COURSE SYLLABUS

Theoretical Foundations of Intervention – Systems
(18:820:502)

Meeting Times: Section 1: Wednesday, 9:15 – noon
Section 2: Wednesday, 2:00 – 4:45 pm
(Classes start February 24)

Instructor: Cary Cherniss, Ph.D.

TA: Elena Tamanas

Course Objectives

1. Help students use systems theory to better understand and deal with the social conflicts that affect them and their clients.

2. Help students develop a better understanding of how systemic forces influence the helping process.

3. Help students become familiar with the organizational dynamics of schools, mental health programs, and other human service organizations.

4. Help students learn about how systems concepts are used as a theoretical foundation for clinical work with individuals and families.

Expectations and Assignments

1. Students are required to attend and participate actively in all class sessions and do all assigned reading before the class date for which it is assigned. Illness or family emergencies are the only acceptable reasons for missing a class session, and students cannot miss more than one class session during the term.

2. There will be three short papers. Each paper should be 3-5 pages long (double space, 12-point font, 1 inch margins). The first paper is due at the beginning of the fourth class session (3/24). The next is due session 7 (4/14), and the final paper is due session 10 (5/5). Specific instructions for each paper will be distributed through Sakai.
Note: Extensions and incompletes are strongly discouraged and will be granted only after a conference with the instructor.

Readings

The schedule of reading assignments and topics follows. There is one textbook, Beyond Burnout: Helping Teachers, Nurses, Therapists, and Lawyers Recover from Stress and Disillusionment by Cary Cherniss (Routledge, 1995). It should be available at the Rutgers Book Store. The other readings will be available online through Sakai. (Note that in some cases only certain pages of a chapter or article are assigned to be read for class. If specific pages are not indicated, please read the entire article or chapter.)

Session 1 (2/24): Introduction to the Course

No readings assigned.

Session 2 (3/3): Systemic Influences on the Helping Process and the Problem of Professional Burnout


Session 3 (3/10): Work and Organizational Factors That Help Professionals Recover from Burnout

Spring Break (3/17)

Session 4 (3/24): The Use of Power and Authority in Human Service Organizations


Session 5 (3/31): Underlying Sources of Conflict in Human Service Organizations: Domain Theory


“Deinstitutionalization” case

Session 6 (4/7): Intergroup Conflict in Human Service Organizations: Embedded Intergroup Relations Theory


“Jefferson DD Center” case

“Sunnyvale” case

**Session 7 (4/14): The Problem of Underboundedness Human Service Organizations**


“Beacon School” case.

**Session 8 (4/21): Applying Systems Theory to Family Therapy (1)**


**Session 9 (4/28): Applying Systems Theory to Family Therapy (2)**

Boyd-Franklin, N. (2003). *Black families in therapy.* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford. *(Read pp. 60-62; 82-84; 236-240; 243.)*


**Session 10 (5/5): TBD**