

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number:	SW 393R30	Instructor's Name:	Jack Nowicki, LCSW
Unique Number:	63075	Office Number:	SWB 3.104-A
Semester:	Fall, 2012	Office Phone:	Nowicki: 659-1465 Nowicki: 892-6888 (LM)
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Meeting Time/Place:	M 5:30-8:30 @ 2.132	Office Hours:	Monday @ 4 or by appt.

SOLUTION FOCUSED BRIEF THERAPY (SFBT)

I. Standardized Course Description

This course is designed as a seminar to provide students with a basic understanding in solution-focused brief therapy. The content will include the history of the SFBT approach within the framework of systems and cognitive approaches, research related to the approach with different populations, as well as heavy emphasis on skill development and practice.

II. Standardized Course Objectives

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

1. Compare strengths-based and deficit-based approaches to working with clients, including understanding the impact of the ecological and social environments in which diverse families live.
2. Demonstrate understanding of similarities and differences among strengths-based theories and critically assess their theoretical perspectives, value bases, and the role of gender in family dynamics.
3. Integrate and demonstrate the application of procedures, techniques, and methods of SBFT that reflect best practices for problem areas or helping diverse client groups.
4. Understand and integrate research information on the effectiveness of SBFT within an evidence-based framework.
5. Understand and integrate research information of effectiveness of empirically based practice for SBFT on problems frequently seen in practice such as: chemical dependency, child maltreatment, and crisis intervention with youth and families.
6. Demonstrate skill in applying knowledge of the impact of policy and social justice issues to interventions with families of diverse cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, family structure, national origin, ability, or other manifestation of diversity.
7. Demonstrate skill in applying knowledge concerning multi-level policies and their impact on SBFT interventions with families of diverse culture, socioeconomic background, race, sexual orientation, and ability.
8. Demonstrate skill in using strengths-based theory to assess family problems in the context of the larger community and target systems within and outside the family for change.

III. Teaching Methods

This class provides opportunities for both theory and skill development. SBFT will be presented through a combination of lectures, demonstrations of the practice interventions, experiential skill-building exercises, and class discussions integrating the course readings, and an essay exam testing students' knowledge and ability to communicate.

IV. Safety Policy

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you

occupy. Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency or from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>

V. Required Texts

- Franklin, C., Trepper, T., Gingerich, W., & McCollum, E. (Eds.). (2012). *Solution-focused brief therapy: A handbook of evidence-based practice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Greene, G. & Lee, M. (2011). *Solution-oriented social work practice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Required Online Readings:

- All additional readings are available on **Blackboard**.

VI. Course Requirements

The grade for the course will be based on the student's ability to demonstrate knowledge and methods from the evidenced-based models of solution-focused therapy and effective interventions for finding solutions. Class attendance, participation, and promptness in completing assignments are considered when assigning the grade. There are three major assignments. This is a professional practice class and each student is expected to demonstrate behavior that meets the criteria of the National Association of Social Workers code of ethics and meets the standards for professional practice of social work.

VII. Class Policies

Students are expected to read the assigned readings (some students use study groups), attend each class meeting, contribute to class discussions, and participate in skill-building exercises. Failure to attend class regularly (missing more than two 2 class sessions) may result in a lower grade for the course, at the instructor's discretion. As soon as students know that they will not be able to attend class, they should e-mail or call the instructor. I respect student's observance of religious holy days. If you must miss class to observe a religious holy day please let me know as soon as you know you will be absent. See section VIII.5 for grading details.

No late assignments will be accepted except in extreme emergencies and then only with permission of the instructor. If students are in an emergency situation they contact the instructor and negotiate a new due date. All late assignments will be assessed point penalties at a rate of 5 points a day.

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs>).

The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY. Please notify the professor of any special accommodations that you may need prior to the end of the second week of class.

VIII. Course Assignments

1. **Essay Exam: (25% of your grade):** There will be an essay exam based on the readings, lectures, and discussions. The exam will be given on Blackboard (details forthcoming). Make-up exams are not given unless there are unusual extenuating circumstances.

A note about essay exams: My intent in giving essay exams is for students to learn to manage information (readings, class discussion, etc.), improve their ability to communicate, and to test students' application of knowledge and skills in practical situations. A goal of graduate education is to integrate and apply your education, and essay exams are a practice in which this can occur. As practice for this, we often will engage in discussion groups related to the readings at the beginning of class. Exams also challenge and encourage students to the high standards of a graduate education: students have a chance to demonstrate their knowledge of SFBT and explain their individual understanding by use of examples, comparisons, and critiques.

