COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is the first of a two-semester course that will introduce students to the fundamental knowledge base and the practical application of skills in social work practice. This course provides students with introductory knowledge of social work methodology within the context of agency-based practice with individuals, families, and communities. Students in generalist practice are expected to coalesce the knowledge they will be gaining through their fieldwork, readings, and classroom discussions in order to forge meaningful interactions with their clients. The focus of the first semester will be on the core principles and concepts that underpin effective communication, active listening, empathy, and the conscious use of self. Core principles and concepts such as “starting where the client is”, social work as a planned change process in which knowledge, value, skill and purpose determine professional action, are studied in depth and provide the foundation for the development of specific practice skills. As this course is taken in conjunction with the field practicum, this course provides the theoretical basis for beginning social work practice. A foundation approach to the helping process is stressed which utilizes micro, mezzo and macro content. A theoretical framework will be presented to help students gain an understanding of how to work through a multi-dimensional lens, develop cultural competence, and interact within multi-disciplinary settings. Within the context of practice, the course infuses content on values and ethics throughout the semester as it applies to the various learning modules. Students will be encouraged to share their fieldwork experience in the classroom in order that they and their peers gain a broader understanding of the diversity of the field experience, including work with vulnerable populations.

This course will be simultaneously taken with Human Behavior and the Social Environment, Research, and Social Welfare Organization, laying a strong foundation for social work practice.

I. COURSE COMPETENCIES

This course addresses CSWE Competencies #1, #2, #6, #7, and #8.

Competencies #6, #7, and #8 are measured using student outcome data.

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession’s history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;

Social workers use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations.

Social workers demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication.

Social workers use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and

Social workers use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

**Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.

Social workers apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
Social workers present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and

Social workers apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

**COURSE COMPETENCY OUTCOMES**

Competencies #6, #7, and #8 are measured using student outcome data.

**Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Social workers apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and

Social workers use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

**Competency #6 Measure**

**Competency Indicator 6A**

Develop a mutually agreed on focus of work and desired outcomes.

**Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior
and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making.

Social workers collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies.

Social workers apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies.

Social workers develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and

Social workers select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

**Competency #7 Measure**

**Competency Indicator 7A**

Select appropriate intervention strategies.

**Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration.
Social workers critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies.

Social workers apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies.

Social workers use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;

Social workers negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and

Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

**Competency #8 Measure**

**Competency Indicators 8A, 8B**

8A – Implement prevention interventions that enhance client’s capacities.

8B – Help clients resolve problems.

**II. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS**

Learning will occur through a variety of experiences and methods such as lecture, class discussion, role plays, oral presentations, and discussions from field experience.

**III. COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING**

Students are expected to attend all classes and to be on time. Class participation is important and there is an expectation that students will do the required reading specified under each course unit. Grades are largely based on assignments. Each assignment will be weighted as follows: 45% each for both assignments and 10% for class participation, attendance and completion of assignments on time. Grades are largely based primarily on written assignments.

**Texts for the course:**


**Recommended Text:**


Note: All required readings are on-line through electronic reserve (ERES). Your instructor will distribute the password and directions to access these readings.

### IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Assignment I - Due 2nd class session - Asking for Help: An Experiential Paper**

Describe a situation in which you found it necessary to ask someone for help. The request need not have been made of a professional but it should not have been a trivial matter. For instance, it should not be a superficial experience, such as asking a friend for help finding an apartment.

Describe your feelings before, during and after this experience.

The focus of this assignment is on the thoughts and feelings you experienced in relation to asking for help rather than on the situation itself. Students will address each of the following questions:

1. What have you learned from this experience of seeking help?
2. How will this experience influence your approach to clients who are asking for help in an agency in which you are placed?
3. Discuss how your experience relates to the conceptualization of social work practice that has been presented in your readings and in class discussions thus far.

This paper should be approximately three, double spaced pages.

**Assignment II - Due 6th class session – The Engagement Process within the context the Agency**

1) This assignment addresses competencies #1 and #2.

Agencies provide services within communities. It is essential for social workers to have an understanding of the agencies in which they work and the communities they serve. This assignment requires you to become familiar with the organization, the services you can provide for your clients and the parameters that guide your engagement and eventual interventions with your clients.

**A. Agency:**

• A brief history of the agency/organization, Is it for profit? Not-for profit? Where does the primary funding come from? Please include any other disciplines operating in the agency.
• What is the agency/organization’s mission statement?
• How is this carried out through the services the agency provides? Give an idea of the breadth of services provided and how they are delivered (individual, group, advocacy, etc). Has the mission statement changed over time? Why? If so, how has this affected the delivery of service?

