

COURSE SYLLABUS
THE SOCIAL WORK INTERVIEW
Fall 2003
Tuesday Evenings

Professor Jon Osborn

This course will focus on the principles of the social work interview; the examination of techniques and theoretical models that increase the effectiveness of social work interventions; and the demonstration and practice of these skills.

METHODS OF THE COURSE

Actual practice of each of the skills described in the course will be accomplished through role play with classmates and the use of video equipment for recording and critique. Discussion and lecture will also be used. You will learn from various sources, but perhaps one of the most important sources will be the input of your classmates.

You will do several helping interviews and serve as role players. Some of your interviews will be recorded on videotape for later playback and discussion.

You will be assigned readings and will have a traditional midterm quiz. Your final, however, will be a video taped interview demonstrating learned skills and will be assessed by you and me.

I am presuming that you are earnest in your desires to become proficient in these social work skills. This is an advanced undergraduate practice course. Your attendance is critical, as is your participation and mature approach to subject matter. The course is largely subjective and there will be no requirement for papers or lengthy exams. When you depart in December, I trust that you will have many skills and concepts that you may develop from my experiences, the text, and, most important, things you have discovered about yourself.

REQUIRED TEXT

Egan, Gerard. The Skilled Helper: A Problem-management Approach to Helping (Sixth edition). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1994.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.
2. Practice within the values and ethics of the social work profession and with an understanding of and respect for the positive value of diversity.
3. Demonstrate professional use of self.
4. Apply the knowledge and skills of generalist social work to practice with systems of all sizes.
5. Apply knowledge of bio-psychosocial variables that affect individual development and behavior, and use theoretical frameworks to understand the interactions among individuals and between individuals and social systems.
6. Apply research findings on practice skills, and under supervision, evaluate their own practice interventions.
7. Use communication skills differentially with a variety of client populations.

LIBERAL ARTS FOUNDATION

In this course, you will be expected to build on the communication skills you have developed in core courses and adapt them to a helping interview context. Your critical thinking skills that you have been developing through liberal arts studies will be of value and further developed as you reflect verbally on your own and your classmates interviewing skills. Since social work practice is integrative, you will be required to apply knowledge and skills from previous courses in the social sciences, natural sciences and humanities in order to understand client system concerns and the nature of professional helping.

HUMAN DIVERSITY

Your sensitivity to issues of human diversity in relationship building will be deepened by class discussion and role plays designed around clients of diverse backgrounds. You will consistently be receiving feedback on how your relationship building skills work to bridge studies of foreign languages, the arts, sociology, political science, economics, psychology, and history offer insights into diverse populations, their cultural beginnings, how needs of diverse groups are or are not met, and how diverse individuals and groups may behave and function.

SOCIAL WORK VALUES AND ETHICS

It is specifically in the practice of social work where your professional and personal values and ethics and some Christian perspectives are integrated and converge or battle one another and cause personal strife. You will have opportunity to understand social work values; clarify your personal values; and to assess them with other people through class discussion.

COURSE OUTLINE

The class schedule is as follows. Depending upon our progress and speed, we may move out of pace with the calendar, but the essence should remain the same.

August 26: Introductory session. We will spend some time introducing ourselves and telling a bit about our backgrounds and our perspectives on helping relationships. There will be some lecture material addressing what a helping relationship is in general. We will be doing some reflective writing on this topic.

Assignment for next session: Chapters 2,3, and 5 in The Skilled Helper, complete social work ethics questionnaire and write a 1-2 page autobiography.

September 2: We will be looking at **Attending Skills**. For the first half an hour we will review the social work ethics questionnaire. We will then have a lecture and discussion on this material and then will have an opportunity to practice these skills with some enjoyable activities and will use the video camera to examine how well we do at attending.

Assignment for next session: Chapter 6 in The Skilled Helper.

