Course Title: SOCW 7325, Assessment in Social Work Practice

Time/Section/Room: Thursdays, 1 pm – 4 pm (18708); Room 229

Faculty: McClain Sampson, M.S.S.W., Ph.D.

Office Hours: GCSW, 403
- Wednesday 12pm – 1 pm;
- Thursdays 11 am – 12:30 pm, 4-4:45 pm
- By appointment on other days. Please submit appointment requests via email.

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Teaching Assistant: Yolanda Villarreal. yolyvillarreal@yahoo.com

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 Spring 2014 semester course will consist of 14 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:

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:

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 site.

B. **Written Assignments**

1. **Self-Assessment and Genogram (20%).** 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 a self-assessment. In addition to completing a cultural chart and writing a brief self-assessment, students will turn in a genogram of their family with 3 generations, including self.

2. **Family Assessment (20%):** Students will view a film and will develop a family assessment based on the characters in the film.

4. **Organizational Assessment (20%):** Students will use a handout to guide them in an assessment of their field practicum agency. If students are not in field at the time, arrangements can be made to conduct assessment of workplace or another agency.

3. **Rapid Bio-psychosocial Assessment (20%).** Because of the busy settings in which social workers assess, this assignment offers a chance to conduct a rapid and brief but multi-dimensional assessment on an individual. Students will take notes of their observations while viewing a therapy session. The focal person in the video is the focus on this individual assessment. The assessment will focus the on biological, social and psychological dimensions of the case.

5. **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 will 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 20%
   2. Family Assessment 20%
   3. Organization Assessment 20%
   4. Bio-psychosocial Assmt. With Individual 20%
   5. 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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-96</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79.9-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>95.9-92</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>75.9-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>91.9-88</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>71.9-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>87.9-84</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>67.9-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83.9-80</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 64%</td>
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</tbody>
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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.

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. Sampson. My office is located on the fourth floor of the GCSW. My office telephone number is (713) 743-6719. Scheduled office hours are indicated on page 1 and posted on my office door. If you need to meet with me at a time other than the allotted office hours, please schedule an appointment. My email is mmsampson@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.

A FRAMEWORK FOR THINKING ABOUT AND CONDUCTING ASSESSMENTS

Week 1 Thursday, January 16: Course Introduction
- Course overview & logistics: Introductions, syllabus, assignments, Blackboard site
- Overview of Assessment Process /In class assessment of knowledge
- Lecture: Phases of Assessment and the value of self-assessment
- Required Readings:
  Course Syllabus & Review Blackboard Site

Week 2 Thursday, January 23: Self-Assessment & Ethics Discussion
- Lecture: Assessment phases: Assessment, Treatment Planning, Intervention,
- De-brief: what elements did you capture? How did you think systematically about gathering information?
- Required Readings:
  Jordan & Franklin– Chapters 1
  Ragg: Chapter 1- Self Awareness (available on Bb)
  In class- handout-Table 4.2: common content areas of data collection for different client systems
GATHERING DATA: IMPORTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW

Week 3  Thursday, January 30: Considerations of data collection
- Lecture: Collection of data within the context of a bio-psychosocial model; Sources of data for Macro & Micro
- In-class activity: Watch MI video of engagement and practice in triads.
- Practice engaging client and gathering information using a MI approach (handout of techniques; including scale)
- Practice a doing a contract for safety
- Required Readings:
  J & F-Chapter 2 “Quantitative Clinical Assmt. Methods”
  Ragg: Chapter 4 “Assmt & Service Contracting”
- Assignment Due: Self-Assessment Report (instructions in Bb folder)

Week 4  Thursday, February 6: Assessment with Co-occurring disorders
- Guest Lecture: practitioner from the field
- Readings: read the article
  Hoge, Stuart, Morris et. al. “Mental Health and Addiction Workforce Development”

