SW 636-004: Mental Health Policy and Services
Wednesday, 2:00-5:00 p.m.
Classroom: 3001 SEB
Hours: Wednesdays, by appointment
Office: 2764 SSWB
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Course Description

This course will cover the various mental health services and programs for adults, children, and youth. It will discuss the roles that social workers perform in promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services to persons with mental illness, developmental disabilities and substance abuse problems. Contemporary policy issues in mental health services, particularly as they relate to larger political and social trends will be discussed. Legislation, ethical issues, stakeholder controversies and social movements affecting services to persons with mental illness will also be discussed. The historical context of services marred as they were by social control measures and stigmatizing practices will be assessed. The impact of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and social class on mental health policies and services will be examined. The course will also examine the potential and actual role of various self-help, mutual aid, and natural/informal helping systems.

Course Content

The process and politics of mental health policy making and program development will be examined from the perspective of historical, contemporary, and future models of the mental health system. Alternative approaches to defining mental health and mental illness, developmental and other disabilities, and substance related disorders will be studied. Epidemiological findings related to the incidence and prevalence of disorders and the utilization of mental health services will be examined. Local, state, and national models of mental health programs including self-help and advocacy programs will be reviewed. These programs will represent a range of approaches to promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services, along with a range of financing, and service delivery mechanisms. Individual rights, especially as they relate to involuntary treatment and professional conduct will be discussed.

Attention will be given to persons with mental illness, developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, and substance abuse disorders—or combinations of these conditions—with a special focus on individuals with severe and persistent mental conditions. US mental health policy will be examined as it is enacted in programs and services, social entitlements, financing
arrangements, and organizational missions. Associated ethical and value dilemmas will be
examined within an American as well as comparative historical and cultural context. The major
focus of the course will be on public policies and services, with simultaneous examination of the
relationships among the increasingly overlapping public, non-profit and for-profit sectors.
Special consideration will be given to how the contemporary mental health system is
experienced by economically disadvantaged persons, women, gay male, lesbian, bisexual and
transgendered persons, and persons of color.

**Course Objectives**

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the historical context of mental health policies and services, and
   apply this knowledge in making a critical analysis of existing and proposed mental health
   systems.

2. Identify the social work practitioner’s role in mental health policies and services in relation to:
   a) initiating and modifying policy and programs through their service providing activities
      and other professional activities, e.g. advocacy, public education, service coordination.
   b) applying the values and ethics of the social work profession to the mental health field,
      especially the rights of individuals regarding commitment, treatment, and social services.

3. Explain how public health concepts and epidemiological data are used in developing and
   changing policies and monitoring mental health programs.

4. Identify and analyze the effects of oppression, discrimination, stigma and other negative social
   influences on consumers of mental health services.

5. Analyze current mental health policies, legal issues, delivery systems, service settings, target
   populations, service approaches, in relation to contemporary social work practice in mental
   health.

6. Use knowledge about the etiology of mental illness and other disabilities and the effects of
   labeling to design prevention and promotion programs for the prevention of illness and
   promotion of health.
Relationship to Curricular Themes

1. Multicultural Issues

Multicultural issues are presented in relation to the various definitions of mental health, mental illness, disabilities, and substance related disorders. Data from epidemiological studies are examined in order to focus on racial/ethnic/cultural groups and other populations at risk in regard to (a) incidence and prevalence rates; (b) acceptability, access, availability, and utilization of services.

2. Social Change and Social Justice

The study of the mental health service delivery system provides students opportunity for assessment of the system in terms of injustice and the effects of stigma and discrimination or those with psychiatric labels to populations at risk. The objectives of social change and social justice are explored in relation to legal issues and individual rights that pertain to mental health policy making and program development.

3. Promotion and Prevention

An examination of the community mental health movement allows for an emphasis on promotion of mental health and prevention of mental illness and disabilities is explored in the context of research on risk and protective factors related to mental health prevention programs and how the knowledge can be translated into effective interventions.

4. Social Science

Social and behavioral science conceptual frameworks and empirical findings are presented throughout the course on such topics as: epidemiology of disorders and disabilities; causes of illness and disability; program evaluations on the effectiveness of community-based mental health programs; financing of mental health services; and services to women, ethnic minorities, and economically disadvantaged populations.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:

This course will examine current ethical issues and controversies in the field of mental health policies and services. The NASW Code of Ethics will be used to inform practice in this area. Students will analyze ethical issues related to: stigmatization and psychiatric labels; client confidentiality; client rights and prerogatives, especially the rights of populations at risk and those related to civil commitment and treatment; prevention and elimination of discrimination; equal access to resources, services, and opportunities; respect for the diversity of cultures; changes in policy and legislation that promote improvements in social conditions; and informed participation of the public.
**Source Materials**


http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/cre/

http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/home.html

http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov

**Other websites for SW 636**

http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/sw636powell.html

http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/mentalpol.html

http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/secondarydata.html

http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/international.html

http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/ihsd.html

http://www.samhsa.gov/

http://www.mentalhealth.org/

http://mentalhelp.net/selfhelp/
http://www.mdch.state.mi.us/

**Electronic Reserves**

All of the requires readings for this course with the exception of the textbook, are accessible electronically via the Social Work Library.

http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/resource.html

Click on electronic reserves for Winter 2003.

