I. **Course Description**

Foundational components of the course include exploration of physical, psychological, social and cultural dimensions of adolescence, with a focus on advanced direct practice with adolescents in contemporary life settings. Particular attention is given to issues of diversity, as well as to comprehending the experiential life worlds, socio-cultural contexts, and social work interventions pertinent to at-risk adolescent populations.

II. **Course Overview**

This course builds upon foundational social work practice knowledge, values, methods, and skills in providing a concentration on direct practice interventions with adolescent populations. The course emphasizes the development of direct practice skills in working with adolescents, their families, and relevant environmental systems. The course addresses normative socio-cultural variations in developmental life tasks and expectations, childrearing practices, and life stage concerns pertinent to adolescents, with a focus on diversity issues. Particular emphasis is given to gender, race, ethnicity, social class, and other types of diversity in relation to adolescent development, resilience, and dysfunction. The course introduces and explores evidence-based practice methodologies in addressing behavioral, emotional, and situational problems of adolescents and their families in a range of social work intervention settings, and includes a focus on individual, family, and group intervention modalities.

Three general dimensions of adolescent functioning and adaptation are addressed from a multi-dimensional, bio-psycho-social perspective: (1) behavioral and emotional issues that fall within a range of typical adolescent adjustment; (2) externalizing problems of adolescence that manifest in conflictual
relations with others as well as in breaches in societal norms and rules; and (3) internalizing problems of adolescence that involve difficulties with emotional relatedness and emotional equilibrium.

Pertinent theoretical frames and strategies for engaging and intervening with adolescents are presented, with behavioral and developmental norms for adolescents considered from a cross-cultural, comparative perspective. Additionally, environmental factors and social justice issues are addressed with respect to the wellbeing of adolescents and their families. As such, the course offers an integral foundation and knowledge base pertaining to social work values, ethics, and empirically-based research that support direct practice interventions with adolescent populations.

Class activities integrate theory, ethics, and research, and emphasize self-reflection and the differential use of self in social work practice. The class format includes lectures, discussions, student presentations, and small group exercises and role-plays of intervention techniques.

III. Place of Course in Program

This is an elective course, which is offered as part of the Advanced Direct Practice curriculum. Satisfactory completion of the Professional Foundation Year practice curriculum is a prerequisite for enrollment. While enrolled in the course, it is helpful for students to be actively engaged in a field placement setting that affords practice experience with adolescents.

IV. Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course students will

1. Acquire a contextualized understanding of developmental life tasks and phases of adolescence, and differentiate normative issues, problems, and tensions of adolescence from circumstances and behaviors that may be considered deviant and/or maladaptive, as relevant to socio-cultural context and values.

2. Demonstrate ability in assessing and analyzing adolescent problem behaviors from a multi-dimensional perspective, including the intersectionality of biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors.

3. Understand and apply relevant theoretical frameworks and empirical research literature in guiding evidence-based intervention approaches with adolescents and their families.
4. Differentially select, and critically evaluate, targeted intervention approaches that planfully address the needs, problems, and circumstances of adolescents and their families and that critically engage relevant issues and concerns pertaining to diversity and difference (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability status, social class).

5. Identify and assess for structural and/or dynamic factors that may impede or facilitate therapeutic alliance, progress, and growth as well as understand how to address these issues within social work intervention contexts employing a multi-dimensional, systems-oriented framework.

6. Demonstrate skills of engaging, motivating, and advocating on behalf of adolescents and their families in the social work practice process.

7. Develop awareness, skill, and critical reflection in the professional use of self and in the application of social work ethics and values in direct practice with adolescents and their families and communities.

V. Required Readings


All books are available for purchase at Rutgers University Bookstores (Camden: University District Bookstore, 601 Cooper Street, 856/968-1200; Newark: Rutgers University Bookstore, Bradley Hall, 973/353-5377; New Brunswick: Rutgers University Bookstore, One Penn Plaza, Ferren Mall, 732/246-8448). Additional bookstore information is available at the following web address: http://www.alumni.rutgers.edu/bookstore/.

