



COURSE TITLE/SECTION:

SOCW 7325/30477, Assessment in Social Work Practice

TIME: Wednesdays, 1pm - 4:00pm

ROOM: 107A Social Work Building

FACULTY:

Lucinda Nevarez, Ph.D., LMSW

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Office: GCSW #426

OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesdays, 10am – 2pm

By Appointment

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 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 assessments;
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. Evidence based methods;
2. Individual, family, community and organizational assessment
3. Assessment tools to address various issues and age levels, inclusive of multicultural content and special groups.

IV. Course Structure

This Spring 2013 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, individual and group presentations, group activities, case studies, videos, 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* (3rd ed). Chicago: Lyceum Books, Inc. [ISBN: 978-1-933478-80-7]

Recommended:

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

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 reading—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 as PDFs, the internet, or posted on the class blackboard site.

B. Written Assignment:

- 1. Analysis of an Assessment Tool/ Instrument (20%).** Through research, students will locate and analyze and assessment tool/instrument that could be used in social work practice. A framework for the analysis will be provided by the professor and will included elements related to purpose, feasibility, evidence-base (reliability and/or validity), population, relevance to social work practice, etc.
- 2. Family Assessment Group Presentation (20%).** Students will be assigned to a group. They will view a film, develop a family assessment based on the families/characters in the film, and present their assessment to the class.
- 3. Rapid Biopsychosocial Assessment (20%).** Students will conduct a multidimensional assessment based on a clinical case study. The assessment will focus the on biological, social and psychological dimensions of the case.
- 4. Organizational Assessment Case Study (20%).** Based on their social work internships, students will complete an assessment of the agency in which they are interns.
- 5. Class Attendance and Participation (20%):** Attendance and participation are expected for the full length of each class sessions. Full

participation includes preparation for class, contribution to class discussions (large and small group), and respectfully providing thoughtful feedback to classmates. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. **Two 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. Evaluation and Grading

A. Grading Distribution

1.	Analysis of Assessment Tool/Instrument	20%
2.	Family Assessment Group Project	20%
3.	Rapid Biopsychosocial Assessment	20%
4.	Organizational Assessment Case Study	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 grading scale presented below. The following standard grading scale has been adopted for all courses taught in the college. Please use this scale to assign final course letter grades.

A = 96-100% of the points	C+ = 76-79.9%
A- = 92-95.9%	C = 72-75.9%
B+= 88-91.9%	C- = 68-71.9%
B = 84-87.9%	D = 64-67.9%
B- = 80-83.9%	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 10 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. Nevarez. My office is located on the fourth floor of the Social Work Building, office # 426. My telephone number is (713) 743-5753, and my office hours are on Tuesdays or by appointment. To schedule an appointment, please e-mail me at lnvarez@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: Students are asked to turn off (or activate the vibrator mode on) cellular phones 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE, ASSIGNED READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

- Week 1** **Wednesday, January 16 – Course Introduction**
- Course overview & logistics: Introductions, syllabus, assignments, Blackboard site
 - INTRODUCTION TO ASSESSMENT IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE
 - Readings: Course Syllabus & Review Blackboard Site

A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSMENT IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

- Week 2** **Wednesday, January 23**
ASSESSMENT AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE (continued)
ASSESSMENT AND THE PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS
- Readings: Jordan & Franklin – Chapters 1, 2 and 4

- Week 3** **Wednesday, January 30**
Meet at Anderson Library Room 10-F
PHASES OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS ASSESSMENT:
PROBLEM-BASED AND STRENGTHS-BASED PERSPECTIVES
- Readings: Ragg—Chapter 4 **and** Saleeby – Chapters 5 & 6

ASSESSMENT TOOLS/INSTRUMENTS

- Week 4** **Wednesday, February 6**
ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION
INTRODUCTION TO ASSESSMENT TOOLS / INSTRUMENTS
ANALYSIS / EVALUATION OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS / INSTRUMENTS
- Readings: Jordan & Franklin – Chapters 3, 5 & 11

ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES COMMON TO SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

- Week 5** **Wednesday, February 13-** **ASSESSMENT TOOL ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT DUE**
ASSESSMENT OF FAMILIES
- Readings: Jordan & Franklin – Chapters 8 & 9 **and** Hepworth et al. Chapter 10
- Week 6** **Wednesday, February 20—**
- *Pre-class assignment: View assigned video prior to class.* • In class assignment: Groups will prepare family assessments & presentations
- Week 7** **Wednesday, February 27 – FAMILY ASSESSMENT GROUP PRESENTATIONS DUE**
- Week 8** **Wednesday, March 6**
MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT: CHILDREN AND ADULTS,
(Guest Speaker)
- Readings: Jordan & Franklin – Chapters 6 & 7 **and** Journal Article: Gillingham & Humphreys (2010)

SPRING BREAK

MARCH 11-15

NO CLASS Wednesday, March 13th

- Week 9** **Wednesday, March 20**
MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT (continued)
SUBSTANCE USE / ABUSE ASSESSMENT
- Readings / Journal Article: Schechter & Lineberry (2011) **and** Gans et al. (2010)
- Week 10** **Wednesday, March 27**
SUBSTANCE USE / ABUSE ASSESSMENT (continued)

VIEW BIOPSYCHOSOCIALCASE STUDY

- Readings / Journal Articles: Berzoff (2011) **and** Samford et al. (2000)

- Week 11** **Wednesday, April 3**
ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITIES & ORGANIZATIONS
• Readings: Netting, Kettner & McMurtry—Chapter 5
- Week 12** **Wednesday, April 10 – RAPID BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSMENT DUE**
ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITIES & ORGANIZATIONS (continued)
• Readings: Netting, Kettner & McMurtry—Chapter 7
- Week 13** **Wednesday, April 17**
ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITIES & ORGANIZATIONS (continued)
• Guest Speaker re: community or organizational assessment

COURSE WRAP UP

- Week 14** **Wednesday, April 24**
Course wrap-up and evaluation

ORGANIZATIONAL CASE STUDY DUE MONDAY, APRIL 29, 2012

XI. Bibliography

- Berzoff, J. (2011). Why we need a biopsychosocial perspective with vulnerable, oppressed and at- Risk clients. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 81, 132-166. doi: 10.1080/00377317.2011.590768
- 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 practices of highly regarded adolescent substance

abuse treatment programs. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse*, 19(1), 33-47. doi: 10.1080/10678280903400578

- Gillingham, P. & Humphreys, C. (2010). Child protection practitioners and decision-making tools: Observations and reflections from the front line. *British Journal of Social Work*, 20, 2598-2616. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcp155
- 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.
- Murphy, B. C. & Dillon, C. (2003). *Interviewing in action: Relationship, process, and change*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Netting, E., Kettner, P., & McMurtry, S. (2007). *Social work macro practice* (4th Ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.
- Ragg, D. M. (2011). *Developing practice competencies: A foundation for generalist practice*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- 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. *Alcohol Treatment Quarterly*, 18(4), 47-62. doi: 10.1300/J020v18n04_04

Schechter, M. & Lineberry, T.W. (2011). Self-harming behavior and suicidality: Suicide risk assessment. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 41(2), 227-234.

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