ORGANIZING AND INTERPRETING MEANING OF DATA

Week 5  Thursday, February 13: Standardized Measures in Assmt.
- Lecture and In-class activity: Finding and understanding standardized tools.
- Lecture: Suicide Assessment/Video/Standardized Tool
- Required reading:
  To be announced and must be read prior to class to help with in-class activity (see Bb)
  Jordan & Franklin-Chapter 3

- Week 6  Thursday, February 20: Assessment with Families
  Lecture: Multi-Dimensional Assessment with families. The importance of culture in assessment.
  In-class activity-get into groups of 4-5 and create a case vignette of family. 4 different ethnic backgrounds to choose from. Each group creates a background, why family was referred to therapy and fills in various dimensions of the family life (i.e. biological factors, social factors). We will distribute instructions.
  Required reading FOR WEEK 6 & 7:
  Jordan & Franklin-Chapter 10, 8
- Recommended reading:
Week 7  Thursday, February 27: Assessment with Families
Groups continue to discuss the vignettes

**Watch Video:** This is the video you will use to do your family assessment assignment.
Readings: continue with same J&F readings from week 6

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**DEFINING THE PROBLEM-ASSESSMENT WITH SPECIFIC POPULATIONS**

Week 8  Thursday, March 6: Assessment with Trauma
- **Guest speaker:** Donna Amtsberg, LCSW.
- Practice report writing with crisis scenario

Week 9  Thursday, March 13: The Art & Skill of Questioning in Assessment—
do the activity of role plays and maybe decisional balance so I can give feedback on their report writing
- Lecture: Problem definition-Using 4 P’s; The importance of How you ask the question
- Required Readings:
  - Ragg Chapter 6- “Questioning Skills”. Posted on Blackboard
  *there may be a quiz on the Ragg reading
  - Video showing asking questions
- Practice report writing
- Assignment Due: Family Assessment Paper

Week 10  Thursday, March 20: SPRING BREAK

Week 11  Thursday March 27 Assessment in Macro Settings—use drop out nation and drop out stats. Do community (school) assessment one day. Watch video 45 minutes one day.
- Lecture: Community/Organizational Assessment Focus;
  Considerations, methods in macro assessment

- Required Readings:
- PDF “Community Needs Assessment Guide” in Blackboard
  Recommended Readings: for both week 10 and 12
  - Hepworth et al. – Chapter 14 (Developing resources, planning, and advocacy)
  - Toseland & Rivas – Chapters 4 (104-127),
Week 11 Thursday, 3 Continued Macro Assessment activity

Week 12 Thursday, April 10. Mental Health Assessment.
- Discuss the next in-class Rapid Assessment
- Discuss the biopsychosocial assessment assignment

Assessment with Children Guest Lecture (LCSW, adolescents and children)
- Required Reading: Jordan and Franklin c. 6, Children and Adolescents

Week 13 Thursday, April 17: Mental Health Assessment
- In-class activity: Watch video of therapy with Dolores and conduct a rapid bio-psychosocial assessment. THIS WILL BE THE DATA GATHERING FOR YOUR ASSIGNMENT. VIDEO CAN ONLY BE VIEWED ONE TIME IN CLASS
- Readings: Required to read the article by Davis, Fulgniti, Kriegl & Brekke. “Deinstitutionalization. Where have all the people gone”. Be prepared to discuss the content of the article and answer questions relevant to the piece. (posted on Bb)
- To help you with the homework revisit reading in Chapter 1, “Psychosocial assessment model” and figure 1.1 (Jordon & Franklin, 3rd ed – pp 8-10 and refer to Blackboard biopsychosocial folder

Week 14 Thursday, April 24: Wrap Up—watch the MI video of substance abuse and tie in evaluation??
- Lecture: Evaluation of Assessment; Methods discussion
- Post-test assessment report. Review each other's.
- Required reading: Jordan & Franklin-Chapter 11
- Monday May 5, Assignment due: Biopsychosocial assessment due by December 13

***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.***
XI. Bibliography


