MASTER SYLLABUS
SW 9220 SOCIAL WORK THEORY II: THEORIES FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH:
GROUPS AND FAMILIES
3 CREDITS

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Prereq: consent of advisor; doctoral student. Theories, models and perspectives guiding social
work practice with families.

PARTIAL WEB-COURSE; Face to Face classes 2014
January 25 9:30-12:30 1:00-3:00
February 15 9:30-12:30 1:00-3:00
March 8 9:30-12:30 1:00-3:00
April 19 9:30-12:30 1:00-3:00

Instructor, Dr. Arlene Weisz Email: aa4495@wayne.edu
Office:335 Thompson Home Phone:313-577-4420
Office hours by appointment

COURSE COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE BEHAVIORS FOR THIS COURSE

- Be able to analyze various theoretical approaches and models of practice by examining
each in regard to: (1) historical origin; (2) assumptions about human actors in group or
family settings, environments, and their interactions; (3) assumptions about human
nature), (4) how knowledge is generated; (5) methodological issues and evidence of
empirical support; (6) consistency with social work values and ethics, especially how they
build upon social work’s commitment to social justice and their applicability to diverse
populations; and (7) requisite knowledge and skills of the practitioners.
- Show ability to develop, expand, and defend stated criteria for evaluation of practice
theories and models related to families and groups.
- Demonstrate the use of criteria to critically examine and evaluate practice theories and
models related to families and groups.
- Be able to analyze similarities and differences between social work practice theories
related to families and groups.

TEXTS AND REQUIRED MATERIAL
The textbooks for this course are:
SW 9220  Winter 2014


**Readings**: Students are required to complete additional readings. The readings will be distributed.

**INTRODUCTION**:  
The purpose of this course is to develop students’ abilities to demonstrate knowledge of various theories, models and perspectives that currently guide social work practice and research with families and groups. It includes a study of the historical context and philosophical underpinnings of practice theories with families and groups as well as knowledge from theories about how families and groups function. Students will analyze criteria from which theories about families and groups can be evaluated and may develop their own practice theory for understanding or working with families or groups.

Students will critically analyze theories related to families and groups with regard to: (1) historical origin; (2) assumptions about human actors, environments, and their interactions; (3) assumptions about human nature (ontology), (4) how knowledge is generated (epistemology); (5) methodological issues and evidence of empirical support; (6) consistency with social work values and ethics; especially how they build upon social work’s commitment to social justice and their applicability to diverse populations; and (7) requisite knowledge and skills of the practitioners.

**PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**:  
Students are expected to demonstrate their progress in basic comprehension, integration, and analyses of the course material through class assignments, i.e., papers, presentations, and discussions.

**GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS**  
Final grades will be determined in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online Discussion Participation</strong>: 26 points each week for 4 weeks (maximum of 100 points can be applied; the extra 4 points are to provide a small cushion); a grading rubric will be provided each week explaining how to earn points demonstrating your thoughtfulness about the theories, the assigned readings and their implications</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentations and Discussion Leadership</strong>: (1st, 2nd &amp; 3rd face to face classes)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wiki entries on theories</strong>: (weeks of February 1st and February 22nd)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparison of Group and Family Theories</strong>: Paper and Presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each student will present an analytical summary of one key assigned reading for each of these class meetings and then lead discussion of the reading in class. Select your readings for presentation by signing-up on the sign-up Wiki on the class Blackboard site (under the Content button on the left side of the screen). A handout, including a brief outline of your analysis and discussion questions, should be furnished for each class member and the instructor via email in advance of the class. The handout maybe a copy of your slides [15% of grade]

For each PPT your goal should be a professional, proofread, non-plagiarized presentation. Strive to synthesize and analyze and limit the number of slides to 20 or less. See the handouts posted under Course Content on Blackboard, including Web addresses of some good PPTs advising you how to do an excellent, readable, engaging PPT.

2. Wiki postings on theory analysis: due February 1st and February 22nd

Each student will be required to write a Wiki entry focused on the topic discussed in one chapter (or group of chapters) assigned for each of these two weeks. Select the readings for your Wiki entry by signing-up on the sign-up Wiki on the class Blackboard site. The entry should present a deep analysis of an approach or theory, starting with analysis of the assigned reading, rather than a summary.
Select several points from this outline
- Describe the theory’s historical origins and evolutionary development.
- Key concepts of the theory; central propositions.
- Assumptions about the nature and origin of human problems, particularly how group and/or family functioning affects the development of these problems
- Concepts about how groups and/or families can contribute to growth and change
  - [this is important practice for the qualifying exams and for translating theory into research and research into theory building]
- Empirical base
  - research demonstrating the applicability of concepts to understanding groups and families
- Ethical issues and consistency with social work values and ethics
- Application to diverse populations
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the theory.
  - Use some of the most interesting criteria for theory evaluation from readings from the early weeks of the class to help you think about strengths and weaknesses.

