



University of Central Florida
School of Social Work

SOW 3352.03 - Practice II: Interpersonal Skills in Social Work

Instructor: Robin M. Kohn, MSW, LCSW
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Term: Spring 2009
Class Day: Thursday
Class Hours: 10:30-1:20

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Office Hours: Tues. 2-4; Wed. 3-5; Thurs. 2-3

Location: HPA 1 – Room: 272

Course Description: The study and practice of interviewing, group leadership, written communication, and oral presentations, in consensual and conflictual contexts of social work.

Course Learning Objectives: By the end of the term, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate the relationship of interviewing skills with diverse clients across the life course to generalist social work practice and the planned change process.
2. Explain the relationship of interpersonal skills to micro, mezzo, and macro intervention.
3. Use interpersonal skills in a manner that demonstrates ethical and professional attitudes and behaviors of practice, such as self-awareness, critical thinking, assertiveness and self-discipline, in given course assignments.
4. Assess the impact of culture, environment, social stressors, social oppression and personal strengths on interpersonal communication.
5. In given assignments, use knowledge regarding cross-cultural and cross-gender communication when working with minority client systems.
6. Develop interpersonal skills that assist one in working with clients of a different race, gender, age, and/or lifestyle.
7. Show competence in using selected interactional skills and tools necessary for social work practice with human systems, including case and class advocacy, interviewing individuals, families, and groups across the life course, group leadership, recording and public presentation.
8. Describe selected communication techniques associated with presenting court testimony.
9. Demonstrate the ability to use effective public speaking techniques, particularly to advance social and economic justice.
10. Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal skills in advocating for social and economic justice in the advocacy assignment.
11. Develop an understanding of the theoretical perspectives that guide our professional practice.

Evaluation of Learning and Grading:

1. **Mid-Term Examination: 30 Points**

One exam will be given during the term as a mid-term during **week 9**; it will cover Units 1 through 3. The exam may contain multiple choice, short answer and essay questions.

2. **Client Consensual Interview Assignment: 25 Points**

In pairs, students will videotape and assess in writing a 10-15 minute interview with a "client". Students need to supply their own tapes; appointments can be made in the main office in the School of Social Work to use video equipment in the Social Work Skills Lab. The instructor will provide additional guidelines and the evaluation form for this assignment (located in the course pack). The tape and typed, evaluation should be submitted for grading by **week 7**.

3. **Advocacy Assignment: 25 Points**

In the same pairs (plus one for a triad) as the consensual interview, students will identify an issue (students must select different issues) related to a client population that is an example of class or cause advocacy from a list that is in your course pack. Each student is to plan and demonstrate in a

10-15 minute videotaped role-play, the use of advocacy and conflict management skills. (This may also be completed in a class setting versus video. The instructor will let students know in advance). Student advocates (interviewers) needs to clearly show their ability to “plead” for their views on the issue selected. During each role-play, the student respondents (interviewee’s) will present an opposing viewpoint on the issue that is the focus of the interview. After each role-play, the respondents will review the interviewer’s tape and provide feedback using the written evaluation form. The interviewer’s will review the tape and the respondent’s feedback, provide written comments related to the respondent’s feedback using the evaluation form. Guidelines, the evaluation form and specific information are in the course pack. **Due week 13.**

4. Professional Presentation Group Assignment: 20 Points

Each student will be assigned to a small group and with other members will plan and make a 15-20 minute group presentation on a topic assigned by the instructor. The topics assigned will focus on various communication skills and techniques in small groups, most notably those used with case and cause advocacy. Group members are expected to demonstrate the use of effective public speaking techniques and strategies when making their presentations. The overall grade received by the group will be assigned to each group member. Evaluation of the presentation will focus on the effectiveness of the group’s overall effort and effectiveness in making the presentation, including organizational skills, time management, and documentation of resources used (e.g., identification of literature references, AV material, etc.) The instructor will assign a presentation topic to each group no later than the sixth week of class; in-class presentations will occur during **weeks 14 & 15.**

Tentative Due Dates for Assignments:

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|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Consensual Interview Assignment | Week 7 - Thurs. Feb. 19 |
| 2. Mid-Term exam | Week 9 - Thurs. March 5 |
| 3. Advocacy Assignment | Week 13 - Thurs. April 2 |
| 4. Professional Presentations | Weeks 14 & 15 - Thurs. April 9 & 16 |
| 5. Professional Presentations continued, if needed | Week 16 - Thurs. April 23 |

A **final course grade** will be based upon the total number of points accumulated by a student on the above evaluations.

