

**Columbia University School of Social Work
Foundations of Social Work Practice (T7100)
Core Syllabus 2004**

Overview

Relationship of T7100 Foundations to Core Social Work Curricular Themes:

- Values & Ethics (EPAS 4.0): Social work values and ethics are integrated throughout the course. Students first are expected to become aware of personal value systems. Students then are introduced to social work values and ethics as related to working with clients, colleagues, supervisors and professionals from other disciplines. The focus for practice at all levels is focused on elements of informed consent, confidentiality, client rights and right to self-determination, professional conduct and misconduct, conflict of interest, and boundaries. The opportunity to develop and practice ethical decision making skills is incorporated throughout the course.
- Multiculturalism & Diversity (EPAS 4.1): T7100 provides an opportunity for students to achieve greater personal and cultural self awareness with the goals of understanding worker impact on clients, facilitating effective work with clients who are different from oneself, and developing the ability to provide effective and culturally relevant social work services to clients from diverse backgrounds. Critical power differentials between client groups and workers and within agencies and institutions are examined. Students are also asked to consider larger systems (e.g., agencies, organizations and institutions) in terms of multicultural competence. Material related to diversity is infused throughout the foundations course sequence.
- Populations-at-Risk and Social and Economic Justice (EPAS 4.2): Themes related to populations-at-risk and social and economic justice are integrated throughout the foundations curriculum. Emphasis is placed on developing strategies for effective practice with populations-at-risk, which requires an understanding of differential access to resources and power on the basis of group membership. Students also are introduced to critical concepts and skills related to the promotion of social and economic justice, including case advocacy, which are further discussed in T7103.
- Evidence-Based Practice (EPAS 4.5): The principles of implementing evidence-based practice (EBP) are reflected throughout the T71000 curriculum. EBP is defined as the intersection of current best evidence, client values and preferences, and clinical expertise. The process of EBP involves posing a well-built question, searching available databases thoroughly and efficiently for relevant articles, critically appraising the evidence found for its quality and applicability, integrating findings with clinical expertise and client values/preferences, and

assessing the results of action taken (Sackett, et al., 1997; 2000; Gibbs, 2003).

Relationship of T7100 Foundations to Field Education (EPAS 4.5, 4.7):

Because the first year field placement is focused on generalist practice, students are placed across all levels of practice. T7100 provides students with their initial orientation to field work in the beginning of the course. Further, the acquisition of skills through the field placement is complemented by the opportunity for skill development in T7100. The primary focus of skill development in this course is on beginning skills including outreach, engagement, contracting, assessment, termination and evaluation. In addition to evaluation of client outcomes, students are expected to develop an ability to critically evaluate professional use of self and self monitoring in social work practice. Specific skills for intervention with individuals, families and small groups are addressed in greater depth in 7102; social advocacy and macro practice skills are further developed in 7103.

Relationship of T7100 Foundations to T7102 and T7103:

Concepts involved in the T7100 course are amplified in subsequent foundation and advanced curricula through courses possessing their own integrity and special emphases. The primary emphasis of T7100 is to provide an overview of essential introductory concepts and skills for social work practice at all levels (individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities). In the second semester of the first year, students deepen their learning in both micro and macro practice. The focus of T7102 is micro practice and is concerned with direct practice with individuals, families and small groups. The companion course, T7103, focuses on macro practice with organizations and communities, and on social work advocacy.

Course Objectives

Students should acquire:

1. Understanding of professional purpose and specific social work values and their ethical implications. Achieving this objective requires an awareness of personal values, as well as of core social work values including regard for individual worth and dignity, self-determination, respect for the unique characteristics of diverse populations, and the importance of ensuring that social institutions are humane and responsive to human needs.
2. Beginning knowledge of the multiple frames of reference that reflect the organization and diversity of the profession. This refers to familiarity with various models, methods, practice roles, and fields of practice, including exposure to new advances in practice knowledge.
3. Initial ability to apply critical thinking skills to practice, including the selection and application of appropriate theories and knowledge to particular situations.
4. Initial skill in application of the knowledge and skills of generalist practice in work with systems of all sizes with special attention to populations-at-risk. This includes skills to enhance the well-being of people and to help ameliorate the environmental conditions that affect people adversely.

5. Appreciation of the role of research for evaluating programs and service delivery in all areas of practice. This includes understanding the rationale for practice monitoring, as well as developing beginning skills in the systemic empirical evaluation of practice, including specifying goals and objectives and how to carry out a simple monitoring plan.
6. Initial skill in the differential use of communication skills with a variety of client populations, colleagues, and members of the community, and recognition of the critical importance of mutuality, collaboration and respect for the client system.

