I. Catalogue Description

Meaning of crisis to client systems and social work practitioners; principles guiding rational decision to intervene at the point of “critical incident.”

II. Course Overview

Social workers are frequently called upon to intervene in various crisis situations, either at the point of the crisis event or in the aftermath. This is an advanced generalist practice course that crosses the three advanced practice focus areas. The course teaches a model and techniques for assessment, initial intervention, and follow-up with individuals, families and groups in high stress situations requiring immediate crisis intervention. The model and techniques will be applied to various emergency situations that may involve threats or acts of suicide, threats of serious injury or homicide, serious symptoms of mental illness that require urgent response, sexual assault and other traumatic events, partner violence, and bereavement and grief issues. Additional topics include crisis in the human services workplace, violence and crises in the schools and community, & crisis worker burnout.

The class will explore ethical issues surrounding intervening in crisis situations. We will also attend to how issues of marginalization and oppression, as well as strengths and resiliency factors, affect crisis intervention with people of color, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals, women, and others who experience social, economic and political disenfranchisement.

III. Course Competencies and Practice Behaviors

Successful completion of this course implies that students will have progressed towards achieving some of the core social work competencies by demonstrating the following practice behaviors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies addressed in course</th>
<th>Practice behaviors addressed in course</th>
<th>Assignments measuring behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.</td>
<td>Apply knowledge of social services, policies, and programs relevant to advanced generalist practice, to advocate with and/or on behalf of clients for access to services.</td>
<td>Paper/panel assignment Final role play</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles</td>
<td>Evaluate ethical dilemmas related to problems and issues in advanced generalist practice.</td>
<td>Reflection paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments</td>
<td>Identify and synthesize multiple sources of knowledge to understand policy and practice issues related to the focus areas. Identify and evaluate models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation that are appropriate to the focus area. Utilize effective communication skills with diverse communities, constituencies, and multi- and interdisciplinary colleagues when dealing with issues related to the focus area.</td>
<td>Reflection paper</td>
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<td>2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice</td>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of how culture and values affect diverse conceptualizations and constructions of social problems and solutions in advanced generalist practice. Demonstrate knowledge and skills to practice without discrimination and with respect towards people of diverse backgrounds.</td>
<td>Paper/panel assignment</td>
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<td>2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice</td>
<td>Appraise of mechanisms of oppression and discrimination impact various groups and outcomes relevant to advanced generalist practice.</td>
<td>Paper/panel assignment</td>
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<td>2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research</td>
<td>Critically evaluate and utilize theoretical and empirical research relevant to the problems and/or populations addressed in advanced generalist practice.</td>
<td>Paper/panel assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment</td>
<td>Evaluate and apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment to choose methods of assessment, intervention, and evaluation most appropriate to focus areas’ problems/populations.</td>
<td>Final role play Paper/panel assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.10 (a –d) Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.</td>
<td>(a) Employ diverse strategies to engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities related to advanced generalist practice. (b) Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations &amp; communities to determine a range of potentially effective and appropriate interventions to improve practice outcomes related to the focus areas. (c) Demonstrate ability to intervene at different levels (with and/or on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities) to achieve the desired practice outcomes related to the focus areas.</td>
<td>Final role play Paper/panel assignment</td>
</tr>
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**IV. Course Content & Assignment Schedule**

In meeting the CSWE competencies and practice behaviors noted above,

1. Students will learn a theory and model of crisis assessment & intervention, characteristics and stages of crises, and will be able to develop effective interventions with clients in crisis;
2. Students will learn specific assessment & intervention skills in situations where there is risk of suicide or homicide;
3. Students will gain skills in assessing mental status and overall functioning, and learn crisis strategies that flow from this assessment;
4. Students will further their awareness of ethics and values that guide crisis intervention practice, and discuss situations in which important values appear to collide;
5. Students will enhance their understanding of the impact of marginalization and oppression experienced by people in our community and the how this affects crisis intervention practice;
6. Students will become able to develop crisis intervention plans that are culturally competent and attend to clients’ strengths and resiliency factors.

