Handbook and Application for
Psychology 3270-3280
Field Practicum I & II
2021-2022

For Students: 1) Please read through the Course Description
2) Complete the Application (it’s the last page of this handbook)
3) Sign up for an interview on Dr. Segal’s Google Page
To the Prospective Field Practicum Student:

Before you apply to join the class, please note that there are slots for only 18 students, with a strong preference for Psychology majors. There are two reasons, and they’re related. First, the dangers of legal liability. Each student works with at least three children. If you or a child you work with is hurt, your family, Cornell, and I may well be sued in court. Because of this liability, I need to supervise each student individually each week to minimize mistakes, to be kept up to date on the clinical progress, and to move quickly in case of emergency. And so the second reason is staffing: I keep track of 18 students, each of whom works with 3 or 4 children – that’s nearly 75 cases I’m responsible for.

Last year 50 students applied to join the class. There are so many of you who are well-qualified that I was forced, after an initial screening, to use a lottery. I’m sure it will be the same this year. Nevertheless, before you apply do consider the following issues:

1) **What is your motivation?** This course is for students who are nearly certain they want to pursue clinical training at some point after graduation. If you’re planning a career in psychology, psychiatry, or social work, this is for you.

2) **What will your senior year look like?** This course has 2 seminar meetings (Mondays & Wednesdays) and demands 4-6 hours of clinical placement, primarily in the late mornings and afternoons. It works best for students who put this sequence at the center of their schedule. Of course, students with honors projects or club memberships are welcome, but if you’re playing in a band or you’re a member of a sports team that involves regular travel, then I would discourage you from applying.

3) **How have you been functioning?** Students in this course develop year-long, one-to-one relationships with 3-4 children. It is crucial that you remain psychologically focused on building an alliance with them. If in the past year you’ve suffered from depression or anxiety that has left you less than functional– that is, you’ve been unable to come to class for weeks at a time, or had to leave campus – then reconsider applying. Reflect on this: many of the children you’ll be working with come from chaotic homes, have a history of abuse or neglect, or have been abandoned by one or both parents. It is hard to hear their stories, so it’s important that you think carefully about whether you’re at a place in your life where you feel strong and stable enough to do it.

Despite these warnings, the Field Practicum program is rare opportunity for undergraduates to gain closely supervised clinical experience. I look forward to meeting with you.

Harry Segal, Ph.D.
Senior Lecturer
General Course Description
This is a two-semester course providing an intensive clinical field experience for undergraduates. Students are assigned to an agency or school where they spend 3-6 hours a week working one-on-one with children, adolescents and adults. (See the Current Placement List and the Role of Field Practicum Student attached to this guide.) They are supervised by a clinician on site as well as weekly by Harry Segal, a clinical psychologist licensed by New York State. The twice weekly seminar covers theory and research of adult and developmental psychopathology as well as principles of psychotherapy and clinical formulation.

The children and adults who work with our students expect to establish a relationship with them over the course of the year; for this reason students who register for 3270 in the fall commit to enrolling in 3280 in the spring. (Only rarely are students asked or permitted to drop the sequence after completing 3270.) In addition to their field work and weekly supervision, each semester students write formulation papers, termination summaries, and give a case presentation in the spring term.

Course Prerequisites
Students should have taken Psych/HD 3250/3700, Introduction to Psychopathology, although in some cases they may be permitted to take the course concurrently with 3280. Students are encouraged, but not required, to have taken other clinically-related courses.

Student Selection
Because the class size is small, the course is open to seniors only. Preference will be given to psychology majors. Interested students must complete the application attached to this form and sign up for an interview with Dr. Segal to be held on April 10-20. Sign up for an interview on Dr. Segal’s door – 222 Uris Hall. (Decisions will be made by the end of classes.)

Ethics & Liability
All of the schools or agencies providing field work experiences have signed contracts with Cornell to provide supervision, safety, and appropriate roles for our students. Students learn the APA Ethics Code, understand the role of Protective Services in New York State, maintain confidentiality, and report any critical incidents which occur at their placement.

Faculty:  Harry Segal, Ph.D.
         Senior Lecturer, Psychology & Human Development
Placement Role of Field Practicum Students

In residential treatment programs, as well as day treatment and outpatient services, individuals are hired as “mental health workers” or “patient care workers.” Their roles are specifically designed to meet the needs of the program, but the general principal underlying their position is this: They establish and maintain a clinical relationship with clients. This “clinical relationship” is always distinct from the role of “therapist,” even though the role is a therapeutic one.

Parameters of the Mental Health Worker Role
The mental health worker in general is expected to 1) establish a working alliance with a client, 2) to facilitate trust and the exchange of information, 3) to assess, in general terms, the overall functioning of the client, and 2) to help the client achieve specific goals prescribed by the client’s treatment team, therapist, or overall program. In pursuing these activities, the mental health worker, under supervision by a clinician, is also expected to avoid taking on the role of therapist by refraining from 1) encouraging inappropriate or intense client disclosure, 2) making interpretations about the client’s diagnosis, personality, or issues, 3) establishing a specific therapeutic treatment plan, or 4) any activity which would appear to usurp the role or responsibilities of a therapist.

Example: A mental health worker, assigned to a work adjustment program, is in charge of 10 psychiatric patients who are volunteering several hours a week at a non-profit institution to gain work experience. The mental health worker joins the patients at the non-profit for all of their shifts. She establishes a personal relationship with each patient, provides a weekly assessment of how well each patient is doing in his or her volunteer job, has individual meetings with the patients to review their work performance and explore their goals for future employment. In addition, the mental health worker is also there to provide support should a patient becomes distressed or psychotic, and is under instructions to call the agency for guidance if the symptoms escalate.

Field Placements Students & Supervision
It is appropriate to consider the field practicum students, enrolled in 3270-3280, as mental health workers assigned to various non-profit institutions to support the goals of those programs. Although our students are supervised by their placement staff, they nevertheless come to their instructor for supervision of their field placement work to ensure that 1) they are gaining the necessary skills for performing the role of mental health worker, 2) to ensure that they are maintaining the boundaries appropriate to their role, and 3) to monitor the activities of the placements generally.
Psych/HD 3270/3280  Field Placements for 2021-2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ithaca Area Schools:</td>
<td><em>Cayuga Heights Elementary, Dryden Elementary, South Seneca Elementary (Interlaken), South Hill Elementary</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Enfield Elementary, Fall Creek Elementary</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cornell students from Psychology 3270-3280 will spend between 3-6 hours per week at these elementary schools where they will be assigned several students who the teachers and/or school social workers hope will benefit from a “special friend.” The goal of the placement is to help “at-risk” or stressed children by providing an additional relationship modeling respect and empathy. The practicum students are expected to work with at least 2 children by meeting with them one-on-one and by helping them in class. The practicum students will be supervised both by teachers as well as by the school psychologist and/or social worker, who may also invite them to participate in other interventions, such as group meetings.

*Lehman Alternative Community School (LACS)*
New to our program last year, LACS is public alternative middle school/high school program in Ithaca. Practicum students will be assigned 3-4 middle or early high school students to “hang out” with and guide according to principles of psychotherapy with adolescents.

*As of now, the Ithaca, Dryden and South Seneca school districts have given us a tentative go-ahead for this fall. I’m not sure how the placements will work in this hopefully post-pandemic world, but we’ll have to play it by ear.*
Psych/HD 3270-3280  2020-2021  Student Application

**Interviews will be conducted via zoom, facetime, or phone on 5/24/21.** Please complete this form and email it to hgs2@cornell. Then go to this google page to schedule a ten minute interview.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1IdPJIZBBcGqYVIlchuyBPaUsytYx7Mh1bb1Uxx1raa48/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1IdPJIZBBcGqYVIlchuyBPaUsytYx7Mh1bb1Uxx1raa48/edit#gid=0)

Name:_____________________________ Email:____________________________

Phone:_____________________________ Major: Psych   HD   Other____________

College Class in Fall 2021-Spring 2022: Junior ____   Senior______

Do you have a car?  *(not required)*  yes ___   no___

Have you taken Psych 3250/HD 3700?  yes ___   no___

List the courses taken related to psychopathology or psychotherapy:

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

List any mental health work experience

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________
In a paragraph below, please explain why you’re interested in taking this course.