I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Whether they practice in specialty mental health or general social service settings, social workers commonly encounter children and adolescents experiencing mental health problems. Recent studies suggest that at least one-quarter of U.S. citizens experience a significant mental health disorder over the course of their lifetimes. Unfortunately, mental health problems often remain undetected in young people and many opportunities for social workers to intervene early with distressed youths are missed. Most social workers do not receive sufficient training in the assessment and treatment of childhood and adolescent mental health disorders. This course provides a comprehensive overview of the epidemiology, causes, assessment, and treatment of childhood and adolescent mental health disorders. Specific attention is paid to issues of race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical and mental disabilities, age, and national origin as they influence the manifestations and assessment of mental health problems. Potentially stigmatizing and other adverse social and economic effects associated with assigning psychiatric diagnoses to young clients are addressed in light of social work’s historic commitment to social and economic justice and other core social work values. Students will learn the skills they need to discern diverse patterns of mental health symptoms as they refine their diagnostic capabilities. Students are also exposed to the values that distinguish social work assessment from more traditional forms of psychiatric evaluation. Available evidence-based psychosocial and pharmacotherapeutic interventions for the treatment of mental health disorders are discussed, although students wanting in-depth and comprehensive discussion of treatment issues should take HB-625 Interpersonal Practice with Children and Youth. Issues in clinical assessment are addressed, including interviewing techniques and the use of rating scales. This course will also present state-of-the-art knowledge and research on factors that promote mental health and prevent mental disorders in children and youth. Biopsychosocial theories of resiliency, coping, etiology, and the impact of mental health disorders on children and family members will be presented.
II. COURSE CONTENT

The prevalence, causes, characteristics, and treatment of mental health disorders affecting children and adolescents will be examined. Disorders with onset in childhood and adolescence such as attention-deficit-hyperactivity disorder, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, problems related to child abuse and neglect, elimination and feeding disorders, mental retardation, learning and motor skills disorders, communication disorders, and pervasive developmental disorders such as autism are systematically addressed. Other conditions that may afflict children and adolescents such as schizophrenia, tic and stereotypic movement disorders, depression and bipolar disorder, and substance-use, dissociative, obsessive-compulsive, impulse control, anxiety, somatoform, factitious, sexual, gender identity, sleep, personality, eating, adjustment, delusional and other psychotic disorders will also be discussed. Students will develop considerable expertise in applying the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Fourth Edition-Text Revised)* nosology to the diagnosis of psychiatric disorders and other assessment approaches consistent with social work values. Strengths-based approaches to assessment of mental health problems will be discussed and contrasted with approaches that are consistent with the prevailing medical model of psychiatric diagnosis. Students will develop skills in appropriate use of self in relation to mental health assessment as they acquire professional-level screening and assessment skills. Commitment to the social work profession will be fostered as students gain enhanced appreciation of the unique role social work plays in the assessment and care of youth with mental health problems.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students will gain application-level familiarity with the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-Fourth Edition-Text Revision* framework for the diagnosis of child and adolescent mental health problems and will examine philosophical and professional issues associated with its application.

2. Students will become familiar with psychological, sociological, anthropological, and biological theories of mental disorder.

3. Students will examine issues related to race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical and mental disabilities, age, and national origin as they influence the definition, diagnosis, and treatment of mental disorders in children and adolescents.

4. Students will learn the demographic distribution, phenomenology, signs and symptoms, and prevalence and incidence of various mental health problems affecting youth including depression, bipolar affective disorder, and schizophrenia.

5. Students will analyze the concepts of mental health and mental illness from different perspectives, including biomedical, sociopolitical, legal, ethical, and psychological viewpoints.
6. Students will be able to articulate core social work values and ethics in relation to the potentially adverse effects of psychiatric labeling, tension between support for client self-determination and involuntary hospitalization, and other issues they are likely to encounter in professional mental health practice.

7. Students will become familiar with various professional roles in mental health practice and will gain an appreciation for social work's unique contribution to mental health treatment thereby fostering commitment to the profession.

8. Students will be able to use various mental health diagnostic tests and paper and pencil questionnaires, conduct strengths-based assessments, recognize diverse forms of child and adolescent mental health symptomatology and assign appropriate diagnoses.

9. Students will be able to discuss diverse issues of social and economic justice as they relate to psychiatric disorders, including the adverse impact of these conditions on earning capacity and discriminatory application of psychiatric diagnostic labels.

10. Students will develop skills in conducting Mental Status Evaluations.

IV. COURSE DESIGN

TEXTS

Required:


This text won the Outstanding Book of the Year Award from the Autism Society of America. It is easy to read, comprehensive in its coverage of issues pertaining to autism spectrum disorders and includes a rich lode of resource information such as that pertaining to ASDs websites, organizations, books, and other media. Although appropriate for graduate students, practitioners will find themselves referring clients to this book on a regular basis.


Russell Barkley is the leading ADHD expert in the United States. This recent book is appropriate for both students and parents of youth with ADHD, as it covers relevant research evidence and treatments for ADHD in a highly practical and evidence-based manner. Parents who are concerned that their child may have ADHD will find this book highly useful as will parents and practitioners who are struggling to help a child who has already been diagnosed ADHD.

