Course Description and Overview
Clinical Practice I expands on the generic direct practice concepts and skills taught in Practice Lab I (SSW717) specific to agency-based practice with individuals and families in the urban environment. Course materials emphasize how the nature (function and structure) of the agency gives focus and direction to the process in which clinical social workers and clients mutually engage in meeting identified needs. Issues of access to resources and social and economic justice as they impact on clients’ needs are addressed. Clinical assessment and diagnostic interventions are taught from a biopsychosocial perspective and coherent theoretical framework that is predicated on the conceptual underpinnings of ego psychology and the life model of social work practice. The ecological perspective, family-centered practice and the NASW code of professional values and ethics will also guide the teaching and learning of clinical practice skills. Issues of diversity and intervening with populations at risk in the urban environment are integrated into diagnostic assessment, treatment planning and client-practitioner relationship units of the course. Therapeutic challenges and opportunities embedded in the on-going and ending phases of the helping process are examined in the context of mutuality and intersubjectivity within the client-practitioner therapeutic dyad.

Course Competency Outcomes:
At the completion of the course, students will be able to
• Identify and apply professional social work values and norms in engaging clients of diverse backgrounds and developing appropriate roles and boundaries in the worker-client relationship (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.10a).
• Identify and apply knowledge about the interplay of psychological development and adjustment, family dynamics, race, culture, class, spiritual orientation, gender,
sexual orientation and other significant variables impacting strengths and vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms of individuals and families in oral and written assessment of clients’ presenting problems and underlying issues (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.10b).

- Develop and apply interventions in a culturally competent manner with a range of clients including populations at risk such as the poor; people of color; women and their families; gay and lesbian children, adolescents, adults and families; and individuals and families with disabilities (CSWE advanced competencies 2.1.10c).

- Define the stages of the worker-client relationship and apply relevant skill concepts ranging from engagement, exploration and assessment, intervention to termination (CSWE advanced competencies 2.1.10a, b, c).

- Evaluate assessment and intervention competencies in oral and written case presentations (CSWE advanced competency 10d).

- Identify and apply social work ethics in guiding practice issues with individuals and families (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.10c).

Course Content Objectives:
Students will utilize course materials to:

1. Apply the ecological/systemic conceptual framework as the central premise for assessment and intervention.

2. Prepare a comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment including the concepts of stress, vulnerability and coping as well as motivation, capacity and opportunity in understanding the client’s presenting, precipitating and perpetuating issues.

3. Identify transference and countertransference issues as shaped by the interplay of individual and environmental factors such as oppression, emotional and resource deprivation, cultural values and norms on individual/family growth and adjustment.

4. Define the dynamic mutuality of the worker-client professional relationship and demonstrate its therapeutic implication and centrality in clinical social work practice.

5. Demonstrate “differential use of self” in providing a “corrective emotional experience” in the beginning, middle and end phase of the helping process.

6. Identify and apply different modes of interventions ranging from case advocacy, crisis intervention, ego-supportive, ego-modifying and strengths-based approaches.
Required Texts:


Recommended Texts:


Course Expectations

The following are specific expectations for successful completion of courses under Clinical Practice with Individuals and Families. In general, students’ grasp of the course content will be reflected through their attendance, involvement in class discussions and their completion of written assignments.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all classes and notify the instructor (via voice mail or email) if they will be absent. Absences should be no greater in number than the credit value of the course.

**Timeliness:** After the instructor has taken attendance, students who are missing are considered absent. Instructors are not to make exceptions to this requirement.

**Religious holiday policy**
Any student who is unable, because of his/her religious beliefs, to attend classes on a particular day or days shall, because of such absence, be excused. It is necessary to inform the professor in advance so that a plan can be made to make up the work missed as a result of the absence(s).

**Professional conduct:** As a professional school, standards of appropriate ethical conduct are expected of students at all times, including in the classroom. Students must refrain from answering or making cell phone calls or reading or texting messages in class.

**Participation:** As a course in which direct clinical practice is the focus, students need to be active participants to master the concepts and skills. Participation includes discussion of readings, contribution from practice of case examples, and some small group discussion and role play of practice skills. Please note that evaluation is based on the quality, not quantity, of the student’s contribution that reflects his/her knowledge of the course materials.

**Online Learning Information and Requirements:**
This course requires at least one hour of teaching and learning online each week via posting of concept application, viewing of interactive videos, and/or participation in discussions on the course’s Blackboard site. More information will be provided in class.
Written Assignments

An integrative paper (6-8 pages) describing a biopsychosocial assessment and plans for intervention with a “difficult” client (CSWE advanced competencies 2.1.10b and 2.1.10c).
  Due date: Week #9.

An integrative paper (6-8 pages) of practice concepts and skills on the termination process with a client which includes discussion of self-awareness, use of self, and countertransference in the optimal management of termination with the client (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.10c).
  Due date: Week #15.

