



**COURSE TITLE:** SOCW 7325, Assessment in Social Work Practice

**TIME/ SECTION/ ROOM:** Tuesday, 8:30 am – 11:30 am / GCSW Rm. 231

**FACULTY:** Marissa Hansen, M.S.W., Ph.D.

**OFFICE HOURS:** GCSW, 414

- **Tuesday-** 12:00pm – 1:00pm;
- **By appointment on other days.** Please submit appointment requests via e-mail.

**E-mail:** [mhansen5@uh.edu](mailto:mhansen5@uh.edu)

**Phone:** (713) 743-5353

**Fax:** (713) 743-8149

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## I. Course

### A. Catalog Description

Knowledge and skills for assessment of clients at the individual, group, family, organizational and community levels.

### B. Purpose

This advanced practice course prepares students to conduct assessments of clients at the individual, group, family, organizational and community levels. Utilizing a strengths perspective, it focuses on the collaborative nature of assessment and the design and implementation of assessments that include evidence based strategies.

## II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

1. Describe how assessment informs all levels of social work practice;
2. Delineate the tasks involved in the process of assessment;
3. Compare and contrast the differences and similarities between problem-based and strengths-based assessment;
4. Discuss the collaborative nature of assessment and its relationship to social work values;
5. Determine the validity and reliability of different assessment tools;

6. Choose appropriate assessment tools for use with clients at the individual, group, family, organizational and community levels;
7. Explain how assessment methods are used in the evaluation process;
8. Utilize culturally sensitive models for assessment of racial/ethnic minority clients, families and communities;
9. Demonstrate assessment skills that take into account special client considerations including, but not limited to, race/ethnicity/social class, gender and sexual orientation;
10. Conduct a strengths-based assessment with clients at the individual, group, family organizational and community levels.

### **III. COURSE CONTENT**

This course will include the following topical (content) areas:

1. Evidenced based methods;
2. Individual, family, organization, community and self-assessment;
3. Assessment tools to address various issues and age levels, inclusive of multicultural content and special groups.

### **IV. COURSE STRUCTURE**

This Fall 2013 semester course will consist of 15 class periods. The content will be delivered in seminar format, utilizing a variety of teaching and learning techniques including: lectures, in-class group discussions, group activities, case studies, handouts, and online activities via Blackboard.

### **V. TEXTBOOKS –** The citation for the textbook is provided below. Additional readings are posted on the class Blackboard site and/or are indicated on the course syllabus in APA-formatted reference.

#### **Required:**

Jordan, C. & Franklin, C. (Eds.) (2011). *Clinical assessment for social workers: Quantitative and qualitative methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Chicago: Lyceum Books, Inc. [ISBN: 978-1-933478-80-7]

There will be required articles or handouts for reading that are posted on Blackboard. These will be listed under “required readings” by weekly basis.

#### **Recommended:**

Green, W. & Simon, L. (2012). *The Columbia Guide to Social Work Writing*. Chichester, NY: Columbia University Press.

Kadushin, A. & Kadushin, G. (2013). *The Social Work Interview* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Chichester, NY: Columbia University Press.

Netting, Kettner, McMurty & Thomas (2012). *Social Work Macro Practice* (5th Edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Ragg, D.M. (2011) Developing practice competencies. A foundation for generalist practice. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

## VI COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. Reading Assignments:** Readings are listed on the class outline and are to be completed prior to the scheduled class. Please note that the lectures are designed to clarify and supplement the assigned readings--they are not designed to review them in detail. It is critical that you remain current with the readings in order to participate fully in class discussions and activities. Some readings are assigned directly from the textbook, while other readings can be found via the UH Library, the internet, or posted on the class Blackboard (BB) site.
- B. Written Assignments**
- 1. Individual Assessment (5%).** Self-awareness and use of self are critical components when conducting assessments. This first homework assignment allows students to reflect on their own experiences, values and beliefs. Students will receive a handout with specific questions to be answered for an assessment of their peer and then be asked to summarize the assessment in a 1 page write-up. Upload the completed assignment via the "Turnitin" feature on BB before the start of class on or prior to the due date and bring a hard copy to class on the due date. **Assignment due September 10, 2013.**
  - 2. Analysis of an Assessment Tool / Instrument (20%).** Through research, students will locate and analyze an assessment tool/instrument that could be used in social work practice. A framework for the analysis will be provided by the professor and will include elements related to purpose, feasibility, evidence-base (reliability and/or validity), population, relevance to social work practice, etc. Students will be asked to summarize findings in a 1-2 page paper. Upload the completed assignment via the "Turnitin" feature on BB before the start of class on or prior to the due date and bring a hard copy to class on the due date. **Assignment due October 1, 2013.**
  - 3. Family Assessment (15%):** Students will be assigned to a group. They will view a film and develop a family assessment based on the characters in the film. Each group will submit a written summary of their contribution and present their assessment to the class in a 20-30 minute PowerPoint presentation. A framework for the assessment and presentation will be provided by the professor. All members of the group must be present during the class

