Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology  
The Graduate Center of the City University of New York  

Practicum IA: Interviewing and Personality Appraisal (Child Intake)  
Course # 77700.16174  
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Day & Time: Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00p.m.; Live supervision Tuesdays 4:00-6:30p.m.  
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:  
The purpose of this class is to teach you the essentials of child evaluation and assessment. These are skills that are critical in making decisions regarding treatment, school placement, testing, and medication, and involve developing your skills in parent interviewing, child play sessions, formulation, and diagnosis. These are skills you will use every single time you meet a child in a clinical setting.

Course Objectives:  
This is a practicum course, and as such our primary focus will be evaluating the children assigned to the Intake Team by the Clinic Director. This course is a companion course to Lifespan Development and Child Psychopathology, which will introduce a number of the theoretical, development, and clinical constructs relevant to evaluating and assessing children and their families. Readings each week will address clinical interviewing, developmental history taking, play observation, diagnostic assessment, report-writing and formulation. In addition, you should be familiar with the disorders of childhood in the DSM-IV, as well as the Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual (PDM).

Within the first two months of the term, you will each be assigned one family to evaluate. You will be responsible for doing a complete intake on that child; this includes parent interviews (which include taking a developmental history, getting a history of the problem, etc.) a series of child play sessions, contact with the school as indicated, having the family complete questionnaires regarding the child’s behavior, obtaining consents for the family to participate in the child intake research, and testing as indicated. Finally, you will meet with both the parent(s) and – if appropriate – the child, for feedback. On the basis of all of your observations you will be expected to write a final report that includes a summary of all sessions, a diagnostic and dynamic formulation, as well as a treatment plan.

The course time is divided between class time and live supervision. Class time (2:10 -4 PM Tuesdays) is used for didactic purposes, as well as to review case material and session notes. In order to give everyone a chance to make the transition from clinic meetings, etc., we start at 2:10 (SHARP). Everyone gets assigned a week or two to bring
snack, as the afternoons are long. The second two hours (4-6 or 6:30 PM, Tuesdays) will be used to see "live" cases, and continue reviewing clinical material. If we don't have a live case scheduled, we will use this time for catch-up and supervision, as we will be working on many cases concomitantly. You will also be assigned an individual child supervisor once you’ve had your initial session with the parents. Please note that until we start seeing cases (usually the 3rd or 4th week of the term), we will meet from 4-5 PM in what I have called “Lab Time” in the syllabus.

There are a lot of things to “do” in each class session: 1) Review the status of each of the cases we are following, including logistics, clinical questions, updates, etc. 2) Review the things you need to know for upcoming sessions with parents/children, and 3) Review reading materials. This is a tall order. I will try to limit the logistics to 15-20 minutes. We will then use ongoing case reviews as a backdrop for discussing the principles of evaluation. If at any time, you feel the focus of the class time needs adjustment (if we are, for instance, spending too much time on logistics, etc.), please let me know.

The TA for the course will meet with you weekly to review procedures and other clinical issues.

One of the main “texts” for the course is the Child Intake Manual I wrote describing the intake process at the Psychological Center. This comprehensive document details all the procedures involved in conducting an intake at the clinic. In addition to this manual, I will be passing out a number of protocols to be used in gathering demographic data and developmental and family history, making child observations, and tracking school performance and other academic information. The Child Intake Manual has been revised each time I’ve taught the course, so if you have questions, please review the manual – the answer is likely to be there!

**Requirements and Grading:**
Grades will be based upon class participation (30%). The remaining proportion of the grade will be based upon the “quality” of your work, that is, the degree to which you really engage in the process, endeavor to learn from supervision, and take the time and the effort required to do your best given your level of skill and understanding. “Quality” of course also refers to your capacity to listen and think clinically, and to conduct yourself in a thoughtful, humane, and clinically responsible way. You will not receive a grade until all written work has been handed in. You are expected to get your report in to me within a month of your third session with the child.

