MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL DISORDERS OF ADULTS AND ELDERLY

Social Work 606.001
Winter, 2006

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Mon. 9:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M.
Office Hours:
Mon. 2:00 P.M.-4:00 P.M.
By appointment

Course Description

This course will examine conceptual framework and research findings relevant to mental health and mental disorders of adults and the elderly. Biological and psychosocial frameworks and findings will be examined from an evidenced-based point of view. The promotion of health and the prevention of various mental disorders will be examined. The classification (diagnosis), etiology, treatment, rehabilitation and prognosis of mental disorders will be discussed. Various factors that modify mental disorder such as socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability and age will be considered. The impact of these factors on symptomatology, social functioning, quality of life and prognosis will be discussed. The relationship of people with disorders to their families, caregivers and others in supportive and regulatory roles will be explored.

Course Content

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV-TR) system of classifying behavior will be compared with other classification systems such as Person in Environment (P.I.E.). It will also be compared with other social work and social science approaches to assessment, particularly those focusing on social functioning rather than disorder. The reliability of the DSM-IV-TR system; the usefulness of the system for the purposes of promotion, prevention, treatment or rehabilitation will be discussed as well as their links to social work and social science constructs. The disorders to be considered include schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, mood disorders, personality disorders, anxiety disorders and mental disorders of aging. The prevalence of these disorders will be considered with particular reference to their distribution according to such factors as socio-economic status,
race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age and physical disability. Studies exploring the influence of biological factors on the development of these disorders will be examined. This will be linked to the response of these disorders to a variety of medications and to nonpharmacological somatic treatments, such as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and bright light treatment. At the same time it will be recognized that biological treatments can be helpful for conditions of non-biological etiology (Think aspirin for headache). Likewise studies exploring the influence of environmental factors on the development, onset, recurrence and persistence of these disorders will be considered. Whatever the presumed etiology, the course will consider the appropriateness of various psychosocial services including psychotherapy/counseling, residential, vocational, social, educational, and self-help and mutual aid programs for people with various types of mental disorder.

The role of families and community caregivers in supporting individuals with these disorders will be addressed. Family and environmental factors will be identified that may be amenable to modifications, thus preventing relapse. Special attention will be given to understanding the processes by which stigma develops and is maintained.

The potential of the mental disorder classification system to create deviance will be examined. Misuses of the system and their negative consequences will be discussed especially as they fall disproportionately on persons from disadvantaged groups which include women, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBT persons, persons with primary medical conditions and persons of low socio-economic status. Strategies for avoiding these misuses will be discussed. Concerns about ethnically questionable uses of the DSM-IV-TR to influence eligibility or reimbursement for services will be discussed.

Prevention will be discussed in relation to each of the disorders. For example, obstetric difficulties will be discussed in relation to schizophrenia, race in relation to the misdiagnosis of bipolar disorder, loss in relation to depression and dysthymia, and violence in relation to posttraumatic stress syndrome.

**Course Themes:**

*Multiculturalism and Social 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; persons with variant sexual orientations; persons with other primary medical conditions; and persons of low socio-economic status.

*Social Justice and Social Change 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.

*Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation will be addressed* through the following means: Epidemiological studies of the influence, for example, of poverty on the incidence and the prevalence of particular disorders will be reviewed for their promotion and prevention implications. 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. Prevention, still further, will be considered from the point of view of averting their occurrence by early intervention. Treatment will be discussed in terms of the clinical efficacy and service effectiveness of various interventions. Rehabilitation will be considered in the context of the effectiveness of various residential, vocational, social and educational services for people with mental disorders.

*Values and ethics will be addressed* through the emphasis placed on working on behalf of the most disadvantaged persons with mental disorders. It places special value on advocacy and environmental modifications. The potential harm associated with classification is discussed, as are ethically questionable practices that have arisen as the DSM-IV-TR has been embedded in insurance reimbursement and service eligibility policies.

**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-TR has been embedded in insurance reimbursement and service eligibility policies.

**Course Objectives:**

Students should 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 posttraumatic disorders, and phobias)
e. Mental disorders of aging (including Alzheimer’s and other dementias).

3. Discuss the impact of culture and race on the disorder and the person with 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 to 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 about mental disorders from clinical wisdom or authoritative opinions, and demonstrate ability to use the scientifically based in literature in search for solutions to problems.

Class Process:

We will conduct the class in a seminar fashion, which means students will be expected to fully participate in the learning process. Seminars will include a range of activities, lectures, guest speakers, discussions, audiovisuals, and student presentations. The above activities will be integrated at critical points in the semester to facilitate a better understanding of the course content.

Writing Policy:

Good writing skills to express information accurately and concisely to individuals involved in helping client systems, is a requirement for effective social work practice. Therefore, formal writing assignments for this course (i.e., papers) will be evaluated both for content, ideas presented, and for the clarity of the presentation.

Appropriate referencing is required on all written assignments. Failure to use quotation marks for short quotations or indentations for longer, direct quotes with appropriate citations will result in a grade of zero as will failure to provide citations for indirect quotations. If you do not know how to reference a paper, now is the time to learn. Please seek assistance before you submit your assignments. See also other appropriate university publications for penalties that may result from scholastic dishonesty such as plagiarism or cheating on tests.

The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association is the style manual to be used by all students. Papers are to be doubled spaced, typewritten/word processed with a 12-point font.
LSA has a College Writing Workshop with graduate fellows and faculty of the English Composition Board. The Writing Center assists students in completing specific assignments or projects to help in improving academic writing skills. Feel free to use this service. Students have found it very helpful. For further information and an appointment contact:

Sweetland Writing Center  
1139 Angell Hall, 1003  
734-764-0429

OTHER HOUSEKEEPING MATTERS

Accommodations for students with disabilities

If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, I encourage you to contact me at your earliest convenience. Given enough notification the assignments, in-class assignments and my teaching methods can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. The earlier you make me aware of your needs, the more effectively we will be able to use the resources available to us, such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, and the like. If you do decide to disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential.

Religious Observances

Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Electronic Devices

Due to their disruptive nature and in consideration of your classmates, I request that all students turn off all telephones and pagers while you are in my class. This is your time and I want you to be able to protect it. I prefer that you receive no messages during class time; however, if you must be on call for emergency, please let your home or office know that you are only available for emergencies that no one else can handle. If you must carry a pager, please set it to vibrate only.
Course Assignments/Readings:

Readings:

Required Texts:


Recommended Text:


Assignments for the Course:

Assignment One: Intervention and Multicultural factors in Mental Disorder:

*Select one of the following disorders as the topic of your paper:*

a) Schizophrenia or Schizoaffective disorder
b) Major depression or Bipolar disorder
c) Borderline personality disorder or Antisocial personality disorder
d) Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Panic Disorder or Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

(If you would like to write about another disorder, let’s talk.)

*Discuss this disorder from the point of view of one of the following interventions:*

a) Treatment (addressing symptoms)
b) Rehabilitation (facilitating recovery)
c) Prevention (decreasing risk factors)

Attention should be given to a discussion of the effect of any one of the following factors on the disorder: gender, age, poverty, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, or ethical considerations. For example, you might examine the prevention of posttraumatic stress disorder among African American women coping with the stresses related to poverty. Another topic is developing a rehabilitation plan for an elderly person living with major depression. The paper should not attempt to provide comprehensive coverage of the disorder but only cover the cultural and intervention aspects you have selected. Supporting
materials should come for observations (field placement), fiction (i.e., memoirs) and personal accounts. The assignment will be discussed in class in order to stimulate your thinking about which aspect of the intervention and multiculturalism you wish to focus on. The length of the paper should be 5-8 pages and should include at least 3 references not in the reserve readings. Some papers may be selected for classroom presentation; group projects are also welcome (let’s discuss your ideas).

Grade=25%
Due February 20

Assignment Two: Clinical Assessment and Treatment Discussion Using either Observations of a Client(s), or Fictional Accounts, or First-Person Accounts, or Ethnographic Observations (e.g., at self-help group meetings) Instructions will be handed out separately.

Grade=35%
Due March 27

Assignment 3- Final exam: The final exam will be a take home exam that will include short-answer essay questions on class lectures and discussions, readings, handouts, and earlier assignments. The exam will be available April 18th. The exam will be graded according to your knowledge of the concepts dealt with in the class and your ability to integrate and discuss their relevance to practice situations.

Grade equals=40%
Due April 23

Assignment Notes: With the exception of the final exam, assignments can be modified to suit your interests. However, it’s important to talk early. The grades should be used to assess your progress in understanding the material. However, please remember the grade is not to be interpreted as an indication of your ability or potential as a social worker. Adding the percentage scores from each assignment will determine your final grade. The percentages will be totaled and converted to a letter grad using the following scale:
Please do not put papers in folders, as they are easier to handle without them. Late assignments will be graded down one level (e.g. B+ to B) and will not receive comments except where arrangements have been made at least two weeks in advance.

**Preliminary Course Schedule**

1-9  
Introduction: Description, Content, Objectives, Assignments  
Validity, reliability and limitations of DSM-IV-TR. Classification and assessment of mental disorders, psychosocial problems or social functioning.

Readings:

DSM-IV-TR, pp. xxiii-xxxv; pp.1-37


1-16  Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

1-23  Psychiatric diagnosis and in the influence of psychosocial factors

Readings:


Mood Disorders: Major Depression and Dysthymia

Readings:


University of Cincinnati; Study explores why minorities with mood disorders face dangerous misdiagnosis. (2005). Health Insurance Week, 117.

Coronary Artery Bypass; Depression linked to poor postoperative recovery. (2005). Heart Disease Weekly, 113.


Miller, J. (2003). Misdiagnosis, lost productivity camouflage the true cost of depression. Managed Healthcare Executive, 13(10), 44.

1-30 Mood Disorders: Bipolar Disorders

Readings:

DSM-IV-TR, pp. 382-392


2-6  Anxiety Disorders

Readings:

DSM-IV-TR, pp. 429-484


2-13 Schizophrenia and Psychosis

Readings:

DSM-IV-TR, pp. 297-345


2-20 Personality Disorders

Readings:

DSM-IV-TR, pp. 583-595


1st paper due

2-27  **Spring Break**

3-6  Eating Disorders

Readings:

DSM-IV-TR, pp.583-596


3-13 Medication and non-pharmacologic treatments.

Readings:


Solomon, J. (2005). Personal Health (A Special Report); Don't Analyze This: Psychopharmacologists are on the rise, as the pill replaces talk therapy in treating mental illness. *Wall Street Journal, p. R.5.*

3-20 Drug and Alcohol Use Disorders

Readings:


3-27  
Family issues, deviance creation, stigma & ethical issues

Readings:


2nd paper due

4-3  
Mental Disorders of Aging, Adjustment Disorders, V-codes
Readings:

DSM-IV-TR, pp.147-171

DSM-IV-TR, pp. 679-683

DSM-IV-TR, pp. 731-743


4-10  Sexual Disorders

Readings:

DSM-IV-TR, pp.535-582


4-17  Integrating informal helping systems and formally organized consumer/self-help and advocacy systems

Readings:


Knowledge gaps, future developments and the role of the helping professional.

Review of take home exam questions.

4-23  Take Home Exam Due