Interpersonal psychotherapy is one of few evidence-based psychosocial interventions of demonstrated effectiveness for the treatment of adolescent depression. This book provides an overview of current issues and treatments for adolescents with depression and a detailed introduction to the use of Interpersonal Psychotherapy.


The 1999 version of this book may have helped initiate the childhood bipolar popular revolution in the United States. Historically, little attention was accorded bipolar spectrum disorders in youth, although this situation has changed dramatically in recent years, to such an extent that many people believe bipolar spectrum disorders (as well as ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorders) are over diagnosed. This book provides extensive descriptions of youth with childhood bipolar disorder.


This book is a very recent and comprehensive introduction to diagnosis and treatment of anxiety disorders in youth including generalized anxiety disorder, specific phobia, school phobia, separation anxiety, selective mutism, obsessive-compulsive disorder, trichotillomania, panic disorder, dental and medical fears, and posttraumatic stress disorder.

ORGANIZATION OF COURSE

Lectures, films, guest speakers, and discussions will constitute the principal didactic formats. There will be a 10-minute break after the first 90 minutes of lecture. Attendance is required.

ROLE OF FACULTY AND STUDENTS

Assignments should be completed consistent with the schedule unless otherwise approved by the instructor.

If you have a learning disability, sensory, or physical disability or other impairment or if English is your second language, and you may need special assistance in lectures or reading assignments, please contact the instructor and appropriate arrangements will be made.
ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Course requirements consist of 5, 20-point book reports. In addition, numerous optional “bonus” point opportunities will be available throughout the semester.

Book reports should be approximately 3-5 pages in length and should summarize the contents of the assigned book and provide a critique of its contents. The first 1-2 pages should describe the length, structure, writing style, and audience for which the book was written and include a careful description of the contents of the book. The second 1-2 pages of the book report should provide your reaction to the book and an assessment of its utility for clients, practitioners, and other potential readers.

Grading System

5, 20-point book reviews* 

100 pts. possible**

* See below for book report due dates

**Multiple bonus point opportunities will also be available throughout the semester and explained in class.

Final grades will be assigned as follows: 90-100 points = A, 80-90 points = B, 70-80 points = C, 60-70 points = D, below 60 points = F. On occasion, I have awarded an A+ to students who have completed many bonus point assignments and exceeded 100 total points.

V. RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO FOUR CURRICULAR THEMES

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be addressed through examining the prevalence, causes, and consequences of mental disorders in a wide variety of oppressed and at-risk child and adolescent populations and the impact that mental health problems can have on individual members of these groups and on the efforts of these populations as a whole to overcome their disadvantaged circumstances.

- **Social Justice and Social Change** will be addressed by evaluating the empirical literature pertaining to the differential impact of contemporary mental health laws and policies on oppressed and at-risk populations and the differential social and human service response to mentally ill members of oppressed groups.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** will be addressed through a comprehensive and systematic examination of prevention and treatment interventions aimed at reducing the social toll taken by mental health disorders on our society. Risk and resiliency factors and evidence-based prevention and treatment approaches will be a major component of the course.
• Behavioral and Social Sciences Research will be reflected in a number of the evidence-based approaches to mental health prevention and treatment we will study in this class and in many of the course readings.

VI. RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO SOCIAL WORK ETHICS AND VALUES

Mental health problems and their treatment within the human services (and too often criminal and juvenile justice systems) raise a host of ethical issues relevant to social work practice. We will examine the NASW Code of Ethics in relation to practice in this area and a set of specific issues including the appropriate role of involuntary treatment for mentally ill youth, the effective use of national and local policy to promote greater mental health on the part of youth, and issues specific to child and adolescent mental health treatment including confidentiality and effective professional communication.

VII. SOURCE MATERIALS

In addition to the required material described above, students may want to consult the following optional sources (which are available from the professor and in the library):


VIII. COURSE OUTLINE

| Session One | COURSE INTRODUCTION, PSYCHIATRIC |
| September 8th | EPIDEMIOLOGY AND RISK FACTORS FOR MENTAL ILLNESS |
| | IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH |
Topics: Overview

1. Introductions
2. Syllabus Review
3. Epidemiology of Mental Health Disorders in Youth
4. Introduction to Psychiatric Diagnosis and DSM-IV: History, Current Uses and Structure
5. Risk and Protective Factors for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Disorders

Readings:
- Osofsky, J.D., & Thompson, M.D. Adaptive and Maladaptive Parenting: Perspectives on Risk and Protective Factors.
- Garbarino, J., & Ganzel, B. The Human Ecology of Early Risk.
- Coll, C.G., & Magnuson, K. Cultural Differences as Sources of Developmental Vulnerabilities and Resources.
- Werner, E.E. Protective Factors and Individual Resilience.
- Aber, J.L., Jones, S., & Cohen, J. The Impact of Poverty on the Mental Health of Very Young Children

Session Two
September 15th

RISK FACTORS FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS (CONTINUED)/ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN YOUTH/INTRODUCTION TO CHILDHOOD PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS

Topics: This session will examine risk and protective factors for mental health problems in children and youth and various issues pertinent to mental health assessment, including signs and symptoms of mental illness. An overview of childhood psychiatric disorders will be presented.

