I. INTRODUCTION

A. Rationale

The family is the primary social unit in our society. Its function is to nurture, protect and socialize new members to society. Throughout history social workers have provided direct services to families with an awareness that families function within a larger social, economic and political context. Services have been provided in a range of settings, both public and private, including schools, hospitals, prisons, mental health clinics, child welfare agencies, nursing homes, safe homes and shelters. (As social workers have developed and modified specific frameworks and therapeutic skills to promote optimal functioning of all families they have been guided by social work values and ethics supporting equitable service delivery to clients who present with diverse interests and needs and with respect for race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, and/or sexual orientation of family members.

The purpose of the Social Work Practice with Families course is to prepare students for clinical social work practice with diverse families who present in a variety of service settings. The course provides a thorough understanding of how one works with family systems to optimize family strengths while collaboratively attempting to alleviate barriers, personal and environmental, which prevent the family from meeting the needs of its members. Accordingly, students will be exposed to specific family therapy theories and skills that will help them to understand and experience the complexity of work with families as they engage, assess and intervene to overcome barriers and promote optimal functioning. The class will provide opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking and practice that will prepare them for competent practice as they enter the workforce.

B. Linkage to other courses

Social Work Practice with Families builds on knowledge of families and therapeutic skills learned in several foundation and advanced level courses. The course will enhance the basic understanding of family issues and patterns at different stages of the life cycle presented in both the human behavior in the social environment and foundation practice
classes. Knowledge of the impact of gender, ethnicity, minority status, sexual orientation and ability will be explored to determine how these factors impact family functioning and enhance or create barriers to optimal family functioning. Three therapeutic models and their specific practice skills introduced to students in the Clinical Social Work Practice course will be explored in depth and applied to all phases of work with a family system. The continued use of self in the process of engaging and working with families in collaborative, strength-based partnerships will be emphasized. Professional accountability through adherence to social work values and the code of ethics will be further explored with particular focus on issues specific to work with family members and collaboration with other service providers.

C. Preparation for advanced level practice

This course will prepare students to work with families in numerous settings and throughout the beginning, middle and ending stages of practice. The content focuses on providing an in depth understanding of family development and events that impact optimal functioning of family members. Students will gain an understanding of how theoretical underpinnings of family practice models influence assessment and treatment tools and skills, methods for ongoing evaluation of progress within the family, and continued reflection on how social work practice within a family context is influenced by the values and ethics of the profession. This course builds on the advanced clinical practice course and field practicum by providing an in depth exploration and application of knowledge related specifically to work with a family system.

D. Content

This course examines approaches to theory and practice with couples and families in widespread use today and addresses special issues in couple and family practice. The historical perspective of social work’s early practice with children and families will be discussed as well as the advent of specific family therapy models to effectively intervene with family problems. Family life stages and specific events that trigger stressful reactions will be addressed. Students will learn how to engage, assess and intervene with families using up to three family practice models. Students will be provided opportunities to view and engage with the family in a larger environmental context which either supports or impedes healthy development and interactions of family members.

The historical underpinnings, theoretical constructs and particular related skill sets will be examined for the experiential (Satir), intergenerational (Bowen) and structural (Minuchin) family models of treatment. These three models are chosen because they lend themselves to an in depth exploration of both assessment and intervention techniques commonly used by social work practitioners. The fit of each model with the ethics and values of social work practice will also be addressed. Consideration for the clients’ socioeconomic, ethnic/minority status, ability and non-traditional family structures will be considered to evaluate how the various practice approaches can be adapted to fit different client family needs. Research on effectiveness of the models in addressing client needs, and application in actual case situations will be reviewed.
Consistent with course objective #12, two class segments will provide students with the opportunity to integrate the contents of this course with previous class and field experiences of their MSW program. This integration will involve reflecting on what they have learned, and how their attitudes and skills have changed in ways that will solidify their identities as professional clinical social workers as they enter the workforce.

