SW 612 Mental Health and Mental Disorders of Children and Youth

Winter 2003  Instructor: Steven Foley MSW PhD
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Office hours: (after class and by appointment)

I. Course Description

The focus of this course will be on mental health and mental disorders of children and adolescents. Topics will include the nature of diagnosis and the social, political, environmental, and historical influences that have shaped and mis-shaped thought on the topic. Treatment issues will be discussed including counseling and family interventions, school-based interventions, the role of psychopharmacology, and opportunities to impact the environmental factors that may initiate or maintain a disorder. The course will explore the benefit and limitations of the DSM IV TR as a classification system. Factors involving disability, race, social-economic status, ethnicity sexual orientation, and gender and the concept of mental disorders will be discussed.

II. Textbooks

Required texts:


Optional Texts:


III. Course Objectives

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

- Recognize and understand the factors that contribute to making a diagnosis of common disorders of children and adolescents
- Understand the use and limitations of the current mental health classification systems
- Understand and be able to use early responses to intervention to further clarify and shape the diagnostic process
- Understand the influence of prejudice, institutional processes, and social and cultural bias on the perception of, or intervention with, child and adolescent disorders.
- Recognize the distortions in judgment that can occur as a result of agency goals, societal and cultural influences, and gender, racial, social, economic, and personal history factors.
- Recognize and understand the interactional factors that contribute to the onset or maintenance of disorders or dysfunctions.

IV. Course Design and Format

The objectives of this course will be pursued through lectures, discussions, readings, case presentations. The examinations and optional paper will be intended as further exercises in learning the material as well as tools for evaluation. There will be two examinations, a take-home midterm and an in class final, in the form of multiple choice and short answer. Class attendance and participation is important and will be considered a factor in determining final grades. Absences require that the professor be notified as to the time and nature of the absence.
V. Course Requirements and Grading

1. Mid-term exam  30%
2. Final exam     30%
3. Completion of worksheets  20%
4. Participation in class discussion  10%
5. Attendance     10%
6. Term paper  (Optional)

Successful completion of requirements #1 through #5 will qualify you to receive a grade up through the B range. In order to qualify for consideration for a grade in the A range, you must also complete requirement #6. Completing requirement #6 does not insure a grade in the A range, it only provides an opportunity to qualify for a final grade in the A range. For those who elect to do the paper, due date is April 2nd.

VI. Relationship of Course to Four Curricular Themes

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be highlighted in the course through discussions of the incidence and prevalence of mental disorders and its relationship to gender and social class, and through discussion of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, and class as factors influencing mental health and mental disorders.

- **Social Justice and Social Change** will be addressed through discussion of the misapplication of mental health diagnoses and placements 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 factors that promote resiliency and positive adaptation.

- **Behavioral and Social Science Research** will be considered a foundation for the course concepts as the material presented will represent the current research on issues related to diagnostic distinctions, social and environmental influences, and biological predispositions, and behavioral, cognitive, and pharmacological interventions.
VII. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values

Ethical and value issues will be considered in every aspect of the course particularly as they relate to issues of personal, social, and institutional bias, the potential for ethical conflicts in making clinical decisions, and the conflicts inherit in dealing with the constraints of limited time or resources. Other issues discussed in the course will be the interface between the rights of children and the rights/responsibilities of their parents, issues of advocacy with and for children and adolescents, and the understanding the limitations of the DSM IV TR and the medical model in understanding the whole child.

VIII. Schedule of Class Topics and Required Readings

#1 - January 8
- Overview of course including course expectations
- Nature of mental health and mental disorders
- Utility and limits of categorical/dimensional diagnostic systems
- Critical thinking as an exercise and as a tool

#2 – January 15
- Attachment Theory
- Implications for assessment and for understanding our biases
- Child resiliency
- Risk factors
Readings: Davies – Intro. and Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

#3 - January 22
- Attention Disorders
- Assessment, differential diagnosis, and treatment
- Role of child management, social effects, and psychopharmacology and implications for school environment
Readings:  Mash & Barkley – Chap. 2,  

DSM IV TR pages 85-93

#4 - January 29
- Conduct disorders, oppositional defiant disorder
- Delinquency
- Assessment, differential diagnosis, and treatment
- Role of environment, “status offense”, economic status, social role theory, and pathology models
Readings:  Mash & Barkley – Chap. 3  

DSM IV TR pages 93-103  
Handout
#5 – February 5
- Anxiety disorders (general anxiety disorders, separation anxiety, “school phobia”, OCD)
- Assessment, differential diagnosis and treatment
- Role of biological predisposition and environmental etiology, parenting, clinical and school interventions
Readings: Mash & Barkley – Chap. 5
   *DSM IV TR* pages 121-124, 429-484
   Handout

#6 - February 12  **Midterm Take-Home Exam Handed Out**
- Depression and adolescent onset bipolar disorder
- Assessment, differential diagnosis, and treatment
- Suicide intervention and lethality assessment
- Role of biological predisposition and environmental etiology, parenting, clinical and school interventions
Readings: Mash & Barkley – Chap. 4
   *DSM IV TR* pages 345-428
   Handout

#7 - February 19  **Midterm Take-Home Exam Turned In**
- Developmental disorders
- Cognitive impairment
- Neurological disorders and head trauma
- Role of government services, working with family adjustment, and special education services
Readings: Mash & Barkley – Chap. 7, Chap. 9, and handouts
   *DSM IV TR* pages 41-56

February 26 – WINTER BREAK

#8 - March 5
- Learning disorders, learning disabilities
- Role of early stimulation
- Effective school and classroom environments
- Learning theory: Orton Gillingham, Reading Recovery
- Phonics verses whole-learning, or language experience.
- ESL issues, non-standard English
Readings: Mash & Barkley – Chap. 9
#9 – March 12
- Autism and Aspergers
- Assessment and intervention
- Role of families, school systems, medication, speech therapy, behavior treatment, and social skills
Readings: Mash & Barkley - 8
\textit{DSM IV TR} pages 69-84
Handouts

#10 - March 19
- Encopresis and enuresis: assessment and intervention
- Tic and tourettes disorder: assessment and treatment
- Communication disorders, elective mutism
- Motor skill disorders
- Sensory Integration Dysfunction
Handouts

#11 - March 26
- Adolescent issues including: age typical behavior and thought, role of peer influence, parents and family, identity, and instrumental competence
- Delinquency, substance abuse, sexual orientation, and eating disorders
- “Leaving home”, individuation issues.
Readings: Mash & Barkley – Chap. 12, Chap. 14

#12 – April 2 Optional Papers Due
- Special Topics: To include as much of the following as time permits.
- Parenting, and standardized parenting programs (Fay, STEP, The Disruptive Child, etc.)
- Lying
- Adolescent sexual offenders
- The evolving role of fathers
Readings: Handouts

#13 – April 9
- 0-3, 3-5 issues, early intervention, parenting.
- Role of environment in development of mental health/disorder
- Goals of early intervention and early intervention strategies
Readings: Handouts

#14 - April 16
- Working in clinical and host settings
- Clinical social work and school social work as careers.
- COURSE EVALUATIONS
Final Exam Completed in Class