Course Description

This course will present state-of-the-art knowledge and research on mental disorders of children and youth, as well as factors that promote mental health and prevent mental disorders in children and youth. Bio-psychosocial theories of resiliency, coping, etiology, the impact of mental health disorders on children and family members, and the relationship of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and social class to mental disorders will be presented (e.g., the DSM IV and ICDM-IX). The impact of labeling and stigma will be explored in order to develop critical thinking about how mental disorders of children and youth are conceptualized.

Course Content

This course will examine psychological, behavioral and developmental disorders of childhood and adolescence. The particular disorders will be considered in broader psychosocial and ecological contexts which promote mental health or create and maintain symptomatic functioning. These broader contexts will be presented through an overview of theory and research on the following issues: 1) a transactional and developmental perspective on the etiology of mental disorders; 2) parent-infant attachment and family dynamics; 3) risk and protective factors (including individual, familial and socio-cultural factors) and resiliency; and 4) stress and trauma theory, including the impact of maltreatment and loss.

The following conditions will be reviewed in terms of presentation, etiology, prevalence, and incidence at different developmental stages and gender distributions: 1) relationship disorders; 2) stress-response syndromes, including post traumatic stress disorder; 3) depression; 4) anxiety disorders; 5) developmental disorders; 6) behavior disorders; 7) communication and learning disorders; 8) eating disorders; 9) substance abuse disorders; and 10) psychotic disorders. Attention will be given to the analysis of strengths and adaptive functions which may coexist with disorders, as well as to issues in defining mental health and mental disorders in cultural terms.
Course Objectives

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

1. Identify factors influencing mental health and mental disorders of children and youth at the individual, familial, cultural/ethnic, and social levels.

2. Describe the transactional processes among the above factors which influence the etiology and maintenance of mental disorders.

3. Describe and critique classification systems of mental disorders of children and adolescents, particularly DSM IV.

4. Identify and differentiate a number of disorders of children and adolescents and apply them to the evaluation of clients.

5. Demonstrate empathic appreciation of the client’s experience of disorders from the perspective of the client’s inner world.

6. Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of the child’s or adolescent’s difficulties on parents and family members.

7. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to mental health and mental disorders of children and youth.

Relationship of the Course to Four Circular Themes

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be addressed through discussion of incidence and prevalence of mental disorders, as related to gender and social class, and through discussion of culture, ethnicity, race, gender and class factors influencing mental health and disorders.

- **Social Justice and Social Change** will be addressed through discussion of the misapplication of mental health diagnoses based on race, class, and gender bias and the potential impact of poverty, discrimination, and disenfranchisement on the development of mental disorders and disorders of parenting.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** will be addressed through discussion of protective factors which promote resiliency and positive adaptation.

- **Behavioral and Social Science Research** will inform the entire content of this course, which will draw especially on current research in the following areas: developmental psychopathology, attachment, risk, resiliency and coping, trauma and maltreatment, and studies of particular disorders.
Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values

Ethical and value issues related to all course topics will be identified and discussed. Examples of this include: how values regarding child development affect judgments we make about the mental health of children, how the use of the DSM IV by social workers can bias judgments of child mental health, what the value issues are when paying attention to the child’s inner world, and how cultural and gender biases also affect professional views of child mental health.

Course Design and Expectations

This course will use a combination of lecture, class discussion, case material, role plays, group discussion and video material when appropriate. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. The instructor must be notified in the event of a possible absence due to illness or emergency. **More than 2 unexcused absences will result in an automatic reduction in the final grade. Class participation is strongly encouraged and worth 10%**

Class Requirements

Progress in this course will be assessed by three assignments. The aim of the assignments is to give you an opportunity to focus on your own specific area of interest, or explore new areas that may not be covered in detail in the class. My hope is that you will draw from your personal experience and choose topics that will aid you in your current internship placement, or a specific personal interest related to children and youth that you hope to pursue professionally in the future. Hopefully, the more personally interesting to you, the more effort you will put into these projects. **All papers are to be typed, double spaced, and written in professional, clinical style.**
Assignment 1: Due Monday, February 3, 2003.

Read and critique a book of your choice on a topic related to course content. Please have your book choice approved by me prior to completing the assignment. Texts or required reading from other classes is not permitted. Your critique should include the following information:

1. Your reasons for choosing this book.
3. To what readership the book is directed.
4. Discuss the book’s strengths; this should include what you like about the book as a social worker, and strengths for its readership.
5. Discuss the book’s weaknesses; this should include your hesitations about recommending this book to clients, clinicians, other social workers, etc.
6. General discussion of the value of the book from a social work perspective.
7. Discussion of how the book relates to the area of mental health and mental disorders of children and youth.

This assignment is worth 20% of your grade.

Assignment 2, Due March 3, 2003

Choose a child or adolescent (or their parent) with a documented DSM diagnosis. Interview the child, adolescent or parent in order to obtain the following information:

1. History of the condition (first suspicions)
2. Process of diagnosis of the condition
3. History of management of the condition (including medications)
4. Current management of the condition (including medications)
5. Child, adolescent or parent’s feelings about the condition
6. Child, adolescent or parent’s resulting self beliefs
7. How has this condition affected the family?
8. Any other pertinent information

Document these elements in narrative style as in a psychosocial history. If you are able to have access to both the child and the parent, please include the opinions of both. Conclude with:

1. YOUR impressions of the interview.
2. What feelings did it bring up for you?
3. Do you agree with the handling of the condition? What would you change?
4. What did you learn about the condition or its effects?
5. How could you as a social worker be helpful to the child or the family?