B. Community:
• What type of community does the agency serve? Geographic? Virtual? Issue/Problem based?
• What are the demographics of the community?
• Is there an overlap of services similar to your agency in this community?
• Provide your assessment of community strengths and resources
• How will the knowledge you have gained about your agency/organization and the community it serves help you in your practice? Based on what you have learned about the agency and its mandate, how do you see the role of the social worker in the agency?

C. Give an account of what the client encounter in working with this agency/organization looks like?
• What is the process the client goes through from initial referral and intake?
• Provide a description of a client system with whom you are now engaged.
• Describe in detail your experience engaging with this client system. What are the differences and similarities between you and the client system (racial, age, ethnic, socioeconomic, religion, etc.) and discuss how these differences/similarities affect the engagement process including any biases that may have arisen for you and/or the client.
• Using social work terminology please describe the skills that you are using to engage with this client. Please add some material from a process recording that reflects the early stage of engagement with this client/client system and you use of social work skills.
• Describe the strengths and challenges of the client.
• What social work literature has informed your approach to engaging with this client/client system? What specific readings/text material guided you?

Recommended length for this paper is approximately 10 pages, 5 peer-reviewed references beyond your required texts. APA 6 style, please proof read your papers.
Assignment III – Final - Engagement, Assessment, Goal Setting and Contracting

This assignment asks the student to consider the on-going process of the developing relationship with a client/client system focusing in the processes of engagement, assessment, contracting and goal setting. Choose a client with whom you have had an on-going relationship. If this is not the case, please discuss with your professor.

Answer each question.

1. Describe the client with whom you have been engaging – including your initial impressions and challenges. Were there any value conflicts between you the agency and the client?

2. Provide a detailed assessment of the client system beginning with how the client came to agency, ie: the referral source, what is the presenting problem, issue that needs to be addressed? How do you partialize the problem(s) presented? Are there other systems interacting with the client with whom you must connect? Discuss the approach you used grounding this discussion in the literature.

3. Use of conscious use of self is a critical aspect of professional social work skills. Referring to the professional literature, discuss your understanding of this concept and how you are developing this skill. Please add some content from a process recording that demonstrates your conscious use of self during the engagement/assessment process.

4. What goals did you and the client identify? Are these consistent with the client’s needs and the agency’s services? Were there referrals and linkages that had to be made to accommodate the client’s needs? Was the client part of the process of identifying and setting goals? If not, why and with whom did you develop goals? How might the outcome of the work be impacted by client participation or lack of participation in the goal setting stage? Were there any ethical dilemmas for you in the goal setting process? Please integrate the professional literature into your response.

5. What contracting arrangements did you and the client decide upon? Did you have to recontract with the client during the assessment and the beginning of the work stage? What does the literature say about the importance of contracting?

6. Provide a conclusion that ties the paper together do not simply reiterate what you did, but be thoughtful in your concluding statements.

This paper should be between 10-12 pages, double spaced, APA-6 style and uses a minimum of 7 references beyond the required texts, to include peer-reviewed journal articles, other texts and related readings.

This assignment measures:

**Competency #6**- Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

**Indicator #6A** – Develop a mutually agreed-on Focus of Work and Desired Outcomes.
Competency #7 - Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Indicator #7A – Select appropriate intervention strategies.

Competency #8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

Indicator #8A – Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities.

Indicator #8B – Help Clients solve problems.

V. Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations are asked to make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, Rochelle Kohn, Beren Campus, (646) 592-4132, rkohn1@yu.edu, Abby Kelsen, Wilf Campus, (646)592-4280, akelsen@yu.edu, during the first week of class. After approval for accommodations is granted, please submit your accommodations letter to Disability Services Office immediately.

Under Roman numeral VI. E-RESERVES – all caps, bold, and underline – cut and paste the paragraph below.

VI. E-Reserves

What is eReserve? eReserve (Electronic Reserve) is Yeshiva University’s on-line web based system used to provide access to journal articles, book excerpts, and other course materials. Most articles listed in each syllabus are available on eReserve. You can access full text articles from your home or from a university computer.

How do I use eReserve?

1. Go to the library’s online resources page: http://www.yu.edu/libraries/
2. Click on online resources.
3. Click on eReserves
4. If you are off-campus, at this point you will be prompted for your Off Campus Access Service login and password (obtain this from the library).
5. In the ‘search for Courses’ box, type in the name of your course.
6. Click on the link to your course.
7. Enter the password given to you by your instructor (ALL UPPERCASE).
8. Locate and click on the item you wish to view. Titles beginning with "A", "An", or "The" are alphabetized under "A" and "T" respectively.
9. When the article text or book record appears on the screen, you can print, email, or save it to disk.
10. If you have any problems, please contact - eres@yu.edu.

