recommended Reading

Class 14
Ending Work from a Strengths Perspective: Transfer of skills; maintaining gains; ending the collaborative relationship; reflecting on your own success

***STRENGTHS-BASED QUESTIONS POST-TEST***

Required Reading

Recommended Reading