Course Description:

This methods course focuses on intervention with the elderly at micro and macro levels. The course will build upon foundation coursework theory about human development, personality, and social environment. This content will be integrated with intervention strategies directed toward the elderly. Major areas to be discussed are: coping with age-related changes, caregiving demands, advanced directives, guardianship, managed care, elder abuse, case management, and advocacy.

Course Objectives:

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

1. Identify the common barriers in serving the needs of the elderly from an interpersonal, environmental, and social perspective, and recognize that these problems can be addressed using all levels of social work intervention.
2. Plan intervention strategies in micro and macro practice that are of particular importance for the elderly of various racial/ethnic backgrounds, SES levels, and sexual orientations.
3. Plan various intervention strategies that promote prevention of health and functional problems and rehabilitation among the elderly.
4. Plan or plan and conduct an intervention strategy with the elderly in micro and macro practice.
5. Incorporate social work values and ethical principles related to social work with the elderly.
Assignments:

There will be three assignments for this course:

1. Lead a class discussion critiquing a set of articles (see articles with * in syllabus) with respect to their implications and usefulness for social work practice with the elderly (10%).

2. Write a paper assessing an elderly person from a biopsychosocial perspective (40%).

3. Write a paper on interventions concerning a specific problem area relevant to the elderly (50%).

Course Design:

The instructor will select reading and design assignments for the course. Approaches such as role plays, class discussions of articles led by students, case analyses, and didactic presentations will be employed. Students’ field placement experiences will be tied to assignments where possible.

Relationship to Four Curricular Themes:

Multiculturalism and Diversity: Students will develop the capacity to see how race, gender, SES, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and disability affect how older people function and adjust to growing older.

Social Change and Social Justice: Students will learn skills to aid older clients to recognize external and internal oppression. Further, they will be able to recognize and address the influence of social inequities in individual, group, policy and social interaction. Lastly, students will be able to help older clients learn assertiveness and advocacy skills in order that they may help themselves in more effective ways.

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation: Too often intervention strategies are designed to help older people once problems arise. Students will learn intervention techniques that promote the well-being of older people in a proactive way before problems occur. Also, issues of rehabilitation will be covered to teach students about ways in which to help older people cope with age-related changes.

Social Science Theory and Research: The course readings will include theory and research findings regarding the efficacy of the various intervention strategies of a micro and macro perspective that are successfully utilized with older people and their caregivers.

Ethics and Social Work Values: The readings and class discussion will help to operationalize the NASW Code of Ethics as it applies to value dilemmas that arise in working with the elderly.

Texts:


In addition, there are two coursepacks available at Dollar Bill Copying, 611 Church Street.
Course Outline

Jan. 9  I. Overview of Course

Jan. 16 II. Biopsychosocial Framework

Texts

Knight (1996): Chapter 1.


Additional Required Readings


Jan. 23 III. Engagement

Texts


Additional Required Readings


Jan. 30 & Feb. 6

IV. Assessment and Cultural Considerations

Text

Knight (1996): Chapters 2 and 5.

Additional Required Readings


Feb. 13

V. Mental Health and Emotional Problems

A. Depression

Texts

**Additional Required Readings**


Feb. 20  

**B. Dementia**

**Text**


**Additional Required Readings**


Feb. 27  

**SPRING BREAK**
March 6 & 13  

C. Psychological Disorders

Texts

Blazer (1998): Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Additional Required Readings


March 20

VI. Prevention

A. Care Management, Elder Abuse, and Alcoholism

Required Readings


March 27  VI. Prevention

B. Advocacy and Community Organizing

Texts


Additional Required Readings


April 3

C. Advance Directives and Guardianship

Required Readings


April 10

Individuals & Groups

Texts

Knight (1996): Chapters 7 and 8.

Additional Required Readings


April 17  

Family Issues

Texts


Additional Required Readings