**Readings:**
A number of books and articles are listed in the syllabus. I will also be passing out articles relevant to individual cases as the semester proceeds. Please also familiarize yourself with the APA Guidelines for Ethical Conduct, as well as the APA Practicum Guide listed below. Please be aware that there are also a number of specific APA guidelines and task force reports regarding, for instance, child custody, traumatic exposure, etc. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with these as necessary at www.apa.org
Texts:


Also Recommended:


Weekly Reading Assignments and Class Topics:

**Introduction**

Conducting an Evaluation

Review Child Intake Manual

**Session 1**

Getting started

Review Child Intake Manual

Bromfield, R., op. cit., Chapters 1 & 2

Review Chapter 4, Succeeding in Practicum.

**Session 2**

Obtaining a Developmental History

Greenspan, S., op. cit., Chapter 1 & 7

Siskind, D., 1999, op. cit., Part I


Lab Time: Review procedures

**Session 3**

Obtaining a Developmental History

Greenspan, S., op. cit., Chapter 2 & 3

Review Tuber, Gomes, & Weinstein Developmental History Formats

Lab Time: Review videotapes of previously conducted parent interviews

**Session 4**

Working with Parents


Bromfield, op. cit., Chapters 11 & 12

Siskind, 1999, op. cit., Chapter 12 & 13

**Session 5 Meeting the Child: Play, Play, Play**

Tuber, S. & Caflisch, J. (2011), *op. cit.*, Chapter 1

Siskind, D., 2001, *op. cit.*, Chapters 6 & 7

Bromfield, R., *op. cit.*, Chapters 3-5.

Greenspan, S., *op. cit.*, Chapters 4 & 5

**Session 6 Meetings the Child: Play, Play, Play**


Bromfield, *op. cit.*, Chapters 6-10

Chapter 13, Child Intake Manual

**Session 7 When to talk and when not to talk**


**Session 8 Outside the evaluation: School contact, medication evaluations**

Bromfield, *op. cit.*, Chapters 14, 17


Session 9    Visible and Invisible Differences: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture

Bromfield, op. cit., Chapter 16


Sessions 9-12    Ongoing case review

During these weeks, we’ll be going over the cases that you’ve been assigned. Please finish Bromfield, Sandberg & Spritz, & the Siskind Primer, and read Annie Rogers’ A Shining Affliction, Winnicott’s Playing and Reality. I also strongly recommend Lieberman and Van Horn’s book, largely because they really address the issue of trauma, which is so relevant in our population. Also wonderful is Siskind’s The Child Patient and the Therapeutic Process. Each of these books will provide a background for our discussions of the basics of child therapy: what it is like to work with children, what to do in the room with them, what to pay attention to (everything!), and how to begin to conceptualize the therapeutic process and to develop dynamic formulations. These books are written by very experienced psychotherapists, each of whom has a distinct voice in thinking about child therapy. They also present a varied picture of short term consultations (Winnicott), child-parent therapy (Lieberman), long term psychotherapy (Siskind) and a more contemporary view of dynamic psychotherapy with children (Bromfield).

Also, Chapter 13, Child Intake Manual (read again!)

Session 13-15    Diagnosis and Developmental Formulation, Report-Writing

During the last 3 weeks of the semester, we will review each of the cases presented in detail, with the aim of clarifying the dynamic formulation, diagnosis, and disposition. This will help students formulate their feedback to the parents, and will help in report writing.

Chapters 9-12, Child Intake Manual (Review outline for report, sample reports, etc.)

Greenspan, op. cit., Chapter 6


In addition, please review the following:

PDM: Chapters on Childhood Disorders
NOTES:

Please remember to register for Clinical Supervision (CRN 11085).

I need to have drafts of all your reports in before I will give you a grade.

In closing, let me just say that -- aside from the skills you will learn in this course, and continue developing for the rest of your career -- learning to listen and attend to your own reactions to a child and his/her family are as vital skills as any others. They give you a window into the child's experience that can't be duplicated by any other kind of knowledge. So, try to stay open to your responses -- flashes of anger, compassion, possessiveness, etc. -- they will make you a better clinician and observer, and a special kind of secure base for the child.

Most important, you get to play, so have fun!