These required readings are also available on library reserve. They may be accessed via Rutgers University Library by searching under the course number (19:910:513). Additional readings may be assigned at the Instructor's discretion.
VI. Course Requirements

**Students’ active participation is essential in this course.** As collaborators with the Instructor in comprehending and applying the theories, ideas, and methodologies introduced throughout the course, students are encouraged to participate by contributing knowledge and observations through in-class discussions, large and small group activities, and with the Instructor during office hours. When students participate actively in class discussions, learning is enhanced. Learning involves respectful dialogue and exchange as well as a readiness to try out and share new ideas with others. It is important that class members feel free to participate in classroom activities, discussion, and assignments. Students are encouraged to inform the Instructor of any changes needed in the class structure or instructional style that might facilitate comprehension and mastery of course content.

**Attendance.** Regular class attendance is required. Students are expected to attend class on a consistent basis and to arrive promptly to all class meetings. This is an essential component in facilitating effective learning from lecture and class discussions. Attendance and participation will affect 10% of the course grade. The Instructor reserves the right to reduce the final grade for any student with 3 or more absences. In order for a student to be considered present for class, the student must attend all of the class.

Students who leave during the break will be marked as absent for that class. Absence, early departure, or lateness to class is acceptable only for compelling reasons (e.g., illness, religious observance). Examples of *inappropriate* reasons for missing class include birthday parties and problems finding parking.

Class participation is crucial. As such, it constitutes a portion of your final course grade. Since a critical aspect of the course entails mutual, shared learning, it is imperative that class members engage fully in class activities, such as discussions, presentations, and small group activities. This involves coming to each class well prepared to thoughtfully and critically analyze course readings and lectures and to proactively voice your professional perspectives and thoughts in a constructive, respectful manner.

**Respect for others in the classroom.** As social work entails multiple, diverse perspectives and opinions, it is imperative that class members bring an attitude of openness to the learning process. True intellectual growth rests upon an atmosphere of mutual respect. This includes a willingness to non-judgmentally consider others’ experiences and ideas as well as a capacity to self-reflexively evaluate one’s own views.

During the course, it may at times prove challenging to adequately disguise certain references to specific organizations and/or people. It is imperative for all
such information to remain within the classroom. At all times, confidentiality is vital.

The use of cell phones (including text messaging), Blackberries, PDAs, or of any similar type of electronic device is not permitted in class. Please turn all such devices off prior to class. If there is an emergency and you need to leave your cell phone on, please turn it to “silent mode” and attend to the call in the hallway so that you will not disturb your colleagues.

This course requires graduate level reading, writing, and analytic thinking skills. Students are expected to come to all class meetings well prepared to participate actively in class discussions about assigned readings and previous lecture materials. As professional practitioners, it is imperative that social workers be able to articulate ideas clearly and effectively in a well-organized manner. Class assignments will be graded on the basis of substantive content and on organizational and stylistic merit. It is the student's responsibility to keep abreast of all assignments in a timely manner.

Course Assignments:

In addition to students' weekly in-class participation, there are three primary assignments for this course:

1. **Weekly Journal:** Students will complete a written journal on a weekly basis (approximately 2 typewritten pages) with comments/reflections on the assigned readings for the week. In your journals, I will be looking for evidence that you are reading and thinking critically about the assigned texts and the core issues that are raised in these readings. I also will be looking for evidence of your understanding of pertinent theoretical frames and strategies for engaging and intervening with adolescents, as well as in bringing information (e.g., practice intervention approaches, evidence-based research findings, social justice and diversity issues) from the course readings together with your practice experiences in the field. The journal assignments are intended as an avenue for you to explore and to raise informed questions and critiques about the readings and the ideas, methods, and perspectives that they present.

2. **In-Class Group Presentation:** Working collaboratively in small groups, students will prepare a 15-minute in-class oral presentation on a topic of special interest (see suggested topics in Section IX, Unit 6, below). Presentations should include a pertinent review of relevant research-based literature, discussion of pertinent assessment and intervention
approaches, and consideration of pertinent professional practice values and diversity issues. Additionally, each group will prepare (and hand in) an outline/overview of their oral presentation (4-5 typewritten pages), which includes a bibliographic reference section. Specific dates for presentations will be scheduled in class.