**The rationale in individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.**

**II. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES**

By the end of this semester, students will be able to:

1. Describe and analyze the use and purpose of the theory and practice of the experiential, intergenerational and structural models of advanced family practice. (Reflects MSW Clinical Concentration Objective #1)

2. Analyze major components of and the constraints involved in applying particular theoretical/practice models based on one or more evaluative frameworks. (Reflects MSW Clinical Concentration Objective #1, #5)

3. Critically analyze the effects of applying a particular family therapy model to their practice. (Reflects MSW Clinical Concentration Objective #1, #2)

4. Analyze the values and relevance of using either the experiential, intergenerational or structural diagnostic framework to understand the client and to develop an appropriate treatment plan with the client’s full participation. (Reflects MSW Clinical Concentration Objective #1, #2, #6)

5. Critically analyze the use of the DSM IV in social work practice with families and apply these concepts of assessment when appropriate. (Reflects MSW Clinical Concentration Objective #1)

6. Develop intervention plans based on their assessment of specific case materials and analyze the relationship of subsequent practice activities to those plans. (Reflects MSW Clinical Concentration Objective #1, #2, #5)

7. Identify gaps in resources when performing their ongoing clinical responsibilities and influence institutional and professional systems in order to improve resource availability to clients. (Reflects MSW Clinical Concentration Objective #1, #2, #5)

8. Describe important characteristics of relationships with other professionals and their differential impact on collaborative clinical practice on behalf of families. (Reflects MSW Clinical Concentration Objective #1, #2, #3)
9. Analyze and apply a framework for understanding the impact on the clinical process of client, worker and system characteristics including race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, religion and culture. (Reflects MSW Clinical Concentration Objective #5)

10. Apply methods for evaluating the worker’s use of self on the clinical process with families and use the resulting feedback to modify, when necessary, their practice activities with families, colleagues and/or collaterals. (Reflects MSW Clinical Concentration Objective #7)

11. Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which factors related to economic and social justice impact the lives of individuals. (Reflects Clinical Concentration objective 3)

12. Critically analyze the ethical and value implications of practice models for clients, professionals, and social service organizations. (Reflects MSW Clinical Concentration Objective #6)

13. Integrate the sum of their academic and experiential learning processes through a concerted focus on the course of their MSW studies, achieved through a semi-structured capstone agenda designed for all clinical students during their final weeks of their academic stay. (Reflects MSW Clinical Concentration Objective #6)

**The educational outcomes in individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.**

### III. CURRICULUM THEMES

The overarching themes of the school are encompassed in a **practice-centered curriculum** that promotes a critical perspective, focuses on people’s strengths, celebrates human diversity and promotes social justice. This course is practice oriented because knowledge is applied to specific situations with families in the student’s field practicum.

- **Consistent with a critical perspective**, students in the Social Work Practice with Families course will be expected to raise questions, reflect upon and systematically evaluate and apply the divergent theories and knowledge upon which social work practice with families is based.

- **The strengths perspective** is a humanistic, empowerment approach to social work practice with families that operates on the assumption that all persons have untapped mental, physical, and emotional resources. Students are encouraged to extend their understanding of assessment, goal setting, design and selection of interventions, and evaluation procedures in practice settings that serve families and to view themselves as collaborators in working with families, and colleagues from other agencies to achieve the mutually decided on goals.

- **The commitment to principles of appreciating diversity** while securing social justice entails helping students develop an appreciation for difference in families and an awareness of how oppression limits human and community development. Focus will include fostering **economic and social justice** that enables all families to access resources to pursue their chosen goals.
Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

IV. LIBERAL ARTS PERSPECTIVE

This course builds on the liberal arts perspective by engaging students in critical thinking as they examine the literature related to best practices that enhance the functioning of families within the larger social context. Students will use an historical perspective to understand how families have been viewed over time and to determine how that view has influenced development of resources and/or barriers that influence family development and functioning within their larger social environments. Students will integrate knowledge of diversity as it applies to culture and family structure, rules and communication patterns and apply that knowledge to all phases of work with the family. Students will perform assessments and develop intervention plans that utilize knowledge from the biological and social sciences to understand family strengths and barriers to meeting the collective needs of their family members.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

V. PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES AND VALUES

This course emphasizes the empowerment of families as they struggle to meet the needs of their members in various social contexts. Emphasis will be on appreciation of the strengths that diverse groups of families bring to the experience of parenting and use of collaborative practice to work toward mutually decided upon goals. Students will examine assessment and interventions family practice models to insure their fit with collaborative, strength-based work with families. Students will be challenged to identify and develop strategies for situations where personal and professional values conflict with those of the client and other service providers within the system. Professional issues that impact practice with families such as regulation of social work practice, peer review, managed care and legal liability will be addressed. Specific attention will be given to social work values and ethics as they impact practice with families with an emphasis on self-determination, confidentiality, informed consent, privileged communication and therapeutic power and responsibility.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

