Course Syllabus

Course Description

This course teaches effective engaging and assessing skills with individuals and families across age, race, ethnic, social class gender, and sexual orientations lines. The organizing frameworks underlying these initial understandings and skills are the ecological and strengths perspective, general systems theory. A generalist framework guides the application of these perspectives and theories. Additional theoretical frameworks will be identified and discussed. Current practice situations will be utilized for skill development in engaging, interviewing, and assessing a variety of client systems and levels of systems. Students will become familiar with several standardized assessment tools, the ecomap and genogram, and a variety of client-centered approaches to assessment. Social work values and ethical decision-making will be introduced as applied to the practice of initial engagement of clients and assessment in partnership with clients. Students will be taught to honor the client as the expert in his/her own life. Partnership with the client requires sharing of power, resources, skills and information. Role playing, reflecting teams and peer feedback will be utilized to help students develop skills in the classroom which will be applicable to future practicum experiences with individuals and families.

Course Rationale

Social work as a profession requires practitioners to be competent as ethical helpers in the context of the mission of social work. The ability to engage clients in a productive working relationship, and assist them in utilizing their own strengths and resources within their particular social and cultural context is an essential requirement of practice. The ecological-systems view and the generalist perspective offer a much needed unifying framework for understanding the multi-system assessment (individual, family, neighborhood, community) needed to participate in social justice efforts as well as to identify informal and formal supports for the client system.

Course Objectives
Students will have successfully completed this course when they have demonstrated knowledge and skills to:

1. Use ecological and strengths perspectives, general systems theory, and generalist framework to develop competent assessments that consider client environmental, biophysical and psychological functioning including cognition, emotion, motivation, coping and interpersonal strengths and deficits.
2. Conduct strengths-based interviews with diverse types of clients and problem situations.
3. Appreciate the strengths and needs of client groups that differ in class, race, gender, ethnicity/culture, sexual orientation, physical ability and age.
4. Partner with the client when applying specific components of the social work helping process, that is, engaging, exploring, assessing and goal setting.
5. Assess with clients their risks and needs for immediate actions and protections, as in child abuse or potential suicide situations.
6. Utilize a variety of standardized assessment tools, client-centered approaches to assessment, the ecomap, and the genogram.
7. Apply ethical decision-making and social work values to the initial engagement and assessment of clients.
8. Think critically and engage in critical discussions about all aspects of initial engagement and assessment, and plan interventions accordingly.
9. Demonstrate awareness of the micro and macro influences of the service delivery system on the client helping process.
10. Demonstrate awareness of how identified theoretical frameworks and research findings can be applied to assessment and engagement including emerging knowledge of practice models.

**Required Texts**


Other journal articles and materials may be added during the quarter. Assignments of this supplementary reading will be made in class. Some may be handouts, some may be on line, and some may be on reserve at the library. Location will be announced.

**Disability statement**
In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Eastern Washington University provides services and accommodations to students who experience barriers to the education setting due to learning, emotional, physical, mobility visual or hearing disabilities. For more information please contact Disability Support Services, 509-359-4706.

**Academic Integrity**

EWU Home page > Academics > Academic Resources > Student Academic Integrity Policy

Misrepresenting the quality or integrity of academic work by any means is a violation of academic integrity. Such academic dishonesty is a punishable offence.

Plagiarism, a common form of academic dishonesty, is the presentation of someone else’s ideas or words as your own. You plagiarize deliberately if you copy a sentence from a book or article and pass it off as your writing, if you summarize or paraphrase someone else’s ideas without acknowledging your debt, or if you buy or borrow a term paper to hand in as your own. You plagiarize accidentally if you carelessly forget quotation marks around another writer’s words or mistakenly omit a source citation for another’s idea because you are unaware of the need to acknowledge the idea.

Violations of academic integrity with respect to examinations include but are not limited to copying the work of another, allowing another student to copy from one’s own work, using crib notes, arranging for another person to substitute in taking an examination, or giving or receiving unauthorized information prior to or during the examination.

Students committing academic dishonesty at EWU will be reported to the appropriate University officials and will receive a sanction according to the University policy on Academic Integrity. Sanctions range from failure of the paper to removal from the University.

**Student Conduct**

EWU Home page > Campus Life > Student Rights & Responsibilities > Student Conduct Code

Student conduct refers to behaviors that include AND go beyond Academic Integrity. The Student Conduct Code is part of the Washington Administrative Code (Chapter 172-120 WAC). Many offenses subject to disciplinary action under the Code are also violations of law.

The Student Conduct Code addresses any behavior which deters the university from achieving its mission and purposes. These include matters impinging on academic achievement and integrity. Conduct that interferes with the rights of others, breaches the peace, causes disorder or disruption, imperils physical or mental health, damages property and theft is also included, as well as harassment, sexual misconduct, physical abuse (threatened or actual) and other specific offenses.