presentation. **Assignment due October 15, 2013.**

4. **Rapid Bio-psychosocial Assessment (20%).** Students will conduct a multidimensional assessment based on a clinical case study. The assessment will focus on biological, social and psychological dimensions of a case presented in class. Upload the completed assignment via the “Turnitin” feature on BB before the start of class on or prior to the due date and bring a hard copy to class on the due date. **Assignment due November 12, 2013.**
5. **Community or Organizational Assessment Case Study (20%):** Students will use a handout to guide them in an assessment of a community agency they are familiar. If students are not familiar with an agency, arrangements can be made to conduct assessment of workplace or another agency. Upload the completed assignment via the “Turnitin” feature on BB by the due date. **Assignment due December 11, 2013.**
6. **Class Attendance and Participation (20%):** Attendance and participation are expected for the full length of each class session. Reading is very important for this class so a few quizzes may occur throughout the semester. Performance on quizzes is factored in with the participation grade. Full participation includes preparation for class, contributing to class discussions (large and small group), and respectfully providing thoughtful feedback to classmates. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. **If you are more than 20 minutes late to class this will be counted as an absence. You are allowed 2 absences without explanation. Three or more UNEXCUSED absences will result in a 1-letter grade reduction at the end of the semester (E.g., A to B, B to C, C to D, or D to F). Excused absences MUST be negotiated with the professor.**

## VII. EVALUATING AND GRADING

### A. Grading Distribution:

|    |                                             |     |
|----|---------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. | Self-Assessment                             | 5%  |
| 2. | Analysis of an Assessment Tool / Instrument | 20% |
| 3. | Family Assessment                           | 15% |
| 4. | Bio-psychosocial Assessment                 | 20% |
| 5. | Organization Assessment                     | 20% |
| 6. | Attendance / Participation                  | 20% |

- B. Grading Scale:** Scores from each written assignment and the class participation grade will be converted according to the grading distribution indicated above. The scores will then be combined and final letter grades will be based on the following grading scale:

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

- C. Policy on grades of I (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. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class session for which they are due, as indicated in the course outline below. Late assignments will be reduced by 5 points for each day they are late. Please plan accordingly so that you are able to complete and submit your assignments on time, and inform me ASAP should any problems arise. If an emergency prevents you from attending class on the day an assignment is due, you must notify me prior to the class so that appropriate arrangements may be planned. An **unexcused** absence will also result in a grade of zero (0) on any in-class assignments administered on the day of the absence. All assignment descriptions will be posted on blackboard for your reference.
- D. POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM:** Although I do not expect to encounter academic dishonesty or plagiarism in this class, I want to be very clear about my standards. 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**

This course will be delivered by Dr. Hansen. My office is located on the fourth floor of the GCSW. Scheduled office hours are indicated on page 1. If you need to meet with me at a time other than the allotted office hours, please schedule an appointment via email. My email is [mhansen5@uh.edu](mailto:mhansen5@uh.edu)

- IX. POLICY ON ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.** 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.

#### **X. EXPECTATIONS FOR MAINTAINING A SAFE, RESPECTFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

**Cellular Phones and Pagers:** Students are asked to turn off (or activate the vibrator mode on) cellular phones and pagers during class time. Disruptions of this nature compromise the academic process, and therefore will not be tolerated. If you have extenuating circumstances that prevent you from honoring this classroom rule, please schedule a meeting with me as soon as possible to advise me of your situation.