VII. PLAGIARISM:

Students should remember that the School will not condone plagiarism in any form and will sanction acts of plagiarism. A student who presents someone else's work as his or her own work is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking and writing. Plagiarism occurs when a student directly copies another's work without citation; when a student paraphrases major aspects of another's work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also plagiarism to use the ideas and/or work of another student and present them as your own. It is not plagiarism to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept as a reaction to someone else's work; however, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. Any student who can be shown to have plagiarized any part of any assignment in this course will automatically FAIL the course and will be referred to the Associate Dean for disciplinary action, which may include expulsion.

VIII. HIPAA ALERT:

In line with the new HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your work will need to be de-identified. What this means is that any information that would allow another to identify the person needs to be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious things like names and birth dates but may also contain other information that is so unique to the person that it will allow for identification, including diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity, gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

IX. COURSE OUTLINE

Unit I. FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE (SESSIONS 1, 2, 3)

Learning Themes

This unit introduces the culture and professional milieu of social work and social work values and ethics. The unit will also introduce the Generalist Practice model of social work.

A. Introduction to Generalist Practice

Required Readings

- Hepworth, et al: Chapter 1, The challenges of social work, 3-21; Chapter 2: Direct Practice, 25-34; Chapter 3: Overview of the helping process, 35-56.
• Shulman: Chapter 1, An Interactional Approach to Helping, 2-47.

Recommended Readings


B. Social Work Values and Ethics

Competency Covered: 1

Required Readings

• NASW Code of Ethics
• Hepworth et al: Chapter 4, Operationalizing the cardinal social work values, 57-86.

Recommended Readings


C. Introduction to the Core Skills in Social Work

Competencies Covered: 1, 2, (Competency 1 & 2)

Required Readings
• Hepworth et al: Chapter 5, Building blocks of communication, 89-134.
• Shulman: Chapter 2, The preliminary phase of work, 68-97.

Recommended Readings

• Compton & Galaway: Chapter 8, Engaging potential clients, 197-232.

Unit II. AN OVERVIEW OF PRACTICE APPROACHES (SESSION 4-5)

Learning Themes

This unit will introduce the learner to the diverse practice approaches traditionally utilized by social workers including micro, mezzo and macro levels of intervention.

Micro Practice

Required Readings

• Hepworth et al: Assessing family functioning in diverse and cultural contexts, 240 – 282
• Shulman: Part II, Social Work with Individuals, 67-220

Mezzo Practice

Required Readings

• Schiller, L.Y. (2007). Not for women only: Applying the relational model of group development with vulnerable populations. Social Work with Groups, 30(2), 11-26, In ERES.
Macro Practice

Required Readings


Unit III. ASSESSMENT AND ROLE OF THE AGENCY IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE (Session 6)

Learning Themes

In this unit, the student will learn the process of assessment as it is reflected in the agency mandate.

Required Readings

Hepworth et al: Chapter 8, Assessment: Exploring and Understanding Problems and Strengths, 179-205 and Chapter 9, Assessment: Intrapersonal and Environmental Factors 206-239.

Recommended Reading

- Compton & Galaway: Chapter 10, Data collection and assessment, 346-394.

Unit IV. PLANNING AND CONTRACTING IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE (SESSIONS 7 & 8)

Learning Themes

This unit describes the process of planning and contracting with the client. Goal setting and discussion around setting goal is central to understanding the assessment and contracting experience.

Required Readings

- Hepworth: Chapter 12, Negotiating goals and formulating a contract, 313 - 354.
- Shulman: Chapter 4, Beginnings and contracting skills, 74-110.
Unit V. SKILLS IN THE WORK PHASE (SESSIONS 9 & 10)

Learning Themes

This unit explores the articulation of the plan for work and moves on to the actual implementation of the assessment.

Required Readings

- Hepworth, Chapter 13, Planning and Implementing Change Oriented Strategies, 379-438.
- Shulman: Chapter 5, Skills in the Work Phase, 146-220.
- Shulman: Chapter 11, The work phase in the group, 387-435.

Recommended Readings


Unit VI. VULNERABLE CLIENTS AND COMMUNITIES (SESSIONS 11-12)

Learning Themes

In this unit, students are expected to choose an area of interest while working with another student, prepare a presentation to the class covering issues pertinent to that chosen population.

Required Readings

Women - choose two or more articles:


**Elderly - choose two or more articles**


**GLBT - choose two or more articles**


• Children & Adolescents - choose two or more articles


Unit VI. SOCIAL ACTION AND COMMUNITY SOCIAL WORK (SESSION 13)

Learning Themes
In this unit students will examine the relationship between social action and community social work, i.e. how to transform an action into a broader community agenda.

Required Readings
- Shulman: Chapter 16, Social Work in the Community, 540-576.

Recommended Readings

Unit VII. PRACTICE ACROSS DIFFERENCE (SESSION 14)

Learning Themes
In this final unit, students will explore their own attitudes and experiences as they relate to working with those unlike themselves.

Required Readings
• Compton & Galaway: Chapter 9, Communication across cultures, 235-252.


**RECOMMENDED READINGS**