Themes for First Year Foundations (Proseminar & 7100)

PROSEMINAR THEMES** (to be included in 7100 AY 2004-2005)

The Profession

- a. Purpose and Domain
- b. Ethics and Values
- c. History
- d. Professional socialization
 - Socialization to the profession
 - Socialization to CUSSW
- e. Integration with Field Education
 - Fields of practice

COURSE THEMES FOR 7100

People in their Diversity within an Environmental Context

- A. Cultural diversity
- B. Cultural competence
- C. Environments: Physical Environments, Institutional Environments (e.g. schools, workplace, health systems, etc.), Community as Environment, and Agency as Environment
- D. Institutionalized Oppression and Discrimination as Critical Elements of the Environmental Context

Social & Justice & Social Action

- A. Case Advocacy

Sources of Knowledge/Evidence-Based Practice

- A. Social and Behavioral Sciences, Quantitative and Qualitative Research, Practice
- B. Wisdom and the Liberal Arts Perspective
- C. Critical thinking
- D. Self-awareness

Phases of Work: Overview of Helping Process

- A. Emphasis on Beginnings:
 - Engagement & Assessment
 - Problem-Formulation
 - Contracting
- B. Middles

- C. Endings & Termination
- Methods, Models and Perspectives
 - A. Generalist Practice
 - B. Ecosystems
 - C. Strengths Perspective
 - D. Problem-Solving Approaches
 - E. Crisis Intervention
 - F. Case Management
- Overview of Selected Theories
- Micro, Mezzo, and Macro Practice
- Units of Attention
 - A. Individuals
 - B. Families
 - C. Groups
 - D. Organizations
 - E. Communities
- Monitoring and Evaluation
 - A. Measurement of Progress
 - B. Measurement of Outcomes
- Skill Development (Lab Component)
 - A. Interviewing Skills
 - B. Differential use of communication skills across populations and settings

T7100 Skill Development Lab: Core Skills

Pre-Engagement

- Anticipatory empathy

Engagement

- Active listening
- Attending behavior
- Empathy

Assessment

- Questioning/Probing
 - Open-ended questions
 - Closed-ended questions
 - Clarification
 - Reflecting feelings and content
- Using assessment tools
 - Ecomaps, genograms
- Problem identification
- Sharing your view of the problem
- Contracting

Working with voluntary vs. involuntary (socially and legally mandated) clients

Working with clients different from oneself

- Race, ethnicity, disability status, religion, gender

Group skills

- Forming a group

- Group facilitation
- Family assessment skills
- Organizational assessment
- Community assessment
 - Diagnosing a neighborhood
- Specialized assessment skills
 - Suicide assessment
 - Crisis intervention
 - Case management
- Case advocacy
- Termination

Course Outline

Week 1: Sources of Knowledge

Introductions/Orientation to Field

Week 2: History, Philosophy & Purpose of Social Work; Social Justice (To be included in Proseminar 2005)

Lab: Preparing for Clients, Basic Communication Skills, Building Rapport
Anticipatory Empathy; Physical Space Exercise, Stereotypes Exercise

Video: *Legacies of Change, Regarding Ourselves, The Women of Hull House*

Week 3: Ethics & Values (To be included in Proseminar 2005)

Lab: Ethics and Values in Practice; Ethical Decision-Making

Video: *Professional Choices: Ethics at Work*

Week 4: Systems of Support

The Helping Relationship
Help-seeking & Help-receiving
Voluntary & Involuntary Clients

Lab: Empathy
Relationship Building and Engagement

Week 5: Overview of Phases of Work: Beginnings, Middles, & Endings/Termination

Focus on Beginnings: Assessment I: Ecosystems Perspective

Agency & Community Contexts for Practice

Lab: Assessing client systems
Ecomaps

Week 6: Phases of Work II

Assessment II: Problem Definition

Generalist Practice, Strengths Perspective

Lab: Formulating Goals, Objectives & Contracts
Conducting a mental status exam
DSM-based assessment

Video: DSM-IV interview from diagnosis videotape series (204-206)

Week 7: Phases of Work III

Assessment III: Specifying Goals and Objectives

Lab: Working with Clients Different from oneself

Week 8: Methods, Models, & Perspectives for Assessment & Intervention I:

**Cognitive-Behavioral Approaches, Case Management, Crisis Intervention,
Problem-Solving, Task-Centered, and Solution Focused Intervention**

Lab: Crisis-Intervention
Debriefing Skills

Video: *I'd hear laughter (Solution-focused interviewing)*

**Week 9: Methods, Models, & Perspectives for Assessment & Intervention II:
Psychodynamic Approaches**

Lab: Assessment of substance abuse

**Week 10: Methods, Models & Perspectives for Assessment & Intervention III
Empowerment Approaches**

Lab: Violence Assessment

Video: *Suicide Risk Assessment*

Week 11: Units of Attention I: Individuals, Children and Families

Lab: Assessment of Family Systems; Family Sculpture

Video: *From a Secret Place (adolescent youth discuss coming out, sexual identity/orientation)*

Week 12: Units of Attention II: Groups

Lab: Forming your own group

Video: *Group psychotherapy with Yalom*

Week 13: Units of Attention III: Macro Practice in Communities

Lab: Diagnosing a neighborhood -- Community Walk (Dress for 30-40 minute walk in a neighborhood near Columbia)

Week 14: Units of Attention IV: Macro Practice in Organizations

Case Studies to be developed by Social Administration faculty

Week 15

Termination/Endings

Week 16

Evaluating & Monitoring Practice

Course Evaluations

Lab: Evaluating practice outcomes

SAMPLE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

1. Genogram/Reflection Paper (adapted from Cournoyer, 1996)
2. Agency & Community Context Paper
3. Diversity Chapter
4. Practice Integration Paper
5. Reading Log
6. Foundations of Social Work Practice: Journal Assignment Series
7. Posing an Answerable Question
8. Research Summaries using Gibbs' (2003) procedures
9. Practice Paper
10. Interdisciplinary Reflection Paper