



GRADUATE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

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COURSE TITLE/SECTION: SOCW 7397 (Section 21192)
Assessment in Social Work Practice

TIME: Thursday, 1:30-4:30p

Faculty

Alicia LaChapelle, MSW
Email: arlachap@mail.uh.edu

Office Hours

GCSW Building, Office 426

- Wednesday, 10am-12pm
- Thursday, 4:30pm-6pm

I. Course

A. Catalog Description

Knowledge and skills for assessment of clients at the individual, group, family, organizational and community levels.

B. Purpose

This advanced practice course prepares students to conduct assessments of clients at the individual, group, family, organizational, and community levels. Utilizing a strengths perspective, it focuses on the collaborative nature of assessment and the design and implementation of assessments that include evidence based strategies.

II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe how assessment informs all levels of social work practice;
2. Delineate the tasks involved in the process of assessment;
3. Compare and contrast the differences and similarities between problem-based and Strengths-based assessment;
4. Discuss the collaborative nature of assessment and its relationship to social work values;
5. Determine the validity and reliability of different assessment tools;
6. Choose appropriate assessment tools for use with clients at the individual, group, family, organizational and community levels;
7. Explain how assessment methods are used in the evaluation process;
8. Utilize culturally sensitive models for assessment of racial/ethnic minority clients, families and communities;
9. Demonstrate assessment skills that take into account special client considerations including, but not limited to, race/ethnicity/social class, gender and sexual orientation;
10. Conduct a strengths-based assessment with clients at the individual, group, family

organizational and community levels.

III. Course Content

This course will include the following topical (content) areas:

1. Evidence based methods/theories;
2. Individual, group, family, organization, community and self-assessment;
3. Assessment tools to address various issues and age levels, inclusive of multi-cultural content and special groups.

IV. Course Structure

This Spring 2010 semester course will consist of 14 class periods. The content will be delivered in seminar format, utilizing a variety of teaching and learning techniques including: lectures, in-class group discussions, individual and group presentations, group activities, case studies, handouts, and online activities via Blackboard.

V. Textbooks

Required:

- O'Hare, Thomas. (2009). *Essential Skills of Social Work Practice: Assessment, Intervention and Evaluation*. Lyceum Books. Chicago, Illinois.
- Netting, F.E. Kettner, P. & McMurtry, S.L. (2004)(3RD Ed.) *Social work macro practice*. New York: Longman.

****The following books can be accessed electronically through UH's Library Catalog:**

- Northen, H., & Kurland, R. (2001). *Social Work with groups*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fischer, J., & Corcoran, K. (2007). *Measures for clinical practice and research: a sourcebook* (4th ed.). Oxford : Oxford University Press.

*In addition to the required texts, there will be assigned readings and journal articles found in the blackboard course folders. Please see the course outline below for more details

VI. Course Requirements

A. Reading Assignments: Readings are listed on the course outline below. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to the scheduled class. The class lectures and activities are designed to supplement the assigned readings and not to review them in detail. Students are expected to complete all readings in order to participate in a meaningful and informed manner in classroom discussions, activities and assignments. In addition to the required texts, some required readings may be accessed through blackboard.

B. Written Assignments

1. **Individual Assessment (20%).** Students will be paired with another student for the individual assessment assignment. Students will complete an in-class interview and assessment focused on the topic of self-care.
2. **Family Assessment (20%).** Students will view a film and will develop a family assessment based on the characters in the film

3. **Assessment Tool/Instrument Assignment (20%).** Students will locate an assessment tool that could be used with an individual, family, group, community, or organization and that is relevant to their field practicum. Students will complete a one page summary of the instrument that discusses how the tool can be used effectively with client systems and also includes information on its psychometrics and scoring. This information, along with a copy of the tool, will be compiled into a booklet and be provided to students at the end of the semester. In addition students must provide the instructor with a peer reviewed journal article that used the tool in its design and information on its psychometrics. Students will prepare a formal presentation of their findings.
4. **Group Assessment (20%):** Students will be assigned to a small task/support group around self-care at the beginning of the course and they will remain members of that group for 5 weeks during it, meeting independently for 45 minutes. The purpose of this assignment is to provide students with the opportunity to reflect and assess their experiences as an individual, as a group member, and as a leader.
5. **Community or Organization Assessment (20%).** Students will have the option to complete either an organization assessment or community assessment. The organization assessment may be based on the student's field placement organization. The community organization may be based on the community defined as a Super Neighborhood by the City of Houston.

