Eastern Washington University
School of Social Work and Human Services

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SWKG 575: Advanced Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents

Catalog Description

Advanced practice strategies and techniques with children, youth and families. Students will apply assessment paradigms to case situations and design appropriate intervention strategies based on contemporary practice theory. Direct practice knowledge and skills will be evaluated through experiential and written assignments.

Course Description

This course builds on the direct practice foundations established in SWKG 532 and SWKG 533. It provides students with advanced direct practice knowledge and skills for work with children and adolescents with an ecological, strengths-based, client centered approach to practice. A major component of the course focuses on client strengths and potential resources in the environment. Strategies and techniques are considered in the context of varying fields of social work practice with youth, as well as in various problems (such as ADHD and Eating Disorders) with which youth are confronted in contemporary society.

Course Rationale

The advanced social work generalist requires advanced direct practice skills. Many MSW's come into contact with the needs of youth in whatever setting they choose to work. Nearly all MSW's practicing in rural settings are required to have advanced direct practice skills that span the life cycle, including specific knowledge of effective approaches with children and adolescents. The level of knowledge and skill required for the MSW goes far beyond academic understanding. MSW's are expected to apply effective assessment paradigms and intervention strategies across a wide range of clients, environments and practice settings. This course focuses on these professional functions and is designed to provide, in concert with the practice experience, the level of practice knowledge and skill required of the advanced generalist.

Course Objectives

1) To understand the social-developmental processes of children and adolescents in terms of life tasks in a complex society and the implications of these processes for social work practice.
2) To become aware of how social, cultural, economic, gender, racial and ethnic factors affect specific groups and their functioning and the implications of these factors for social work practice.

3) To become knowledgeable about specific macro-, meso-, and micro-level interventions and practitioner roles and tasks in social work practice with children and adolescents.

4) To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of successful interventions for a variety of current issues facing children and adolescents today through selection of ecologically-based approaches.

5) To apply knowledge gained from the literature and class discussion to select practice situations.

6) To become knowledgeable about specific issues that trouble youth and interventions aimed at dealing with them.

Required Texts:


Course Expectations

This course includes lecture and discussion, therefore student participation and contribution is the key to the success of the course. On certain topics some of you may have more experience than the instructor and we all can profit from that experience. Critical thinking and critical dialogue are expected. The instructor and the students share responsibility for raising important issues and questions related to the lectures and readings. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to class meetings, in order to be prepared to discuss the content. Regular attendance is required.

This class may require students to discuss sensitive information about themselves, their families and/or their work experiences. All discussions in this class must be considered confidential in nature and therefore, may not be discussed or revealed outside of this classroom. Violations of this expectation of confidentiality may be grounds for failing the class.

Assignments

1) Reading summaries: Often there will be assigned readings. For each chapter or assigned article I would like a one paragraph summary of the reading and then the
leading question you had about the material. It is the question more than the summary that tells me how much you have integrated the reading and what you are pondering. This summary and question can be hand typed or written which ever you prefer. 20 percent of grade.

2) Paper: The major part of your grade is a paper (70%). First you need to decide if you want to explore more services to youth and adolescents; specific issues with that population or treatment. In one of those three areas, you explore in depth a specific topic or theory that you want to explore. Two weeks after the beginning class please give me the topic and some of the reading you are planning of doing on the subject. This will give me an idea what you are interested in and an opportunity to give suggestions for reading if I have them.

This will be due on November 29th. 15 to 20 pages, double spaced, typed.

3) Attendance and participation (10%)

4) If a topic interests you or you have worked in that type of unit (like CPS) you can do a presentation on that topic or issue. You need to tell me the week ahead of the presentation that you plan to do so I can schedule accordingly. Presentations are often 20 minutes to a half an hour. This is completely voluntary, some hate to do presentations. If you do, give me a paper with a short summary or notes of the presentation. You can take this as extra credit or shorten your paper to 10 to 12 pages. Tell me in the summary which you prefer to do.

Grading

For almost all graduate students pragmatically grades mean very little. I have never been asked in a job interview what my GPA was, nor at this point do I know. Psychologically grades are another issue. Many of us were trained to see our work and the worthiness of same through the lens of grades. Further we have our own view of what they mean and where they stand with other work we have done.

For example, I have given students a 3.6 and they have felt like they flunked and say they have never gotten such a low grade. This has been protested to the Dean who was incredulous that anyone would protest that high a grade. For me, I felt that the grade did not communicate what I intended, the student felt they had done very poorly and I felt they had done very well.

It can also influence when things are due or the amount of work. From a grading perspective it is not helpful to put so much credit on one paper, but when I have diversified more it seemed to me like busy work. A final is helpful in assigning grades but my experience is that it rewards those who memorize well and therefore there is no final in my class. The paper gives more time for feedback if it is due before Thanksgiving, but I have found that weekend is prime for extra work.
Grades by University standards translate into this: A—4.0 to 3.8; A- 3.7 to 3.4; B+ 3.3 to 3.1; B 3.0 to 2.8; B- 2.7 to 2.4; C+ 2.3 to 2.1; C 2.0 to 1.8

Schedule:

**Class 1**  
9/27  
Introduction/Course Overview/Goals and Expectations  
Read: Chapter 1, 2 and 3 in Petr

**Class 2**  
Oct 4th  
Adultcentrism and how to interview children  
Due summary of reading and questions  
Read: Chapters 4, 5 and 6 Petr

**Class 3**  
Oct 11th  
Traditional services to children CPS, CWS, residential treatment, child welfare agencies  
Due summary of reading and questions  
Due ideas for papers  
Read: Decide if you want to read in child welfare agencies or mental health—do one or the other—you have two weeks to do this.

**Class 4**  
Oct. 18th  
Class cancelled.

**Class 5**  
Oct 25  
Substance abuse and homelessness  
Due summary of reading and questions  
Read Chapters 1, 2, 3 Playful Communications

**Class 6**  
Nov 1  
ADHD, Aspersers, Suicide  
Due summary of reading and questions  
Read Chapters 4, 5, 6 Playful Communications

**Class 7**  
Nov 8  
Play therapy, Behaviorism, Attachment theory  
Due Summary of reading and questions  
Read Chapter 7, 8 and 9

**Class 8**  
Nov 15  
Externalizing the symptom  
Due Summary of reading and questions  
Read Chapters 10, 11 and 12

**Class 9**  
Nov 29  
Writing letters  
Due summary of reading and questions  
Due major paper  
Choose two stories to read and have usual summary and questions with additional question; why did you choose these two stories?

**Class 10**  
Narrative therapy with children
Dec 6th  

Due summary of reading and questions

**Recommended Texts**

Note: The best books about children and youth are NOT professional books but books by fictional writers. No one (in my opinion) has ever caught adolescent turmoil better than JD Salinger in Catcher in the Rye, or JK Rowling’s Harry Potter series is almost the phenomena of our time. Girl of the Limberlost, Ender’s Game, the CS Lewis series starting with the Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe; there are too many to mention.


Bronfenbrenner, Urie *The Ecology of Human Development* Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Fallon, P. Katzman, MA and Wooley SC (Eds) *Feministist perspectives on eating disorders* New York: Guilford

Garbarino, James—almost any of his books

Kozol, Jonathan—same as Garbarino, almost any of his books

Morgan, A (ed) *Once upon a time* Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Press

Patterson, G. *Living with children* Research Press

Schaefer, C and Millman, H *How to help children with common problems* New York: Plume

Webb, N *Play therapy with children in crisis* New York: Guilford Press

White, M and Morgan, A *Narrative therapy with children and their families* Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Press