I. **Catalogne Course Description**

This course provides a framework of knowledge, values, skills and experiences for spiritually sensitive social work. Students will develop skills and insight into responding competently and ethically to diverse spiritual and religious perspectives in social work settings with individuals, organizations and communities. Attention will also be given to collaboration with faith-based organizations as spirituality enters into the dimension of policy and service delivery as “secular” and “spiritual” come together to address human need in society. Thus this course pays attention to both micro and macro aspects of social work.

II. **Course Overview**

Social work provides individuals, families, organizations and communities with the resources and tools to achieve their highest potential. From an Ecological Perspective, social work incorporates a variety of approaches when serving people; utilizing interventions that incorporate biological, psychological, sociological, and spiritual aspects.

In this course, the term "spirituality" designates the human longing for a sense of connection to something greater than oneself. Spirituality is experienced through unique and common forms that are expressed in societal myths, rituals and symbols. As such, spirituality includes and goes beyond institutional religious beliefs. "Religion" refers to organized structures that center around particular beliefs, behaviors, and traditions.

As social workers we need to be prepared to respond ethically, responsibly, and effectively to the spiritual meanings under girding peoples' human experiences and religious beliefs both in a micro and macro context.

III. **Place of Course in Program**

This is an elective course recommended for professional growth and development.
IV. **Course Goals and Objectives**

Goal:

1. To enable students to respect and utilize effectively their own spiritual values and religious beliefs and those of their clients to create positive change and healing within individuals, families, organizations and communities.

Objectives:

1. Integrate, appreciate and interpret one’s own spirituality and religious tradition.
2. Identify and respect diverse religious and spiritual experiences and the implications for social work practice and social justice.
3. Understand the role of spiritual values and religious beliefs in the framework of contemporary clinical interventions.
5. Demonstrate skills of working sensitively and effectively with clients' spiritual values and religious beliefs in social work practice; i.e., with clients who face life-threatening illness; substance abuse, poverty, etc.
6. Apply selected spiritually sensitive clinical practice techniques in a manner consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.
7. Experience religious diversity from multiple paradigms; i.e., racial, ethnic, gender, rural/urban, age, etc.; particularly those of oppressed groups.
8. Analyze critically the recent research on religion and spirituality in social work practice.

V. **Required and Recommended Texts and Readings**


Recommended texts:


The required texts can be purchased at the Rutgers University Bookstore. Recommended texts may be ordered online at Amazon.com.

Most required readings are on electronic reserve. Go to Rutgers University Libraries home page (www.libraries.rutgers.edu), click on IRIS, and then click on Reserve Desk. Readings are listed in alphabetical order by author’s name and can be found by searching Spirituality and Social Work or the professor’s name (Stager). Other required readings may be found by searching on Iris- Indexes and Data Bases under the heading Social Work and then Academic Search Premier.

VI. **Course Requirements**

Students are expected to attend class and to complete readings on a timely basis so that they can participate effectively in class discussions. In addition, students are expected to take leadership roles in class discussion or exercises.

VII. **Grading**

10% Participation in class discussion. This participation should be of the quality which reflects the student's own development and contributes to the knowledge and professional development of other class members.

25% Spiritual genogram/ecomap/lifemap development project Using the models discussed in class, students will provide a spiritual genogram/ecomap/lifemap based on their own spiritual journey. This assignment is due in the 12th week of classes.

25% Two Onsite visits to a religious/spiritual service; 2 to 3 page reflection paper and class discussion. At least one of the visits must be to a tradition which is outside of your own spiritual tradition. The visits will be a part of the class discussion in the weeks they are due. In the paper, describe the rituals, symbols and spiritual expressions found in this experience and how they are different/similar to your own. The first paper is due during the 5th week of classes. The second paper is due during the 9th week of classes. For class discussion, students should be prepared to give a brief 5 minute summary of their visits.
Scholarly paper (between 8-10 pages, not including references and bibliography) on a topic chosen by the student with instructor's approval. This could be a paper regarding working with clients from a particular spiritual tradition, intervening with clients with a specific spiritual conflict; applying a particular spiritual technique (guided imagery, prayer, pilgrimage, etc.) or evaluating the aspects of spirituality on a macro-level in an agency. Due the 14th week of classes.

Class presentation of paper; each presentation will be 15 minutes (Dates will be assigned beginning the 13th week of class).

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<tr>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
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<td>60-69</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>50-59</td>
<td>F</td>
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VIII. Course Evaluation

Rutgers University issues a survey that evaluates both the course and instructor. This survey is completed by students toward the end of the semester, and all answers are confidential and anonymous. The instructor may also choose to conduct a mid-point evaluation.

IX. Course Outline

A variety of methods are used including lectures, discussions, exercises and assignments, readings, videos. Readings marked with an asterisk "*" and are not from the texts are available electronically through the library reserve system, and are required.

Session 1: Course Overview: Defining Spirituality

- Overview of the course
- Mutual introductions
- Introduction to the language of spirituality


Session 2: Distinguishing between religious/ spiritual experiences, values and beliefs

Core Readings


**Recommended Readings:**


**Sessions 3&4: Understanding Spiritual Differences**

- Identifying & distinguishing various religious traditions and spiritual paradigms:
- Christian, Hindu, Islam, Jewish, Native American, etc.
- Mysticism, Taoism, Transpersonal Social Work, Existentialism, etc.

**Core Readings:**


Session 3: Chapters 3,4,6,8
Session 4: Chapters 7, 9, 11, 12

**Recommended Reading**

Hodge, D. R. (2005) Social work and the house of Islam: Orienting practitioners to the beliefs and values of Muslims in the United States *Social Work, April 50 (2)* April, pp. 162-173. (Reserve)

**Session 5: Revisiting Human Development and its Relationship to Faith**

- Stages of ego-development in the Life Cycle Model
- Understanding the elements of Faith Development
- Developing a pictorial image of the Faith Life Cycle

**Core Readings:**


**Recommended Reading:**


**Session 6: Stages of Faith:**

- Early childhood – elementary roots of faith
- Childhood – a deepening awareness

**Core Readings:**


**Session 7: Stages of Faith:**

- Early Adolescence
- Middle and Late Adolescence
*Kelcourse, F., Part II: Chapters 9-11, pp. 205-235


**Session 8: Stages of Faith:**
- Young Adulthood – self-realization of faith
- Mid-life – integration of one’s own understanding of faith and a broader outlook of faith

Core Readings:
*Kelcourse, F.: Part II: Chapters 11,12, pp. 236-268.

**Session 9: Stages of Faith:**
- Late Adulthood
- End of Life

Core Readings:
*Kelcourse, F. Part II: Chapters 12,13, pp. 269-308


**Recommended Reading:**


**Session 10: Assessing Spiritual Development**

**Core Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Session 11: Assessing Spiritual Development Continued**

**Core Readings**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Session 12: Assisting with the Spiritual Growth of Clients**

- Use of Professional Self
- Nurturing of Spiritual Growth

**Core Readings**


**Session 13: Spirituality and Recovery**

- Forgiveness and Forgiving
- Surrender and Powerlessness
- Twelve-Step Programs and Spirituality

**Core Readings**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Sessions 14&15: Spirituality in Macro-practice**

- The Faith-Based Organization as “Host Agency”
- The “Faith-Based Initiative”
- The Efficacy Of Faith-Based Organizations
- What Social Workers Need to Know About working in FBO’s

**Core Readings:**


**Recommended Reading:**


**X. Academic Integrity Policy**

All work submitted in a graduate course must be your own.

It is unethical and a violation of the University’s Academic Integrity Policy to present the ideas or words of another without clearly and fully identifying the source. Inadequate citations will be constructed as an attempt to misrepresent the cited materials as your own.

Use the citation style preferred by the discipline.

Effective September 2, 2008, a revised Policy on Academic Integrity will go into effect. The new policy is posted at [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml<file://localhost/owa/redir.aspx>](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml<file://localhost/owa/redir.aspx>)

Please Note: Violations of academic integrity by graduate and professional students will normally be penalized more severely than violations by first-year undergraduate students. Since all violations of academic integrity by a graduate or professional student are potentially separable
under the Academic Integrity Policy, faculty members should not adjudicate alleged academic integrity violations by graduate and professional students, but should refer such allegations to the appropriate Academic Integrity Facilitator (AIF) or to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The AIF that you should contact is Antoinette Y. Farmer, 732.932.2621. The student shall be notified in writing, by email or hand delivery, of the alleged violation and of the fact that the matter has been referred to the AIF for adjudication. This notification shall be done within 10 days of identifying the alleged violation. Once the student has been notified of the allegation, the student may not drop the course or withdraw from the school until the adjudication process is complete. A TZ or incomplete grade, shall be assigned until the case is resolved.

**Definition of Plagiarism**
Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or part in one’s own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: to paraphrase Plato’s comment...and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not to be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one’s general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some case, be a subtle issue. Any question about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.

**XI. Disability Accommodation**
Please Note: Any student who believes that s/he may need an accommodation in this class due to a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services, Kreeger Learning Center, 151 College Avenue; dfoffice@rci.rutgers.edu; 732-932-2847.

Students must have a letter of accommodation from the Office of Disability Services in order to receive accommodations.

**XII. Bibliography**