C. Attendance. It is expected that each student will be present for the full length of each class and will be active participants in discussions and activities. Each excused absence must be negotiated with the professor by email or in person and must be presented with a doctor's excuse or documentation. Each non-excusable absence will result in a 2-point reduction (or 1-point with an excuse email approved by the instructor, or no deduction with a doctor's note or excuse documentation) from the final grade, including extensive tardiness.

Students who are absent for more than two class periods without excusable reasons, will have their end of term grade lowered (i.e.: A to B, B to C, etc). Excused absences MUST be negotiated with the professor

To show your full participation and respect others, please observe this rule: absolutely no browsing through the internet (except for viewing course materials to follow the lecture), or using the cell phone or text-messaging in class.

VII. Evaluation and Grading

A. Grading Distribution:

1. Individual Assessment 20%
2. Family Assessment 20%
3. Assessment Tool/Instrument 20%
4. Group Assessment Portfolio 20%
5. Community or Organization Assessment 20%

B. Grading Scale: Scores from assignments will be calculated according the distribution above. These scores will be combined to form the final grade according to the scale as follows:

A =	96-100%	C+ =	76-79.9%
A- =	92-95.9%	C =	72-75.9%
B+=	88-91.9%	C- =	68-71.9%
B =	84-87.9%	D =	64-67.9%
B- =	80-83.9%	F =	Below 64%

C. Policy On grades of I (Incomplete):

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are either **(1)** passing a course or **(2)** still have a reasonable chance of passing in the judgment of the instructor but, for non-academic reasons beyond their control have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. Please refer to the UH Graduate and Professional Studies Bulletin for more details on the policy regarding incomplete grades. Incompletes will be granted **only** in accordance with this policy.

Assignments are due at the beginning of each class session (or by email prior to the start of class) for which they are due, as indicated in the course outline below. Late assignments will be reduced by 10 points for each day that they are late. Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time and providing proper documentation.

D. Policy on Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism:

The purpose of this course is to help each student develop his or her strengths and improve limitations in the area of Social Work Assessment. In order for this to happen, each student is expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you **must** set the quote in quotation marks **or** use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number(s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must **clearly** indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using **any** other person's work and representing it as your

own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

VIII. Consultation

My office is located on the fourth floor of the Social Work Building, office #426. Scheduled office hours are indicated on page 1 of the syllabus and posted outside of the office door. Other times may be arranged by emailing for an appointment. My email address is arlachap@mail.uh.edu.

IX. Policy on Academic Accommodations for students with disabilities:

Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. Please call 713-743-5400 for more assistance.

X. Expectations for Maintaining a safe, respectful, learning environment and classroom behavior:

Cell phones and Laptops: Students are asked to avoid using cell phones (including texting) during the class period. In addition, student's lap top use is to be restricted to purposes related to class (i.e. note taking) and not for social networking or other internet surfing. Disruptions of this nature compromise the academic process and therefore will not be tolerated. If you have extenuating circumstances that prevent you from honoring this classroom rule, please schedule a meeting with me as soon as possible to advise me of your situation.

Classroom Behavior: All students are expected to behave in a professional manner and to be respectful of one's self as well as one's colleagues. Due to the nature of social work, and specifically this course and the assignments, some discussions will elicit various emotions, opinions, and perspective. These differences often serve to enrich the education process. In addition, all information that is divulged during in class discussions and activities as well as written assignments will be treated as confidential by the professor and the students.

XI. Course Outline (This outline is subject to change based on class progress; check your emails or Blackboard regularly for new reading papers and review questions. Prepare all your reading assignments prior to each class. Please note that assignments are due on dates listed in bold font)