3. **Final Case Study Assignment:** Students will submit a scholarly paper (16-18 pages in length), due at the beginning of the 14th class, which presents a case study profile of an adolescent with whom you are currently working in your social work field setting. Please include an in-depth discussion on assessment, intervention, goal-setting, and social work practice processes. The paper should include a title page, abstract, and a final reference section.

Your final paper should address the following topics:

1. A clear delineation of the scope and content of the presenting problem(s), as well as a discussion of the strengths and resources of the client system.
2. A multi-dimensional formulation that addresses relevant biological, psychological, socio-cultural, and environmental factors.
3. A discussion of social work practice intervention(s) with the client system, including engagement, goal setting, prevention, therapeutic change processes, and evaluation.
4. A discussion of social work professional value considerations and the professional use of self (e.g., confidentiality, self-determination, diversity issues, professional roles and boundaries).
5. A thoughtful integration of case material with research and theory drawn from the assigned course readings.

Additional instructions for these assignments will be distributed in a later class.

The quality and content of written work are both important. Students should check spelling and grammar as well as sentence and paragraph construction. Written work should meet basic standards of writing proficiency, and should conform to accepted citation standards. The format found in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) should be used in all written work. Quotation marks must be used to delineate direct quotations and proper citation information must accompany all quoted and paraphrased material. If you are unsure of how to cite sources, please consult the Instructor.

*Remember that plagiarism is a serious offense and violates the University’s standards for academic integrity. Please be sure to review the section on Academic Integrity in Section X of the course syllabus, below (pp. 15-16).*
Students are expected to conform to ethical standards described in Rutgers University guidelines (see School of Social Work Student Handbook) and the NASW Code of Ethics. The entire University Code of Conduct can be attained from the Student Judicial Affairs Office or on-line at the following web address: http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~judaff/code.htm.

Guidelines for Respecting and Maintaining Client Confidentiality:

In employing client case history information from the field, it is imperative that client confidentiality be adequately safeguarded. In discussing case material, it is crucial that all client identifying information be effectively disguised (e.g., specific names, addresses, places of employment and/or schooling). In most instances, it is acceptable to refer to clients by first name (unless the name is very unusual) or by using the initial of a client’s actual last name. In addition, it is acceptable to name a town/area where a client resides and to describe the type of employment/schooling in which a client engages (unless this is very unusual), yet without revealing specific names or addresses of employers/schools. In presenting case material, it is also is acceptable to mention clients’ ages and ethnic/racial background (i.e., general background information that does not reveal a client’s specific identity is acceptable). Also, please make sure to disguise the names of all collateral contacts, such as teachers, doctors, or home health aides.

Importantly, please check with your field instructor in order to be fully appraised of, and in compliance with, any specific confidentiality criteria/policies that may be required by your agency.

VII. Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Case Study Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Overall Grading Criteria:

Assignments will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Thoroughness and completeness of content
- Clarity and logic of presentation
- Evidence of critical thought
- Quality of oral presentation and/or professional writing skills
A = Exceptional or outstanding work; student demonstrates full understanding of material, displays unusual analytical and/or creative ability; extremely thorough work; must be well organized and conform to accepted standards of writing including correct grammar, accurate spelling, etc.; cites material correctly.

B+ = Above average work in terms of demonstrating comprehension of the course material as well as the ability to apply material from lectures and readings to one’s own project. Work must be organized and conform to accepted standards of writing; cites material correctly.

B = Good work; demonstrates understanding of material; written materials are well organized and conform to accepted standards of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and accepted citation guidelines.

C+ = Satisfactory work; demonstrates basic comprehension of material, along with key applications to own project; work is presented in an organized fashion and cites material correctly, although some grammar and spelling errors may be evident.