1. Interviewing and Clinical Examination of the Child Psychiatric Patient
2. Signs and Symptoms of Psychiatric Illness
3. Use of Psychiatric Rating Scales
4. Laboratory Tests and Physical Examination

Readings:

Lester, B.M., Boukydis, C.F.Z., & Twomey, J.E. Maternal Substance Abuse and Child Outcome

Kaufman, J., & Henrich, C. Exposure to Violence and Early Childhood Trauma

Minde, K. Prematurity and Serious Medical Conditions in Infancy: Implications for Development, Behavior, and Intervention

Seifer, R., & Dickstein, S. Parental Mental Illness and Infant Development


Session Three  
September 22nd

CHILDHOOD PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS: MENTAL RETARDATION, LEARNING DISABILITIES, MOTOR SKILLS DISORDER, AND COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

Readings:  Pages 39-134 in DSM-IV: "Disorders Usually First Diagnosed in Infancy, Childhood, or Adolescence."

Session Four  
September 29th

PERVASIVE DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS/SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Topics: This session will examine pervasive developmental disorders and the full gamut of substance use disorders and their social and medical consequences, personal and social costs, and signs, symptoms, and methods of treating.

Readings:  Read one-half of Autism Spectrum Disorders book.

Session Five  
October 6th

CHILDHOOD-ONSET SCHIZOPHRENIA AND OTHER PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS/FEEDING AND EATING DISORDERS OF INFANCY AND EARLY CHILDHOOD/TIC DISORDERS/ELIMINATION DISORDERS
Topics: Schizophrenia in its various manifestations will be addressed along with other disorders involving hallucinations, delusions, and other characteristic features of thought disorders. Attention will also be paid to the clinical features of Tic Disorders and several other disorders commonly observed early in life.

Readings: Finish *Autism Spectrum Disorders* and submit book review following week.

**Session Six**  
October 13th

**MOOD DISORDERS: DEPRESSION AND BIPOLAR DISORDER**

Topics: The full spectrum of depressive and manic-depressive disorders will be characterized in terms of their etiology, presenting symptoms, and diagnostic criteria. Available treatment approaches will be addressed.

Readings: Read one-half of *The Bipolar Child*

**Session Seven**  
October 20th

**ANXIETY DISORDERS**

Topics: Signs and symptoms of the full-range of anxiety disorders will be presented including phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and social anxiety. Discussion will address assessment methods and evidence-based treatments for childhood anxiety disorders.

Readings: Complete *The Bipolar Child* and submit book review following week.

**Session Eight**  
October 27th

**ADHD/SOMATOFORM/FACTITIOUS DISORDERS**

Topics: ADHD and Somatoform disorders will be discussed with special attention to somatization and hypochondriasis.

Readings: Read one-half of *Childhood Anxiety Disorders* book

**Session Nine**  
November 3rd

**ODD/CD/DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS**

Topics: Factitious and dissociative disorders will be presented including conditions such as Munchasen's Disorder by Proxy. Differentiating between the various dissociative disorders conditions will be a central feature of the discussion. Current methods for assessing and treating ODD and CD will be examined.

Readings: Finish *Childhood Anxiety Disorders* and submit book report the following week.
Session Ten  GENDER IDENTITY DISORDER/EATING DISORDERS/IMPULSE CONTROL DISORDERS
November 10th

Topics: Characteristics of gender identity, eating, and impulse control disorders will be the focus of the lecture. Discussion and lecture will focus on contemporary assessment and treatment approaches to GID, Eating, and Impulse Control Disorders.

Readings: Read one-half of Taking Charge of ADHD

Session Eleven OTHER DISORDERS OF INFANCY OR EARLY CHILDHOOD/CHILDHOOD PHYSICAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT
November 17th

Topics: This session will focus primarily on the causes, prevalence, and available social and psychological interventions for individuals and families affected by child physical and sexual abuse.

Readings: Finish Taking Charge of ADHD and submit book report the following week.

Session Twelve SLEEP DISORDERS/ ADJUSTMENT DISORDERS/MEDICAL DISORDERS THAT CAN PRODUCE/MIMIC MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS
December 1st

Topics: Normal and abnormal sleep processes will be described including primary and secondary insomnia and sleep disruptions secondary to psychiatric and medical disorders. Adjustment reactions and medical disorders that can mimic mental health conditions will be systematically addressed.

Readings: Read one-half of Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Depressed Adolescents

Session Thirteen PERSONALITY DISORDERS/VCODES/DELINQUENCY/POLICY TRAINING AND SERVICE DELIVERY ISSUES
December 8th

Topics: Cluster A, B, and C personality disorders will be examined with regard to their diagnostic features and will other conditions, which may be the focus of clinical attention such as criminal behavior and legal issues.

Readings: Finish Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Adolescents and submit book report the following week.