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The Brain, within its Groove  
Runs evenly-and true-  
But let a splinter swerve-  
‘Twere easier for you-

To put a Current back-  
When Floods have slit the Hills-  
And scooped a Turnpike for Themselves-  
And trodden out the Mills-

Emily Dickinson  
c. 1862
Assignments, Grading, etc.

All assignments will be graded individually, even if students are working in small groups. Please understand that “A” grades are assigned for **exceptional** work, including content, format, organization, grammatical correctness, and creative application. Papers and presentations that clearly demonstrate evidence of originality and imagination are candidates for an “A” grade only if the above specifications are also met. Please keep in mind that grading is a subjective experience, despite criteria and expectations of the instructor. More important than the instructor’s grade, is the knowledge you take with you into practice. You may wish to review the guidelines regarding grading, writing, and plagiarism in your Student Guide to the MSW Program. All referencing should be according to APA guidelines.

**If you struggle with writing skills**, consider taking advantage of a free LS&A writing workshop. Call (734) 764-0429 for details. Good writing is valuable and necessary in professional social work practice.

**Numerical equivalents for computing the course grade are as follows:**

A+ 4.3 (rare), A 4.0, A- 3.7, B+ 3.3, B 3.0, B- 2.7, C+ 2.3, C 2.0, C- 1.7

**Class Participation** can improve your grade, or diminish it. It is highly recommended that you keep up with readings, and come to class prepared to engage in meaningful discussion. I do pass a sign-in sheet at the start of each class session. If extenuating circumstances cause you to miss a class session, you are still responsible for the material covered that day.

**The Final Exam** will be a comprehensive take-home. It will consist of short and long answer essay questions, and you will have some choice in your selection of questions. The final will be discussed further as the end of the term approaches.

**I welcome student conferences** and can usually be available with a week’s notice. The best way to reach me is via my home phone, or e-mail; or speak with me after class about scheduling a time to meet.

**Summary**

| Assignment I – | 30% |
| Assignment II – | 40% |
| Final Exam – | 30% | 100% |
Preliminary Course Schedule

January 8, 2003  
Course Overview  
Introductions  
Assignments and class participation  
Writing expectations, and Grading  
Multicultural content in this course  

Reading: Executive Summary: A Report of the Surgeon General, (Forward and Preface) pp. 1-8  

January 15, 2003  

Readings:  
Mechanic, chapter 1 & 2  
Report of the Surgeon General, chapter 1&2 (partial, to be discussed in class)  

Video:  
Mental Illness- Voyager series (brain research on schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and addiction)

January 22, 2003  
Service Delivery – Part I  

Screening Centers, Emergency rooms (dispositions, safety, family involvement, voluntary and involuntary admissions). Impatient psychiatric units (structure, rules, staff, seclusion, restraints, right to be treated with dignity and respect, mental health code, recipient rights).  

Readings: Mechanic, chapters 4, 5, and 12
January 29, 2003  Service Delivery – Part II

Discharge to community, Barriers to Aftercare Planning, Partial Hospitalization, Psychosocial Rehab, Assertive Community Treatment, Community Mental Health, Case Management, Private Clinics, Clubhouses, AFC Homes, Shelters, Self- Help Organizations.

Readings: Report of Surgeon General, Chapters 4 & 5
Mechanic, Chapter 9 & 10


Handout: Discharge debacle- the case of “Joseph” (true story)

February 5, 2003  Co- Morbidity: Mental Illness and Chemical Dependency.
Epidemiological Surveys
Gaps between what research recommends and what is available in communities. Public fear of violence and mental illness.

Readings: Mechanic, Chapters 3 & 6


Guest Speaker: Deborah Thomas, MSW, CSW
Program Supervisor, Huron Valley Correctional Facility, State of Michigan
February 12, 2003

Financing Mental Health Care

Public (Medicaid - MPRO, Magellan, Medicare), Private (Managed Care, 3rd Party), Insurance Party, Gatekeepers, Impact on Access to Services, Impact on Quality of Care.