**Classroom Behavior:** The **GOLDEN RULE** for expected behavior in the classroom is to ***be respectful of yourself and your colleagues***. By virtue of

the nature of our profession, we will often engage in content and discussions in this course that elicit varied opinions, perspectives, and emotions. This will provide a well-rounded educational experience for all of us, if we practice and demonstrate the core values of social work. Social Work classes are a good training ground for professional conduct.

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## **A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSMENTS IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

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### **Week 1      Tuesday, August 27, 2013: Course Introduction**

- Course overview & logistics: Introductions, syllabus, assignments, Blackboard site
- Overview of Assessment in Social Work Practice and value of self-assessment

#### Readings to be reviewed in class:

- Course Syllabus & Review Blackboard Site
- Article - Gladwell (2006). Million-Dollar Murray Why problems like homelessness may be easier to solve than to manage. The New Yorker (February 13, 2006)

### **Week 2      Tuesday, September 3**

- General assessment cont'd, engaging the client (motivational interviewing), and the Problem-Solving Process
- In-class activity – Self – Assessment exercise

#### Required Readings:

Jordan & Franklin– Chapters 1, 2, and 4  
Green & Simon- Chapter 6

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## **GATHERING DATA: IMPORTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW**

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### **Week 3      Tuesday, September 10**

- Assessment: Problem-based and strengths-based perspective/  
Forming objectives and goals

#### Required Readings:

Ragg- Chapter 4; Saleeby – Chapter 5 & 6

#### Recommended Readings:

Campinha-Bacote (2002)

**\*\*DUE\*\* Self – Assessment write-up due >> submit at start of class**

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## ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES COMMON TO SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

### Organizing and Interpreting the Meaning of Data

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**Week 4      Tuesday, September 17:**

- Assessment and Evaluation
- Introduction to Assessment Tool / Instruments
- Analysis / Evaluation of Assessment Tools/ Instruments

Required Readings:

Jordan & Franklin – Chapters 3, 5, & 11

**Library Session --- Searching for Assessment Tools / Instruments**

**Week 5      Tuesday, September 24:**

- Assessment of Families
- Multi-dimensional assessment with families.  
    >> conducting a Family Assessment and associated tools; genograms
- Review of *Family Assessment Assignment* & Group Set-up assignment

Required reading:

Jordan & Franklin-Chapter 8 & 9

Hepworth – Chapter 10

Recommended Reading:

See BB folder for articles pertaining to family assessment models

**Week 6      Tuesday, October 1:**

- Assessment with Families cont'd & diversity issues in working with families
- In-Class Assignment – Groups will meet during class time to discuss family assessments and presentation

Required Reading:

Kadushin & Kadushin - Chapter 12

Journal Article - Marsiglia, Kulis, Garcia-Perez, & Bermudez-Parsai (2010)

***\*\*Due - Analysis of an Assessment Tool / Instrument\*\****

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## DEFINING THE PROBLEM-ASSESSMENT WITH SPECIFIC POPULATIONS

### Application of Assessment Tools

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**Week 7      Tuesday, October 8**

- Mental Health Assessment: Children and Adults, CPS risk assessment for suicidality
- Guest Speaker (LCSW, adolescents and children)

Required Readings:

Jordan & Franklin- Chapters 6 & 7

Recommended Readings:

Journal Articles –Gillingham & Humphreys (2010); Schechter & Lineberry (2011); Zhair & Gao (2009)

**Week 8      Tuesday, October 15**

- In class presentations – Group Projects - Family Assessment

**Week 9      Tuesday, October 22:**

- Bio-psychosocial Assessment
- Biopsychosocial Assessment – In-class activity assessment case study

Required Readings:

Green & Simon- Chapter 14

Journal Article – Berzoff (2011); Barklay (2009)

**Week 10      Tuesday, October 29**

- Substance Use / Abuse Assessment and Behavioral Health
- Guest Speaker – Center for Drug and Social Policy Research, UofH
- Bio-psychosocial cont'd

Required Readings:

Journal Articles- Samford et al. (2000); Gans et al. (2010); Barrera, Castro, Strycher, & Toobert (2012)