C = Acceptable work, similar to C+ but reveals greater problems in applying the concepts and techniques to one’s own work; fails to cover some important points; evidences problems in organizing and presenting written materials; exhibits difficulties with cited material, e.g., over-reliance upon too many direct quotes.

Late Assignments: All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date assigned. Late assignments will not be accepted, unless the student has made arrangements with the Instructor prior to the assignment due date. If an assignment due date conflicts with a religious observance, please consult with the Instructor prior to the assignment’s due date.

Incomplete Grades: An incomplete grade will be granted only under special circumstances, at the Instructor’s discretion. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the Instructor of any special circumstances that may interfere with timely submission of course assignments and to request an Incomplete from the instructor before the end of the semester. A request signed by the student and the faculty member must be on file in advance of an Incomplete grade being submitted on the student’s behalf.

Computation of the final grade will be based on the following point distribution (100 points):

30% (30 points total) Journal
20% (20 points total) Group Presentation
40% (40 points total) Final Case Study Paper
10% (10 points total) Class Participation

Designation of letter grades for the course will be as follows:

- A  90-100 %  C+  75-79 %
- B+  85-89 %  C  70-74 %
- B  80-84 %  F  Below 70 %

**Writing & Style Guide Resources:**

- RefWorks (Rutgers University Libraries Web-based Bibliography and Database Manager): http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/refworks/refworks.shtml
- Rutgers University Libraries Searchpath (Online Tutorial for enhancing information literacy skills): http://searchpath.libraries.rutgers.edu/
- Rutgers University Libraries Online Research Resources: http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/lib_instruct/instruct_tutorials.shtml
- Rutgers Learning Centers (Academic Support Programs to Support Student Achievement): http://lrc.rutgers.edu/
- Rutgers Writing Program: http://wp.rutgers.edu/

**Rutgers University Library Social Work Research and Practice Resources**


**VIII. Course Evaluation**

Rutgers University issues a survey that evaluates both the course and the Instructor. This survey is to be completed by students toward the end of the semester; all answers are confidential and anonymous. A confidential, online mid-semester evaluation also may be conducted.
IX. **Course Outline**

UNIT 1  WHAT IS ADOLESCENCE?  
(Classes 1-2)

A. Bio-psychosocial overview of adolescence: Adolescence defined and described.

B. A developmental perspective of the three phases of adolescence: early, middle, and late phases.

C. Parenting and family issues.

D. Diversity issues (i.e., ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation).

E. High-risk adolescents.

**Assigned Readings:**


UNIT 2  STRENGTHS-BASED ASSESSMENT WITH ADOLESCENTS  
(Classes 3-4)

A. Problem differentiation with diverse adolescent populations.

B. Adolescent and family evaluation.

C. Assessment with external systems.

D. Systems-based assessment and diagnostic procedures.

**Assigned Readings:**


UNIT 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS (Classes 5-7)

A. Ecological perspective.

B. Systems theory.

C. Psychodynamic theories.

D. Cognitive theories.

E. Solution Focused and Narrative theories.

Assigned Readings:


UNIT 4 SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE MODALITIES WITH ADOLESCENTS: ENGAGEMENT, INTERVENTION, EVALUATION, & TERMINATION (Classes 8-10)

A. Individual therapy.

B. Family therapy.

C. Social work with adolescent groups.

D. Community supports, resources, advocacy, and prevention.

Assigned Readings:

1) Bromfield, R. (2005). Chapters 4-15 (pp. 31-159); Chapter 18 (pp. 187-198).

2) Malekoff, A. (2004). Chapter 3 (p. 35-58); Chapters 5-10 (pp. 90-203).


UNIT 5 PROFESSIONAL VALUES, ETHICS, & PROFESSIONAL USE OF SELF (Class 11)
A. Social work values, professional use of self, and ethically informed decision-making.

B. Cultural competence in social work practice with adolescents.

B. Legal issues and perspectives.

C. Working with delivery service systems.

Assigned Readings:

1) Malekoff, A. (2004). Chapter 11: Prejudice reduction, intergroup relations, and group identity (pp. 207-222); Chapter 13: When world stage and group work intersect. (pp. 239-274); Chapter 17: On becoming a reflective group worker (pp. 329-338).