Readings: Mechanic, Chapters 7 & 8

Surgeon General’s Report, Chapter 6

Assignment I Due

Determine Small Groups

February 19, 2003

Cultural Competence in Psychosocial Services to the Mentally Ill. Ethnic groups, gender bias, sexual orientation bias, Vietnam veterans, the poor.


http://www.nimh.nih.gov/strategic/strategicdisparity.cfm
http://www.mentalhealth.org/cre/ch2.asp

Video: Moods and Music: Hugo Wolf, Robert Schumann, Hector Berlioz, George Fredric Handel

SPRING BREAK- NO CLASS ON FEBRUARY 26
### March 5, 2003

**Suicide Gestures and Attempts in Adolescence. (Epidemic?)**
Developmental considerations, System Approach, Substance Use and Abuse, Peer Influence.

**Readings:** Report of the Surgeon General, Chapter 3

Interim Report to the President, page 14

*In Harm’s Way: Suicide in America*
http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/harmaway.ctm

### March 12, 2003

**Stigma and Confidentiality**

**Readings:**


Report of the Surgeon General, Chapter 7

**Video:** *Four Lives: Portrait of Manic-Depression*

### March 19, 2003

**Vocational and Employment Issues**

**Readings:**


Interim Report to the President: page 12 & 13, Box 6 & 7.

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**March 26, 2003**

Mental Illness in Older Adults  
Role of family, Power of Attorney; Dementia, Alzheimer’s-type vs. Psychotic Depression; Abuse & Neglect; Housing Medicare.

**Readings:** Report of the Surgeon General, Chapter 5.


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**April 2, 2003**  
**Group Presentations**

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**April 9, 2003**

**April 16, 2003**  
Course review  
A Vision for the Future

**Readings:** Report of the Surgeon General, Chapter 8

New Freedom Commission Final Report to the President (as available-April, 2003).

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**April 23, 2003**  
Take-Home Final Exam Due. No Exceptions
Assignment I - Due Feb. 12, 2003—30%

This project is an opportunity to think about how social workers might “tap into” an unlikely resource by a) seeking to better understand the influence of the motion picture industry on public views of the mentally-ill, and b) appealing to movie producers and directors as benefactors of services to the mentally-ill (developmentally-disabled and substance-dependent persons). I am not aware of any grant developers seeking endowments from mega film makers (i.e., MGM, Dreamworks, United Artists). Therefore, this assignment is a novelty, and I am not asking you to send your letters (see below) to Steven Spielberg or Ron Howard, You are only sending them to me. I do hope that you enjoy this assignment, that you will take it seriously, and that it stimulates your innovative self.

From the list of motion pictures provided below (or you may choose your own and discuss it with the instructor), select one, and write a 5-6 page analysis paper. It is imperative that you (re)view the movie for this assignment, even if you have seen it recently so that your writing will be specific and not from memory alone. Your critical analysis should include at least five (5) of the policy-related issues listed below, with a minimum of one academic reference for each area addressed. Your analysis is not simply a personal opinion of the film, but must be supported with professional literature. You can use your text or any of the syllabus readings as resources, as well as any independent sources that support your analysis.

List of Policy Issues:

- Stereotyping
- Stigma
- Values
- Addiction
- LGBT issues
- Boundaries
- Reimbursements
- Family Involvement
- Symptoms
- Elderly
- Medication
- Therapy
- Self-help
- Confidentiality
- Safety
- Rehabilitation
- Prevention
- Social Justice
- Minorities
- Homelessness

Your paper could begin by focusing on the mentally-ill, developmentally disabled, or otherwise disenfranchised character, and how he/she is presented to the viewing public. Is this portrayal an accurate/authentic depiction? Is the story (even if based on a true life story) believable? Does the movie leave the viewer with a positive or negative perception of the mentally-ill, or does it perhaps stigmatize or distort the reality you know to be true from your work experience or research.

Keep in mind that film-making in this country is an extremely powerful medium that has the ability to greatly influence public opinion. U.S. movie box office receipts in 2000 totaled about $9 billion dollars (Neilsen). In addition, 97.8% of families own a VCR. Perhaps in your research you will come up with further statistics to support the influence of this medium. Thus, movies influence consumers, providers, administrators of mental health programs, funding sources, and policy-makers. Today’s motion picture industry is one of the wealthiest, and thus has tremendous resources to “strike a nerve” in the people of our country, as well as internationally. The movie Forrest Gump, for example, grossed worldwide more than 679 million dollars, according to Neilsen Media Research, 2001.
The second part of the assignment is to write a letter to the producer/director of the film (1-1 ½ pages). The content of your letter will depend upon your analysis of the film and how it influences viewers toward an accurate depiction of the mentally-ill or developmentally-disabled persons, or the services they received or situations they find themselves in. Your letter should come from the perspective of a “pretend” grant developer, seeking a funding gift to an agency who has taken a special interest in promoting the movie as part of their campaign to create a new program. You can briefly describe the type of program for which you are hoping to get money, but the bulk of your letter should touch on the authenticity (or not) of the movie in the spirit of useful critical feedback. You will receive one grade for the entire project.

