1. Course Description

This course teaches practice models and methods of intervention for effective social work practice in mental health care, including the promotion of mental health, the prevention of mental illnesses, and the delivery of psychosocial treatment and rehabilitation services. A major focus is on enabling individuals with mental health problems to increase their functioning in the least restrictive environments, with the least amount of ongoing professional intervention, so these individuals maximize their success and satisfaction. This course has a specific emphasis on services to individuals who suffer from severe and persistent mental illness, substance abuse, and/or who are recovering from the effects of severe traumatic events. Interventions relevant to these conditions help individuals develop/restore their skills and empower them to modify their environments so as to improve their interactions with their environments. Culturally competent and gender-specific interventions are a major emphasis of the course, as are special mental health issues for groups who have been subject to oppression.

2. Course Content

The course will present practice methods for carrying out functional assessments, resource assessments, establishment of client preferences, development of plans to meet service needs, services to enhance client skill development, and the development and modification of relevant community and agency environments. The emphasis of the course is on approaches that enhance problem-solving and coping strategies and are empowering and supportive to consumers, both individually and in groups and families.

This course will provide students with models and methods for the promotion of mental health, the prevention of mental illness, the provision of effective treatment of psychiatric disabilities, with an emphasis on promotion of optimal adaptation when psychiatric disabilities are long lasting. Assessment and intervention strategies will be included for use at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, and societal levels. A special issue is the integration of services for individuals with multiple problems. The course, therefore, will emphasize the integration of micro and macro methods through which students learn to make social, behavioral, environmental, organizational, administrative, and policy assessments, with an emphasis on risks/strengths assessment and capacity-building.
Students will develop knowledge of empirically-based interventions and will be able to select and implement appropriate methods based on assessments and service plans. A major focus of this course will be gender specific and culturally competent interventions with and for groups who have been subject to oppression, such as people of color, women, lesbian/gay/bi/transgendered people, the aged, and people with disabilities.

3. Course Objectives

Students who complete this course will be able to:

1. Assess the risks and strengths of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and/or communities for the purposes of promoting mental health, early intervention, treatment, and continuing service, with an emphasis on problems faced by people who suffer from severe and persistent mental illness, substance abuse, and/or who are recovering from the effects of severe traumatic events.

2. Plan or plan and conduct culturally competent, gender-specific individual, family, group, organizational, and community-based capacity building and preventive interventions.

3. Identify and demonstrate understanding of the many components of the mental health system as team member, advocate, broker, community organizer, and program planner, in order to interact productively with the many components of the mental health system.

4. Build partnerships with key neighborhood and self-help organizations and institutions for the purpose of mental health promotion and disease prevention.

5. Incorporate social work values and ethical standards in practice in mental health.

6. Plan or plan and engage in advocacy at both micro and macro levels to help individuals overcome oppression, discrimination, and other barriers to access and quality of mental health services.

4. Course Design

The course will include lectures, discussion, simulations, small group exercises, individual and group projects, guest speakers, and written assignments.

5. Relationship to Four Curricular Themes

Social Science and Behavioral Research is presented throughout the course and includes findings from evaluation studies and intervention research in social work, psychiatry, psychology, anthropology, and sociology.

Multiculturalism and Diversity are integrated throughout the course especially in view of the fact that mental health problems are experienced very differently in various cultures, each of which has its own indigenous responses to healing. In addition, the stresses associated with mental health problems and access to appropriate services are
differentially affected by gender, poverty, race/ethnicity and sexual orientation. The students must be aware of these issues and helped to develop culturally competent and gender-specific interventions and interventions to overcome oppression and discrimination as barriers to access to and quality of care.

_Social Justice Issues_ have special relevance to the processes of psychosocial rehabilitation. Persons with psychiatric disabilities are often discriminated against with respect to access to education, employment, housing, and financial assistance. Health insurance plans often discriminate against persons with mental as opposed to physical disabilities. Social justice issues are often seen with respect to the processes of commitment, the rights of people in mental institutions, the rights to treatment (such as in the criminal justice system), access to attorneys, and the determination of competence to stand trial or when mental illness is offered as a defense in a criminal proceeding. The student will learn about these issues in the course as well as the role of social work in fighting for these and other rights.