- 2. Group Demonstration of SFBT Techniques (40% of your grade):** The class will divide into five groups for preparation and presentation of experiential practices from SFBT. The group's purpose is to experientially model one or a few specific intervention practices of SFBT in a client(s)/counselor format. The modeling may be "live" or captured on video. Members of the group will act as producers, writers, researchers, and actors. If there is a live production, the group will be available to discuss and answer questions about their demonstration. If the demo is on video, the group may choose to stop, discuss, start their demonstration. In addition, the group will develop and provide a written protocol for using the intervention practice, developed like a DTP ("a means of publishing reports, advertising, etc. to typeset quality using a desktop computer"¹) and shared with the class during or after the presentation. The intervention topics are: 1) exploring exceptions; 2) miracle questions; 3) scaling; 4) goaling; and 5) taking a break and reconvening. The demonstrations will be presented on the dates corresponding to these topics on the class schedule. The demonstration, with a question and answer period, should be 30 to 40 minutes long.

As the group progresses in developing their demonstration, they must schedule at least one planning session with the instructor. The group is responsible for scheduling this meeting. (I suggest the group meet with me early in the development process.) All group members will be assigned the same grade for their presentation, so it should reflect equal responsibility on all members' parts (If all members of the group are not sharing the burden of the work, please notify the instructor).

- 3. Video Assignment (25% of your grade):** Each student must turn in a video demonstration of a solution-focused counseling session they have conducted. The video must include all the parts of a solution-focused counseling session as they are elucidated in the SFBT Treatment Manual (Ch 2 of Franklin, et.al. text). Students are free use peers, friends, or other volunteers as their "clients" with the understanding that the participant is aware that the tape is being turned in as an assignment, that their participation is NOT confidential, and that the tape may be used (with their permission) as a teaching instrument in the future. More details about this assignment will be given in class.
- 4. Class Participation (10% of your grade):** This course is practice related. Each class includes "Group Discussion Activities" and/or "Skill-building Exercises" as opportunities for students to share what they are learning or practice the attendant skills. There are opportunities for students to use their own family history and life experiences in these activities; therefore, we will discuss class personal sharing and make agreements about keeping our stories confidential if necessary.

Class participation includes active class involvement and discussion, demonstrating an understanding of SFBT techniques, and evidence of having read the readings. Class involvement is graded based on the student's self-evaluation and the instructor's observation of class participation. The class participation grade is not only determined by the quantity of participation behaviors but also on the quality of the participation; i.e. making salient contributions, reflecting preparation and knowledge of the material, and raising thought-provoking and/or pertinent information.

¹ Definition retrieved online from Dictionary.com at <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/desktop+publishing>

5. Course Grades

A note on Grading: “I do not *give* grades; I record students’ *achievements!* Students *earn* grades.”² From my vantage point, what matters is *learning*. In the study of SFBT, there is no way students can learn everything about this approach in 13 weeks. My goal is to push students’ knowledge base beyond the level they brought to the class (unusually high grades lead me to think I am not pushing hard enough, just as low grades indicate that I am pushing too hard). My goal is for industrious and motivated students to stand out and the average students to recognize that they get out of the class what they put into it. Finally, grades, I think, should be viewed as a measure of understanding, integrating, and applying the course materials. I start the semester imagining that the all students are “B” students and it is up to students to earn their way up from there.

Definitions	Grading scale:
<u>Superior work:</u> The assignment significantly exceeds expectations listed in the syllabus. Student does more than is required in the assignment and demonstrates a high level of in-depth critical thinking and analysis (i.e., coherence and integration of ideas).	90-100=A
<u>Good Work:</u> The assignment meets <u>all</u> the requirements and demonstrates evidence of in-depth critical thinking and analysis.	80-89=B
<u>Average Work:</u> The assignment meets the requirements or has <u>minor</u> gaps but lacks evidence of in-depth critical thinking and analysis	70-79=C
<u>Poor Work:</u> The assignment has important gaps, both in terms of not meeting the requirements and lacking in-depth critical thinking and analysis.	60-69=D Below 60=F

The final course grade will be calculated as follows:	Points
Essay Exam	25
Group Demonstration	40
Video	25
Class Participation	<u>10</u>
	100

² Miller, S. (2000) Thoughts about lessons and grades. Sue Miller’s Homepage. Retrieved online August 20, 2010 from <http://academics.hamilton.edu/biology/smiller/lessonsgrades.html>

IX. Course Schedule: This schedule is intended as a guide: the professor reserves the right to shift sessions and topics based on the learning needs of the class.