Students are expected to further their critical thinking skills. This implies an orderly process of collecting information, evaluating information, synthesizing disparate or partial information, and withholding conclusions until adequate information and the ability to pursue unanswered questions is available—a particular challenge in emergency situations.

In-class role plays will provide opportunities to learn, practice and build skills to perform crisis assessments, risk assessments, crisis safety planning, and other crisis intervention plans. We will have speakers present on several topics related to the theme of the class. Student panels will present information on crisis intervention services with under- or poorly served populations.

In order to achieve the course objectives, students will need to attend all classes, read the assigned material thoughtfully and thoroughly, and be prepared to contribute to class discussions by bringing questions, concerns, and practice experiences to share in class. Sharing of practice experience must be done in a way that is respectful to the client and maintains the client’s confidentiality. We will take care to use “person-first” language, e.g., “a person with bipolar disorder” rather than “a bipolar person.” This is not just semantics, but rather represents an ecological framework and a holistic approach that supports a person’s recovery and healing.

**CLASS TOPICS & ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE**

Assignment schedule at a glance (more details follow the table)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Written Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/27</td>
<td>Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>Skills (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/10</td>
<td>Skills (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/17</td>
<td>Crisis Case Handling</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/24</td>
<td>Suicide (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>Suicide (2)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3/10</td>
<td>Suicide (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/17</td>
<td>Crisis Intervention with</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James &amp; Gilliland Ch. 1 &amp; 2; Kanel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James &amp; Gilliland Ch. 3</td>
<td>Ethics reflection paper (3-5 pages)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>James &amp; Gilliland Ch. 4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James &amp; Gilliland Ch. 5 &amp; 6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James &amp; Gilliland Ch. 8; Shea Ch. 4 &amp; Appendix B</td>
<td>Suicide reflection paper (3-5 pages)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shea Ch. 5 &amp; 6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shea Ch. 7</td>
<td>Class exercise: roleplay for reflection paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>James &amp; Gilliland Ch. 11</td>
<td>TOPIC for paper/panel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Reading</td>
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<td>3/24</td>
<td>Sexual Assault/ Mindfulness for the Practitioner (guest speaker)</td>
<td>James &amp; Gilliland Ch. 9; Levinson &amp; Morin Ch. 4; Recommended: James &amp; Gilliland Ch. 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/31</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/7</td>
<td>PTSD and At-Risk Youth (guest speaker)</td>
<td>James &amp; Gilliland Ch. 13; Hillman Recommended: James &amp; Gilliland Ch. 14 &amp; 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/14</td>
<td>Partner Violence (guest speaker)</td>
<td>James &amp; Gilliland Ch. 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/21</td>
<td>Under-served groups</td>
<td>Recommended: James &amp; Gilliland Ch. 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/28</td>
<td>Under-served groups</td>
<td>(catch up on reading)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>Burnout; Class wrap-up &amp; evaluation</td>
<td>James &amp; Gilliland Ch. 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>Exam Week</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Week 1 01/20 Orientation.** Objectives: Introductions, review syllabus and course objectives. Discuss students’ goals for the course and experience levels. Establish ground rules for safety. Discuss different learning styles of students. Discuss the values behind the concept of “least restrictive alternative.” We will review counseling basics in preparation for learning specific crisis intervention skills.

**Week 2 01/27 Crisis Intervention Theory.** Objectives: Establish conceptual framework for crisis intervention.

James & Gilliland, Ch. 1 “Approaching Crisis Intervention” & Ch. 2 “Culturally Effective Helping”


**Week 3 02/03 Crisis Intervention Skills (1)** Objectives: Learn a model for assessment and initial intervention, and build skills.