_Promotion/Prevention/Treatment/Rehabilitation_ are addressed throughout the course. Mental disabilities often occur or are exacerbated as a result of stressful environmental conditions and the ways of seeking changes in these conditions or preventing them will be stressed.
6. Relationship of This Course to Social Work Values and Ethics:

Virtually every topic of this course is related to issues of social work values and ethics, and these issues will be dealt with in this course. Examples of these issues are priorities assigned to various services and populations by mental health agencies and the role of social workers in molding these priorities, recognition of the right of self determination of consumers of mental health services, the principle of the utilization of the least restrictive environments for treatment of mental disorders, the values placed on preventive services, an understanding of the responsibility of workers to strive for less stressful environments in relationship to preventing mental problems, the creation of community respect for individuals in the community whose behavior, while lawful, departs from community norms, and promoting community awareness of the “not in my back yard” phenomenon.

Recommended Mental Illness Memoirs/Narratives/Texts:

**Under Observation: Life Inside McLean Psychiatric Hospital**


Natalie on the Street, Ann Nietzsche, 1994, Calyx Books (a memoir about the author’s relationship with an elderly homeless woman).


The Quiet Room: A Journey Out of The Torment of Madness, Lori Schiller and Amanda Bennett, 1994, Warner Books. (a schizophrenia memoir).

Call Me Crazy: Stories From the Mad Movement, Irit Shimrat, 1994, Press Gang Publishers (a memoir and history of the ‘mad movement’ or mental health consumers movement in Canada, written by a woman who was diagnosed schizophrenic but lives without medication and is a political activist).

Prozac Diary, Lauren Slater, 1998, Random House, (a memoir written by a woman who suffered from nightmarish mood swings, compulsions, phobias).


Night Fall Fast: Understanding Suicide, Kay Redfield Jamison, 1999, Knopf

Holy Hunger: A Memoir of Desire, Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, 1999, Knopf
First Person Plural: My Life As A Multiple, Cameron West, 1999, Hyperion

Mockingbird Years: A Life In And Out Of Therapy; Emily Fox Gordon, Basic Books, 2000.


Passing For Normal: Living with Tourettes, Amy Wiletsky, Broadway Books, 2000


Required Texts

4. Course Pack will be available at Excel (same side of street as Ulrich’s on S. University)

Recommended Texts

1. Meanings of Madness
Course Assignments, Requirements, and Grading

10% of your grade will be based on class participation. Class participation will be graded according to attendance, currency in reading, and participation in discussion.

The two major paper assignments will account for 25% and 30% of the grade and the self-help assignment will account for 20% of the grade. There is also a Case Study assignment that will account for the remaining 15% of your grade. Papers are expected to be handed in on their due dates and papers must meet all academic standards for ethical documentation. Papers will be marked down 5% for every day late. The papers will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Systematic and logical presentation of arguments;
- Appropriate use of evidence;
- Familiarity with and appropriate use of relevant literature and concepts;
- Clarity and coherence of presentation;
- Originality and creativity;
- Conformity with the requirements of the assignment

**Paper 1 (Self-Exploration in relation to the readings)**

Paper 1 is in the form of a Readings Journal. This paper will provide an opportunity to consider the readings in light of your own experiences and should respond to at least four or five of the readings, in depth. You can consider personal and practice experience as well as current dilemmas you may now face in your work.

Length: 6-8 pages.
25% of Course Grade
Due: Oct. 4

Throughout the semester we will attempt to become aware of the beliefs and biases that shape our intellectual and emotional responses to work with people who present symptoms of or have been diagnosed with mental illnesses. These beliefs and biases are deeply embedded in our culture’s mythology and ideology regarding:

- acceptable feelings and behaviors
- what we define as civilized conduct
• what are appropriate expressions of one’s gender identity, age, familial role, citizenship
• illness, disease, and impairment
• the role of the helper
• who may become a client/patient/consumer
• the long term consequences of being psychiatrically-labeled and treated in the mental health system

These same biases have influenced the ways in which psychiatry, social work, and psychology have organized systems of diagnosis, treatment, and care-giving. As we read, we will attempt to uncover some fundamental assumptions about normality, “humanness,” and illness/disease that underlie our practices as social workers in mental health care roles and settings, as well as speculate about who these practices may serve or disserve. You may want to use these ideas as ways to approach your own reading and journaling.