(1) September 10		Course Overview and Introductions	
		1) Class introductions 2) Course (syllabus) review; class structure, assignments, readings, etc. 3) Communications: Use of Blackboard, printed handouts, emails, "office hours" 4) Open frame for questions and discussion.	
(2) September 17		Client-Centered Therapy & Clients' Theories of Change	
Texts		Franklin, et.al. (2012): Ch 1	[15]
		Greene & Lee (2011): Ch 1-3	[45]
Readings		Duncan, B., Miller, S., Sparks, J., et.al. (2004) The client's theory of change. In Duncan, B., Miller, S., Sparks, J., <i>The heroic client</i> . San Francisco: Jossey-Bass	[27] 105
Supplemental		Blundo, R. (2006) Shifting our habits of mind: Learning to practice from a strengths perspective. In, Saleebey, D., <i>The strengths perspective in social work practice, 4th Ed</i> . New York: Allyn & Bacon, pp 25 - 44 Hubble, M., Duncan, B., & Miller, S. (1999) Learning and honoring the client's theory: Practical guidelines. In Hubble, M., Duncan, B., & Miller, S., <i>The heart & soul of change: What works in therapy</i> . Washington, DC: The American Psychological Assn., pp 119 - 146	
		→ Group Discussion Activity or Skill-Building Exercise	
(3) September 24		Evidence-based Practice & SFBT	
Texts		Franklin, et.al. (2012): Ch 2	[14]
Readings		Kim, J., Smock, S., Trepper, T, et.al. (2010) Is solution-focused brief therapy evidence-based? <i>Families in Society</i> (91)3, pps 1-7	[6]
		Duncan, B. & Reese, (2012) Empirically supported treatments, evidence-based treatments, and evidence-based practice. In Weiner, Stricker, and Widiger (Eds) <i>Handbook of psychology, Vol 8: Clinical psychology, 2nd Ed</i> . Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.	[37] 57
		→ Group Discussion Activity, Skill-Building Exercise, or Group Demonstration	
(4) October 1		Outcomes, Research	
Text		Franklin, et.al. (2012): Ch 4-7, 9, 19	[70]
Supplemental		Gingrich & Eisenhart, (2000) SFBT: A review of the outcome research. <i>Family Process</i> , (20)4, pps. 477-496 Kim, J. (2008). Examining the effectiveness of solution-focused brief therapy: A meta-analysis. <i>Research on Social Work Practice</i> ,(18)2, pp. 107-116	
		→ Group Discussion Activity or Skill-Building Exercise	
(5) October 8		Cultural Competency & Ethics	
Text		Greene & Lee (2011): Ch 10	[19]
Readings		Barrett, M. (2012) Ethics yesterday & today: Boundaries in an age of informality. <i>Psychotherapy Networker</i> (34)4, 21-25...	[7]
		Corey, G., Schneider-Corey, M., & Callanan, P. (2011) Multicultural perspectives and diversity issues. <i>Issues and ethics in the helping professions</i> . Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Ch 4	[43]

<i>Cultural Competency & Ethics; continued</i>	Dermer, Hemesath, & Russell, (1998) A feminist critique of SF therapy. <i>American Journal of Family Therapy</i> . (26)3 pps. 239-249 [10] Diller, J. (2011) What it means to be culturally competent. <i>Cultural diversity: A primer for the human services</i> . Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole. Ch 2 [24] 103 → Group Discussion Activity or Skill-Building Exercise
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(6) October 15	<i>SFBT "101" ~ Assessment: Finding a Solvable Problem</i>
Texts	Franklin, et.al. (2012): Ch 2 [Review] [16]
Readings	Greene & Lee (2011): Ch 4 [12] Berg (1994) <i>Family based services: A solution-focused approach</i> . New York, NY: Norton, Ch 2-3 [33] De Jong & Berg (2008) <i>Interviewing for solutions, 3rd Ed.</i> Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Ch 1-3 [50] Walter, J. & Peller, J. (1992) Assumptions of a solution-focused approach. <i>Becoming solution-focused in brief therapy</i> . New York: Brunner/Mazel, Ch 2 [25] 136
Recommended	Murphy & Duncan, (2007) Assessment 1: Recruiting the heroic client, in <i>Brief intervention for school problems, 2nd Ed.</i> , New York, NY: Guilford → Group Discussion Activity or Skill-Building Exercise

