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 and prevent relapse. This course has a specific emphasis on services to individuals who suffer from severe and persistent mental illness, substance abuse in conjunction with mental illness (dual diagnosis), 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. Mental health disparities will be considered in relation to race, poverty, diagnoses, treatment options and case disposition.

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.

7. Accommodation for Disability Statement

Any student who feels that s/he may need an accommodation for any type of disability (physical, mental or learning, temporary as well as chronic), please feel free to contact me at any time during the semester so that we can discuss options that will enable you to complete the course responsibilities.
Recommended Mental Illness Memoirs/Narratives/Texts:

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


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 Falls 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


His Bright Light: The Story of Nick Traina, Danielle Steel, Delacourte Press, 1998. (Bipolar disorder)


The Eden Express: A Memoir of Insanity, Mark Vonnegut, Kurt Vonnegut, Seven Stories Press, 2002 (schizophrenia)

Conquering Schizophrenia: A Father, His Son and a Medical Breakthrough, Peter Wyden, Knopf, 1998


A Different Kind of Boy: A Father's Memoir about Raising a Gifted Child with Autism, Daniel Mont, Jessica Kingsley Publisher, 2001

**Required Texts**


**Required Website**

http://www.mentalhealthpractices.org/
For article downloads
https://www.socialworkers.org/nasw/default.asp
For access to practice related documents
Recommended but Optional Texts


Course Assignments, Requirements, and Grading

15% of your grade will be based on class participation. Class participation will be graded according to attendance, currency in reading, and participation in discussion. Class attendance will be taken weekly by sign-in sheet. The major assignments for the course will be articulated below. 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 unless there has been an arrangement worked out with Dr. Gioia. The following criteria will be taken into account when papers are graded:

- 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

While papers are judged on their individual merit, in any class there is a “standard” around each assignment. The way I grade is to read all the papers first and make comments on each and then to think about where the individual papers fall in terms of the standard of excellence set by the class and then go back to each and place a letter grade.

Course Overview

The course will be guided by four important themes:

A) Understanding people with mental illness from multiple perspectives (including gender, race, ethnicity, culture, privilege, oppression, social justice)

B) Understanding the mental health practitioner roles of social workers

C) Understanding the best evidence practice methods for our work with individuals with severe and persistent mental illness
D) Developing intolerance for poor practices or treatment of mentally ill persons and their families and to acquire the skills and muster the courage to “do things differently” if it will aid these courageous persons to have better lives (Mary Ann Test)

**Paper 1 (Looking at a personal memoir through a “cultural lens”)**

30% of grade.
Length 7-10 pages.
Due: Oct 2nd

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 he/she received?

b. Using approaches to understanding the intersections of culture and mental illness in class, 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, historical context 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 therapeutic relationship(s) discussed in the book. 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?

**Assignment 2 (small group presentation on diversity issues)**

20% of grade
20 minutes
In class 3rd or 4th week

Instructions will be given in class

**Final paper outline – detailed instructions will follow**

35% of grade
Length: 10-15 pages maximum
Due: To be decided

1. Choose a severe and persistent mental health disorder (Discuss disorder features in some depth with DSM multi-axial assessment included)
2. Choose an empirically focused treatment for that disorder
3. Choose the social work role(s) that align best with delivery of this treatment
4. Adjust and alter the delivery of the treatment for a particular ethnic group, gender, developmental life-stage, location, socio-economic group of your choosing.
   (e.g. a Latino male in prison with severe depression and substance abuse)

Extra credit assignment (if needed and with permission of professor). Attend a self-help meeting – National Alliance of Mentally Ill, 12-step meeting for dually diagnosed, etc and produce a 5 page paper answering questions which will be given to you on request. Maximum percentage to be earned – 10%.

Class Schedule and Readings

The chapters and articles are to be read by the date under which they are listed in the schedule unless re-negotiated in class.

Class 1  Sept. 4  Introduction to class

Who are we? What do we bring to the arena of mental health practices?
What strengths? What biases? What is the historical role of social work in the area of mental health practice?
What is a severe and persistent mental disorder? What is recovery?
What is the role of culture?