In general, try to answer the following:

a--Describe your personal responses to the reading. What are the central ideas that seem most salient or significant to you? Why? Which are appealing, problematic, troubling?

b--What questions do the readings pose for you or answer for you?

c--How do the perspectives described make claims about health or illness that are adequately or inadequately inclusive, stigmatizing, and/or potentially empowering to clients?

Grading:
10 Points – how well did author genuinely share about and reflect on own experiences.
10 Points – how well did author tie in this sharing to the specific issues raised in the readings
5 Points – grammatically correct, referenced properly, comprehensible

Paper 2 (Looking at a personal memoir through a “cultural lens”)

30% of grade.
Length 7-9 pages.
Due: Nov. 1

Please select one or more of the memoirs in the recommended readings list or propose another. Address your reactions to the memoir(s) and consider the following questions:

a. Why did you pick this memoir? What are your personal responses to this story and the author’s construction of his/her illness/disability/disease and the methods of treatment?

b. Using Castillo’s approach to understanding the intersections of culture and psyche, discuss how the author’s experience, idioms of distress, and efforts to accept or resist labeling and treatment reflect cultural values, folkways, and attitudes about psychological suffering. Also discuss how this author’s experience may differ from cultural values, folkways, etc.
c. How do gender, race, class, etc. influence the experience of illness by the author and others in connections with the author?

d. Describe the impacts of the significant relationships on the author’s experience of the illness/disability, particularly emphasizing the therapeutic relationship(s). What stands out to you as especially significant, helpful, not helpful? What is missing in her/his relational world? What are the challenges for the people in relationship to the author and how well were these challenges managed?

Grading:
5 Points – how well does author explain personal responses to the memoir
10 Points – how well does author explain the intersections of culture and psyche in the book
10 Points – how well does author explicate issues of gender, race, and/or class
5 Points – grammatically correct, referenced properly, comprehensible

Paper 3 (Self–Help)

Length: no more than 5 pages
Due: Nov. 22
20% of total grade

1. Attend one open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous or National Alliance of the Mentally Ill (NAMI- 994-6611) or another self-help group. Phone numbers should be listed in Business section of phone book.
2. Give the name of the group, the place and time of the meeting, the demographics of the group and the physical surroundings of the meeting.
3. Describe the atmosphere and tone of the meeting and give a clear description of the structure of the meeting (i.e. how was it conducted?).
4. Give an analysis of the meeting, describing self-help philosophy and the underlying individual and group dynamics involved in the meeting. Please cite references from textbooks here.
5. Rules for participation: respect anonymity of all people you meet, if there is any inquiry, be honest about your reason for attending, attend the meeting by yourself (not with a friend or fellow classmate), be highly respectful and be a good participant.

Grading:
5 points – did author give clear information about meeting and what transpired there
10 points – did author relate the process of the meeting to some aspect (or aspects) of “self-help” philosophy
5 points – grammatically correct, comprehensible
Clinical Simulation “Treatment Team” Group Work Case Study Packet

Starting the third week of class, each student will participate in a simulated “treatment team,” which will function as a “home base group” for purposes of in-class exercises, problem-solving, and collaboration. Each group will work with an individual case which will require learning how to identify appropriate diagnoses; learning about the unique cultural and personal circumstances in the client’s life; noting unique challenges (or privileges) that affect provision of effective service delivery; and identifying a range of possible intervention strategies and necessary resources. Most of the work on this project can be accomplished during class time. If you are not in class on a day that a particular activity is done, you will not receive credit for that portion of this assignment.

Throughout the semester, students will gain experience with a variety of skills that are critical for working in mental health settings, and each of you will turn in a case study packet that will include samples of your work, including:

1. Initial Diagnostic and “level of care” Impressions (with explanation of what led you to these determinations.) 1 point
2. A revised diagnosis and “level of care” determination, with explanation of what led you to this revision - was there any dissention in the treatment team, what discussion was there over the possible cultural influences in the choice of diagnosis, etc. 2 points
3. Case summary (we will go over format in class – this should be concise, but sufficient to provide a clear picture of the client for your colleagues when you present the case in a “team meeting”) 2 points
4. Goals, Objectives, and a sample Progress Note which meet reporting/auditing requirements. 2 points
5. Your plan to engage the family. (Or an explanation of why this is not needed or not possible) 2 points
6. Your plan to coordinate with other services. (Or an explanation of why this is not needed or not possible) 2 points
7. A 1-page summary detailing what aspects of the case requires additional self-education or research (e.g. utilizing journal articles, conferences, outside experts, agency contacts, etc.) in order for you to feel competent in providing effective treatment services to your client. This could include issues having to do with your client’s cultural/ethnic background; applying non-western/alternative healing approaches to treatment; investigating the most efficacious modalities of treatment for a particular mental disorder (e.g. cognitive-behavioral therapy versus psychodynamic therapy for depression); the problems of violence and mental illness; problems related to dual diagnoses; services for families and caregivers; availability or access to community-based services for the mentally-ill; the impact of insurance and managed care on service delivery; the challenges of working in multidisciplinary teams on client needs and services (e.g. collaborating on treatments, including medications, psychotherapy, psychiatric emergencies; etc.) (4 points).

Due: Dec. 6
15% of Grade
Class Schedule and Readings

The chapters and articles are to be read by the date under which they are listed in the Schedule.

Class 1  Sept. 6  Introduction to class

Class 2  Sept. 13  Evaluation from a Social Work Perspective

Readings

Zide/Gray  * Chpt 1, “An Introduction to the Competency-based Assessment Model”

Spaniol et al  * Chpt 1, “The Recovery Process”

Castillo  * Chpt 1, “Why Culture?”
* Chpt 4, “Cultural Assessment”

Class 3  Sept. 20  A Cultural Framework for Understanding Mental Illness and Working with the Mentally Ill

Readings

Castillo  *Chpt 2 “Culture and Clinical Reality”
*Chpt 3 “Culture and Personality”

Coursepack  *“The Mismeasure of Woman”, Carol Tavris, 1995 in Feminism and Psychology, Sage.

Spaniol et al  *Chapter 5 “The Helping Culture”
Class 4  Sept. 27  Dissociative Disorders and Personality Disorders (*The Impact of Trauma*)

Readings
Spaniol et al  * Chapter 7, Barriers to Recovery
Castillo,  * Chapter 6, “Personality Disorders”
* Chapter 13, “Dissociative Disorders”
Zide & Gray  * Chapter 9, “Personality Disorders”

Class 5  Oct. 4  Psychopharmacology: medications In the treatment of mental illness (*Presentation from Dr. Ernesto Figueroa*)

Readings
Castillo  * Chapter 15, “Toward a Client-Centered Paradigm: A Holistic Synthesis”

Coursepack  * Chpt 1, “History and Overview of Social Work Roles in Medication Management,”


PAPER 1 DUE
Class 6  Oct. 11  Understanding Disorders of Mood

Readings
Castillo    *Chpt. 12, “Mood Disorders”
Zide & Gray *Chpt. 4, “Mood Disorders”


Class 7  Oct. 18  Cost and Benefits of Recovery  
(Presentation from Donna Orin)

Readings
Spaniol  *Chpt. 2, “The Experience of Recovery”
*Chpt. 6 “Self Help”
*Chpt. 8, “Advocacy and Empowerment, pp. 562-582”

Class 8  Oct. 25  Families Coping with Mental Illness

Readings
Spaniol  Chpt. 3 “Coping and Adaptation”
Chpt. 4 “The Family”

Coursepack  *The Nature of Bipolar Disorder and Its Impact on the Family”,

Class 9  Nov. 1  Anxiety Disorders  
(Presentation from Dr. Etta Saxe)

Readings
Castillo  Chpt. 10, “Anxiety Disorders”
Zide & Gray Chpt. 5, “Anxiety Disorders”

PAPER 2 DUE
Class 10  Nov. 8  *Schizophrenia and other Psychotic Disorders*

Readings

- Castillo  *Chpt. 14 “Psychotic Disorders”*
- Zide & Gray  *Chpt. 3, “Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders”*

Class 11  Nov. 15  *Substance Abuse*

(Presentation from Greg Hilton)

Readings

- Castillo  *Chpt. 9, “Substance-Related Disorders”*

Class 12  Nov. 22  *Theater Experience exploring Eating Disorders*

Readings

- Castillo  *Chpt. 8, “Eating Disorders”*
- Zide & Gray  *Chpt. 8, “Eating Disorders”*

Class 13  Dec. 6  *Course Wrap-up*

CASE STUDY PACKET DUE