I. **Catalog Course Description**

Advanced practice with family systems, with an emphasis on systems-analytical perspective that includes environing systems as well as internal dynamics of the family system. Differential use of the major theoretical approaches in family therapy. Emphasis on a social work framework and on such traditional family social work techniques as advocacy, brokerage, and provision of concrete services.

II. **Course Overview**

This course provides in-depth level, theory and advanced clinical practice for social work with the diverse family configurations (including single, reconstituted, gay/lesbian families) that social workers encounter in agency-based practice. The course will include lecture, discussion, role-playing, written case materials, and videotaped clinical interviews.

III. **Place of Course in Program**

This course is an elective offered as part of the Clinical Social Work concentration curriculum and is ideal for students who wish to deepen their knowledge and expand their skills in working with families. Satisfactory completion of the Professional Foundation is a prerequisite and it is recommended that students be placed in a field setting that has opportunity for work with families.

IV. **Course Objectives**

1. To gain an overview of family treatment and its relation to clinical social work practice.

2. To acquire a systems view of how families function, their needs, and their transactions with the environment.

3. To deepen and broaden understanding of direct practice processes, particularly the meaning of "resistance" in family work.

4. To acquire an understanding of a variety of theoretical approaches and be able to assess their applicability to a range of families including those that are single (female) parent, minorities of color, and gay and lesbian.

5. To acquire additional skill in a range of intervention techniques with diverse
families having problems ranging from life cycle and situational crises to substance abuse and family violence.

6. To be aware of the institutional supports that foster a family-centered approach and to understand how family-centered practice can be used in a range of social work settings.

7. To be able to assess the family-environment interface and plan change strategies in this area.

8. To be able to complete an intergenerational family assessment through the use of a genogram and understand the use of the family of origin as a resource for change.

9. To be able to identify the structural patterns in the family, have a culturally sensitive ability to assess dysfunctional patterns and knowledge of appropriate intervention methods to alter family structure.

10. To be able to formulate a rationale for the choice of family as the appropriate unit of attention.

11. To be aware of the normative, ethnocentric, and heterosexist biases implicit in various models of family therapy and to explore how to counteract these biases in practice.

12. To acquire an appreciation of the applicability and use of research thinking and methodology in family practice.

V. Core Competencies 2015 Covered in this Course.

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;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Core 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;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

**Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice**

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

- use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

**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.

**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;
- 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;
- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

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;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- 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 facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Social workers understand that evaluation 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 recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:
- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

VI. School-Wide Learning Goal
To prepare students for practice and leadership roles in the fields of social work and social welfare. This goal is operationalized using three of the ten Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) prescribed competencies. These competencies are as follows:
1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly;
2. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment; and
3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgment.

VII. Required Text


In addition, several book chapters and articles will be assigned for required reading and will be available electronically.

VIII. Course Requirements

Classes will consist of a combination of lecture, discussion, videotapes, and skill-building exercises.

**Brief Discussion Papers.** Students will do 3, reaction/discussion papers 2-3 pages in length (not including bibliography) answering specific questions related to the readings. They will use these papers to prepare for class discussions and will submit them for grades at the end of the class they are due. **Papers must have proper citations and references in APA style. Include page numbers and running heads.** Abstracts are not necessary.

**Genogram.** Students will construct a 4-generation genogram of their own families and will also write up a 2-3 page analysis of their own family systems. Because of the personal nature of this assignment, the instructor will keep the information in strictest confidence. Credit will be deducted if genogram is incomplete (e.g. not 4 generations) or if narrative is missing components.

**Final Paper.** Further instructions will follow.

**Penalties**

**Class Discussion**

As this class will be seminar style, each of you will be called upon to give your impressions of the readings and to engage in class discussions. **Please note that if you are called upon and it becomes clear that you have not done the reading assignment, you will lose points on class participation. If this happens three times, your final grade will be reduced one letter grade.**

All assignments for this class must reflect social work values and ethics including awareness of issues of diversity and economic and social injustice.

**Use of PDA’s**
All cell phones, iPads, iPhones, and laptops must be silenced and stored out-of-sight before class begins. Use of cell phones is prohibited in the classroom. Texting during class will NOT be allowed. Failure to comply with these rules (along with any rude behavior) will result in point deductions in grade for class participation and you may be asked to leave class at the instructor’s discretion.

Written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Late papers will be penalized ½ a letter grade for each day they are overdue. Papers not received in the first 30 minutes of class on their due date but submitted before the end of class will be considered a full day late and will be penalized accordingly. Papers overdue by five days or more will not be accepted and will result in a 0 grade. Late genogram papers will be penalized one point for each day they are late. Students are urged not to wait until the night before the due dates to write their assignments as personal emergencies occurring two days or less before they are due will not be considered grounds for an extension.

Professional social workers keep case records, write treatment reports for referral sources and managed care companies, correspond with judges and other professionals, develop policy, and advocate for their clients. Each of these tasks requires excellent writing skills. Therefore proper grammar, syntax, spelling, and appropriate referencing are expected for all assignments. You must adhere to the style guidelines of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition). Failure to do so will result in substantial deductions from your paper’s grade.

Attendance is required. One point will be deducted from a student’s class participation score for each unexcused absence. Absence, early departure, or lateness to class is acceptable only for compelling reasons, such as illness. Five or more absences (excused or otherwise) will result in course failure. Multiple unexcused departures or late arrivals will also result in course failure.