Your posting should not exceed 4 pages double-spaced.
It should not contain any direct quotes, because you should be showing your ability to integrate and explain what you have read.
If absolutely necessary, one, short direct quote is acceptable.
SW 9220  Winter 2014

- Prepare it in Word, run the spelling and grammar check, proofread very carefully and then post it on the Wiki site designated for that week
- Run your wiki through SafeAssign as a draft before posting it to make sure you did not accidentally plagiarize.
- End your wiki with two thoughtful discussion questions.
- Part of your grade includes your moderation of the discussion of your Wiki. You should respond thoughtfully to other students’ postings, and add probing questions if the discussion is not flourishing.
- These Wiki postings will be graded to give you feedback on the quality of your analysis and writing. I will send you private emails with the grades and feedback about your writing, but my comments or discussion on the content of your analysis will be public in order to benefit other students
- *I am willing to review drafts provided I receive them at least one week ahead of the due date. After you email a draft, confirm that I received it.*
- [25% of grade]

3. **Theory Comparison Papers and presentations due by the final face to face class, April 19th**

Prepare a 15-30 page paper *comparing a family theory to a group theory* in terms of their relevance and value for understanding and intervening with a particular social/psychological problem or population.

*Use this “Outline for a social work analysis of theories” to present an analysis of how each of the theories you select is valuable and relevant to your selected population or problem.*

- Describe the theory’s historical origins and evolutionary development.
- Key concepts of the theory; central propositions.
- Assumptions about the nature and origin of human problems, particularly how group and/or family functioning affects the development of these problems
- Concepts about how groups and/or families can contribute to growth and change
- Major contributions to social work; how can it inform social work knowledge?
- Empirical base:
  - Research demonstrating the applicability of concepts to understanding groups and families
  - Research on the interventions that derive from the theory
- Ethical issues and consistency with social work values and ethics
- Application to diverse populations
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the theory.

Use subtitles to help you organize and help the reader understand how you organized the paper.
- Discuss how the theory helps you understand human functioning related to the social/psychological problem or population you selected, using the outline above to analyze and compare these theories
From the outline, examine how each theory would account for problems (or strengths) of that population; in other words, how does the theory explain human interactions or dynamics?

- What are the major concepts of the theory, and how do they apply?
- What is the epistemological basis for the theory?
- Differentiate how each theory would recommend intervening to assist that population (this should not be about technique but rather about understandings of what causes problems for people and how they can be helped to change).
- If possible, use published research to discuss how one might conduct research to determine the meaningfulness of applying each theory to this population or problem. If there is no published research using these theories, envision how you would be the first to conduct such research focusing on the population or problem you selected. What methods would need to be used based on these theories?
- Discuss the implications for social work practice and research.
- What are the ethical implications?
- How applicable is the theory to understanding and intervening with diverse populations?
- Present the basis for your evaluation of the two theories and how you decided which one seems the most relevant and helpful for this problem or population.
  - Propose how you would modify the best of the two theories to begin building your own theory.
  - Assemble your thoughts on how best to demonstrate (conduct research on) the usefulness of this best theory for the population.

Email me at least a month before the due date with the topic (population or problem of interest) and the 2 theories you are using, so that I can provide guidance.

You must run your draft through SafeAssign as a draft and revise any areas that appear to be plagiarized or improperly cited. You must use APA style citations. You are expected to refer to assigned readings and to show that you read deeply beyond the assigned readings for this paper.

I am willing to review a draft provides that I receive it at least 10 days ahead of the due date. After you email, it confirm that I received it.

Your paper should not include self-plagiarism (sections that are copied from other material that you wrote for this class or any other class).

Email the paper to me by the due date. Confirm that I received it.

For the last class meeting, prepare a PowerPoint of 20 slides or less and a 1-3 page handout (probably the slides of your PPT) summarizing your analysis, your comparison of the group theory and family theory and their value for understanding and intervening with the population or problem. Include your thoughts about further theory development. Your presentation should focus on the implications of your analysis for social work research and practice. [30% of grade]
**Grading Policy:**
Doctoral students must pass all their courses (social work, cognate, statistics, and research methods) with a B or better in order to progress in good standing within the doctoral program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading system</th>
<th>All written work will be graded with the following grading scale.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95.0-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90.0-94.9</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.0-89.9</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.0-86.9</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.0-82.9</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.0-79.9</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.0-76.9</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.0-72.9</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE**

Students are introduced to a general discussion of social work theories, especially those related to families and groups, and then progress to discussion of theories from social psychology that explain the functioning of groups and families. The course then moves to a discussion of theories for understanding and intervening with groups and families. Students will be asked to consider how theories can inform basic research and practice evaluation. The basic method of instruction will be lecture/discussion, both face-to-face and online, including several student presentations. Films or video/audio recordings will also be used.