**Week 11      Tuesday, November 5**

- Bio-psychosocial cont'd
- Introduction to Assessment of Communities & Organizations

Required Readings:

Netting et al. (2012) – Chapter 5

**Week 12      Tuesday, November 12**

- Assessment of Communities & Organizations cont'd
- Methods of Assessment
- Review of Organization Case Study Assignment

Required Readings:

Netting et al. (2012) – Chapter 7

Green & Simon – Chapter 7 & 8

***\*\*DUE Bio-psychosocial Assessment\*\****

**Week 13      Tuesday, November 19:**

- Assessment of Communities & Organizations cont'd
- Guest Speaker – TBA – Assessment in Macro Practice

Required Readings:

Netting et al. (2012) – Chapter 8 & 10

**Week 14      Tuesday, November 26:**

**--NO CLASS--**

- Conduct agency interviews and consultation with Dr. Hansen on final assignment

**Week 15 Tuesday, December 3:**

- Assessment of Communities & Organizations cont'd
- Course wrap-up and evaluation

***\*\*Organization Case Study- Submit via BB - due December 11th\*\****

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**\*\*\*The instructor reserves the right (and flexibility) to alter the Course Outline or schedule in order to better accommodate learning goals and time constraints. Student flexibility and tolerance for any necessary agenda shifts may be required.\*\*\***

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## **XI. Bibliography**

Barkley, J. (2009). Biopsychosocial Assessment: Why the Biopsychosocial and Rarely the Social?. *Journal Of The Canadian Academy Of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 18(4), 344-347.

Barrera Jr., M., Castro, F. G., Strycker, L. A., & Toobert, D. J. (2013). Cultural Adaptations of Behavioral Health Interventions: A Progress Report. *Journal Of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 81(2), 196-205. doi:10.1037/a0027085

Berzoff, J. (2011). Why We Need a Biopsychosocial Perspective with Vulnerable, Oppressed, and At-Risk Clients. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 81(2-3), 132-166.

Campinha-Bacote, J. (2009). A Culturally Competent Model Of Care for African Americans. *Urologic Nursing*, 29(1), 49-54.

Collins, D., Jordan, C., & Coleman, H. (2007). *An introduction to family social work*. (2nd Ed.). Itasca, IL: Peacock Publishers.

Corey, M. and Corey, G. (2006). *Process and practice groups* (7th ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Dillon, C. (2003). *Learning from mistakes in clinical practice*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Gans, J., Falco, M., Schackman, B. R., & Winters, K. C. (2010). An In-Depth Survey of the Screening and Assessment Practices of Highly Regarded Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment Programs. *Journal Of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse*, 19(1), 33-47. doi:10.1080/10678280903400578

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Helton, L., & Jackson, M. (1997). *Social work practice with families: A diversity model*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Hepworth, D. H., Rooney, R. H., Rooney, G. D., Strom-Gottfried, K., & Larsen, J. (2006). *Direct social work practice: Theory and skills* (7th ed). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

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Mattaini, M. A. (1997). *Clinical practice with individuals*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Shellenberger, S. (1999). *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention* (2nd Ed.). New York: W. W. Norton.

McGoldrick, M., Giordano, J., & Pearce, J. (Eds.). (1996). *Ethnicity and family therapy* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

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Saleebey, D. (2006). *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.

Samford, B., Fischer, J., Reifman, A., & Caldera, Y. (2000). Assessment Instruments in Texas Alcohol/Other Drug Dependence Treatment Facilities: Use of Biopsychosocial Models. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly, 18*(4), 47-62.

Schechter, M., Lineberry, T. W., Goldblatt, M. J., & Maltzberger, J. T. (2011). Self-Harming Behavior and Suicidality: Suicide Risk Assessment. *Suicide & Life-Threatening Behavior, 41*(2), 227-234. doi:10.1111/j.1943-278X.2011.00004.x

Toseland, R. W., & Rivas, R. F. (2001). *An introduction to group work practice* (4th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Zhai, F., & Gao, Q. (2009). Child Maltreatment Among Asian Americans: Characteristics and Explanatory Framework. *Child Maltreatment, 14*(2), 207-224.