The university is supported by taxpayers in order to carry out a particular mission, that of providing educational opportunities to students, transmitting and advancing knowledge and
serving the community. Basically, any behavior that interferes with the rights, opportunities and welfare of students, faculty and staff to carry out this mission is considered a violation of the Code.

**Professional Accountability**
http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp

Students enrolled in a professional social work program are also held accountable to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics just as practicing professional social workers. The NASW Code of Ethics includes many types of misconduct also listed in the Student Conduct Code.

As with the Student Conduct Code and Academic Integrity, the instructor must establish by a preponderance of evidence – a reasonable probability – that the ethical violation in fact took place. A range of punishments may be applied such as verbal sanctioning, lowering a grade, failing the class, removal from the BASW program or even the University, etc., etc.

As is the case with practicing social workers, claiming that “everyone else was doing it” is not an acceptable defense. Professional accountability is an individual responsibility regardless of the behavior of ones peers.

**Course Format**
The course will be taught in a lecture/discussion format complemented by in-class skills practice.

**Evaluation and Grading**

**Assignment Completion:**
All assignments, whether written or otherwise, must be completed in a timely manner. Assignments are due at the beginning of a class session and are late thereafter. Points will be deducted for late assignments. Written assignments will be evaluated for clarity, comprehensiveness, organization, demonstration of the ability to integrate and apply course content, responsiveness to assignment, as well as correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and referencing style (if references are utilized). All written papers should be double spaced and typed or word processed using **Times New Roman font with 12 point type and 1” margins** unless otherwise specified. Please include a title page with your name and the title of the assignment in the upper right hand corner.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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1. Preparation, attendance, and participation  Due: Throughout the quarter  35%

This is a practice class, and attendance and participation are mandatory. Specifically, students are required to attend all classes in this course. (Attendance is defined as prompt arrival and continual presence and participation during all class hours.) Multiple absences will result in a lowering of grades. Students who attend less than 75% of the classes (excluding finals week) will not pass this course.

Grading will be done as follows:
- Only one absence for cause (and approved by the instructor) is allowed without penalty.
- For second absence 2 points is subtracted from 35%. (Credit for attendance is now 33%)
- For third absence 4 additional points are subtracted. (Credit for attendance is now 29%)
- For fourth absence 8 additional points are subtracted. (Credit for attendance is now 21%)
- For fifth absence 16 additional points are subtracted. (Credit for attendance is now 5%, and student will not be given a passing grade for the course.

Professional behavior is expected of all students in the classroom. This includes:
- Being responsible for your own learning and being engaged in the learning process
- Coming to class prepared to do the work required for the day
- Using your fair share of air time during class discussions
- Asking questions when you don't understand
- Talking about mistakes as well as accomplishments
- Giving thoughtful, appropriate feedback to others during skill practice sessions
- Considering the viewpoints and ideas of others with respect.
- Avoiding cross-talk and other distracting, disruptive behaviors
- Turning cell phones and pagers to “silent”

2. Quizes  Due: Oct. 10, Oct. 24, Oct. 29, Nov. 7, Nov. 21  15%

Sound practice is built on an understanding of major concepts. These brief tests will make sure you have the basic principles well in hand. These principles form the foundation of all the rest of your classes. (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)

3. Genogram and ecomap  Due: Nov. 5  20%

(This is a confidential project—content will not be shared with anyone other than the instructor without student permission.)

Genogram:
Draw a three-generation genogram of your family. Indicate important family trends such as physical and mental health issues, substance abuse issues, similar career choices, etc. Be creative! Write a 2-3 page narrative (maximum) detailing your observations and insights about your family.  (See an example rationale on pp. 162-3 in Kirst-Ashman & Hull.)

~Instructions for this assignment are continued on next page~

Ecomap:
On a large piece of paper, prepare an eco-map of your own personal support system as it exists now or sometime within the past 6 months. Be creative! Write a 2-3 page narrative (maximum) detailing your observations and insights about the situation. (See an example on pp. 160-2 in Kirst-Ashman & Hull.)

General Instructions:
Narrative should be typed or word-processed according to course standards for papers. Maps may be drawn by hand, painted, sculpted, etc., but be sure words are readable. Don’t forget the keys and relating your observations to course content!!