Grade	Overall Points	Grade Point Value	Grade	Overall Points	Grade Point Value
A	94-100	4.00	C	74-76	2.00
A –	90-93	3.75	C –	70-73	1.75
B +	87-89	3.25	D+	67-69	1.25
B	84-86	3.00	D	64-66	1.00
B –	80-83	2.75	D –	60-63	0.75
C +	77-79	2.25	F	59 points and below	0.00

Required Text: Murphy, B. & Dillon, C. (2008). *Interviewing in action in a multicultural world.* (4th ed.) New York: Brooks & Cole Publishing Co. (Students **do not** need the DVD, only the book).

Course Pack – available through the bookstore and online through WebCT (instructor will discuss first day of class). Some of the forms with the points awarded for the assignments may be wrong. The syllabus is correct.

Reserve Readings: Reserve readings, where indicated on the following Course Outline and Schedule, are required unless identified as optional selections. Copies of required and optional reserve readings can be checked out at the reserve desk of UCF’s main campus library or accessed via Electronic Reserve.

POLICIES

In addition to the information below, the student should become familiar with School of Work Student

Handbook and The Golden Rule Handbook for UCF Students. All policies included in these handbooks apply to this class.

Modification of Syllabus

This syllabus may be modified at the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be discussed with students in class and/or via email. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the student's email address is current in eCommunity.

Cell phones, pagers and recorders

- Students are asked to turn off cell phones and beepers during class sessions.
- Permission to audiotape a class meeting(s), must be obtained from the instructor in advance.
- While the use of laptops is convenient for students to take class notes, it is expected that students WILL NOT engage in other laptop activities during class time that may include: internet activities, reading and responding to email, balancing a checkbook, etc. If this should occur, the instructor reserves the right to request that the student not use a laptop during class.

Classroom Decorum

- Side conversations are discouraged because they distract the class.
- The instructor expects students to respect the culture, values, beliefs and rights of their classmates. During class sessions, alternate points of view are encouraged and should be received by others with respect. Students should feel free to express their opinions and to refer to relevant personal situations without fear of disapproval or disrespect; however, the classroom is not the place where students should indulge in personal venting or support seeking.

Attendance and Participation

Student attendance and participation are integral parts of this course. Students are expected to attend each class, arrive on time, and remain for the duration of the class. Students are also expected to assume responsibility for their own learning and to actively involve themselves in class discussions and exercises. Students must be prepared for class (i.e., complete readings and other assignments *prior* to class). Furthermore, make-up exams will be given **ONLY** in extreme circumstances. These circumstances include exceptional health EMERGENCIES (that require that the student bring in medical documentation), and the make up exam will be an essay exam. Out-of-town vacations, trips, mild colds, and other similar circumstances do not qualify as extreme. **Students who miss three (3) or more absences regardless of the reason will have their final grade lowered by one letter grade.** The only exception to this is if the student has a **documented** extraordinary circumstance (student hospitalization; severe illness; death in the family; car accident) preventing the student from coming to class. In that case, the student must present written documentation to the instructor.

Attendance during Finals Week: It is university policy that all classes **MUST** meet for either a final exam or a class session.

Written Assignments

Effective written communication skills are essential to professional social work practice. Thus, students are expected to present their ideas clearly and properly and to adhere to accepted standards of writing.

Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are to be correct in all written materials submitted and will be considered in grading written assignments. All written assignments must be typed in a 12-font print, and all margins must be one inch. The cover page of a paper is not considered to be a page of text. Work not conforming to these standards or demonstrating serious deficiencies in common English usage will be returned ungraded. When required, references should be included in the APA documentation style. Students are encouraged to use the University Writing Center (UWC) for assistance in preparing written assignments. The UWC is located in MOD 608 (near the Communications Building). UWC staff may be reached at (407) 823-2197 or <http://www.uwc.ucf.edu/>.

