



COURSE TITLE / SECTION: SOCW 7397 (Section # 21175) Spring, 2011
Contextualized Strengths-Based Practice in Social Work

TIME: 6-9 pm Mondays

FACULTY:
Cynthia F. Reibenstein, LCSW, ACSW, DCSW

OFFICE HOURS:
Before class on Monday or by appt.

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FAX: N/A

I. Course

- A. Catalog Description:** [Credit 3 (3-0)]. Analyzes and applies contextualized practice approach with a diverse range of client systems, from a multicultural strengths-based perspective.
- B. Purpose:** This course focuses on the application of a contextualized strengths-based practice approach to clinical practice. Students will gain knowledge and understanding of this approach when working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and larger social systems within a multicultural perspective.

II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. articulate a framework for understanding the significant role context plays as it relates to social work practice;
2. explain how social, political, and economic contexts affect the opportunities and limitations of social work practice;
3. critically analyze the role, influence, and impact of power and power inequity in social work practice;
4. discuss and demonstrate knowledge and skill for practical application of contextualized strengths based practice approach to working with a diverse range of clients and settings;
5. demonstrate assessment and intervention skills that draw upon the client's situation, strengths, and limitations;
6. evaluate self development and the effectiveness of professional practice; and
7. assess the significance of culturally competent practice with the overall goal of contextualized strengths-based practice.

III. Course Structure

A variety of teaching and learning techniques will be utilized in this course, including lectures, group discussions, individual/group experiential exercises, role plays, guest lectures, videos, and handouts. Blackboard vista will be utilized as a means of creating discussions about relevant clinical practice issues, posting assignments, supplementary readings, essential updates, and for delivery of some assignments.

IV. Required Text

Saleebey, D. (2008) *The strengths perspective in social work practice (5th Edition)*. Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.

Required Readings

A selection of articles/chapters from books have been identified as required readings for this course. These required readings will be posted on Blackboard Vista and are listed in the syllabus; they are to be read by the day they are listed.

V. Course Requirements

A. Reading Assignments

The course outline contains topics to be covered and reading assignments to be completed on a weekly basis. Students are also required to regularly check Blackboard Vista to access readings, resources, and other materials for class. This highly interactive class will be designed to clarify, and supplement the understanding of assigned readings, and to create stimulating discussions and experiences regarding content. It is critical that students remain current with all reading assignments to fully participate in class and to experience academic success in the course.

B. Course Assignments

1. Class Attendance and In-Class Participation

Attendance and class participation are critical to successful learning in this course and to student's development of essential social work practice skills. Students can receive full class participation points for class attendance, attending the entire class session (arrival on time and staying throughout class), active participation in class and group activities, and informed participation in class discussions. **NOTE: More than two absences will significantly impact your final grade.** If you know in advance that you need to be absent from class, please notify Professor in writing via e-mail. Periodically students will participate in experiential work, role plays, and review of prepared cases to develop knowledge and skill for practical application of contextualized strengths based practice approach. Blackboard vista will be used to distribute readings and resources to students as well as to provide opportunity for discussion.

2. Self-Assessment

As a means of assessing student's readiness for the class and to guide the course to meet the needs of students, students will be required to complete a comprehensive pre and post self-assessment of their current clinical knowledge and skill in social work practice.

3. Group Presentation

Groups of students will be formed to develop a comprehensive and professional presentation that allows students to demonstrate their acquired clinical knowledge and skills for practical application of a contextualized strengths based practice approach with a specific client group within a specific practice arena. A detailed description of the assignment will be provided by the Professor and posted on Blackboard vista.

4. Article Analysis

Students will conduct an analysis of a scholarly and/or research article about a select topic related to contextual, strengths based social work practice. Specific guidelines for this assignment will be presented by the Professor and posted on Blackboard Vista.

5. Integrative Clinical Case

Students will have an opportunity to demonstrate practical application of clinical knowledge and skill through the review, response, and completion of an integrative clinical case. Specific guidelines for this assignment will be presented by the Professor and posted on Blackboard Vista

VI. Evaluation and Grading

Grades will be based on the following:

1. Self-Assessment (Pre and Post)	10%
2. Class Attendance and Class Participation, includes quizzes	15%
3. Article Analysis	25%
4. Group Presentation	25%
5. Integrative Clinical Case	25%

A. Final course letter grades are based on the following standard grading scale for all courses taught in the College:

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

B. Attendance and Class Participation

Attendance and class participation are considered to be absolutely critical to successful learning in this clinical practice course. Maximum participation as demonstrated by regular attendance of full class period, actively engaging in class discussions, and ongoing involvement in class work and exercises is crucial to the class participation grade in this course. Both attendance and class participation will be observed and recorded; Quizzes count in this section of grades.

C. Late Assignments

Professor will allow for submission of late assignments **only** if the student has made prior arrangements to do so and for appropriate and compelling reasons. Late assignments (granted permission for late submission) however will automatically result in the lowering of the otherwise earned grade.

D. Pagers, Cell Phones, and Laptops

Please show respect and consideration of colleagues and professor by taking responsibility for keeping pager and cell phone interruptions to a minimum. Please use laptops for note taking purposes **only**.

E. Policy on Grades of Incomplete

Please refer to the UH Graduate and Professional Studies Bulletin for the university policy regarding a grade of Incomplete (I). Incompletes will be given only in accordance with this policy.

VII. Consultation

I do not office in the Social Work Building. My email address is RCReibenstein@aol.com and my cell telephone number is (713) 725 1826. Please make an appointment.