**DUE TODAY: REFLECTION PAPER:** Reflecting on the ethics reading and discussion from last week, write about two things you thought about that are of potential value or relevance to your practice. How will you go about resolving ethical dilemmas that arise in crisis intervention practice? This paper should be 3-5 pages.
James & Gilliland, Ch. 3 “The Intervention and Assessment Models”

**Week 4 02/10 Crisis Intervention Skills (2)** Objectives: Continue building crisis assessment and initial intervention skills.

James & Gilliland, Ch. 4 “The Tools of the Trade”

**Week 5 02/17 Crisis Case Handling** Objectives: Overview of how crises are handled, and differences between crisis intervention and longer term social work involvement.

James & Gilliland, Ch. 5 “Crisis Case Handling” & Ch. 6 “Telephone & Online Crisis Counseling.”

**Week 6 02/24 Handling of Specific Crises: Crisis of Lethality** Objectives: Begin learning how to work with people who present risk for lethal behavior. As the preface to the James text suggests, “Suicidal and homicidal ideation flows through many other problems that assail people the human services worker is likely to confront, and is a consideration for all providers of crisis intervention services in regard to the safety of both those clients and the interventionists.” (p. xvii)

**DUE TODAY: REFLECTION PAPER:** Write a 3-5 page introspective paper on suicide: Reflect on your own personal experiences and beliefs about suicide, including your moral, religious and cultural perspectives. How might these influence how you work with suicidal clients?

James & Gilliland, Ch. 8 “Crisis of Lethality”


**The Shea readings are available on Learn@UW.**

**Week 7 03/03 Uncovering Suicidal Ideation** Objectives: Learn strategies and skills for eliciting information from the suicidal client.


**The Shea readings are available on Learn@UW.**

**Week 8 03/10 Practical Assessment of Suicide Risk; Intervention Planning** Objectives: Learn a practical, user-friendly model for good risk assessment and key areas of intervention planning. *Please note that reflection papers regarding our in-class exercise will be due in two weeks.*


**The Shea readings are available on Learn@UW.**
Week 9 03/17 Crisis Intervention with AODA
James, Ch. 11 “Chemical Dependency: Crisis of Addiction”

DUE TODAY: TOPIC for panel discussion/paper

Week 10 03/24 Part 1: Sexual Assault Part 2: Mindfulness for the Practitioner
James & Gilliland, Ch. 9 “Sexual Assault”
Levenson J. S & Morin, J.W.  Ch. 4 “Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse in Children” In:
Connections Workbook, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001 pp. 47-56. This reading is available on Learn@UW.

DUE TODAY: REFLECTIONS PAPERS
Write two brief (2-3 page) reflection papers about your experience with the suicide intervention role-play exercise done in class on 3/10, one from your role as client and one from your role as crisis intervention worker. (For grading purposes, this counts as one reflection paper assignment.) What went well and why? What could have gone better, why and how? What personal reactions did you notice—what was the hardest part, the best part? What interviewing skills were used? What if any cultural issues were addressed?

03/31 Spring Break

Week 11 04/07 PTSD and At-Risk Youth, Community Violence
James & Gilliland, Ch. 13 “Crises in Schools”


Recommended: James & Gilliland, Ch. 14 “Violent Behavior in Institutions”, & Ch. 15 “Crisis/Hostage Negotiation”

Optional: James & Gilliland Ch. 7 “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.” Treating PTSD requires special clinical training. This chapter is included as an optional reading as all advanced practice social workers in direct practice are likely to encounter persons who meet criteria for PTSD. In addition, clients’ post-traumatic stress disorder responses from past trauma are likely to have a significant impact on how current crises are experienced and resolved.
**Week 12 04/14**  Intimate Partner Violence Objectives: Learn strategies to assist people affected by domestic abuse
James & Gilliland, Ch. 10 “Partner Violence”

**Due Today: Paper**

**Week 13 04/21 & Week 14 04/28** A Special Look at Under- or Poorly Served Populations

**Student Panels in Class these three weeks.** Students not presenting will be filling out feedback sheets for the panel participants, which the instructor will review before passing them on.