September 9: We will be focusing on **Primary Accurate Empathy**. We will have some lecture and discussion material and then you will have an opportunity to try some empathy skill building with classmates. We will also see a segment of a video entitled "Gloria" where Carl Rogers talks about the use of empathy.

Assignment for next session: Chapter 8 in The Skilled Helper and some accounting of observations you have done regarding empathy on campus.

September 16: We will be focusing on **Helping the Client Tell Their Story**. I will be asking you to do some writing on how you think you might go about guiding and directing the interview as well as talking about reluctant clients and how to go about assessing your clients situation and we will look at the reluctant client. We will use some skill building tools in class to sharpen our understanding of this area.

Assignment for next session: Chapter 13 in The Skilled Helper as well as an additional homework exercise devoted to Primary Accurate Empathy.

September 23: We will be looking at how to help the client to **focus** on areas that are most amenable to the helping effort. We will examine prompting skills such as asking opened ended questions and will talk about the uses of summaries. We will also be talking about screening clients. We will have some worksheets for you to clarify your understanding of these areas.

Assignment for next session: Chapter 10 and 12 in The Skilled Helper

September 30: We will be looking at the skills of **Challenging** the client. We will have some lecture and discussion from the text and then I will have several demonstrations to do for you before you break up into pairs and try some role playing. *Note- First set of notebooks due at this time*

Assignment for next session: Study for Midterm

October 7: Midterm exam with possibility of guest speaker for second portion of this class session. *Note- Second set of notebooks due at this time*

Assignment for next session: Chapter 11 in The Skilled Helper section on Advanced Accurate Empathy.

October 14: Fall Break

October 21: We will spend the session looking at **Advanced Accurate Empathy**, a challenging skill. We will have several demonstrations by me and then some role plays to try using the video tape recorder. *Note- third set of notebooks due at this time*

Assignment for next session: Readings on closed reserve in library on Advanced Accurate Empathy and worker self disclosure.

October 28: We will review **Advanced Accurate Empathy** skills with some additional examples and will discuss how much a worker may wish to **disclose about themselves** to their client. Also we will be talking about how to **share information** with clients.

Assignment for next session: No assignment.

November 4: We will devote this session to learning how to take a complete **social history** of a client. Much of the material will be presented by me. A demonstration of a complete social history will be handed out.

Assignment for next session: I will be asking you to take a complete social history of a parent or other significant person in your life. Also, read the section on Chapter 11 in The Skilled Helper on Immediacy.

November 11: We will be focusing on the skill of **Immediacy**, another challenging skill. Several demonstrations of uses of immediacy will be given and some opportunities for you to practice these in class.

Assignment for next session: I will be asking you to prepare and immediacy statement for an important person in your life. Also read Chapter 9 in The Skilled Helper.

November 18: We will be talking about dealing with **resistive clients** and how to motivate clients. We will be also be considering why clients sometimes **lie** and misrepresent themselves and what you might do about this. Finally we will be talking about how important **hope** is for the client to be able to change.

Assignment for Next Session: Read Chapters 13 and 15 in The Skilled Helper.

November 25: During this session we will be talking about helping clients to **brainstorm** and helping them to set reasonable **goals** for change. A demonstration project will be shared to help the class visualize this.

Assignment for Next Session: Next session will be the beginning of oral exams.

December 2: Individual oral exams demonstrating some of the sixteen skill areas taught this semester. Each exam will last about 45 minutes.

December 9 Individual oral exams demonstrating some of the sixteen skill areas taught this semester. Each exam will last about 45 minutes.

Grading for this class is as follows:

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| 1. Class participation | 20% |
| 2. Completion of tasks in workbook exercises and role plays. | 20% |
| 3. Demonstration of skills (final) | 30% |
| 4. Attendance
(0 absences=A, 1 absences=B, 2 absences=C
3 absences=D, more than 3 absences result in
no credit for the attendance section of your
grade) | 15% |
| 5. Midterm | 15% |