4. Written assessment paper  
Due: Nov. 28  
30%

Students will arrange with a partner in class to do an interview gathering material on one of several scenarios which will be distributed in class and individually adapted by each student. A written strengths based assessment following the guidelines contained in the syllabus will include the following: 1) A brief description of the "problem" that the student partner is experiencing, 2) pertinent ecological-systems information, 3) an assessment of the client based on environmental, cultural, biophysical, and psychological strengths and deficits, and 4) client goals. (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)

5. Suicide Risk Assessment  
Due Dec. 3  
Pass/no pass, retake

Take the EWU sponsored, web-based, QPR Gatekeepers Program. This program takes the student about 1.5 to 2 hours to complete and produces a Certificate of Completion after passing a post-test that they can bring in to the instructor as proof of satisfactorily completing the assignment. The cost to the student is about $20. The procedure for taking the on-line course will be explained in class. Note that this requirement must be completed in order to receive a grade in this course. (Objectives 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10)

[Background: The assessment protocols designed by the QPR Institute and utilized in the EWU courses are recommended by JCAHO (Joint Commission of Accreditation for Healthcare Organizations) as “best practices,” have won the J. J. Negley President’s Award for avoiding suicide malpractice and QPR was highlighted as an example of best practices in suicide risk assessment in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (SAMHSA) Treatment Improvement Protocol - TIP 42 - Substance Abuse Treatment For Persons With Co-Occurring Disorders.]

6. Miscellaneous

Additional assignments, quizzes, etc. may occur throughout the class. These may or may not be graded, and students will be advised of that when the work is assigned.

Reading assignments are to be completed prior to the class for which they are listed.
The following is a suggested grading scale for this class:
### Grading Scale

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR CASE ASSESSMENT PAPER

Use the following guidelines for your assessment.
Organize your paper by using the major heading (I, II, etc.) of each section.
Write each sub-section (A, B, etc.) in paragraph form.
Use APA Guidelines. Limit: 10 pages.

I. Orienting Information and Brief Summary of Identified Problem Situation
   A. Brief Description of Client (demographics, e.g., age, gender, marital status, household composition, economic situation, etc.)
   B. Presenting Identified Problem Situation
   C. Who is involved--family, friends, larger systems?
   D. Why is the client seeking help now?

II. Initial Goal Formulation
    A. How would the client like things to be different?
    B. If the work is successful, what would be different for the client?

III. Assessment of Current Functioning of the Client(s) Including Strengths
    A. Biophysical Functioning/physical health & it’s psychological & social meaning to client
       (Abilities/disabilities, chronic or acute illnesses/conditions, nutrition, sensory abilities, medications including effects & side effects, mobility, activities of daily living)
    B. Psychological functioning
       1. Cognition—logic of thinking, ability to reason, problem solving ability, openness to new ideas, perception of the world relative to other people of his/her culture
       2. Emotion—how in touch with feelings, ease of expressing feelings, range of emotions, emotions congruent with situations, handling of stress, hope vs. hopelessness, ability to express love and concern
       3. Motivation—desire to improve current or future situations, dependent vs. independent, avoidance or denial of problems, willingness to seek help, locus of control
       4. Coping—Handling of situations, history of handling situations, organizational ability, ability to follow through, resourcefulness and creativeness, persistence
       5. Interpersonal—relationships with friend, family, etc., appropriateness of performing social roles, self-confidence, manners, ability to listen as well as to express self, sense of humor, expectations of others, truthfulness, patience, ability to accept feedback (+ or -) from others, flexibility, cooperativeness, extrovert vs. introvert.

IV. Assessment of Ethnic, Cultural, Religious/Spiritual and Life Style Factors Including Strengths
    A. Ethnic, cultural patterns of behavior, strengths
    B. Oppression, life-style issues
    C. Attitude, motivation toward seeking help
    D. Use of and access to cultural, ethnic, and religious/spiritual resources

V. Assessment of Environmental Factors Including Strengths (Use info. from tools such as the ecomap)
    A. Assessment of social support systems
    B. Assessment of basic needs (housing, nutrition, financial)
    C. Assessment of opportunities available for solving problem

VI. Supporting History
    Individualize for client’s situation and include past evidence of strengths as well as past problematic issues that relate to the current situation.

VII. Goals and Contracting
    A. Mutually constructed goals
    B. Specific strategies for first steps, short-term plans
    C. Strategies for outcome evaluation (How will you and client know if goals were met?)
Class Schedule

Note: The course will proceed approximately as follows. Changes may occur in the printed class schedule to accommodate student learning needs and interests or unforeseen circumstances.

Class 1
Sept. 26 (W) Introduction—listening to our stories; establishing a learning climate and learning goals; course overview including logistics, assignments, expectations and grading.