The assignments will emphasize the integration of interviewing, verbal, conceptualization and writing skills in practice. All assignments will be evaluated and graded on the following criteria.

1. Appropriate use of APA writing style.
2. Adequate number of references cited.
3. Organization and clarity of ideas presented.
4. Ability to integrate theory and practice appropriately.
5. Ability to use analytical skills throughout the assignment.
6. Creative ways of responding to the instructions beyond the requirements.

Late Assignments

All assignments must be turned in to the instructor at the beginning of the class period or delivered to the instructor's mailbox *before class starts on the due date.* *It is the student's responsibility to see to it that her or his assignment is stamped with the date by the social work staff member who then places the assignment in the instructor's mailbox.* No assignments will be accepted by fax or email unless the instructor has given explicit prior approval. *Late assignments will lose a full letter grade for each week that they are late unless the student gained prior approval from the instructor.* No assignment will be accepted after the last day of class. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor regarding late assignments.

Incomplete Grades

In exceptional circumstances, an incomplete grade may be given per School and University policies. Individual arrangements must be made with the instructor for the completion of the course requirements, but in no case will the date set extend beyond the end of the following semester. Students who experience chronic medical or personal problems that prevent them from attending class regularly are encouraged to review policies relating to securing a leave of absence from their university studies.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

Social workers must demonstrate high standards of integrity. Every student is expected to do his or her own work and all of the work produced will be expected to be completed in its entirety by the student who turns it in. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any acts of plagiarism, *including not acknowledging sources of information appropriately and in accordance with APA guidelines,* may result in a failing grade in the course. School and University policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced. Students found to have cheated or plagiarized will receive no credit for the exam or assignment, receive a failing grade for the course and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. (See the UCF Golden Rule for further information.). Students who observe others violate this policy are expected to report this to the instructor.

Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result in an "F" for that assignment, the student may also receive an "F" for the entire course and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. (See the UCF Golden Rule for further

information.) It is assumed for this course that students will adhere to the academic creed of the University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. The instructor also adheres to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask for your grade to be changed without just cause or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Turnitin.com

The instructor reserves the option to use turnitin.com; an online system which can determine if work has been copied from another source. The instructor will provide information on submitting assignments through this system at the beginning of the semester. For a more detailed look at this process, please visit <http://www.turnitin.com>

Disability Access Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

THE UCF CREED

Integrity, scholarship, community, creativity, and excellence are the core values that guide our conduct, performance, and decisions.

Integrity: *I will practice and defend academic and personal honesty.*

Scholarship: *I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of my membership in the UCF community.*

Community: *I will promote an open and supportive campus environment by respecting the rights and contributions of every individual.*

Creativity: *I will use my talents to enrich the human experience.*

Excellence: *I will strive toward the highest standards of performance in any endeavor I undertake.*

Course Outline and Schedule

Weeks 1-2 Unit 1 - Fundamentals of Communication for Social Work Practice

Content:

1. Course overview and requirements.
2. Interpersonal skills for generalist practice and the planned change process.
 - a. Types and purposes of oral interviews in social work.
 - b. Other kinds of social work communications.
3. Cross-cultural communication: problems and issues with specific populations including the older adult and persons with disabilities.
4. Selected communication concepts as applied to social work practice.
5. Overview of Communication
6. Variables affecting communication.
7. Consensual and Conflictual contexts of communication in social work practice.
8. Selected communication techniques: e.g., observing, attending, active listening, reflective responding, questioning, summarizing, etc.
9. Identification of the theoretical perspectives that guide our professional practice

Readings and Video Segments:

Week 1

1. Murphy, B. & Dillon, C. Chapter 1, "Becoming a professional"
Chapter 4, "Attending and listening"
2. Kadushin. Chapter 3, "Listening: A basic communication skill" (reserve)
3. Videotape (DVD): "Interviewing in Action" 1.1-4.4

Week 2

1. Murphy, B. & Dillon, C. Chapter 3, "Getting started"
Murphy, B. & Dillon, C. Chapter 5, "Support and empathy: A sustaining presence" (DVD 5.1-5.4)
2. Kadushin. Chapter 11, "Nonverbal communication" (reserve)