Absence on the due date for an assignment or scheduled presentation will result in a 0 grade. No opportunities for make-ups or extensions will be given unless the student provides documentation of extenuating circumstances.

IX. Grading

Class participation and Attendance 10%
Brief Discussion Papers (10 pts. ea.) 30%
Family-of-Origin Genogram 10%
Final Paper 50%

Grading and assessment criteria (the new MSW program wide grading scale is below)

A 92-100
B+ 87-91
B 82-86
C+ 77-81
C 70-76
F 0-69

*Scores to be rounded up at .5
X. **Course Evaluation**

Rutgers University issues a survey that evaluates both the course and the instructor. Toward the end of the semester, students complete this survey and all answers are confidential and anonymous. The instructor may also choose to conduct a mid-point evaluation and/or add qualitative questions to the final evaluation.

XI. **Course Outline**

**UNIT I**

**INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY-CENTORED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE AND GETTING STARTED**

Definition of family and description of family configurations and types, including ethnicity, composition, and sexual orientation, and how these differences impact the family life cycle and development.

History, ethics and values, underlying assumptions.

Family Life Cycle.

Empirical Support for the family approach.

**Class 1**

(Sepetember 3)

Introduction

General Skills for Working with Diverse Families

**Required Reading:**

Nichols

Chapter 2: Basic Techniques of Family Therapy (pp. 31-52)


**Class 2**

(September 10)

Evidence Basis for the Family Approach

**Required Reading:**
UNIT 2 THE STRUCTURAL APPROACH

Class 3, 4 & 5
(September 17, 24, & October 1)

Required Reading


Nichols, M.

Chapter 6: Structural Family Therapy (pp. 122-141)


DUE September 24th - Brief Discussion Paper 1 (Briefly answer the following questions.)

1) What are the stages of enactment as articulated by Davis and Butler?
2) Briefly contrast and compare their model of enactment with that articulated by Nichols and Schwartz and also Minuchin.

Class 6
(October 8)

Practicing Enactments

UNIT 3: THE EXTENDED FAMILY SYSTEMS (BOWENIAN) APPROACH

Class 7
(October 15)

Required Readings

Nichols Chapter 4: Bowen Family Systems Therapy (76-97)


**DUE—October 15th Brief Discussion 2:** Briefly answer the following questions:

1) What are the theoretical underpinnings of Bowenian family therapy?
2) How is it different and similar from structural family therapy?
3) Why is it important for therapists to develop and work on their own genograms?

**Class 8**
(October 22)

**The Genogram**

**Required Reading**


**Class 9**
(October 29)

Genogram Due

**UNIT 4: THE SOLUTION FOCUSED APPROACH**

**Class 10**
(November 5)

**Required Reading**

Nichols

Chapter 11: Solution Focused Therapy (pp. 245-365)


Chapter 5, Useful Tools: How and What to Use. (pp. 245-267)

**DUE-Discussion Paper 3:** Briefly answer the following questions.
1) What are the theoretical underpinnings of solution-focused therapy?
2) How does it contrast/compare with structural and Bowenian family therapy?

Class 11
(November 12)

Required Reading


Chapter 6, Investigation as Intervention and Prevention (142-186).

Chapter 7: Case Closure: How Good is Good Enough? (187-203).

*****ADD FAMILY THERAPY WITH ONE PERSON

*****ALSO ADD REVIEW COMPARE AND CONTRAST THREE MODELS

UNIT 5 DIFFERENTIAL USE OF THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND INTERVENTIONS

Class 12
(November 19)

Required Reading:

Nichols, M.

Chapter 9: Cognitive Behavioral Family Therapy (184-206)

Chapter 12: Narrative Therapy (pp. 268-284)

Class 13
(December 3)

Families of Divorce

Required Reading


**Class 14 & 15**  
**(December 10 & 17)**

Contextual Issues

**Required Reading**

Nichols

Chapter 10: Family Therapy in the 21st Century (209-264)


**December 17 FINAL PAPER DUE**

XII. **Academic Integrity Policy**

All work submitted in a graduate course 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 material as your own. Use the citation style preferred by the discipline.

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. Acknowledgement is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in 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, only 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 with the faculty member.

Plagiarism along with any and all other violations of academic integrity by graduate and professional students will normally be penalized more severely than violations by first-year undergraduate students. Since all violations of academic integrity by a graduate or professional student are potentially separable under the Academic Integrity Policy, faculty members should not adjudicate alleged academic integrity violations by graduate and professional students, but should refer such allegations to the appropriate Academic Integrity Facilitator (AIF) or to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The AIF that you should contact 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 more information regarding the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures, see: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml

XIII. Disability Accommodation

Please Note: Any student who believes that s/he may need an accommodation in this class due to a disability should contact the designated Coordinator for the Concerns of Students with Disabilities at the School of Social Work, Arlene Hunter, Assistant Dean for Student Services and Director of Admissions (amhunter@ssw.rutgers.edu) for a letter of accommodation. Students must have a letter of accommodation from the Coordinator in order to receive accommodations. (Undergraduate New Brunswick students should contact the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities for their College.) Any student who has already received a letter of accommodation, should contact the instructor privately to discuss implementation of his/her accommodations immediately. Failure to discuss implementation of accommodations with the instructor promptly may result in denial of your accommodations.