Class 2
Oct. 1 (M) Generalist Practice—systems theory (micro, mezzo, macro), purpose/function of social work.
Read Kirst-Ashman & Hull, pp 3-11, 14-21; Gambrill, pp. 3-10.
(Objectives 1, 8, 9, 10)

Class 3
Oct. 3 (W) Ecological Perspective—Person-In-Environment, characteristics of clinical interviews, clinical vs. social interactions.
Read Kirst-Ashman & Hull, pp 11-14, 21-26; Murphy & Dillon, Chap. 1.
(Objectives 1, 2, 4, 8)

Class 4
Oct. 8 (M) Strengths Perspective—problem solving, Generalist Intervention Model.
Interviewing Skills—attending, listening, SOLER.
Read Kirst-Ashman & Hull, pp 26-33, 41-46; Murphy & Dillon, Chap. 3;
(Objectives 3, 4, 5)

Class 5
Oct. 10 (W) Quiz on basic concepts
Interviewing Skills—warmth, empathy, genuineness, verbal and nonverbal communication, self-determination, empowerment.
Read Kirst-Ashman & Hull, pp 46-51; Murphy & Dillon, Chap. 4;
(Objectives 2, 4, 5)

Class 6
Oct. 15 (M) Engagement—setting the stage, opening lines, introductions, anxieties-theirs and yours, confidentiality, settings.
Read Kirst-Ashman & Hull, pp 51-55 & 137-142; Murphy & Dillon, Chap. 2;
Gambrill, pp 394-400.
(Objectives 3, 4)

Class 7
Read Kirst-Ashman & Hull, pp 160-163; Murphy & Dillon, pp 129-146.
(Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10)
Class 8  
Oct. 22 (M)  
Interviewing Continued—cultural competence, rephrasing, reflecting, summarizing, interpreting, closed and open ended questions. 
Read Kirst-Ashman & Hull, pp 55-64; Murphy & Dillon, Chap. 5. 
(Objectives 2, 3, 4, 9) 

Class 9  
Oct. 24 (W)  
Choosing Interview Partners and Scenarios; and Quiz on interviewing skills 
Challenges in Interviewing—silence, confrontation, hostility, involuntary clients, deceivers. 
Read Kirst-Ashman & Hull, pp 64-75. 
(Objectives 2, 3, 5, 7) 

Class 10  
Oct. 29 (M)  
Write up of Adaptation of Interview Scenario Take Home Quiz is due 
Assessment Continued—diagnosis vs. assessment, client centered assessment, gathering information, various assessment tools, purpose, mezzo & macro. 
Read Kirst-Ashman & Hull, pp 142-160; Gambrill, pp 316-323 & 334-41. 
(Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 8) 

Class 11  
Oct. 31 (W)  
Assessment Framework. 
Start interview for assessment ONLY IF scenario write up has been approved. 
(Objectives 1, 6) 

Class 12  
Nov. 5 (M)  
Ecomap and Genogram Assignment is due 
Defining the Problem Situation—goals, SMART objectives, and action steps. 
Read Kirst-Ashman & Hull, pp 181-194 & 33-38; Murphy & Dillon, pp 142-6. 
(Objectives 1, 4, 6) 

Class 13  
Nov. 7 (W)  
Take Home Quiz on goals, objectives, and action steps is due 
Ethics—overview, confidentiality. 
(Objectives 7, 8, 10) 

Note: There is no class on Monday, November 12 

Class 14  
Nov. 14 (W)  
Solving Ethical Dilemmas—models, Tarasoff ruling, duty to warn. 
Read Kirst-Ashman & Hull, pp 369-392. 
(Objectives 1, 8, 10) 

Class 15  
Nov. 19(M)  
Skill Building—practice with ethical dilemmas. 
(Objectives 3, 7, 8, 10) 

Note: There is no class on Wednesday, November 21
Class 16  **Email Quiz** on Code of Ethics, solving ethical dilemmas  
Nov. 26 (M) Diversity in the US—race, ethnicity, disability, culture, age, sex and gender, sexual preference, class, language, family style, religion, etc.; impact on assessment tool choices.  
Read Kirst-Ashman & Hull, pp 395-405; Gambrill, pp 26-35.  
(Objectives 2, 3, 7)

Class 17  **Assessment Paper is due**  
Nov. 28 (W) Culturally Competent Social Work—skills practice.  
Read Kirst-Ashman & Hull, pp 405-22.  
(Objectives 2, 3)

Class 18  **Suicide Certificate is due**  
Dec. 3 (M) Suicide—suicidality and family violence.  
(Objective 4, 5, 6, 8)

Class 19  
Dec. 5 (W) Tying up Loose Ends—Mezzo & Macro assessments—celebration of success, course evaluation.  
Read Kirst-Ashman & Hull, pp 166-178.  
(Objectives 2, 8, 10)

Class will **not** meet during finals week due to probable schedule conflicts with other university class final exams.
References