**Recommended:** James & Gilliland Ch. 17 “Disaster Response”

**Week 15 05/05** Burnout, Vicarious Traumatization and Compassion Fatigue/Overflow from Panels
Objectives: Discuss this major hazard associated with being a professional in the human services field, and look at action steps to deal with the hazard. We will also do a brief review of the course to wrap up, and course evaluations.

James & Gilliland, Ch. 16 “Human Services Workers in Crisis: Burnout, Vicarious Traumatization, and Compassion Fatigue”

V. Texts & Reading Materials


Additional readings are posted on Learn@UW

VI. Evaluation of Competences and Practice Behaviors: Assignments, Grading & Methods

Grade Standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>What the point totals &amp; subsequent grade generally indicate:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding, excellent work in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88-93</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Outstanding, excellent work in many areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-87</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Meets expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-81</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Meets expectations in most areas; below expectations in others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Below expectations in most areas; not acceptable graduate work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-69</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Below expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;64</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Course failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students will earn points towards their grade with the following:

1. Class attendance and participation (1 point per class) 15 points
2. Reflection papers (10 points each) 30 points
3. Paper/Panel presentation 30 points
4. Crisis role play with instructor 25 points

1. Three reflection papers (10 points each): Specific topics and due dates of each reflection paper are given in the class schedule section. Read the assigned topics carefully in order to fulfill the assignment. Papers must be handed in on the due date via the Learn@UW course drop box by the beginning of class, unless specific arrangements have been made in advance. If you do not attend class, you will still be responsible for handing your work in on time.

Grading will be based on evidence of thoughtful consideration of assigned course material, class discussion and personal/professional experience and also on attention to grammar, spelling, organization, clarity and jargon-free writing.

2. Final paper (20 points) and panel presentation (10 points): Students will prepare a paper and sit on a student panel concerning crisis intervention practice with a population that may be underserved or poorly served, such as people who live in rural areas, people of color, elders, individuals who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, and children and (or) adolescents.

Turn in topic choices by March 17 via Learn@UW dropbox. Your topic may be listed as a sentence unless it needs further description. For example “My topic will be crisis intervention with clients who require language interpretation services”. The instructor will decide panel presentation dates and students will be given their panel date via class email by the end of the week.

Grading of the paper and panel presentation will be based on evidence of organization and critical thinking, attention to specifics of assignment as noted below, and in the case of the paper, attention to clear writing. Your grades for this assignment will be made available following the panel presentation, along with your classmates’ feedback.

Regardless of the panel presentation date, due date for the papers is April 14 – upload them to the assignment drop box by the start of class.

PAPER: Papers should be 10-12 pages in length (excluding a title page & reference list), utilizing one-inch margins and fonts no larger than 12 pts. They should include the following:
1) Summary paragraph/abstract of your paper
2) A summary of 4 or more readings/articles pertinent to your topic. The summary should include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the readings, and how they pertain to crisis intervention practice for the population chosen by speaking to one or more of the following:
   --Access/obstacles of this population to crisis services
   --Cultural beliefs pertaining to suicide, violence, mental illness
   --Cultural beliefs pertaining to help-seeking
   --Characteristics or demographics that may increase vulnerability
   --Availability of support systems
--Availability of formal and informal resources

3) Ideas (your own, or gleaned from the articles you have chosen) for improving crisis services for the population chosen. Questions for further research can be included in this section.


Students are encouraged to make use of the University Writing Lab for this assignment. Please review the Writing Lab’s information here to avoid intentional or unintentional plagiarism: http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html

PANEL: Each panel will have approximately an hour, with each student on the group panel having 8-10 minutes to address some of the main points of #2 & #3 above pertaining to their topic.

After the panelists’ individual remarks, the panel will respond to any additional questions or comments from the class.