Detailed instructions for each assignment will be provided. All submissions are to be typed, double-spaced, with approximately 1” margins on all sides. Each assignment should draw from relevant class readings and classroom discussions. Citations and format of the paper have to conform to APA style, with a reference section included. Please review APA style on either the OWL website (owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01) or the APA website (www.apastyle.org). Paraphrasing and direct quotes from articles, books, chapters, and other sources must be clearly referenced.

Completion of Assignments: Assignment deadlines are scheduled to make it possible for faculty to give ample attention to all assignments. Therefore, deadlines for turning in of assignments are required. Late work will be accepted only with prior faculty approval, and lateness will be weighed in grading.

Writing level for graduate students: Students graduating the MSW program enter the professional practice arena and are expected to communicate orally and in writing at a professional level. This includes care in preparation of written materials, responsiveness to guidelines, as well as appropriate skill in language usage. Unedited, misspelled, grammatically incorrect, or carelessly organized work is not appropriate or creditable. The Writing Center at the School of Social Work is available to all students needing help, and should be contacted promptly by any student whose self-evaluation or faculty evaluation reveals a need to improve skills. Referencing style for all written work is by APA format throughout this curriculum. Instructional materials on this system of referencing are available in the library. Full referencing is expected in all written work. Grading: The expected grade for this graduate course is Credit. Students wanting letter grades must give the instructor a request in writing by the third week of the semester. Once agreed upon, letter grading cannot be rescinded. Grades of Honors are reserved for students who demonstrate exceptional levels of work. Honors is equivalent to an A+ letter grade, and will be given for superior performance in all three of the following: 1) style and content of written work, 2) creative use of assigned and outside readings in papers and class discussions, and 3) quality of contributions to class discussions. Grades of No Credit are assigned due to a combination of poor quality of work on assignments;
lack of class participation; and excessive absences or lateness. Grades of Incomplete are at the discretion of the instructor, but students have to have demonstrated satisfactory performance throughout the semester before they can be considered for an extension of their final grade.
Academic integrity: Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

Course Syllabus

UNIT 1 (Wk. 1-3) Introduction to Clinical Practice

Week 1 Introduction to course and defining clinical social work


Recommended Readings


Weeks 2 Exploring some frameworks: The Life Model, A Psychosocial Approach and Ego Psychology


Woods & Hollis: Ch. 2, The psychosocial frame of reference, pp. 35-80; Ch. 10, Initial interviews and the psychosocial study, pp. 267-292
Goldstein: Ch. 2, The Emergence and Assimilation of Ego Psychology into Social Work Practice.

**UNIT 2 (Wk. 3- 9) Diagnostic Assessment Process, the Therapeutic Relationship, and Professional Use of Self**

**Weeks 3 and 4 Deepening Assessment Skills**


Goldstein: Ch.3, The Ego and Its Functions; Ch. 4, The Ego and Its Defenses; and Ch.5, Ego Mastery and the Processes of Coping and Adaptation; Ch.7, The Nature of Ego-Oriented Assessment


Woods & Hollis: Ch. 11, Assessment and diagnostic understanding, pp. 293-324.

**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 5 Intersubjectivity: The two-person interactive perspective**


Gitterman & Germain: Ch. 11, Reducing Interpersonal Stress between Worker and Client.

Goldstein: Ch. 9, The Nature of the Client-Worker Relationship.
Recommended Readings


**Week 6 Use of transference and countertransference as diagnostic and treatment tools**


Recommended Readings


**Week 7 Special issues: Managing "difficult" clients and "resistant" behavior**


**Weeks 8 and 9 Self-disclosure, use of self**


**UNIT 3: (Wk. 10-15) Ego-Oriented and Ecologically-Informed Intervention and Termination**

**Week 10 Issues of Termination**


Gitterman & Germain: Ch. 12, Endings: Settings, Modalities, Methods and Skills.

Woods & Hollis: Ch.19, Termination, pp. 543-554.

**Recommended Readings**


**Weeks 11-15 Ego-supportive and ego-modifying approaches, crisis intervention, secondary traumatic stress.**

(Articles to be added based on students’ areas of practice)


Gitterman & Germain: Ch. 7, Helping individuals, families and groups with stressful life transitions and traumatic events; Ch. 8, Helping individuals, families and groups with environmental stressors; and Ch. 9, Helping with dysfunctional family processes.


Recommended Readings


Woods & Hollis: Ch 5, Sustainment, direct influence, and exploration-description-ventilation; Ch. 6, Reflective discussion of the person-situation configuration; Ch. 7, Reflective consideration of pattern-dynamic and developmental factors; Ch. 8, Psychosocial therapy and the environment, pp. 185-200; Ch. 12, Choice of treatment objectives, pp. 325-341; Ch. 13, Choice of Treatment procedures; and Ch.18, Crisis intervention and brief treatment, pp. 513-537.