COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is the first of a two-semester sequence in social work practice. This course provides students with introductory knowledge of social work methodology within the context of agency-based practice. As such, the focus of this course will build upon a liberal arts foundation to develop beginning relationship and assessment skills. As a foundation generalist course, it provides a framework for the beginning student to gain an understanding of how to help people in any setting using a multiplicity of skills grounded in a systems approach.

Core principles and concepts such as “starting where the client is”, the worker's conscious use of self, 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. Broad based practice skills are introduced which include communication between client and worker, interviewing, relationship building, assessment, and problem solving, sensitivity to issues of difference and their impact on practice, and work with vulnerable and at risk populations including the elderly, women, those socioeconomically disadvantaged and the disabled. Within the overall curriculum for beginning students, this course is linked conceptually to Human Behavior and the Social Environment, Research I, and Social Policy.

The course will stress the environmental, social, cultural, economic and psychological factors that affect clients' lives and their capacities for seeking and using help, as well as those that affect workers' capacities to provide the type of help and service needed. Within the context of practice, the course infuses content on values and ethics throughout the semester as it applies to the various learning modules.

COURSE COMPETENCY OUTCOMES

This course will help students achieve the following competencies:

**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.

**MEASURES:**

1A – Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice.

1B – Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics.

1C - Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts.

**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.

**MEASURES: 2A** – Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, create or enhance privilege and power.

2B – Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups.

2C – Recognize and communicate their understanding of personal biases and difference in shaping life experience.

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

**MEASURE 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.

**MEASURE 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 interprofessional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, interprofessional, 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, 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.
MEASURES: 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, and presentations from field experience.

III. COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING

Texts for the course:


Recommended Text:


IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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

1) This assignment measures:

(1) Competency #1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Indicator #1A – Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice.

(2) Competency #2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice Indicator #2B – Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups.
Describe a situation in which you found it necessary to ask someone for help. Describe your feelings before, during and after this experience. The request need not have been made of a professional but it should not have been a trivial matter.

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. Will address

Please answer the following questions in your discussion:

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.

This paper should not exceed five, double spaced pages.

**Assignment II - Due 6th class session - Agency/Organization in the Community**

This assignment measures:

(1) Competency #6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations

Indicator 6A – Develop a mutually agreed – on focus of work and desired outcomes.

Agencies provide services within communities. It is essential for social workers to have an understanding of the agencies in which they work and the community to which services are provided. This assignment requires you to become familiar with the organization you are assigned to for fieldwork and the community it serves in an integrated narrative that includes the following information:

A. Agency:

A brief history of the agency/organization and how it is structured including other disciplines operating in the agency (this may include an organizational chart)

What is the agency/organization’s mission statement?

How is this carried out through the services the agency provides? Give an idea of the breath of services provided and how they are delivered (individual, group, advocacy, etc).
Is this agency/organization a for-profit organization or a not-for-profit organization?

How is it funded? If there are multiple funding sources provide an approximate breakdown.

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; through intake, service delivery, linkages, other referrals and follow-up once a client completes services.

Identify any internal (staffing issues, space, etc) /external (political, funding, community) pressures on this agency/organization that impact service delivery?

B. Community:

What type of community does the agency serve? Geographic? Virtual? issue/Problem based?

What are the demographics of the community?

A geographic community in NYC should extend about a 20-40 block radius in all directions. What else is located within this boundary (Residential, commercial, religious, health, educational institutions etc.)?

A virtual community or issue/problem-based community may not have a physical boundary but has some way of identifying who is included in the community and other resources it links to.

Provide a brief history of the community highlighting the past 10-20 years.

What other resources both formal and informal are available within or to this community?

Provide your assessment of community strengths and resources

C. 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? Provide a brief description of an interaction with a client system in which you were required to demonstrate your understanding of the agency mandate, your role in the agency and the impact on the client system of limitations in the mandate of the agency and your role within it.

Recommended length for this paper is approximately 6-7 pages.
Assignment III – Engagement, Assessment, Goal Setting and Contracting

This assignment measures:

(1) Competency #7 - Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

    Indicator #7A – Select appropriate intervention strategies.

This assignment asks the student to consider the process of developing a relationship with a client/client system and discusses the process of engagement, assessment, contracting and goal setting.

Answer each question.
1) Identify and describe a client system with whom you are now engaged.

2) 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. Please add some material from a process recording that reflects the early stages with this client/client system.

3) Describe the strengths and challenges of the client.

4) What social work literature has informed your approach to engaging with this client/client system? What specific readings/text material guided you?

5) Moving toward assessment, goal setting and contracting. Give a one-page assessment of the client system. Discuss the approach you used grounding this discussion in the literature. Again, please add some content from a process recording where you discussed the goals and assessment.

6) What goals and contracting arrangements did you and the client decide upon? What does the literature say about setting goals with the client/client system?

7) Describe any ethical dilemmas encountered in the course of the work date.

This paper should be between 8-10 pages and uses a minimum of 7 references beyond the required texts, to include journal articles, other texts and related readings.

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.

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. Generalist Social Work Practice (Sessions 1, 2, 3)

Competencies Covered: 1,2

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:**

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


Unit II. An Overview of Practice Approaches (Session 4-5)

Competencies Covered: 7 & 8 Learning Themes

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:**


Shulman: Part IV, Social Work with Groups, 265-470


Macro Practice

Required Readings:


Unit III. Assessment and Role of the Agency in Social Work Practice (Session 6)

Competency Covered: 7

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)

Competencies Covered: 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)

Competencies Covered: 7, 8 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.

Unit VI. Vulnerable Clients and Communities (Session 11-12)

Competency Covered: 2
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 (Sessions 13)

Competencies Covered: 2,6,7,8

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)**

Competency Covered: 2

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:**