International Federation of Social Workers – document for class discussion

Class 2  Sept. 11  A Cultural Framework for Understanding Mental Illness and Working with the Mentally Ill

Readings

Castillo

Chpt 1  “Why Culture?”
Chpt 2  “Culture and Clinical Reality”
Chpt 3  “Culture and Personality”
Chpt 4  “Cultural Assessment”


Kropf & Isaac

Chap 1  Cultural Diversity and Social Work Practice: An Overview (in Harrison, Thyer & Wodarski)

Class 3  Sept. 18  Practice Relevant Information Across Diverse Groups (Race/Ethnicity)

Readings

Divide chapters for mini-group presentations
Harrison et al  Chap 2.  SW Practice with African Americans
Chap 3  SW Practice with Latinos
Chap 4  SW Practice with Asian Americans
Chap 10  SW Practice with Native Americans


Spaniol  Chapter 5 “The Helping Culture”

Class 4  Sept. 25  Practice Relevant Information Across Diverse Groups (Gender/Lifespan/Sexual Orientation/Disabilities)

Readings  Divide chapters for mini-group presentations
Harrison  Chap 5  SW Practice with Women
Chap 6  SW Practice with the Aged
Chap 8  SW Practice with Persons with Adult Onset Disabilities
Chap 9  SW Practice with Gay Men, Lesbian Women, & Bisexual Individuals

Transgender practice guidelines (S. Schulz) – will provide link on course tools

Class 5  Oct. 2  What is Psychosocial Rehabilitation?

Hughes & Weinstein  Chap 2  What is PSR?
Chap 3  Research in PSR
Chap 4  Person Centered Planning & Practice

** First paper due

Class 6  Oct. 9  Supported Education Conference

Attendance at the supported education conference as note-takers
(information to follow)
Links for supported education articles given in class
Class 7  Oct. 16  Illness Management & Recovery  
Cost and Benefits of Recovery

Evidence-based practices website for downloadable articles

Spaniol  
Chap. 2, “The Experience of Recovery”
Chap. 6 “Self Help” (Tom Powell or self-help video)
Chap. 8, “Advocacy and Empowerment”

Homelessness/Legal Issues – Cursing the Sun (video)

Class 8  Oct. 23  Family Psychoeducation/  
Families Coping with Mental Illness

Readings  
Evidence Based Practices Website for downloadable articles

Bentley  
Chap 10  Social Workers as Consumers and Family Consultants

Spaniol  
Chap. 3 “Coping and Adaptation”
Chap. 4 “The Family”
Video – Mental Illness in the Family

Class 9  Oct. 30

Psychopharmacology: Medication Management issues in psychiatry &  
Cultural sensitivity in medication use

(speaker – Joe Harvey or Tom Carly)

Readings  
Evidence-based practices Medication Management (article download)

Bentley  
Chap 9  Social Workers as Medication Facilitators
Chap 7  Social Workers as Skills Trainers

Demonstration of community re-entry module
Class 10  Nov. 6  CBT/IPT  (Speakers)
*readings will be suggested by presenters

Readings

Bentley  Chap 4  Social Workers as Therapists

Class 11  Nov. 13  Co-Occurring Disorders: 
Integrated Dual Disorders Treatment

Readings

Consumer panel from Dearborn to discuss dual diagnosis

Evidence-based practices web-site article downloads

Castillo  Chap. 9, “Substance-Related Disorders

Class 12  Nov. 20  Assertive Community Treatment
Supported Employment/Vocational
Rehabilitation

Evidence-based practices website – article downloads
ACT & Supported Employment

Bentley  Chap 8  Social Workers as Case-managers

Allness & Knoedler (1998) The PACT Model (a manual for PACT Start-up), NAMI

Introduction to treatment manuals and fidelity scales (IPS)

Class 13  Nov 27  Thanksgiving – no class

Class 14  Dec 4  The Future of Social Work Practice in
Mental Health

Bentley  Chap 14 Social Workers as Administrators & Policy Analysts

Chap 15 Emerging Knowledge & Future Trends in Mental Health

Final Paper due week if 12/11 – date will be firmed up in class