VIII. 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. For more information and/or assistance, please contact the Center for Students with DisAbilities at 713-743-5400. Instructors may not provide accommodations without supporting documentation from the UH Center for Students with DisAbilities.

COURSE OUTLINE, READINGS, and ASSIGNMENTS

Monday, January 24

- Overview of Course & Course Introduction
- Preparation for Assignments & Formation of Groups for Presentation
- Initiate Ideas for Article Analysis
- Completion of Pre Self-Assessment

Monday, January 31

- Contextualized Social Work Practice: Understanding the Significant Role of Context in Social Work Practice
- Exercise: Exploring the Context of Student for Balancing Academic Commitments with Professional Self-Care
- Readings:
Kemp, S. P., Whittaker, J. K., & Tracy, E. M. (2002) Contextual social work practice. (Chapter 2). In *Pathways to power: Readings in contextual social work practice*.

Monday, February 7

- Contextualized Social Work Practice: Contextual Assessment/Contextual Intervention
- Readings:
 - Saleebey, D. (Ed) (2008) Chapters, 2, 5, 6
 - Beder, J. (2009). Social work in the department of defense hospital: Impact, role, and interventions. *Military Medicine*, 174, pp. 486-490.

Monday, February 14

- The Effects of Social, Political & Economic Contexts in Social Work Practice
- Readings:
 - Saleebey (Ed., 2008), Chapter 12,14
 - Lewis, M. (2008). Families in the Heartland: Exploration of the social, economic, and cultural realities of Latino immigrants. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*. pp. 193-201.

Monday, February 21

- Role, Influence, Impact of Power & Power Inequity
- Readings:
 - Saleebey (Ed., 2008), Chapters 10, 11
 - Spencer, M. S. (2008). A social worker's reflections on power, privilege, and oppression. *Social Work*. 53 (2), pp. 99-101.
 - Faust, J. R. (2008). Clinical social worker as patient advocate in a community mental health center. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 36: 293-300.

Monday, February 28

- Contextualized Strengths Based Practice with Diverse Clients & Settings
- **Article Analysis Due & Discussion of Findings**
- Readings:
 - Saleebey (Ed., 2008), Chapters 7, 9
 - Rawana, E. & Brownlee, K. (2009). Making the possible probable: A strengths-based assessment and intervention framework for clinical work with parents, children, and adolescents. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, pp. 255-260.
 - Palmer-House, K. (2008). The perceived impact of strengths-based family worker Training: Workers' learning that helped empower families. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 89 (3): 428-437.
 - Bransford, C. L. (2009). Process-centered group supervision. *Clinical Social Work Journal*. 37: 119-127.

Monday, March 7

- Assessing the Significance of Culturally Competent Practice
- Readings:
 - OMelia & Miley – Salome Raheim - Chapter 6 – Cultural Competence: A requirement for empowerment practice
 - Schiele, J. H. & Hopps, J. G. (2009). Racial minorities then and now: the Continuing significance of race. *Social Work*, 54 (3): 195-199.

A Requirement for Empowerment Practice

Monday, March 21

- Integrative Clinical Practice – Clinical Case Reviews & Practical Application
- Readings:
 - Dewane, C. (2008). The ABCS of ACT – Acceptance and commitment therapy. *Social Work Today*, 8 (5): 36.
 - Lee, M. Y. (2008). A small act of creativity: Fostering creativity in clinical social work practice. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*. pp. 19-31.
 - Mireau, R. & Inch, R. (2009). Brief solution-focused counseling: A practical effective strategy for dealing with wait lists in community-based mental health services. *Social Work*, 54 (1): 63-70.
 - Turner, K. (2009). Mindfulness: The present moment in clinical social work. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 37: 95-103.

Monday, March 28

- Integrative Clinical Practice – Clinical Case Reviews & Practical Application
- Readings (Continued from previous week)

Monday, April 4

- Integrative Clinical Practice Work – Clinical Case Reviews & Practical Application

Monday, April 11

- Integrative Clinical Case DUE

Monday, April 18

- **Group Presentations:** Demonstration of clinical knowledge and skills for practical application of a contextualized strengths-based practice approach to a specific client group and practice arena

Monday, April 25

- **Group Presentations:** Demonstration of clinical knowledge and skills for practical application of a contextualized strengths-based practice approach to a specific client group and practice arena

Monday, May 2 – Last Day of Class

- Evaluating Self-Development and the Effectiveness of Professional Practice
- Completion of Post Self-Assessment, bring in
- Course Wrap-up & Evaluation

POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Although I do not expect to encounter academic dishonesty or plagiarism in this class, I want to be very clear about my standards. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "F" for the class. Other actions may also be taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism: All written assignments must be fully and properly referenced, 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 APA manual (5th edition) to determine the proper referencing format. Again, should you have any question regarding compliance, confirm with the APA manual.

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 preciously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper in more than one class. Finally, the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

SOCW7397: CONTEXTUALIZED STRENGTHS-BASED PRACTICE IN SOCIAL WORK COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Berzoff, J., Flanagan, L. M., & Hertz, P. (2008) *Inside out and outside in: Psychodynamic clinical theory and psychopathology in contemporary multicultural contexts*. (2nd Ed.) Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Press.

Blackwell, C. W., Dziegielewski, S. F. & Jacinto, G. A. (2006). The use of a strengths based approach in addressing discrimination against gays and lesbians. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 14 (3), pp. 1-17.

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