Course Description
This course will examine conceptual framework and research findings relevant to mental health and mental disorders of adults and elderly. Biological and psychosocial frameworks and findings will be examined from an evidenced-based point of view. The promotion of health and the prevention of various mental disorders will be examined. The classification (diagnosis), etiology, treatment, rehabilitation and prognosis of mental disorders will be discussed. Various factors that modify mental disorder such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability and age will be considered. The impact of these factors on symptomatology, social functioning, quality of life and prognosis will be discussed. The relationship of people with disorders to their families, caregivers and others in supportive and regulatory roles will be explored.

Course Content
The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV-TR) system of classifying behavior will be compared with other classification systems such as Person in Environment (P.I.E.). It will also be compared with other social work and social science approaches to assessment, particularly those focusing on social functioning rather than disorder. The reliability of the DSM-IV-TR system; the usefulness of the system for the purposes of promotion, prevention, treatment or rehabilitation will be discussed as well as their links to social work and social science constructs. The disorders to be considered include schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, mood disorders, personality disorders, anxiety disorders and mental disorders of aging. The prevalence of these disorders will be considered with particular reference to their distribution according to such factors as socio-economic status, race ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age and physical disability. Studies exploring the influence of biological factors on the development of these disorders will be examined. This will be linked to the response of these disorders to a variety of medications and to nonpharmacological somatic treatments, such as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and bright light treatment. At the same time it will
be recognized that biological treatments can be helpful for conditions of non-biological etiology. Likewise studies exploring the influence of environmental factors on the development, onset, recurrence and persistence of these disorders will be considered. Whatever the presumed etiology, the course will consider the appropriateness of various psychosocial services including psychotherapy/counseling, residential, vocational, social, educational, and self-help and mutual aid programs for people with various types of mental disorder. The role of families and community caregivers in supporting individuals with these disorders will be addressed. Family and environmental factors will be identified that may be amenable to modifications, thus preventing relapse. Special attention will be given to understanding the processes by which stigma develops and is maintained. The potential of the mental disorder classification system to create deviance will be examined. Misuses of the system and their negative consequences will be discussed especially as they fall disproportionately on persons from “minority” groups which include women, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBT persons, persons with primary medical conditions and persons of low socio-economic status. Strategies for avoiding these misuses will be discussed. Concerns about ethnically questionable uses of the DSM-IV-TR to influence eligibility or reimbursement for services will be discussed. Prevention will be discussed in relation to each of the disorders. For example, obstetric difficulties will be discussed in relation to schizophrenia, race in relation to the misdiagnosis of bipolar disorder, loss in relation to depression and dysthymia, and violence in relation to posttraumatic stress syndrome.

**Course Themes:**

*Multiculturalism and Social Diversity* will be addressed through discussions of different patterns of health promotion opportunities and diagnosing practices affecting diverse cultural groups including women, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with variant sexual orientations, persons with other primary medical conditions and persons of low socio-economic status.

*Social Justice and Social Change* will be addressed through the review of epidemiological studies dealing with the frequency and distinguishing characteristics of those who experience particular disorders; controlled trials of various interventions including medication, intensive outreach services, social skills training and psychoeducational services; and follow-up surveys of persons affected by the disorders.

*Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation* will be addressed through the following means: Epidemiological studies of the influence of, for example, poverty on the incidence and the prevalence of particular disorders will be reviewed for their promotion and prevention implications. Prevention will also be addressed by an examination of the avoidable negative social consequences of severe mental illness, e.g. homelessness, joblessness, and disrupted educational careers. Prevention, still further, will be considered from the point of view of averting their occurrence by early intervention. Treatment will be discussed in terms of the clinical efficacy and service effectiveness of various interventions. Rehabilitation will be considered in the context of the effectiveness of various residential, vocational, social and educational services for people with mental disorders.

