

**WURZWEILER SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK YESHIVA UNIVERSITY  
DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN SOCIAL WELFARE**

**SWK8814: SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE THEORIES**

**Dr. Sari Skolnik – Spring Semester, 2017**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course, students will explore contemporary social work theory within the context of its applicability and relevance to social work practice. The focus is on an in-depth examination of the role and use of practice theory within the social context in which it is practiced and the interface between political, cultural, and national issues that influence the development, selection, and use of practice theory.

The analysis of social work theories considers their uses and adaptations from other disciplines as well as inter-disciplinary perspectives that include social work. Attention is given to the basis and evolution of the theory, its precepts, its utility (based on assessment according to agreed-upon criteria discussed in class), and the limitations. The application of theoretical perspectives to actual practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels is emphasized.

**EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

**Knowledge Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will demonstrate:

1. Knowledge about the different theoretical frameworks for social work practice and their differentiating attributes.
2. Knowledge about the underlying theories that inform social work practice.
3. Comprehension of the key elements of a theory.
4. Ability to critically compare and appraise the major theoretical perspectives.
5. Knowledge about current debates regarding the validity and utility of various theories and concepts of practice.
6. Understanding of the linkages between social work theory, research, values and ethics, and practice.

**Skill Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will demonstrate:

1. Ability to articulate the implications of different theoretical frameworks for social work practice.
2. Ability to document and convincingly defend a position on a social work theory.
3. Ability to apply theoretical models to practice situations.
4. Ability to articulate criteria of effective theoretical perspectives.
5. Ability to critique theoretical formulations and their application to practice.

6. Skill in analyzing the knowledge base of one's own practice.
7. Skill in identifying the value base of different theories.
- 8.

## **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 that may include expulsion.

## **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, or gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Given the nature of classroom discussion and the presentation of case materials and at times personal revelation in class, students are reminded that the same commitment to confidentiality with clients extends to classmates. What is shared in class stays in class.

## **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, 917-326-4828, rkohn1@yu.edu, Abby Kelsen, Wilf Campus, 646-685-0118, 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.

### **E-RES (Electronic Reserve)**

Most of the articles mentioned in the curriculum are available on electronic reserve [E-RES]. You can access the full text articles from your home or from a university computer at no charge.

#### How do I Use E-RES?

1. Go to the library's online resources page:  
[http://www.yu.edu/libraries/online\\_resources.asp](http://www.yu.edu/libraries/online_resources.asp)
2. Click on E-RES. If you are off-campus, at this point you will be prompted for your Off Campus Access Service login and password.
3. Click on "Search E-RES" or on "Course Index," and search by instructor's name, department, course name, course number, document title, or document author.  
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4. Click on the link to your course.
5. Enter the password:
6. Locate and click on the item you wish to view. Titles beginning with "A", "An", or "The" are alphabetized under "A" and "T" respectively.
7. When the article text or book record appears on the screen, you can print, email, or save it to disk.

To view documents that are in pdf format, the computer you are using must have Adobe Acrobat Reader software. You can download it FREE at [www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html)

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### Required Texts

Payne, Malcolm (2014). Modern Social work theory, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Lyceum. ISBN978-1-935871-06-4; Price: \$44.95.

Turner, F.J. (2011). Social work treatment: Interlocking theoretical approaches, 5th ed. Oxford Univ. Press. ISBN 978-0-19-539465-8; Price: \$61.02.

### Course Assignments

1. Throughout the semester students will be required to lead the class in discussions based on designated theories. These assignments will be made at least one week prior to the discussion. Students are expected to keep current with the readings so that they will be able to contribute to these discussions in an informed manner. Each time a student is asked to lead a discussion, he/she will submit a one to two page précis of the assigned theory. Each student will lead four discussions and each précis will be graded.
2. A paper will be submitted on the 13<sup>th</sup> session that will include the following content: 1) The usefulness of two theories that were studied in class for informing a specified social work practice; 2) Examples of how these theories are helpful in explaining and expanding on the meaning of micro-, meso-and macro-phenomena related to social work practice; and, 3) A demonstration of how these theories are related to social policy.