UNIT 6 DIRECT PRACTICE APPLICATIONS WITH SPECIFIC TARGET POPULATIONS (LECTURE, DISCUSSION, & STUDENT PRESENTATIONS) (Classes 12-14)

Potential Presentation Topics, Classes 12-14:

- Adolescent welfare and the abused and/or neglected adolescent
- Disruptive behavioral disorders in adolescents
- Adolescent sexuality, pregnancy, reproductive health issues
- Adolescent depression and suicide
- Eating disorders in adolescence: anorexia, bulimia, obesity
- Substance use/abuse in adolescence
- Chronic illness and developmental impairment in adolescence
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- Suicidal and self-destructive behaviors in adolescence
- Gender identity in adolescence, gay and lesbian issues
- Cultural competence in social work with adolescents
- Immigration and adolescents
- Peer group influences and dynamics (e.g., gangs, relational violence)
- Psychiatric trauma and related issues/disorders
- Schizophrenia and psychotic disorders in adolescence

**Relevant Course Readings:**


2) Bromfield, R. (2005). Chaper 16 (pp. 161-173); Epilogue (pp. 199-208).


4) Malekoff, A. (2004). Chapter 12: Violence and youth I. (pp. 233-248); Chapter 14: Adolescent sexuality and group work: variations on a theme. (pp. 275-299); Chapter 15: Group work as a counterforce to alcohol and other drug abuse. (pp. 300-312); Chapter 16: Loneliness, social isolation, scapegoating, and group work: the adolescent’s struggle to fit in. (pp. 313-326).


FINAL COURSE WRAP-UP
(Class 15)

X. Academic Integrity Policy

All work submitted must be your own. It is unethical and a violation of the University’s Academic Integrity Policy to present the ideas or words of another without clearly and fully identifying the source. Inadequate citations will be construed as an attempt to misrepresent the cited materials as your own. It is important that you refer to the APA Style Manual for the correct procedures in citing material.

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or part in one’s own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: “To paraphrase Plato’s comment...” and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, materials that contribute to one’s general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any question about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed in a timely manner with the course Instructor. Students should be aware that violations of academic integrity, for example plagiarism of any kind, must be reported to the University and may result in expulsion.

Please Note: Violations of academic integrity by graduate and professional students will normally be penalized more severely than violations by undergraduate students. Since all violations of academic integrity by a graduate or professional student are potentially separable offenses according to the Academic Integrity Policy, faculty members shall not adjudicate alleged academic integrity violations by graduate and professional students, but shall refer all such allegations to the appropriate Academic Integrity Facilitator (AIF) or to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The AIF for the School of Social Work is Antoinette Y. Farmer, 732.932.2621. The student shall be notified in writing, by email or hand delivery, of the alleged violation and of the fact that the matter has been referred
to the AIF for adjudication. This notification shall be done within 10 days of identifying the alleged violation. Once the student has been notified of the allegation, the student may not drop the course or withdraw from the school until the adjudication process is complete. A TZ, or incomplete grade, shall be assigned until the case is resolved.

For additional information on the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy:

- Rutgers University Policy on Academic Integrity: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml
- Rutgers Academic Integrity Resources for Students: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/students.shtml
- Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Online Tutorial: http://library.camden.rutgers.edu/EducationalModule/Plagiarism/

XI. Disability Accommodation

Please note: Any student who believes that they may need an accommodation for this class because of a disability should contact the Rutgers University Office of Disability Support Services (at Kreeger Learning Center, 151 College Avenue, Suite. 123, New Brunswick, NJ 08901; tel.: 732/932-2848; email: dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu; website: http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/) for a letter of accommodation. Students must have an officially approved letter of accommodation in order to receive disability accommodations. Any student who has received a letter of accommodation should notify the Instructor to discuss implementation of these accommodations. Failure to do so may jeopardize the timely implementation of disability accommodations.

XII. Bibliography for Additional Information and Interest:


