UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

GRADUATE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK
WWW.SW.UH.EDU

COURSE TITLE / SECTION: SOCW 7304 (Section # 20299) Fall, 2012
Contextualized Strengths-Based Practice in Social Work

TIME: 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm Tuesdays

FACULTY:
Bonnie Byrne, LCSW

OFFICE HOURS: Room 231 GCSW
Before class on Tuesday or by appt.

E-mail: bjbyrne@uh.edu **Phone #:** (281) 384-0820

I. Course

A. Catalog Description: [Credit 3 (3-0)]. Analyzes and applies contextualized practice approach with a diverse range of client systems, from a multicultural strengths-based perspective.

B. Purpose: This course focuses on the application of a contextualized strengths-based practice approach to clinical practice. Students will gain knowledge and understanding of this approach when working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and larger social systems within a multicultural perspective.

II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

1. articulate a framework for understanding the significant role context plays as it relates to social work practice;
2. explain how social, political, and economic contexts affect the opportunities and limitations of social work practice;
3. critically analyze the role, influence, and impact of power and power inequity in social work practice;
4. discuss and demonstrate knowledge and skill for practical application of contextualized strengths based practice approach to working with a diverse range of clients and settings;
5. demonstrate assessment and intervention skills that draw upon the client's situation, strengths, and limitations;
6. evaluate self development and the effectiveness of professional practice; and
7. assess the significance of culturally competent practice with the overall goal of contextualized strengths-based practice.

III. Course Structure

A variety of teaching and learning techniques will be utilized in this course, including lectures, group discussions, individual/group experiential exercises, role plays, guest lectures, videos, and handouts.

Blackboard vista may be utilized as a means of creating discussions about relevant clinical practice issues, posting assignments, supplementary readings, essential updates, and for delivery of some assignments.

IV. Required Text

Saleebey, D. (2008) *The strengths perspective in social work practice (5th Edition).* Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.

Required Readings

A selection of articles/chapters from books have been identified as **required readings** for this course. These required readings will be posted on Blackboard Vista.

V. Course Requirements

A. Reading Assignments

The course outline contains topics to be covered and reading assignments to be completed on a weekly basis. Students are also required to regularly check Blackboard Vista to access readings, resources, and other materials for class. This highly interactive class will be designed to clarify, and supplement the understanding of assigned readings, and to create stimulating discussions and experiences regarding content. It is critical that students remain current with all reading assignments to fully participate in class and to experience academic success in the course.

B. Course Assignments

1. Class Attendance and In-Class Participation (15%)

Attendance and class participation are critical to successful learning in this course and to student's development of essential social work practice skills. Students can receive full class participation points for class attendance, attending the entire class session (arrival on time and staying throughout class), active participation in class and group activities, and informed participation in class discussions. **NOTE:** More than two absences will significantly impact your final grade. If you know in advance that you need to be absent from class, please notify Professor in writing via e-mail. Periodically students will participate in experiential work, role plays, and review of prepared cases to develop knowledge and skill for practical application of contextualized strengths based practice approach. Blackboard vista will be used to distribute readings and resources to students as well as to provide opportunity for discussion. Discussion groups, to offer opportunity for questions, issues, and ideas, will be a formal part of the course as well.

2. Self-Assessment (10%)

As a means of assessing student's readiness for the class and to tailor the course to meet the needs of students, students will be required to complete a comprehensive pre and post self-assessment of their current clinical knowledge and skill in social work practice.

3. Group Presentation (25%)

Groups of students will be formed to develop a comprehensive and professional presentation that allows students to demonstrate their acquired clinical knowledge and skills for practical application of a contextualized strengths based practice approach with a specific client group

within a specific practice arena. A detailed description of the assignment will be provided by the Professor and posted on Blackboard vista.

4. Article Analysis (25%)

Students will conduct an analysis of a scholarly and/or research article about a select topic related to contextual, strengths based social work practice. Specific guidelines for this assignment will be presented by the Professor and posted on Blackboard Vista.

5. Integrative Clinical Case (25%)

Students will have an opportunity to demonstrate practical application of clinical knowledge and skill through the review, response, and completion of an integrative clinical case.

VI. Evaluation and Grading

A. Grades will be based on the following:

1. Self-Assessment (Pre and Post)	10%
2. Class Attendance and Class Participation	15%
3. Article Analysis	25%
4. Group Presentation	25%
5. Integrative Clinical Case	25%

B. Final course letter grades are based on the following standard grading scale for all courses taught in the College:

A	= 96 - 100	C+	= 76 - 79.9
A-	= 92 - 95.9	C	= 72 - 75.9
B+	= 88 - 91.9	C-	= 68 - 71.9
B	= 84 - 87.9	D	= 64 - 67.9
B-	= 80 - 83.9	F	= Below 64

C. Attendance and Class Participation

Attendance and class participation are considered to be absolutely critical to successful learning in this clinical practice course. Maximum participation as demonstrated by regular attendance of full class period, actively engaging in class discussions, and ongoing involvement in class work and exercises is crucial to the class participation grade in this course. Both attendance and class participation will be observed and recorded.

D. Late Assignments

Professor will allow for submission of late assignments **only** if the student has made prior arrangements to do so and for appropriate and compelling reasons. Late assignments (granted permission for late submission) however will automatically result in the lowering of the otherwise earned grade.

E. Pagers, Cell Phones, and Laptops

Please show respect and consideration of colleagues and professor by taking responsibility for keeping pager and cell phone interruptions to a minimum. Laptops and IPADS for class research and note taking purposes are highly encouraged in this course. It will be assumed that students are using technology in a professionally appropriate and ethical manner.

F. Policy on Grades of Incomplete

Please refer to the UH Graduate and Professional Studies Bulletin for the university policy regarding a grade of Incomplete (I). Incompletes will be given only in accordance with this policy.

VII. Policy on Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the Instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you must set the quote in quotation marks or use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number (s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using any other person's work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see Instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

VIII. Consultation

My email address is bjbyrne@uh.edu please allow 24 hours for response and my office telephone number is 832-384-0820. Consultation can be arranged by appointment.

IX. Americans with Disabilities Statement

Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. For more information and/or assistance, please contact the Center for Students with DisAbilities at 713-743-5400. Instructors may not provide accommodations without supporting documentation from the UH Center for Students with DisAbilities.

X. COURSE OUTLINE, READINGS, and ASSIGNMENTS

Tuesday, August 28

- Overview of Course & Course Introduction
- Preparation for Assignments & Formation of Groups for Presentation
- Initiate Ideas for Article Analysis & Establish Process for Review of Readings
- Completion of Pre Self-Assessment

Tuesday, September 4

- Contextualized Social Work Practice: Understanding the Significant Role of Context in Social Work Practice
- Exercise: Exploring the Context of Student for Balancing Academic Commitments with Professional Self-Care
- Readings:
  Kemp, S. P., Whittaker, J. K., & Tracy, E. M. (2002) Contextual social work practice. (Chapter 2). In *Pathways to power: Readings in contextual social work practice.*

Tuesday, September 11

- Contextualized Social Work Practice: Contextual Assessment/Contextual Intervention
- Readings:
  Beder, J. (2009). Social work in the department of defense hospital: Impact, role, and interventions. *Military Medicine,* 174, pp. 486-490.
  Garcia-Biggs, M. J., Simpson, C. G., & Gaus, M. D. (2009). A case for bullying: Bringing together the disciplines. *Children & Schools,* 31 (1): 39-41.

Tuesday, September 18

- Strengths Based Practice and Context
- Exercise: Assessing Strengths & Strengths Interview
- Readings:
- Bell-Tolliver, L., Burgess, R. & Brock, L. J. (2009). African American therapists working with African American families: An exploration of the strengths perspective in treatment. *Journal of Marriage & Family Therapy,* 35 (3): 293-307.
  Saleebey, D. (Ed) (2008) Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 15

Tuesday, September 25

- The Effects of Social, Political & Economic Contexts in Social Work Practice
- Readings:
  Saleebey (Ed) 2008), Chapter 10
  Lewis, M. (2008). Familias in the Heartland: Exploration of the social, economic, and cultural realities of Latino immigrants. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services.* pp. 193-201.

Tuesday, October 2

- **ARTICLE ANALYSIS DUE**
- Role, Influence, Impact of Power & Power Inequity/Assessing the Significance of Culturally Competent Practice
- Readings:
  Saleebey (Ed, 2008), Chapter 13, 14
  Spencer, M. S. (2008). A social worker's reflections on power, privilege, and oppression. *Social Work.* 53 (2), pp. 99-101.
  NASW Cultural Competence Standards
  Crisp, C. & McCave, E. L. (2007). Gay affirmative practice: A model for social work practice with gay lesbian and bisexual youth. *Child Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 24: 403-421.

Tuesday, October 9

- Clinical Practice: Application of Contextualized Strengths Based Practice Approach I
- Readings:
  Dewane, C. (2008). The ABCS of ACT – Acceptance and commitment therapy. *Social Work Today,* 8 (5): 36.
  Gitterman, A. & Heller, N. R. (2011). Integrating social work perspectives and Models with concepts methods and skills with other professions' specialized approaches. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 39: 204-211.*
  Turner, K. (2009). Mindfulness: The present moment in clinical social work. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 37: 95-103.

Tuesday, October 16

- Clinical Practice: Application of Contextualized Strengths Based Practice Approach II
- Smith, S. et al (2011). Using solution focused communication to support patients *Nursing Standard,* 25 (52): 42-47.
- Wahab, S. (2005). Motivational interviewing and social work practice. *Journal of Social Work, 5: 45-60.*

Tuesday, October 23

- Clinical Practice: Application of Contextualized Strengths Based Practice Approach III
- Readings (Continued from previous 2 weeks)
- **Integrative Clinical Case (Practice)**

Tuesday, October 30

- **Integrative Clinical Case**

Tuesday, November 6

- **Group Presentations**

Tuesday, November 13

- **Group Presentations**

Tuesday, November 20

- **Group Presentations**

Tuesday, November 27

- Evaluating Self-Development and the Effectiveness of Professional Practice
- Completion of Post Self-Assessment

Tuesday, December 4, Last Day of Class

- Course Wrap-up & Evaluation

XI. COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beder, J. (2009). Social work in the department of defense hospital: Impact, role, and interventions. *Military Medicine,* 174, pp. 486-490.

Bell-Tolliver, L., Burgess, R., & Brock, L. J. (2009). African American therapists working with African American families: An exploration of the strengths perspective in treatment. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy,* 35 (3), pp. 293-307.

Blackwell, C. W., Dziegielewski, S. F. & Jacinto, G. A. (2006). The use of a strengths based approach in addressing discrimination against gays and lesbians. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment,* 14 (3), pp. 1-17.

Bransford, C. L. (2009). Process-centered group supervision. *Clinical Social Work Journal.* Volume 37, pp. 119-127.

Cooper, M. G. & Lesser, J. G. (2005). *Clinical social work practice: An integrated approach.* (2nd Ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Crisp, C. & McCave, E. L. (2007). Gay affirmative practice: A model for social work practice with gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth. *Clinical Social Work Journal,* 24: 403-421.

Dewane, C. (2008). The ABCs of ACT – Acceptance and commitment therapy. *Social Work Today.* Volume 8, Number 5, pp. 36.

Faust, J. R. (2008). Clinical social worker as patient advocate in a community mental health Center. *Clinical Social Work Journal,* 36, pp. 293-300.

Fook, J. (2002). Contextual practice: Strategies for working in and with contexts (Chapter 11). In *Social work: Critical theory and practice.* pp. 142-155). London: Sage Publications.

Furman, R., Negi, J. J., Iwamoto, D. K., Rowan, D., Shukraft, A., & Gregg, J. (2009). Social work practice with Latinos: Key issues for social workers. *Social Work.* Volume 54, Number 2, pp. 167-174.

Lewis, M. (2008). Families in the heartland: Exploration of the social, economic, and cultural realities of Latino immigrants. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Sciences.* pp. 193-201.

Lindhorst, T. (2005). Contextualized assessment with battered women: Strategic safety planning to cope with multiple harms. *Journal of Social Work Education,* 41 (2): 331-352.

Miley, K. & DuBois, B. (2007). Ethical preferences for the clinical practice of empowerment in social work. *Social Work Health and International Development,* pp. 29-44.

Mireau, R. & Inch, R. (2009). Brief solution-focused counseling: A practical effective strategy for Dealing with wait lists in community-based mental health services. *Social Work,* 54 (1): 63-70.

Nguyen, P. V. (2008). Perceptions of Vietnamese fathers' acculturation levels, parenting styles, and mental health outcomes in Vietnamese American adolescent immigrants. *Social Work,* 53 (4), pp. 337-346.

O'Melia, M. & Miley, K. K. (2002). *Pathways to power: Readings in contextual social work practice.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Palmer-House, K. E. (2008). The perceived impact of strengths-based family worker training: Workers Learning that helped empower families. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Sciences.* pp. 428-437.

Probst, B. (2009) Contextual meanings of the strengths perspective for social work practice in mental health. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Science,* pp. 162-166.

Rawana, E. & Brownlee, K. (2009). Making the possible probable: A strengths based assessment and intervention framework for clinical work with parents, children, and adolescents. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Science, pp. 255-260.*

Saleebey, D. (2008). *The strengths perspective in social work practice.* (5th Ed.). Boston: Pearson/ Allyn & Bacon.

Sanders, S. & Power, J. (2009). Roles, responsibilities, and relationships among older husbands caring for wives with progressive dementia and other chronic conditions. *Health and Social Work,* 34 (1), pp. 41-51.

Schiele, J. H. & Hopps, J. G. (2009). Racial minorities then and now: The continuing significance of race. *Social Work,* 54 (3): 195-199.

Smith, S. et al (2011). Using solution-focused communication to support patients. *Nursing Standard,* Volume 25 (52): 42-47.

Snyder, C., Van Wormer, K., Chadha, J., & Jaggers, J. (2009). Older adult inmates: The challenge for social work. *Social Work,* 54 (2), pp. 117-124.

Spencer, M. S. (2008). A social worker's reflections on power, privilege, and oppression. *Social Work*. Volume 53, Number 2, pp. 99-101.

Turner, K. (2009). Mindfulness: The present moment in clinical social work. *Clinical Social Work Journal,* 37: 95-103.

Waites, C. (2009). Building on strengths: Intergenerational practice with African American families. *Social Work,* 54 (3), pp. 278-287.

GROUP PRESENTATION - EXPLORATION OF CLINICAL PRACTICE WITH SPECIFIC GROUPS/PRACTICE ARENA

OBJECTIVE

This assignment is intended to give students the opportunity to demonstrate their acquired clinical knowledge and skills for practical application of a contextualized, strengths-based practice approach to a specific client group and practice arena.

TASK

Based on shared interests, students will form groups of 4 to 5 persons. Students will identify a specific client group and practice arena for exploration of clinical practice. (Example: exploring clinical social work practice in mental health outpatient settings with older adults experiencing depression) Once an area of study has been decided, the group will initiate research to develop a contextualized strengths based approach with the selected group and setting. This will require application and integration of key concepts, theories and perspectives addressed in this course.

FORMAT:

Develop a PowerPoint presentation which will serve as the outline for your presentation by displaying key points. The presentation should last approximately 45 minutes. All sources/references should be cited in APA format. Each group member must play an active role in completing research, developing content, and in presenting. The presentation should address the following--

1. **Introduction / Description** – provide an objective and comprehensive introduction to the group and setting explored. This may include prevalence statistics, data of interest and relevance, history/background, applicable key concepts and definitions.

2. **Contextualized Strengths Based Practice & Cultural Competency –** Using key concepts, terms, and theories from course readings/textbooks and independent research, describe relevant and applicable contextual and cultural aspects of the selected group or issues.

3. **Strengths Perspective** – Using key concepts, terms, and theories from course readings/textbooks and independent research, apply the strengths perspective to social work practice with the selected group and setting.

4. **Empirical Evidence and/or Studies** – Briefly present findings from 3 empirical studies of clinical social work practice with the selected group or clinical interventions proven effective in addressing the selected issue. Implications for clinical social work practice should be included in this section.

5. **References** – The presentation should include discussion of at least ten scholarly references related to the selected topic area and APA format should be used in citations.

Note: Students may send their power point presentation (in PDF format) to the Professor for uploading to blackboard vista at least 24 hours prior to class or handouts of the presentation can be distributed to class at the time of presentation.

EVALUATION
This is assignment is worth 25% of the overall course grade and will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Clarity, organization, and overall quality of the presentation (3 points)
2. Content addresses all 5 requested areas; information provided in each section is appropriate, comprehensive, and relevant to that section; and all sources are cited according to APA format (15 points)
3. Demonstration of critical thinking skills, the integration of course content, and the ability to collect necessary data to complete the assignment (5 points)
4. Supplemental information, beyond what is required, that enhances the overall quality of the presentation (2 points)

DUE DATE
See course outline for scheduled group presentation dates.

ARTICLE ANALYSIS

OBJECTIVE
The purpose of this assignment is to help students demonstrate their ability to critically analyze a scholarly and/or research article and apply the content to the contextualized strengths based practice approach in social work.

TASKS:
Students will select an article from a list provided by the Professor. (Articles will be posted on blackboard vista.) Selected articles focus on one of the following aspects of the course:

1. Contextual practice and the strengths based perspective;
2. Effects of power and inequity; and/or or social political and economic contexts on social work practice;
3. Self-awareness and/or professional development in clinical social work practice;
4. Cultural competence in clinical social work practice.

Students will complete a meaningful analysis of the article using the following as a guide:

1. Introduce and briefly describe the article and state its purpose;
2. Summarize the key points emphasized in this article;
3. Provide a critical analysis of the approach/model/research discussed in the article (specifically stating if you find the source to be useful; if yes, how and why? If not, why not, and how might it be improved?)
4. Identify the social work implications of the article—how does this article relate to contextualized strengths based practice in social work; where would this information be valuable in terms of settings, social work practice arena, social work practitioners.

FORMAT
This assignment should be typed in 12 point font, double spaced, and with 1 inch margins. A cover page (student name, course title, professor name, and date) should accompany the assignment. APA format should be followed for preparation of the paper and references. Paper should be a maximum length of 7 pages, includes cover page and references.

EVALUATION
The article analysis is worth 25% of the overall course grade and will be evaluated as follows:

1. Development of introduction of the article (5 points)

2. Summary of key points (5 points)
3. Critical analysis of approach/model/research (5 points)
4. Social work implications (5)

5. Quality of analysis, including APA formatting, grammar, writing, spelling (5 points)

DUE DATE

See course outline for scheduled due date.