Assessment Overview	
Week 1 Jan 20	<p>Class Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Course Overview and Expectations: syllabus, assignments, blackboard sites <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Syllabus and Blackboard Site
Assessment of Individuals	
Week 2: Jan 27	<p>Class Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conducting Assessments with Individuals ➤ Strengths perspective vs. problem based perspective <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ O'Hare, Chapter 1; Chapter 4 (pp.85-100 only); Appendix B (pp.377-381) ➤ Skim the following articles found on blackboard: Graybeal, C. (2001); Ghou and Tsui (2010)
Week 3: Feb 3	<p>Class Activities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continuation of Individual Assessments with a focus on mental health and substance abuse ➤ Conduct individual Interviews for Assessment Assignment I <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ O'Hare, Chapter 1; Chapter 4 (pp.85-100 only); Appendix B (pp.377-381) ➤ Skim O'Hare, Chapters 8 and 9, paying close attention to the sections labeled: <i>Assessment</i>
Cultural Issues and Assessment Tools	
Week 4: Feb 10	<p>Class Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assessment Tools ➤ Cultural Considerations in Assessment <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Read the following: O'Hare, Thomas: Overview (p. 32); Chapter 4 (pp. 103-105); ➤ Fischer & Corcoran (2007) [can be retrieved electronically through UH library catalog]: Introduction and Chapter 1
Week 5 Feb 17	<p>Class Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How to locate, evaluate and select assessment tools <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fischer & Corcoran (2007) [can be retrieved electronically through UH library catalog]: Chapters 3 and 5 <p>Assignment Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Individual Assessment
Assessment of Families	
Week 6 Feb 24	<p>Class Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Family Systems and Assessment <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ O'Hare Thomas: pp.100-103;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Family Theory and Genogram handouts per Blackboard
Week 7 March 3	<p>Class Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ View movie for Family Assessment Assignment <p>Assignment Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assessment Tool Assignment (Written Portion)
Assessment of Groups	
Week 8 March 10	<p>Class Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Practice and Assessment with Groups <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Northen & Kurland (2001) [can be retrieved electronically through UH library catalog]: Chapters 2 and 10
Week 9 March 17	Spring Break! No Class
Week 10 March 24	<p>Class Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In Class Presentation of Assessment Tools, Group I ➤ In Class Group Session 1 <p>Assignment Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Family Assessment Paper
Week 11 March 31	<p>Class Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In Class Presentation of Assessment Tools, Group II ➤ In Class Group Session 2
Assessment of Communities and Organizations	
Week 12 April 7	<p>Class Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assessment with Communities ➤ In Class Group Session 3 <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Netting, Kettner & McCurty: Chapters 5 and 6
Week 13 April 14	<p>Class Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assessment with Organizations ➤ In Class Session 4 <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Netting, Kettner & McCurty: Chapter 7
Week 14 Apr 21	<p>Class Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continued Discussion of Community and Organizations ➤ In Class Session 5
Week 15 Apr 28	<p>Class Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wrap up and Course Evaluations <p>Assignment Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community or Organization Assessment
May 5th	<p>No Class</p> <p>Assignment Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Group Portfolio

Bibliography

- Collins, D., Jordan, C., & Coleman, H. (2007). *An introduction to family social work*. (2nd Ed.). Itasca, IL: F.E.Peacock Publishers.
- Cournoyer, B. (2007). *The social work skills workbook* (5th Ed.) . Belmont, CA: Thompson.
- Devor, W. (1999). *Ethnic sensitive social work practice* (5th Ed.). S.I.: Merrill.
- Fischer, J., & Corcoran, K. (2007). *Measures for clinical practice and research: a sourcebook* (4th ed.). Oxford : Oxford University Press.
- Ghou, W., & Tsui, M. (2011). From resilience to resistance: a reconstruction of the strengths perspective in social work practice . *International Social Work*, 53(2), 233-245.
- Glicken, M. (2004). *Using the strengths perspective in social work practice*. Boston: Pearson.
- Graybel, C. (2001). Strengths-based social work assessment: transforming the dominant paradigm . *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 82(3), 233-242.
- Netting, F., Kettner, P., & McMurtry, S. (2008). *Social work macro practice* (4th Ed.) . Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Northen, H., & Kurland, R. (2001). *Social Work with groups* . New York: Columbia University Press.
- O'Hare, T. (2009). *Essential skills of social work practice : assessment, intervention, and evaluation* . Chicago: Lyceum.
- Robinson, J. P., Shaver, P. R., Wrightsman, L. S., & Andrews, F. M. (1991). *Measures of personality and social psychological attitudes* . San Diego: Academic Press.
- Saleeby, D. (2006). *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.
- Sue, D. W. (2006). *Multicultural social work practice*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley.
- Zastrow, C. (2006). *Social work with groups: a comprehensive workbook* (6TH Ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson/Brooks/Cole.