VI. PREPARATION FOR PRACTICE WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS

This course considers variations in family structure and functioning that may be influenced by racial/cultural factors, socioeconomic status, gender roles and patterns, sexual orientation of family members and ability/disability. The course focuses on both positive and negative influences of these factors as the family is considered within his/her environmental context that either supports or discriminates against diverse families. Methods that address the intra-familial as well as environmental barriers that prevent families from nurturing, protecting and socializing their members to their fullest potential will be discussed. Particular emphasis will be on teaching students how to help families develop skills that will enable them to communicate more effectively with family
members and advocate for themselves in situations where they are experiencing oppression or discrimination.

**Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.**

VII. **TOPICS**

**Mandatory:**

1. Historical and conceptual overview of family systems in clinical social work practice.

2. Social work values and ethics with family systems

3. Review of HBSE materials on applying culturally competent knowledge and skills with families and family interventions (foster families, single parent families, ethnically diverse families, gay/lesbian headed families).

4. Review and expansion of HBSE materials on the family life cycle.

5. Learn the impact of grief and loss on the family (death, divorce, foster care)

6. Awareness, sensitivity, and knowledge of the social and economic justice issues involved with family systems in clinical social work practice

7. One, two, or all of the following family therapy models as they apply to engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation of couples and families.
   - (a) Experiential approaches to family treatment (Satir)
   - (b) Intergenerational approach to family treatment (Bowen)
   - (c) Structural family treatment (Minuchin)

8. Psycho-educational work with families

9. Capstone integrative experience

**Individual instructors’ syllabi should provide a topical outline for the course and provide adequate information to determine where and when the required topics are being covered.**

VIII. **RECOMMENDED READINGS**

**Recommended Texts.**


**Individual instructors must either select one of the texts listed or obtain approval from the faculty mentor for an alternative text**

**Recommended readings:**

A course reader that contains additional readings will be available for purchase.


For individual syllabus, remove the word “RECOMMENDED.” In addition individual syllabi need to specify which readings are required and which are recommended. The entire list of “additional resources” does not need to be included in individual syllabi.

**IX. RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENTS**

**A. Role play of family intervention**

**Rationale:** The purpose of this assignment is to help students to critically analyze interactions and social work interventions within a family therapy session that they have role-played as either a family member or family practitioner.

Students will role play a session within the class, view the video-tape and summarize and critique the session. Additionally, students will describe in a written assignment significant interactions or events that occurred during the session and critique both the strengths and challenges in their family interventions. Students will draw upon theory and intervention methods that they were exposed to in the course or in their field practice to analyze interactions and interventions in the session. As a part of this analysis students will consider and evaluate the impact of their use of self on the clinical process. They will also use client feedback in this self-evaluation to help identify practice strengths and areas of improvement with family systems. The assignment should be approximately 4-5 pages and should be typed and double-spaced. APA format should be used for citations and references. (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10)
B. Genogram and interpretation of family patterns

**Rationale:** The purpose of this assignment is to help students to understand how the genogram visually describes a family within the larger social context, illustrate relationships and patterns of interaction, and records specific events that have supported growth or created barriers to optimal development.

Students will complete and interpret a genogram of their family of origin, inclusive of three generations. Include a color-coded legend to specify culture, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, SES, education, spirituality/religion, familial interests or hobbies, as well as any disability or significant problems. Include annotations under family members that give additional information to the reader. Carefully analyze the genogram for thematic patterns that you think might have influenced family development (strengths as well as challenges i.e. loss, substance abuse, physical or mental illness, unemployment, discrimination, domestic abuse, child abuse). Critically analyze this model for its consistency with social work values and ethics. The principles of Bowen’s multigenerational model must be clearly indicated on the genogram and discussed in a (5-6 page) accompanying paper as they relate to family dynamics. (Objectives 1, 3, 4, 9, 11)

C. Comparison of Family Theories

**Rationale:** The purpose of this assignment is to encourage students to think understand how the underlying principles of family therapy models influence the interventions of the practitioner. Additionally, students will think critically about how social work ethics and values interface with the specific models.