Weeks 3-7 Unit 2 - Consensual Interviews: Interpersonal Skills in Social Work Practice

Content:

1. Consensual contexts for social work interviews with various populations across the life course.
2. Interview and interpersonal relationship components.
3. Interview conditions, settings, recording, problems, & obstacles across the life course.
4. Stages of the interview: introductory, developmental, ending
5. Guiding and structuring interviews
6. Things to look for in interviews
7. Interviewing techniques
8. Behaviors to avoid when interviewing

Readings and Video Segments:

Weeks 3 & 4

1. Murphy, B. & Dillon, C. Chapter 6, "Exploration and elaboration"
Chapter 7, "Assessment, formulation and goal setting"
Chapter 8, "Planning for evaluating change"
2. Kadushin. Chapter 6, "Problem exploration phase" (reserve)
3. Miller, W. & Rollnick, S. Chapter 4, "What is motivational interviewing?" pp. 33-43 (reserve)
4. Videotape (DVD): "Interviewing in Action," 6.1-8.1

Week 5

1. Murphy, B. & Dillon, C. Chapter 9, "Gaining new perspectives"
Chapter 10, "Changing behaviors"
2. Kadushin. Chapter 7, "Developmental phase: Problem-solving interventions" (reserve)
3. Videotape (DVD): "Interviewing in Action," 9.1-12.3

Week 6

1. Murphy, B. & Dillon, C. Chapter 11, "Working with people in crisis"
Chapter 12, "The clinical relationship: Issues and dynamics"
Chapter 13, "The Clinical relationship: Addressing self-disclosure and Other boundary issues"
2. Videotape (DVD): "Interviewing in Action", 13.1-15.1

Week 7

1. Murphy, B. & Dillon, C. Chapter 14, "Endings and transitions"
Chapter 15, "Professional issues: Ongoing education and self-care"

Consensual Interview Assignment Due week 7

Week 8 Unit 3 - Interviewing People from Diverse Backgrounds

Content:

1. The impact of culture, environment and social oppression on communication across the life course.
2. Applying knowledge of diversity to interviews.
3. Explaining the relationship of culture, environment, gender, sexual orientation, age and populations at risk (persons with disabilities, the older adult, children, etc.) in obtaining social and economic justice.
4. Interviewer-interviewee differences: potential communication problems.
 - a. Race
 - b. Ethnicity
 - c. Gender
 - d. Age
 - e. Class
 - f. Lifestyle
 - g. Sexual orientation

Readings:

Week 8

1. Kadushin. Chapter 12, "Cross-Cultural Interviewing," pp. 321-354 (reserve).
2. Murphy & Dillon, Chapter 2, "Responsible practice: Difference and diversity, values and ethics"
3. Murphy, B Dillon, Chapter 12, "The clinical relationship: Issues and dynamics" pp. 328-336
4. Mackelprang & Salsgiver, Chapter 13, "Guidelines for practice with persons with disabilities" pp. 241-258 (reserve)
5. Proctor, E., & Davis, L. in Multicultural issues in social work edited by Ewalt, Freeman, Kirk, & Poole, Chapter 8, "The challenge of racial difference: Skills for clinical practice" pp. 97-117 (reserve)

Week 9 Mid-Term Exam (Units 1-3)

Week 10 SPRING BREAK - No Class

Weeks 11 & 12 - Unit 4 - Professional Presentations in Social Work

Conflictual Interviews: Micro and Macro Applications

Content:

1. The importance and purposes of public presentation: to inform, persuade
2. Use of public speaking in advocacy
3. Critical presentations factors: credibility, agency support, delivery, communicating to advocate
4. Modes of delivery: impromptu, reading, etc.
5. The importance of public presentations in representing an agency or when speaking for a specific purpose.
6. Professional presentations in an advocacy setting (conflictual).

Conflictual Interviews: Micro and Macro Applications

Content:

1. Conflictual contexts of social work interviewing.
 - a. Investigative interviews.
 - b. Advocacy communications (case and cause) in conflictual situations.
 - c. Review from "Generalist Practice" of hostility, resistance, and conflict in client and non-client interviews.
2. Selected skills in conflictual contexts:
 - a. Assertive communication.
 - b. Bargaining.
 - c. Confrontation.
 - d. Conflict management and resolution.
 - e. Others.
3. Interviewing skill applications to micro and macro target systems (e.g. reluctant agency staff, dominating supervisor), particularly the use of critical thinking skills.