(7) October 22	<i>SFBT ~ Finding Exceptions & Questioning Techniques</i>
Texts	Franklin, et.al. (2012): Ch 3 [15]
Readings	Greene & Lee (2011): Ch 5 [17] De Jong & Berg (2008): Ch 4 [23] Berg, I.K. (1994): Ch 6 [26] Berg, I.K., & Dolan, Y. (2001) <i>Tales of solutions</i> . New York, NY: Norton, Ch 3 [23] Berg & Dolan (2001) Ch 6 [24] 138
Recommended	De Jong & Berg (2008): Ch 6 Franklin, et.al. (2012): Ch 10 → Group Demonstration

(8) October 29	<i>The Miracle Question</i>
Readings	Berg, I.K., & Dolan, Y. (2001) Ch 2 [33] De Shazer, S. & Dolan, Y. (2007) <i>More than miracles: The state of the art of solution-focused brief therapy</i> . New York, NY: The Hawthorne Press. Ch 3-4 [35] 68 → Group Demonstration

(9) November 5	<i>Scaling and Goaling</i>
Texts	Greene & Lee (2011): Ch 6 [30] Franklin, et.al. (2012): Ch 5 [15]
Readings	Berg (1994) Scaling questions. <i>Family based services</i> . Ch 6 [9] Franklin, Corcoran, Nowicki, et.al. (1997) Using self-anchored scales to measure outcomes in SF therapy. <i>Journal of Systemic Therapies</i> [17] Walter & Peller (1992) Ch 4: Well defined goals. [10] 81 → Group Demonstrations (2)

(10) November 12		<i>Taking a Break & End of Session</i>	
Texts Readings	Greene & Lee (2011): Ch 7, 9		[41]
	Walter & Peller (1992): Ch 9		[18]
	Berg & Dolan (2001): Ch 5:		[16]
	De Jong & Berg (2008): Ch 7		[24]
	Chang, J. (2010) The reflecting team: a training method for family counselors. <i>The Family Journal</i> (18)36-44		[8]
			107
	→ <i>Group Demonstration</i> Essay Exam on Blackboard!		
(11) November 19		<i>Special Populations</i>	
Texts Readings	Green & Lee (2011): Ch 12		[27]
	Lee, M. & Mjelde-Mossey, L.A., (2004) Cultural dissonance among generations: Solution-focused approach with east Asian elders and their families. <i>Journal of Marital & Family Therapy</i> , 30:4, 497-513		[14]
	Tohn & Oshlag (1996) SF therapy with mandated clients. In Miller, Hubble, & Duncan, <i>Handbook of solution-focused brief therapy</i> . San Francisco: Josey Bass Publishers. Ch. 5		[31]
	Zamarripa, M. (2009) Solution-focused therapy in the south Texas borderlands. <i>Journal of systemic therapies</i> . 28:4, pp 1-11		[10]
			82
	→ <i>Group Discussion Activity or Skill-Building Exercise</i>		
(12) November 26		<i>Special Problems</i>	
Texts Readings	Franklin, et.al.(2012) <i>Any Two</i> : Ch 11[10], 12[10], 15[11], 16[13], 17[14], 18 [11]		[14]
	Green & Lee (2011): Ch 13		[14]
	George, E, Iveson, C., & Ratner, H. (1999) Smoke gets in your eyes: A case of depression. <i>Problem to solution: Brief therapy with individuals and families</i> . London: BT Press. Ch 3		[9]
	Sahily de Castro, (2008) Solution-focused therapy for families coping with suicide. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i> . Retrieved online November 2008 from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3658/is_200801/ai_n24392892/print?tag=artBody;col1		[13]
			56
Recommended	Metcalfe, L. (1998) Changing directions in group therapy. <i>Solution-focused group therapy</i> . New York: Free Press, Ch 1		
	Nowicki, J. & Arbuckle, L. (2009) Social workers as family counselors in a non-profit, community-based agency. In A. R. Roberts, A., (Ed) <i>Social worker desk reference</i> . New York: Oxford U. Press, pp. 45-53.		
	→ <i>Group Discussion Activity, Skill-Building Exercise, or Group Demonstration</i> Video Assignments Due		
(13) December 3		<i>Last Class ~ Evaluations</i>	
Reading	Connie, E. & Metcalf, L. (2009) <i>The art of solution-focused therapy</i> . New York: Springer. Ch 8-9		[30]
	→ Class Reflections Evaluations		