COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will present the state-of-the-art knowledge and research of mental disorders of adults and the elderly, as well as factors that promote mental health and prevent mental disorders in adults and the elderly. Bio-psycho-social theories of coping, trauma, and etiology, the impact of mental health disorders on individuals and family members, and the relationship of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and social class to mental health will be presented. Classification systems of adult mental functioning and mental disorders will be presented, such as DSM-IV and PIE. Students will be taught to critically understand both the strengths and limitations of these classification systems.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast the utility of the mental disorders diagnostic system with broader social work and behavioral science frameworks focusing on social functioning.

2. Discuss the bio-psycho-social aspects of the disorders below in terms of clinical presentation, prognosis, etiology, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

   a) schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders
   b) mood disorders (including major depression, bipolar disorder, and dysthymia)
   c) personality disorders (including anti-social and borderline personality disorders)
   d) anxiety disorders (including obsessive-compulsive, panic and post
traumatic stress disorders, and phobias)
e) mental disorders of aging (including Alzheimer's and other dementias).
f) substance abuse disorders

3. Discuss the impact of culture and race on the disorder and the person diagnosed with the disorder.

4. Discuss the potential of the mental disorder classification system to generate deviance, and discuss strategies to minimize those risks and combat stigma.

5. Discuss the appropriate use of diagnostic/classification systems and the ethical questions surrounding the use of these systems.

6. Distinguish empirically based generalizations related to mental disorders from what is sometimes described as clinical wisdom, often promulgations by prominent figures, and be able to use the scientifically based literature in search for solutions to problems.

7. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to mental health and mental disorders of adults and elderly.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO FOUR CURRICULAR THEMES:

Multiculturalism and Diversity will be addressed through discussions of different patterns of health promotion opportunities and diagnosing practices affecting diverse cultural groups, including women, racial and ethnic minorities, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered persons, persons with other primary medical conditions and persons of low socio-economic status.

Social Justice and Social Change will be addressed through examination of the discrimination experienced by people with mental illness, particularly those from disadvantaged groups. The social justice and social change agenda of family advocacy and consumer support and empowerment groups will be examined as a source of information about needed social changes.

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation will be addressed through the following means: 1) epidemiological studies of the influence of different factors (e.g., poverty) on the incidence and prevalence of particular disorders and their promotion and prevention implications, 2) prevention will also be addressed by an examination of the avoidable negative social consequences of severe mental illness (e.g., homelessness, joblessness, and disrupted educational careers), 3) prevention, still
further, will be considered from the point of view of averting the occurrence of disorders through early intervention, 4) treatment will be discussed in terms of the clinical efficacy and service effectiveness of various interventions, and 5) rehabilitation will be considered in the context of the effectiveness of various residential, vocational, social, and educational services for people with mental disorders.

Behavioral and Social Science Research will be addressed through the review of epidemiological studies dealing with: the frequency and distinguishing characteristics of those who experience particular disorders; controlled trials of various interventions including medication, intensive outreach services, social skills training and psychoeducational services; and follow-up surveys of persons affected by the disorders.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO SOCIAL WORK ETHICS AND VALUES:

This course will emphasize working on behalf of the most disadvantaged persons with mental disorders. Special emphasis will be placed on advocacy and environmental modifications. The potential harm associated with classification will be discussed as will ethically questionable practices that have arisen as the DSM-IV has been embedded in insurance reimbursement and service eligibility policies.

FORMAT OF COURSE

The objectives of the course will be pursued through lectures, discussions, demonstrations, case studies, and visits by individuals experiencing the disorders covered in this class. There will be two exams, one at mid-term and one at the final session. The course grade will be an average of the grade for each exam. Students are expected to attend all classes.

TOPICS AND REQUIRED READING ASSIGNMENTS

Texts:


Topics:

A. Assessment and Diagnosis

1. DSM-IV, pp. 1-12, 27-35.


B. Anxiety Disorders

1. DSM-IV, pp. 429-485.


D. Mood Disorders


E. Eating Disorders

1. DSM-IV, pp. 583 - 596.


F. Drug and Alcohol Use Disorders

1. DSM-IV, pp. 191-293.


G. Schizophrenia and Psychosis

1. DSM-IV, pp. 297 - 344.


H. Personality Disorders

1. DSM-IV, pp. 685 - 730.


I. Dementia and other Disorders of the Elderly

1. DSM-IV, pp. 629 - 673.


J. Sexual Disorders

1. DSM-IV, pp. 535 - 582.