Choose four class readings that provide overviews of **two** of the theoretical perspectives we cover in the class (intergenerational, structural or experiential). Choose two readings for each perspective. Summarize the readings very briefly (1-2 paragraphs). Compare and contrast the perspectives, identifying how they are similar and different in terms of their philosophical assumptions about human nature and personal change, the roles of the practitioner and the client, and the nature of the assessment and intervention process. This should be roughly four-five pages, double-spaced, and using APA format. (Objectives 1, 2, 4, 10, 11)

D. Couple or Family assessment and intervention paper using specific family treatment model/models

**Rationale:** The purpose of this assignment is to examine either a clinical problem or other psycho-social problem of a family or couple that a student has encountered in their field practicum using assessment and intervention techniques learned within the course. (For example, family therapy for school refusal). Address the following:

1. What is the nature of this disorder/problem? (Include prevalence, incidence, symptoms, etc.) How is it traditionally conceptualized in terms of etiology? How
would the etiology or maintenance of the problem be viewed from a family systems perspective or perspectives? (approx. 2-3 pages)

2. How would this problem be diagnosed using the DSM IV and/or treated with a family or couple based treatment approach? Choosing a specific theoretical model, or an integrated approach, what intervention strategies and specific skills would you likely use in each phase (engagement, contracting, intervention, termination)? Describe the impact that other helping professionals may have on the clinical process with this family system problem. Identify the skills and the model/models that promote the skill. (approx. 5-7 pages)

3. Has this approach been evaluated empirically? What is the evidence for its effectiveness? Can a family therapy approach effectively treat this problem without being combined with other intervention approaches? Why or why not? (approx. 2 pages)

4. Identify issues of human diversity that you think could potentially impact (positively or negatively) the use of this method. Are there populations for which this approach may be contra-indicated? Why or why not? Are there ways that this approach might be tailored to be more effective for a specific population? Give examples. (approx. 2-4 pages)

12-15 page paper. Using APA format for citations and references, type, double space. (Objectives 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11)

E. Suggested Assignments:

Students will identify the 3 most pressing professional issues that they anticipate encountering during their first year of practice. The issues could be related to ethics, credentialing, private practice, membership in NASW or other professional groups, “keeping up” with the literature, writing a resume, passing the licensing exam, social justice issues for specific types of families (families in poverty, gay and lesbian families), etc. Organize a class session to discuss the most common issues, utilizing guest speakers such as the Executive Director of K-NASW and/or guest panels of recent graduates. (Objectives 7, 8, 11, 12, 13)

F. Capstone Assignment/Frame of Reference Paper and Oral Presentation

Required of all students
This assignment is non-graded.
Rationale: Regardless of the specific theory covered in SW 811 class, students need the opportunity to integrate this specific course content with other courses and experiences from the start of their MSW education. Students need to look at where they have been and how they have changed and to engage in discussions and activities that help them to solidify their identities as professional clinical social workers as they enter the workforce.
In this paper (or oral presentation), students will be provided the opportunity to personally assess their graduate education and experience, to take a personal accounting of their personal and professional growth, the highs and lows of classroom and field, and their hopes for the future. As a termination exercise, this assignment allows the student to take stock of his/her current development, including an analysis of his/her own termination style.

Students will write a 4-5 page (typed, double-spaced) essay that summarizes and integrates your social work graduate education experience. Write about how you have grown, what you have (and haven't) learned, where you hope to go from here. Include specific knowledge, skills and values that you have acquired from your education at KU. Students may include any or all of the specific points of learning detailed below:

**Personally:** How have your practicum and classroom experiences helped you to grow as a person? What have you learned about yourself, your values, your biases, your strengths and weaknesses? How have you changed and grown as a person? What have you targeted for areas for future growth? Be specific and give examples of practicum and classroom experiences that have affected your personal growth.

**Professionally:** Compared to the beginning of your graduate education, what is your view of the social work profession? Of its purposes, values, strengths, weaknesses, etc.? How has your view of yourself as a professional changed? Compared to the first year, what are your current assessments of your strengths, weaknesses, interests, goals, regarding your professional self? What are the crucial components of your current social work frame of reference?

**Coursework/Practicum.** What theories, ideas, discussions from your two years of classes have influenced your work? Give specific examples of how content of classes (including this SW 811 course) has (or has not) been useful in your practicum, and will/will not be useful in the future.