### **Grading Policy**

The following grading policy will be adhered to by the professor. All assignments must be handed in on time in order to receive the highest grade. Late papers and précis will be graded down depending on the time lapse and circumstances, to be determined by the professor.

Precis – 50%

Paper = 50 percent of grade.

Students wishing to take the comprehensive exam may not have an incomplete. Other students may have an incomplete only with the permission of the instructor and university rules about completing the course will pertain.

### **On-Line Access**

Students are expected to have and be able to use a Canvas account with the university.

## **COURSE READINGS SCHEDULE**

**\*All readings are subject to modification by the instructor**

Part I.

Approaches to Ways of Using Theory (Sessions 1-2)

Required Readings:

Payne. Chapter 1, The Construction of Social Work Theory, pp. 3-29; Chapter 2, Evaluating Social Work Theory in Practice, pp. 31-63; Chapter 3, Connecting Theory and Practice, pp. 65-91.

Turner. Chapter 1. Theory and Social Work Treatment, 3-14.

Reid, W.J. (2002). Knowledge for direct social work practice: An analysis of trends. *The Social Service Review*, 6-33.

Thyer, BA (2001). What is the role of theory in research on social work practice? *Journal of Education*, 37(1), 9-26.

Part II:

Application of Theory to Practice (Sessions 3-11)

### Behavior Theory (Session 3, 4)

Turner. Chapter 6. Cognitive Behavior Theory and Social Work Treatment, 103-116.  
Chapter 7. Cognitive Theory and Social Work Practice, pp. 77-102.

Payne. Chapter 6, Cognitive behavioral theories, pp. 150-183.

### Crisis Theory (Session 5)

Turner. Chapter 9. Crisis Theory and Social Work Treatment pp. 134-143.

Payne. Chapter 5, Crisis Intervention and Task Centered Models, pp. 127-149.

### Feminist Theory (Session 6)

Payne. M. Chapter 13, Feminist Perspectives, pp. 348-372.

Turner. Chapter 13, Feminist Theory and Social Work Practice, pp. 205-224.

Mason, S.E., & Clemans, S.E. (2008) Participatory research for rape survivors groups: A model for practice. *Affilia*, 23(1), 66-76.

### Systems Theory and the Ecological Perspective (Session 7)

Payne. Chapter 7, Systems and Ecological Perspectives, pp. 184-210.

### Psychosocial Theories and Psychodynamic Theories (Sessions 8-9-10)

Turner. Chapter 10. Ego Psychology and Social Work Practice, pp. 144-156.

Turner. Chapter 24. Problem-solving theory and social work treatment. pp. 364-373.

Turner. Chapter 26. Psychosocial Theory and Social Work Practice, pp. 387-400.

Turner. Chapter 35. Task Centered Social Work, pp. 513-532.

Payne. Chapter 4. Psychodynamic Perspectives, pp. 93-126.

### Social Construction and Social Roles (Session 11)

Turner. Chapter 20. Narrative Therapy, pp. 315-326

Turner. Chapter 28. Role theory and social work treatment, pp. 413-427.

Empowerment, Advocacy and Cultural Sensitivity (Session 12).

Turner. Chapter 11. Empowerment Approach to Social Work Treatment, pp. 157-178.

Payne. Chapter 11. Empowerment and Advocacy, pp. 294- 316; Chapter 14. Anti-oppressive and multicultural sensitivity approaches to practice, pp. 373-400.

### Spirituality and Humanism (Session 13)

Payne. Chapter 10. Humanistic Practice, Existentialism, and Spirituality, pp. 271-292.

Turner. Chapter 12. Existential Social Work, pp. 179-204.

### Social and Community Development Theory (Session 14)

Payne. Chapter 8, Macro Practice, Social Development and Social Pedagogy, pp. 212-237.