*Values and ethics* will be addressed through the emphasis placed on working on behalf of the most disadvantaged persons with mental disorders. It places special value on advocacy and environmental modifications. The potential harm associated with classification is discussed,
as are ethically questionable practices that have arisen as the DSM-IV-TR has been embedded in insurance reimbursement and service eligibility policies.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:
This course will emphasize working on behalf of the most disadvantaged persons with mental disorders. Special emphasis will be placed on advocacy and environmental modifications. The potential harm associated with classification will be discussed, as will ethically questionable practices that have arisen as the DSM-IV has been embedded in insurance reimbursement and service eligibility policies.

Course Objectives:
Students should be able to:
1. Compare and contrast the utility of the mental disorders diagnostic system with broader social work and behavioral science frameworks focusing on social functioning.
2. Discuss the biopsychosocial aspects of the disorders below in terms of clinical presentation, prognosis, etiology, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.
   a. schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders
   b. mood disorders (including major depression, bipolar disorder, and dysthymia)
   c. personality disorders (including anti-social and borderline personality disorders)
   d. anxiety disorders (including obsessive-compulsive, panic and posttraumatic disorders, and phobias)
   e. mental disorders of aging (including Alzheimer’s and other dementias).
3. Discuss the impact of culture and race on the disorder and the person diagnosed with the disorder.
4. Discuss the potential of the mental disorder classification system to generate deviance and discuss strategies to minimize those risks and to combat stigma.
5. Discuss the appropriate use of diagnostic/classification systems and the ethical questions surrounding the use of these systems.
6. Distinguish empirically based generalizations about mental disorders from clinical wisdom or authoritative opinions, and demonstrate ability to use the scientifically based literature in search for solutions to problems.

Texts:

Required:

Recommended:
Written Assignments:
To be discussed and finalized by the second class session, depending on student interest and need. Will include 2-3 of the following: clinical assessment, case presentation, role play and analysis of clinical interview, short paper (5-8 pages on selected disorder, population, and intervention), presentations, literature reviews, short answer and essay test.

Preliminary Course Schedule

Course description and review of syllabus, including course objectives and assignments. Overview of mental health and mental disorders of adults and the elderly.

January 14. Epidemiology, classification and assessment; mental status exams and psychosocial assessments
Required readings:
Williams & Ell, Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 3-48.
DSM-IV-TR, pp. xxiii-xxxv; pp.1-37
Recommended readings:

January 21. Mood Disorders: Major Depression and Dysthymia
Required readings:
Williams & Ell, Chapter 3, pp. 49-82.

January 28. Mood Disorders: Bipolar Disorders
Required readings:
DSM-IV-TR, Bipolar Disorders, pp. 382-392.
February 4. Anxiety Disorders

Required readings:
- DSM-IV-TR, Anxiety Disorders, pp. 429-484.
- Williams & Ells, Chapter 118-156.

February 11. Schizophrenia and Psychosis

Required readings:
- Williams & Ells, Chapter 5, pp. 157-181.

Recommended readings:

February 18. Personality Disorders

Required readings:
- DSM-IV-TR, Personality Disorders, pp. 583-595.
- Williams & Ell, Chapter 7, pp. 203-216.

February 25. Spring Break

March 4. Substance Use Disorders

Required readings:
- Williams & Ell, Chapters 6 & 16, pp. 182-202, 437-481.

March 11. Mental Disorders of Aging, Adjustment Disorders, V-codes

Readings:
- DSM-IV-TR, pp.147-171.
- DSM-IV-TR, pp. 731-743.

March 18. Services and Treatment Research
March 25. Medication and short-term treatments.

Required readings:
Williams & Ell, Chapter 10 & 11, pp. 287-342.

Recommended readings:

April 1. Family issues, deviance creation, stigma & ethical issues

Required readings:
William & Ell, Chapter 12, pp. 343-364.

Recommended readings:

April 8. Community-based treatment models

Required readings:
William & Ell, Chapters 15 & 17, pp. 420-436, 482-497.

April 15. Consumer/self-help/advocacy systems; integrating informal helping systems and formally organized consumer/self-help and advocacy systems. Knowledge gaps, future developments and the role of the helping professional.

Required readings: