SW612: Mental Health and Mental Disorders of Children and Youth  
Spring/Summer 2006 (Tuesday 8-Noon)

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I. Course Description

This course will present the state-of-the-art knowledge and research on mental disorders of children and youth, as well as factors that promote mental health and prevent mental disorders in children and youth. Bio-psycho-social theories of resiliency, coping, etiology, the impact of mental health disorders on children and family members, and the relationship of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and social class to mental disorders will be presented. Classification systems of child and youth functioning and disorders will be presented (e.g., the DSM-IV and ICDM-IX). The impact of labeling and stigma will be explored in order to develop critical thinking about how mental disorders of children and youth are conceptualized. Critical thinking skills will be used in order to appreciate the complexity of unresolved problems when treating children and adolescents with mental disorders.

II. Course Objectives

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

1) Understand and recognize the clinical and associated features used in diagnosing childhood and adolescent disorders.

2) Utilize a questioning/critical thinking approach in learning the “art” of diagnosis:

- Identify factors influencing mental health and mental disorders of children and youth at the individual, familial, cultural/ethnic, and social levels.
- Describe the transactional processes among the above factors which influence the etiology and maintenance of mental disorders.
- Describe and critique classification systems of mental disorders of children and adolescents, particularly DSM-IV.
- Identify and differentiate a number of disorders of children and adolescents and apply them to the evaluation of clients.
• Demonstrate empathic appreciation of the client's experience of disorders from the perspective of the client's inner world.
• Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of the child or adolescent's difficulties on parents and other family members.
• Discuss typical ethical concerns related to mental health and mental disorders of children and youth.

3) Recognize and appreciate the strength, resilience and health that most children possess as they navigate the complexities of childhood.

4) To develop intolerance for poor practices or treatment of mentally ill children, adolescents, and their families and to acquire the skills and muster the courage to “do things differently” if it will aid these courageous persons to have better lives (Mary Ann Test)

III. Course Design and Format

The objectives of the course will be pursued through lectures, discussions, demonstrations, case studies and presentations, videotapes and visits by outside experts. There will be two examinations of short essay format, one at mid-term and one at the final session. The final will be given as either an in-class exam or take-home. Students are expected to attend regularly and take part in classroom discussions and groups. Missing two classes will be viewed as excessive absence will result in the lowering of the student’s final grade by one half grade (e.g. an A will become and A-).

III. Course Requirements and Grading

1) First assignment – (book critique) 15%
2) Mid-term paper 30%
3) Group participation 15%
4) Final exam 30%
5) Class attendance 10%

1) The first assignment will involve reading at least the first two sections plus the intro (pp.1-85) of Judith Rapoport’s book, The Boy Who Couldn’t Stop Washing
   a. What did you learn from reading this book?
   b. What are the major issues from the parent’s perspective?
   c. What are the kids with the diagnosis most concerned about?
   d. Would you recommend this book? To whom?
   e. What is most valuable to social work clinicians when they hear disorder stories from a multiple perspectives?

Assignment due: May 23rd (3-5 pages)

2) For the midterm paper you have two options. If you are working with children and have an interesting diagnostic case to write up, you can use that, or I will provide you with a
vignette from which to work. The paper will focus on a post-assessment session where you are present and witness the psychiatrist informing the family of the child’s diagnosis. The paper will include the following:

a. A brief definition and clinical description of the objective symptoms from one of the disorders which will be covered in class. Include DSM-IV diagnostic criteria – all 5 Axis.

b. Your brief impressions of the child’s general presentation, developmental stage, family constellation (who’s living with child), ethnic, racial and socio-economic background and other issues and contributing factors that you feel are relevant to understanding this child’s disorder.

c. Use imagined or actual quotes from the session to inform the reader about the particular intricacies of this disorder for this “family” and on this child. The term family should be used broadly depending on the scenario.

d. “Putting yourself in the family’s shoes” hypothesize what they may be feeling, thinking, reacting to as they hear the diagnosis.

e. What was your reaction to the diagnosis? Did you like how it was handled by the psychiatrist? What would you have done differently?

f. What are the first steps you might take with the family and child after this session?

g. I will also ask you to use the DSM IV cultural formulation for this case – I will discuss this and pass it out in class.

Assignment due: June 13th (5-8 pages, cite only DSM IV-TR and Morrison/Anders text)

3) Group participation

During June and July we will be using part of each class to work on the practice of diagnosing. Your group will be given a case or perhaps watch a video and then determine as a team what the diagnosis might be. This will give you a chance to talk to other students about cases – much as you would do in rounds or in a staff meeting. Some of the cases we use for this will be taken from your midterms, with your permission – this will also give us all a chance to ask additional questions of the student who did the assessment – our resident expert.