Each student should prepare a brief (2 page max) handout for class members and get it to the instructor for photocopying the day before their presentation date. I strongly recommend that the panel members be in contact with each other prior to the presentation date to determine what amount of overlap there may be and coordinate their presentations accordingly.

Students will be filling out feedback sheets for the panels. The instructor will review the feedback and then pass the sheets on to the individual panelists.

3. **Student crisis role play with instructor (25 points):** Working in dyads of two (a “crisis team”), students will have the opportunity to demonstrate crisis intervention skills, techniques and knowledge acquired throughout the semester by role playing crisis intervention workers assessing a client in crisis. In case there is not an even number of students, we will enlist the aid of a member of the class to serve twice (but be graded only once). These role plays will be done towards the end of the semester at school, outside of class time, taking the place of a “final exam.” I will post available times. The week following the end of classes (aka “exam week”) will be included in this schedule.

4. **Class attendance (15 points):** If you need to miss a class due to an excused absence and want to receive the attendance point for that session, you must contact the instructor about any make-up assignment. Please see VII. Course Policies below for expectations regarding class attendance.

VII. **Course Policies**

Meeting course objectives requires that the instructor and students actively work to create a learning environment that is respectful and safe so that practice challenges can be examined honestly, diverse viewpoints shared, and role plays and the like approached with maximum curiosity and enthusiasm and ever-decreasing “performance anxiety.” Each student has knowledge and experience that will enhance the learning of his/her colleagues.

**Accommodations**
If a student has a disability that may require accommodation to complete the course expectations, please discuss this with the instructor as soon as possible. Students registered with the McBurney Disability Resource Center must give the instructor a copy of their VISA within the first two weeks of class.

**Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes, and to arrive on time.

- Attendance will be taken at each class. Students who **must** be absent due to inclement weather, illness, or other emergencies must contact the instructor prior to the start of class to be considered for an excused absence.
- Unexcused absences will result in a loss of “attendance points” for the classes missed.
- Additional make-up work appropriate for the content missed may be assigned for excused absences. Depending on the content of the class, make-up may take the form of a meeting with role play practice with the instructor, or short reflection papers focusing on particular questions that cover assigned readings. Students are responsible for contacting the instructor to determine make-up requirements.
- Students are responsible for completing any class requirements for the day missed, and for obtaining from a fellow classmate any assignments, materials, and communications missed due to absence, late arrival, or early departure.

**Late assignment policy**

If you are not able to be in class the day a written assignment is due, you are still responsible for turning in your assignment on the due date. If a student a) communicates with me **prior** to the due date, b) provides me with a reasonable justification for an extension, and c) we come to an agreement about a revised deadline, the assignment handed in by the new date will be considered “on time.” Unapproved late assignments will be marked down 10% of the total points for that assignment **for each day the assignment is late**.

Panel presentations will only be re-scheduled in the case of an excused absence. In this case, a student who is unable to participate in his/her panel on its scheduled day will either be assigned to a different panel, or will do a solo presentation.

**Learn@ UW**

All students are required to access Learn@UW for course content and assignments. Students are advised that Learn@UW can provide the instructor with information regarding students’ use of the course website.

**Plagiarism & academic integrity**

Plagiarism involves presenting someone else’s work or ideas as your own without appropriate citation and acknowledgment, and is an extremely serious form of academic misconduct. Plagiarism and cheating in any form will result in a grade of “F” for the course, and may also result in suspension from the University. Please review the information found here: [http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html)

**Professional behavior policy**
Professionalism means showing up both physically and mentally, and actively working with the instructor to create a respectful and stimulating environment for learning. It means coming to class on time, having read & thought about all of the assigned material. Professionalism includes bringing questions, concerns and direct practice experiences to aid in understanding applications of course material. Sharing of direct practice experiences must be done in a way that is respectful to the client and protects clients’ rights to confidentiality. Students should also keep confidential all issues of a personal nature shared in class. As professionals, during class you are expected to use electronic devices only for note taking; inappropriate use of electronic devices in class will be treated as an unexcused absence.