**ROLE OF THE STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR**

See University Statement of Obligation of Students and Faculty Members of the teaching - learning process
http://www.bulletins.wayne.edu/fib/fib2d.html

Students are expected to attend all class sessions, both online and face to face. More than one online absence (no written online contributions) will result in students being asked to withdraw from the class. For the Saturday classes, you must attend (unless seriously ill or you have an emergency) or you should withdraw from the class. If you cannot attend a Saturday class, notify me well in advance and we will see if the rest of the class and I can change the schedule (only if everyone can agree on a date).

Students are expected to arrive for class on time and stay until the end of the class session. Students are expected to be prepared at class time for discussions pertaining to assigned readings. In order to be courteous to classmates, we ask that cell phones use be restricted to vibrations—no rings. Please limit beeper use to emergencies only.
SW 9220  Winter 2014

For further details, see the University Statement of Obligations of Students and Faculty Members of the teaching-learning process.

Please run all paper drafts and Wiki entries through Safe assign on our class BB site. Run it as a draft so your final paper does not appear to be plagiarizing your draft.

WSU STUDENT RESOURCES

Students with disabilities
http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/rights.php.

Academic integrity and student code of conduct
http://www.doso.wayne.edu/student-conduct/Academic_Integrity.html
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at Wayne State:
http://www.caps.wayne.edu/

COURSE LEARNING UNITS

Online Session 1  week of January 11  Introduction of ourselves and to theories

• Review syllabus and begin discussion of social work perspectives on theories for groups and families. Why is theory important for a research-based doctoral student? Relevance and development of theories for social work practice

• Historical and philosophical foundations of social work practice theory

READINGS


**Face to Face Session 1 January 26**

**Lecture, Discussion and student presentations**

- Criteria for evaluating theories of change in families and groups
- Social-psychological theories of how groups and families function
- [Each student will sign up to present one reading, using a PPT of 20 slides or less and containing at least 2 excellent discussion questions; instructor will lecture and lead discussion on the remainder of the readings]

**READINGS**


   - Ch. 1 Defining family communication and family functioning (pp.2-26).
   - Ch. 2. Theoretical perspectives on family communication (pp.27-50).


**Online Session 2 week of February 1**

**Overview of Group and Family Intervention Theories**

Each student will produce a Wiki entry by February 1st. [See assignment descriptions] and all students will provide comments and responses to discussion questions based on each other's Wikis.
READINGS:


   Ch. 1. [What Is a Theory? Pp. 2-15 recommended, not required]; pp. 16-32 required
   Ch.9. The Bioecological Framework (pp.241-271)


   Ch. 6. The Systems Framework (pp.151-177)


   Ch. 4. The Symbolic Interaction Framework, (pp. 93-120)
Face to Face  Session 2  February 16  Psychoanalytic/existential and other theories of groups and families therapy

READINGS:

   Ch. 1 the therapeutic factors (pp.1-18).

   Ch. 2 Interpersonal learning, (pp.19-52).

   Ch. 5. The Family Life Course Development Framework (121-150)

   Ch. 8. The Feminist Framework and Poststructuralism (pp. 205-240)

   http://www.jstor.org/stable/584992  Or on Blackboard  


Online Session 3  week of February 22  
Each student will produce a Wiki entry by February 22nd on one topic for this week.  [See assignment descriptions] and all students will provide comments on each other’s Wikis.

Cognitive-Behavioral and related theories and approaches to groups and families
READINGS:


   Ch. 2. The Functionalist Framework, pp. 33-62

   Ch. 3. The Social Exchange and Rational Choice Framework (pp. 65-92)

**Face to Face Session 3 March 9**  Student presentations and discussions of selected group & family theories

Each student will sign up to present one reading, using a PPT of 20 slides or less and containing at least 2 excellent discussion questions; you may also include a brief video clip about the method as long as you can focus discussion on the theory behind it. The instructor will lecture and lead discussion on any unclaimed readings.

**Additional foundational and respected approaches**

**Mutual Aid groups**

READINGS:

   Ch. 12 Transactional Analysis, 315-337.

   Ch. 15 Reality Therapy in Groups, 399-423.
   Ch. 7. The Conflict Framework, (pp.179-204)

   Kurtz, L. F. (2004). Support and Self-Help Groups, In C. D. Garvin, L. M. Gutiérrez, & M. J. Galinsky, (Eds.). *Handbook of social work with groups (pp.139-159).* NY: Guilford Press. [skim parts that focus solely on technique, although technique sometimes clarifies the theory]


**Week of March 10  Spring Break: No class**

**Online Session 4 week of March 24th**
Integration and Comparisons
Research on the theories
Conducting research to support theories in group and family intervention

**READINGS**
   Ch. 17 Comparison, Contrasts, and Integration, 447-468


   Ch. 10 the state of family theory and its future. (pp.273-288).

Face to Face  Session 4  week of April 21 Discussion and student presentations comparing group and family theories

IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Theory Development and Evaluation


**Family Theory and Social Work Practice**


**Group Theory and Social Work Practice**


### Social Work Practice and Theories

#### General Topics


