S.W. 694 – Social Work with the Elderly
Instructor: Karyn Schoem
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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, advance 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:
1. Lead a group process exercise appropriate to a particular stage of or issue in group work with elderly or with administrative/organizational groups. (10%)

2. Teach one reading from the supplemental reading list. Administer a short quiz following the presentation. (20%)

3. Total quizzes (10), (20%)

4. Write a 10-15 page paper on an experience in current fieldwork that exemplifies assessment and intervention techniques covered in class and discuss micro-macro implications of the experience. (30%)

5. Present a case for class discussion from field experience that reflects topics discussed in class (20%)

Course Design:
The instructor will select readings and design assignments for the course. Approaches such as lecture, discussion, case review and simulations will be employed. Students will be expected to contribute case/programmatic examples from their field experiences.

Relationship to Four Curricular Themes:
Multiculturalism and Diversity: Students will develop the capacity to see how race, gender, SES, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, physical and mental ability affect how older people function within various contexts.

Social Change and Social Justice: Students will learn skills to aid older clients in recognizing external and internal oppression. They will be able to recognize and address the influence of social inequities in individual, group, policy and social interaction. Students will be able to empower clients to articulate their needs, as individuals and in groups, and to acquire the knowledge and skills to get their needs met.

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation: Students will learn individual and group strategies for promoting wellness, a client knowledge base of variations in “normal” aging, a spectrum of coping skills to deal with change, loss and disability and preparedness for end-of-life issues.

Ethics and Social Work Values: Readings, case discussion and simulations and games will help students to define their own interpretations of the NASW Code of Ethics in work with the elderly.

Readings will be available in coursepack form at Dollar Bill Copying, 611 Church St. At least one copy will be on reserve in the SSW library.
Course Outline

1. Overview of Course and Introduction to Strengths-Based Foundation for Macro and Micro Intervention
   Required Reading
   Supplemental Reading

2. Physical Functionality: A Central Feature of Macro and Micro Practice
   Required Reading
   Supplemental Reading


3. **Sexual Functioning: Issues for Older Adults, Family and Systems**

   Required Reading


   Supplemental Reading


4. **Mental Health (Axis I): Fundamentals for All Levels of Practice**

   Required Reading


   Supplemental Reading


5. Mental Health (Axis II): Fundamentals for All Levels of Practice

Required Reading


Supplemental Reading


6. Mental Health: Multilevel Practice in Inpatient and Long Term Care

Required Reading


Supplemental Reading


7. Cognition: Alzheimer’s Disease, Vascular Dementia and Stroke

Required Reading


Supplemental Reading


8. Cognition: Work with Families and Systems

Required Reading


Supplemental Reading


9. Advance Directives and Guardianship: Interface with Elder Law

Required Reading

- Michigan Bar Association (2002). Five of the 120 Most Frequently Asked Questions from Clients at the Legal Hotline for Older Michiganians. [www.michbar.org/sections/elderlaw](http://www.michbar.org/sections/elderlaw)

Supplemental Reading

10. Vulnerable Adult Assessment, Intervention and Prevention

**Required Reading**

**Supplemental Reading**

11. Substance Use and Course Summation

**Required Reading**
- Jones, T et al. (199-). Clinical Guidelines for Alcohol Use Disorders in Older Adults. *American Geriatrics Society*.

**Supplemental Reading**