



**COURSE TITLE:** SOCW 7397, Assessment in Social Work Practice

**TIME/ SECTION/ ROOM:** Wednesdays, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon (21184); SW 231  
Wednesdays, 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm (21186); SW 229

**FACULTY:**  
Sheara A. Williams, Ph.D., ACSW

**INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT:**  
Jackie Duron, LMSW

**OFFICE HOURS:** GCSW, 414  
Tues 9:00a-12p & Weds 12p-1:00p

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Wednesdays 1 – 3 pm

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## 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:

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, group, 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 2011 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, handouts, and online activities via Blackboard.

### **V. TEXTBOOKS**

There is no assigned text for the course. All readings are posted on the class Blackboard site and/or linked to the University of Houston Library.

### **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. **Individual Assessment (20%).** Students will be paired with another student for the individual assessment assignment. Students will complete an in-class interview and assessment focused on the topic of self-care.
2. **Family Assessment (20%).** Students will view a film and will develop a family assessment based on the characters in the film.
3. **Assessment Tool / Instrument Assignment (20%).** Students will locate an assessment tool that could be used with an individual, family, group, community, or organization and that is relevant to their field practicum. Students will complete a one page summary of the instrument that discusses how the tool can be used effectively with client systems and also includes information on its psychometrics and scoring. Additionally, students must provide a peer reviewed journal article that uses the tool in its design and information on its psychometrics. Students will prepare a formal presentation of their findings for small group discussions.
4. **Group Assessment (20%):** Students will be assigned to a small task/support group focused on self-care at the beginning of the course and they will remain members of that group for 5 weeks, meeting independently for 45 minutes. The purpose of this assignment is to provide students with the opportunity to reflect and assess their experiences as an individual, as a group member, and as a group facilitator.

**C. Class Attendance and Participation (20%)**

Attendance and contribution are expected for the full length of each class session. 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. **A student who is absent from class for more than two times will have their end of term grade lowered (i.e.: A to B, B to C, etc). Excused absences MUST be negotiated with the professor.**

## **VII. EVALUATING AND GRADING**

**A. Grading Distribution:**

1.	Individual Assessment	20%
2.	Family Assessment	20%
3.	Assessment Tool/Instrument	20%
4.	Group Assessment Portfolio	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. Williams with support provided by Ms. Jackie Duron, Instructional Assistant. Ms. Duron is available to consult with you regarding the specifics of course assignments, using the APA manual, answer questions about the readings, and how to utilize or submit assignments using Blackboard.

Dr. Williams' office is located on the fourth floor of the Social Work Building, office # 414. Her office telephone number is (713) 743-8120. Office hours are on Tuesdays and Thursdays by appointment. To arrange an appointment, email Dr. Williams, [swilliams3@uh.edu](mailto:swilliams3@uh.edu), or call.

Ms. Duron's office is on the fourth floor of the Social Work Building, office #420. Her office hours are on Wednesdays from 1-3 pm. Her email address is

**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.

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**COURSE SCHEDULE, ASSIGNED READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS**

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- Week 1      Wednesday, January 19 – Course Introduction**
- Course overview & logistics: Introductions, syllabus, assignments, Blackboard site
  - Overview of Assessment and Social Work Practice
  - Readings:  
    Course Syllabus & Review Blackboard Site

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**ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUALS**

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- Week 2      Wednesday, January 26**
- Overview of Assessment and Social Work Practice (continued)  
Practice with Individuals, Strengths Perspective
- Readings:  
    Hepworth et al. – Chapters 8 & 9  
    Saleebey – Chapters 5, 6

**Week 3****Wednesday, February 2**

Practice with Individuals, Strengths Perspective (continued)  
Individual interviews for Individual Assessment assignment

- Readings:  
Hepworth et al. – Chapters 8 & 9  
Saleeby – Chapters 5, 6

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**ASSESSMENT TOOLS and THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN ASSESSMENT**

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**Week 4****Wednesday, February 9 -- Individual Assessment Due**

Introduction to Assessment Tools  
Impact of Culture on Assessment Process

- Readings:  
Jordan & Franklin – Chapter 3, 4, 5 and 10

**Week 5****Wednesday, February 16**

Library instruction on how to find assessment tools.

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**ASSESSMENT OF FAMILIES**

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**Week 6****Wednesday, February 23**

Family systems and assessment

- Readings:  
Hepworth et al – Chapter 10  
Jordan & Franklin – Chapters 8 & 9

**Week 7  
Due****Wednesday, March 2 – Assessment Tool Written Assignment**

View Movie for Family Assessment assignment

**Week 8****Wednesday, March 9**

Family systems and assessment (wrap up)

- Readings:  
Standardized Family Assessment Tools (located in “Readings”  
folder)  
Corcoran (2002) – Family Assessment (located in “Readings”  
folder)

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**ASSESSMENT OF GROUPS**

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**Week 9****No class, Spring Break****Week 10****Wednesday, March 23 -- Family Assessment Paper Due**

## Practice and assessment with Groups

- Readings:

Hepworth et al. – Chapter 11

Toseland & Rivas – Chapters 4 (104-127), 7, and 8



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## APPLICATION OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS

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**Week 11**      **Wednesday, March 30**  
In class presentations of assessment tools  
**1<sup>st</sup> In-class groups**

**Week 12**      **Wednesday, April 6**  
In class presentations of assessment tools  
**2<sup>nd</sup> In-class groups**

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## ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

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**Week 13**      **Wednesday, April 13**  
Remaining in class presentations of assessment tools  
Assessment with Communities and Organizations  
Reading:  
    Netting, Kettner & McMurty – Chapters 5 and 7  
    Sheafor & Horejsi – Chapter 10 (241-245, located in “Other  
Required  
    Readings” folder)  
**3<sup>rd</sup> In-class groups**

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## CASE STUDIES / COURSE WRAP UP

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**Week 14**      **Wednesday, April 20**  
Community and Organizational Assessment Case Studies  
Readings provided on the Black Board Site  
**4<sup>th</sup> In-class groups**

**Week 15**      **Wednesday, April 27**  
**5<sup>th</sup> In-class groups (wrap up)**  
Wrap-up & overview of assessment at all levels, course evaluation  
**Group Assessment Portfolio Due Wednesday, May 4, 2011**

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**\*\*\*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.\*\*\***

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## XI. Bibliography

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.

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.

Jordan, C. & Franklin, C. (2003). *Clinical assessment for social workers: Qualitative and qualitative methods* (2nd ed.). Chicago: Lyceum.

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.

Saleeby, D. (2006). *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.

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