4) Final Exam

The final exam will be tied to each student’s ability to understand diagnostic criteria, how it is applied, the ability to form clinical hypotheses, and the overall diagnostic assessment process. Six case examples will be presented and given to students in a take-home exam. Each case will contain cultural components that will affect diagnosis and treatment. Students will choose 3 cases to write up from referral through assessment, diagnosis and treatment plan.

(Specific guidelines for the Final Exam will be distributed in class)

Final Exam will be turned in during our last class on July 25th

5) Attendance will be taken at each class session. Students should leave a voicemail or e-mail message with the professor if they can not attend.
IV. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be addressed through discussion of incidence and prevalence of mental disorders, as related to gender and social class, and through discussion of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, and class as factors influencing mental health and disorder.

- **Social Justice and Social Change** will be addressed through discussion of the misapplication of mental health diagnoses based on race, class, and gender bias, and the potential impact of poverty, discrimination, and disenfranchisement on the development of mental disorders and disorders of parenting.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** will be addressed through discussion of protective factors, which promote resiliency and positive adaptation.

- **Behavioral and Social Science Research** will inform the entire content of this course, which will draw especially on current research in the following areas: developmental psychopathology, attachment, risk, resiliency and coping, trauma and maltreatment, and studies of particular disorders.

V. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values

Ethical and value issues related to all course topics will be identified and discussed. Examples of this include: how views of the rights of children affect our understanding of child mental health, how societal values regarding child development affect judgments we make about the mental health of children, how the use social workers make of DSM IV can bias judgments of child mental health, what the value issues are in paying attention to the child’s inner world, and how cultural and gender biases also affect professional views of child mental health.

VI. Accommodation for Disability Statement

Any student who feels that s/he may need an accommodation for any sort of disability (physical, mental or learning, temporary as well as chronic), please feel free to contact me so that we can discuss how to handle this.

VII. Topics and Required Reading Assignments

1) **REQUIRED TEXTS**: (Available in Ulrich’s and U of M Bookstores, also at Amazon.com)


2) **OPTIONAL TEXTS:** (In library reserves or available through Amazon.com)


3) **ADDITIONAL ARTICLES**

In addition to the readings from the texts students will be given relevant readings and other resources on CTools throughout the semester.

**Week 1: May 9**

A) **Class Overview & Format**
B) **Attachment as a context in children**
C) **What is a mental disorder? How are they diagnosed?**
D) **Early Intervention/Prevention/Health Promotion/Evidence-Based Practice**


**Week 2: May 16**

A) **Assessment – General and Child-Specific – A Framework for Studying Psychopathology**

1. DSM-IV-TR, (pp. 1-11).
2. DSM-IV-TR, (pp. 27-37).

**Week 3: May 23 – Book Critique due.**

A) **Anxiety Disorders in Children and Youth**

1. DSM-IV-TR, (pp. 121-125) and (pp. 429-455) and (463-484).


6. Morrison & Anders – Chapter 17

**Week 4: May 30**

**A) Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder**

1. DSM-IV-TR, (pp.456-463).


**Video**

**Week 5: June 6**

**A) ADHD/Disruptive Behavior Disorders**

1. DSM-IV-TR, (pp. 85-103) and (pp. 108-116).


Speaker: Lisa Parr-Smith, MSW

**Week 6: June 13 – 2ND ASSIGNMENT DUE**

**A) Developmental Disorders (Learning Disorders, Communication Disorders, Motor Skills Disorder)**

1. DSM-IV-TR, (pp. 41-70).


4. Morrison & Anders Chapter 11

**Week 7: June 20**

**A) Depressive Disorders/Bipolar Disorders/Adolescent Suicidality**

1. DSM-IV-TR, (pp. 345-428).


**Week 9: June 27**

**A) Childhood autism/Asperger’s Disorder/Pervasive Developmental Disorders**

1. DSM-IV-TR (pp. 70-84).


**B) Childhood Schizophrenia/Psychosis**

1. DSM-IV-TR, (pp. 297-343)


**July 4th - Holiday**
Week 8: July 11

A) Childhood Trauma, Abuse & Neglect, Homelessness, and Divorce

1. DSM-IV-TR, (pp. 463-468) and (pp. 736-738).

2. DSM-IV-TR, (pp. 679-683).


Week 10: July 18 – Final Exam given out.

A) Adolescent issues

a) Substance Related Disorders (Abuse vs. Dependence)

1. DSM-IV-TR (pp. 191-269)

b) Eating Disorders
1. DSM-IV-TR (pp. 583-595)
2. Morrison and Anders Chapter 22

c) Cutting/Self-Injurious Behavior/Borderline personality disorders

Week 11: July 25

A) Gender Identity Issues & Culture Bound Syndromes

1. DSM-IV-TR, (pp. 576-582)

Final Exam – Due in class today.