Films:

28 Days
Beloved
Sybil
Rain Man
The Fischer King
As Good As It Gets
Prince of Tides
The Dream Team
When A Man Loves A Woman
Sling Blade
Riding In Cars With Boys
One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest
The Color Purple
Angela’s Ashes
What About Bob?
Silence of the Lambs
A Beautiful Mind
I Am Sam
Forrest Gump
Driving Miss Daisy
What Dreams May Come
Girl Interrupted
Castaway
Assignment II- Interview and Class Presentation in Small Groups- 40%

Presentation dates are April 2 and 9. Small groups (3-4 students) will be determined on or before February 12.

This assignment requires you to work in a small task group. Within your group, you may decide how parts of the assignment will be carried out by consensus, or by whatever means seems to work for your group members. You will need to identify a local “agency” that serves individuals who have mental illness. This can be a hospital, partial hospital program, an outpatient clinic (public or private), an Assertive Community Treatment Program, Psychosocial Rehabilitation, Adult Foster Care Home, Fairweather Lodge, or other professional organization that provides services to the identified population. See instructor for suggestions if needed. You may need to narrow your focus to a particular program if applicable (i.e., psychiatric emergency room services within a general hospital).

Next, you will obtain two interview appointments (most-likely arranged by telephone contact). One will be with the CEO, Administrative Personnel, Recipient Rights Officer, Grant Developer, or Policy-maker; the other with a “front-line” social worker (MSW) in the agency. All members of the small group are required to participate in the interviews. You may choose to work in pairs with one student asking questions, and the other taking notes or audio taping (get permission ahead) with attention to non-verbal. Interviews should last between 30 and 60 minutes each. Be sure to clarify time frames in your initial contact.

The interviews should focus on culturally-competent services, policies, and awareness. You may inquire about recent inservices or staff trainings. You might ask what specific accommodations are made for patients/clients who may be psychotic, physically-disabled, non-English speaking immigrants, disclose LGBT issues, are homeless, frail elderly, etc. You can ask where these policies are written, and ask to see them. You may ask about how the agency ensures confidentiality and how they define confidentiality. You may ask about recipient rights complaints and how these matters are resolved. Of course, interview questions (assessment) should be prepared in your small group prior to your agency visit. Some class time will be set aside for this planning work.

It is important to ask relatively the same questions of each interviewee so that perspectives and assumptions can be compared later. Once the interviews have been completed, your group will discuss your findings and begin to create a presentation for the class, including a minimum of one visual aide, (graph, poster, power-point, organizational chart, etc.). Presentations will be a minimum of 20 minutes (NTE 30 minutes). Questions and comments from the class can extend beyond the 30 minute maximum.

Assignment II continued:
Class presentations can take many forms. Use your discretion as well as your organizational assessment skills, Tell us about the program, the interviews, the accessibility to interviewees and their willingness to speak candidly with you. Tell us about what policies seem to benefit clients, and are implemented by staff; and those that appear to be obsolete, ineffective or violated. The
most important part of the presentation is to make valid recommendations about how the program could better respond to the interests/needs of at least two or more cultural groups outside of the mainstream. Observations should be in the form of policy recommendations that you would make to the agency. Serious problems such as discrimination, safety violations, mistreatment of clients/patients, staff attitudes, risk for creating deviance, etc. are certainly areas you would want to include in your presentation.

The written requirement for this assignment is for each student to submit a 2-3 page typed summary of his/her contribution to the project and what you learned in the process. This will be due on the date of presentation. In addition, on the date of presentation, a one-page brief questionnaire, prepared by each group, will be handed out to all classmates to use as a written evaluation of the class presentation. The instructor will utilize these class feedback sheets to assign individual grades to each group member.

Summary:

Students will be graded (individually) on the following areas:

- Interview 30 points
- Presentation to the class 30 points
- Visual Aide 10 points
- Written summary 20 points
- Class questionnaire 10 points

100 points

Wash and Wear

If only could change my mind
Like I change my socks, my T-shirts…
This particular version is full:
Bitterness, rage, and hurt…

- Heidi E. Hermanson
  Consumer

Concluding Benediction

Keep guard over nothing,
Underfoot the stones,
And on my heart
The dark rain falling-
O, rain, be merciful!
Wash away the sharp edges of my world,
Crumble underfoot the stones of my desolations.

- Deborah Dana
  Consumer
  The Altered State, Southern Ed.