**Responsibility to Promote Social Justice.** What do you see as your role in the promotion of social justice at micro and macro levels of practice? After completing your MSW degree, how will you work to promote social justice as a social worker?

**Termination.** What are you finding about your termination style, with respect to clients, classmates, and instructors? Now that your graduate school days are almost over, what do you wish you had done or learned or studied that you didn't? What are your regrets? What don't you regret? What do you plan to do in these last few days and weeks to "tie up" loose ends with people? What do you see yourself doing as professional 5 years from now? 10 years? As an MSW, how will you contribute to the growth and perpetuation of the Social Work profession?

One or more class sessions will be devoted to sharing of all or parts of the assignment with class members. These sessions could be in the form of 20-30 minute individual or group oral presentations of the entire content, or shorter, more focused exercises (such as a narrative reflecting team format, art or play therapy exercise, etc) engaging each class member in some level of sharing of some part of the assignment. Some type of
experiential activity with fellow students will be essential in facilitating student’s termination process regard their multifaceted graduate school experience. *Students may be involved in decisions about the best method for presenting their learning experiences.* (Objective 11, 12)

**X. Grading**

**Grading**-Grading in this course follows the policy set forth in the *Bulletin of the School of Social Welfare*

A  = Exceptional work; outstanding. This grade will be assigned to work which shows *extensive use of the literature* as well as concrete examples of practice.

B  = Fully meets graduate standards: This grade will be assigned to work in which all the aspects of assignments are completed satisfactorily, showing a combination of accurate use of theory and principles and precise descriptions of practice.

C  = Overall performance is unsatisfactory, below graduate standards, although all aspects of assignments were completed.

F  = Failure: overall quality of work is unsatisfactory, or some aspects of assignments not done.

I  = Incomplete: a temporary grade assigned to students who, for impelling reasons beyond their control, were unable to complete the required work. This grade is granted only after prior arrangements with the instructor.

A sample grading scale is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-77</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;70</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Attendance Policy**

In order to pass the course, students cannot miss more than three classes during the semester. Any additional policies regarding class attendance will be determined by individual instructors.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should specify the following:

A. The weighting of each assignment in the course and the dates by which they are done.

B. For every assignment, explain the standards used for grading.

C. If class participation is part of the grade indicate what this means. For example, if
10 points are awarded for class participation, one point will be deducted for every class missed.

D. Indicate the policy on late assignments, e.g., they are not accepted and treated as an “F” grade or the grade is reduced by ___ for each day, week, etc.

E. Indicate how final grades will be determined

XI. **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Students who have special educational needs of any kind, including those related to learning disabilities, other disabilities, English as a second language should discuss necessary accommodations with the instructor within the first two sessions of the course. The university and School of Social Welfare are committed to provide supportive programs and accommodations to assist students who have special learning needs to successfully meet course expectations. In particular, students who feel that they have a disability that may require accommodation should advise the instructor of such disability and desired accommodation as soon as one obtains written documentation of the disability. The instructor will work with the student and the office of Services for Students with Disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations.

Please notify the instructor if your religious observances conflict with class or due dates for class assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements.

**Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.**

XII. **RECORDING AND SHARING RECORDINGS OF LECTURES**

Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the instructor are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. On request, the instructor will usually grant permission for students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

**Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.**

XIII. **HIPAA REGULATIONS**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that any personal information that may identify a person must be removed to protect confidentiality. Confidentiality applies to both classroom discussions and to written work. Please follow these simple, yet essential guidelines:

- Always disguise the name and other personal identifying information when you speak and write about a person, following the guidelines established by HIPAA.
• If writing in great detail about a client, ask permission from the client.
• Share nothing about specific clients, agencies or other students outside of the classroom.

Any information shared with the class/instructor will be confidential, within the limits defined by the Code of Ethics and state guidelines.

**Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.**

**XIV. INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY**

Provide students with information on how to see and/or reach you.

**XV. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

In the event of inclement weather students should call
- Lawrence: the University (785) 864-SNOW, or if hearing impaired and have TTY/TDD equipment, (800) 766-3777
- Edwards Campus: (913) 897-8499
- KCKCC Campus: (913) 334-1100

to determine if classes have been cancelled. Class will be held if classes have not been cancelled, and students should contact the instructor if weather or driving conditions make it impossible for them to get to class.