4. Demonstrate social and economic justice through cause advocacy assignment.

Readings:

Week 11

1. Bolton. Chapters 9, "Developing three-part assertion messages," in *People Skills*, pp. 138-157 (reserve).

Week 12

1. Bolton. Chapters 10 & 13, "Handling the push-push back phenomenon," "Handling the emotional components of conflict," in *People Skills*, pp. 158-176 and 216-231 (reserve)

Weeks 13 & 14 Unit 6 – Facilitating Groups, Leadership in Groups, and Interviewing Families

Unit Learning Objectives:

Content:

1. Purpose and types of groups in social work.
2. Group structure, purpose, process and atmosphere: impact on communication.
3. Communication patterns and problems in groups.
 - a. Subgroups, scapegoats and isolates.
 - b. Dominating members, complainers, distractors, etc.
 - c. Groupthink and hidden agendas.
4. Directing and participating in groups.
 - a. Leadership styles.
 - b. Communication techniques: attending, seeking and giving information, rewarding, responding to feelings, focusing, summarizing, etc.
5. Dealing with conflicts and communication problems in groups.
 - a. Contracting.
 - b. Gatekeeping.
 - c. Confronting.
 - d. Modeling.
 - e. Mediating.
 - f. Others (e.g., blocking, initiating, summarizing, linking, time-out, expulsion, grouping, sanctions).
6. Interviewing families as a special type of group.
7. Describe the social worker's role in engaging a family, dealing with the initial resistance of its members, and communicating with family members in the initial stages of treatment.
8. Apply communication theory to interviewing different types of family systems including multigenerational families, ethnic minority families and nontraditional families.

Readings:

Weeks 13 & 14

1. Corey, G (2008). *Theory and Practice of Group Counseling*. Belmont, CA; Brooks/Cole-Thomson Learning. Chapter 2, "Group leadership," pp. 15-42 (reserve).
2. Collins, D., Jordan, C. & Coleman, H. (1999). *An introduction to family social work*. Chapter 3- Family Systems, pp. 39-59 & Chapter 7 – The Assessment Phase, pp. 122-142.
3. Jacobs, E., Masson, R. & Harvill, R. (2006). *Group counseling: Strategies and skills*. Chapter 16 "Dealing with Problem Situations", pp. 374-392 & Chapter 17 "Working with Specific Populations", pp. 393-428.

Advocacy Assignment Due week 13

Professional Presentations begin week 14 and continue week 15 (finals week 16, if needed)

Week 15 Unit 7 - Testifying in Court: A Special Case of Conflictual Communication in Social Work Practice

Content:

1. The social worker as expert witness and the legal system.
 - a. Legal terminology.
 - b. Roles: social worker, judge, state attorney, defense, others.
 - c. Rules of evidence.
 - d. Direct and cross- examination.
 - e. Evidentiary objections.
 - f. Jury versus judge trials.
2. Preparatory skills and techniques for the social work witness.
3. Legal "tricks" to discredit testimony.
4. Selected skills of court testifying.
5. Effective verbal and written communication skills for social work practice within the legal system.

Readings:

Week 15

1. Vogelsang, J. (2001). *The witness stand: A guide for clinical social workers in the courtroom*. NY: Haworth Social Work P. Chapter 1, "How the Court System Works," pp. 7-26, Chapter 2, "The Biopsychosocial Assessment As Expertise," pp. 27-39, Chapter 10, "Preparation of Testimony," pp. 89- 92, Chapter 11, "Qualifying As an Expert," pp. 93-103, and Appendix, "Tips for Testifying in Court," pp. 117-118 (reserve).
2. Gothard. "Power in the court: The social worker as an expert witness," *Social Work*, pp. 65-67 (reserve).

Professional Presentations continue

Week 16 Professional Presentations, if needed

Bibliography

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- McKay, M. & Paleg, K. (Eds.) (1992). *Focal group psychotherapy*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications
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