This assignment is worth 30% of your grade.
Assignment 3: Due Monday, April 7, 2003.

This is a research project. There are 3 options for this assignment.

1. Diagnostic Category: Choose a diagnostic category from the DSM IV that pertains to children and/or adolescents.
   ✓ Read 10 references about the diagnosis.
   ✓ Write a brief definition of the diagnosis and the common symptoms. (This section may be a paraphrase of the DSM IV.
   ✓ Discuss common hypotheses regarding the development of the disorder (psychosocial and biological)
   ✓ Discuss how the diagnosis is likely to affect the individual in terms of development, functioning, view of self and view of reality
   ✓ Describe the potential impact on the child’s family
   ✓ Present a brief case example, either from your reading or from your practicum experience which illustrates behaviors or emotional symptoms of the diagnosis.

2. Risk Factors: Choose a risk factor that has the potential to alter the course of a child’s development and puts him/her at risk for a mental disorder or deviant behavior. Risk factors can be child based—prematurity, serious illness, mental retardation, etc.; parent/family based—mentally ill parent, substance abusing parent, domestic violence, etc.; sociologically/environmentally based—poverty, exposure to gangs, racism, etc.
   ✓ Read 10 references about the risk factor.
   ✓ Describe the risk factor and how it affects development, and differential effects based on developmental stage of child.
   ✓ Describe the risk factor as it relates to family functioning.
   ✓ Discuss whether research indicates specific types of mental disorders or deviant behaviors are associated with the risk factor.
   ✓ Present a brief case example, either from your readings or from your practicum, which illustrates the impact of the risk factor on a child or adolescent.

3. Concept Paper: Choose a concept discussed in lecture or readings that you would like to learn more about in depth, i.e.: resiliency, trauma, attachment, transactional view of development.
   ✓ Read 10 references about the concept.
   ✓ Present an overview and definition of the concept.
   ✓ Discuss research on specific aspects of the concept.
   ✓ Discuss how the concept affects development.
   ✓ Discuss how the concept affects family functioning.
   ✓ Present a brief case example, either from your readings or your practicum, which illustrates the impact of the concept on the child/adolescent.

All assignments should be 8 to 10 pages in length. (Please no more than 10!) Assignments must be typed, double spaced, written in clinical style and following A.P.A. documentation form. Please include a bibliography of your references. Please protect confidentiality by using pseudonyms, and changing any other identifying data.

This assignment is worth 40% of your grade.
Grading:
The requirements listed above are the minimal expectations for class assignments, and if followed precisely will result in an A- grade for the assignment. A grade higher than A- would be given to work that has gone above and beyond the minimal qualifications. This would reflect more thorough, thoughtful and thought provoking work on your part. This will be discussed in detail in class. Feel free to ask questions about this policy!

Assignments that are turned in later than the due date will receive an automatic grade reduction. There are no exceptions to this policy!

Required Texts:

Available at Ulrich’s Bookstore


*Diagnostic Classification 0 to 3*: Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood, National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, 1994

Course Pack of Required Readings available at EXCEL.

Recommended Text:

*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, (or Text Revision)*
Course Outline and Reading Schedule:

**Monday, January 6, 2003**

Introduction to Course  
The Transactional Developmental Model  
Variations from “Normal”  
Impact of Labeling and Stigma

**Monday, January 13, 2003**

Understanding the DSM and Other Contexts of Diagnosis  
(Please bring a DSM to class if you can.)

Readings:  
Breggin: Chapters 1-3, p. 1-68  
0 to 3: p. 0 to 3: Introduction p. 10-19

**Monday January 20, 2003**

NO CLASS: Martin Luther King Day

**Monday, January 27, 2003**

Families, Parenting  
Gender, Beavers Scale

Readings:  
Davies: Introduction  
Breggin: Chapters 11 and 12  
0 to 3: bottom of 29-30, 46-56, 58-60, 67-69  
Course Pack: *I Don't Want to Talk about It.*

**Monday, February 3, 2003**

Attachment

Readings:  
Davies: Chapters 1-3 p. 13-107
**Monday, February 10, 2003**

Contexts of Development

**Readings:**
Breggin: Chapters 1-3 p. 1-68
Course Pack: *The Nature of Environmental Stress and the Nurture of the Individual*

**Monday, February 17, 2003**

Trauma, Shame and Loss

**Readings:**
Davies: Case Study p. 348-356
0 to 3: p. 19-21
Course Pack: *Ghosts from the Nursery*

**Monday, February 24, 2003**

**NO CLASS: Spring Break**

**Monday, March 3, 2003**

Developmental Disorders

**Readings:**
0 to 3: 40-46
Course Pack: *Pervasive Developmental Disorders*

**Monday, March 10, 2003**

Learning and Communication Disorders

**Readings:**
0 to 3: bottom 31-38
Monday, March 17, 2003

Mood Disorders

Readings:
Course Pack:
*DSM IV Training Guide for Diagnosis of Childhood Disorders*
Chapters on Anxiety and Depression
*The Boy Who Couldn’t Stop Washing*

Monday, March 24, 2003

Psychotic Disorders

Readings:
Breggin: Chapters 6-7, p. 113-146
Course pack:
*Straight Talk about Psychiatric Medication for Children*
*The Bipolar Child* (2 chapters)

Monday, March 31, 2003

Behavior Disorders

Readings:
Breggin: Chapters 4 and 5, p. 69-112
Course pack:
High Risk: *Children Without a Conscience*
*Boys Will Be Boys*

Monday, April 7, 2003

Disorders of Adolescence

Readings:
Course Pack:
*Women, Girls and Psychotherapy*

Monday, April 14, 2003

To be determined