S.W. 694 – Social Work with the Elderly
Fall 2004

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Course Description:
This methods course focuses on intervention with the elderly at micro and macro levels. The course will build upon foundation coursework theory about human development, personality, and social environment. This content will be integrated with intervention strategies directed toward the elderly. Major areas to be discussed are: coping with age-related changes, caregiving demands, advance directives, guardianship, managed care, elder abuse, case management and advocacy.

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

1. Identify the common barriers in serving the needs of the elderly from an interpersonal, environmental and social perspective, and recognize that these problems can be addressed using all levels of social work intervention.
2. Plan intervention strategies in micro and macro practice that are of particular importance for the elderly of various racial/ethnic backgrounds, SES levels, and sexual orientations.
3. Plan various intervention strategies that promote prevention of health and functional problems and rehabilitation among the elderly.
4. Plan or plan and conduct an intervention strategy with the elderly in micro and macro practice.
5. Incorporate social work values and ethical principles related to social work with the elderly.

Assignments:

1. Present a case for class discussion from your practice experience. This presentation can be based upon work with an individual, group, family, community organization, etc. Use the case to facilitate a discussion of the class readings as well as issues relevant to our intensive focus on oppression, privilege, diversity, and social justice (10%).
2. Write a research paper (10-12 pages) based on the in-class instant aging exercise. Focus on one aspect of age-related changes (e.g., hearing loss, social support, loneliness) using articles and book chapters to help you understand this change. Describe ways in which social workers can intervene to address this age-related change by focusing on one of the following levels of practice: interpersonal, community organizing, administrative and/or policy (40%).

3. Write a research paper (12-15) on a specific problem area relevant to the elderly; describe relevant prevention and intervention strategies at multiple levels of practice (i.e., interpersonal, community organizing, administrative and/or policy); and describe how these approaches relate to the strengths perspective (50%).

Course Design:
The instructor will select readings and design assignments for the course. Approaches such as lecture, discussion, case review and simulations will be employed. Students will be expected to contribute case/programmatic examples from their field experiences.

Relationship to Curricular Themes:
Multiculturalism and Diversity: Students will develop the capacity to see how race, gender, SES, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, physical and mental ability affect how older people function within various contexts.

Social Change and Social Justice: Students will learn skills to aid older clients in recognizing external and internal oppression. They will be able to recognize and address the influence of social inequities in individual, group, policy and social interaction. Students will be able to empower clients to articulate their needs, as individuals and in groups, and to acquire the knowledge and skills to get their needs met.

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation: Students will learn individual and group strategies for promoting wellness, a client knowledge base of variations in “normal” aging, a spectrum of coping skills to deal with change, loss and disability and preparedness for end-of-life issues.

Social Science Theory and Research: The course readings will include theory and research findings regarding the efficacy of various intervention strategies from a micro and macro perspective that are successfully utilized with older people and their caregivers.

Ethics and Social Work Values: Readings, case discussion, and simulations will help students to define their own interpretations of the NASW Code of Ethics in work with the elderly.
Readings:
Both required and recommended readings will be available in course pack form at Ulrichs.

Course Outline

Session 1 (September 9): Overview of Course

Session 2 (September 16)- Physical Functioning: A Central Feature of Macro and Micro Practice

   Required Reading

   Recommended Reading

Session 3 (September 23)- A Strengths-Based Framework for Assessment, Intervention, and Prevention

   Required Reading


**Recommended Reading**


**Session 4 (September 30)- Mental Health Functioning Assessment**

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


**Session 5 (October 7)- Mental Health Functioning: Prevention and Intervention**

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


**Session 6 (October 14)- Working with Vulnerable Adults**

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


**Session 7 (October 21)- Substance Use: Assessment, Intervention and Prevention**

**Required Reading (Understanding Age-related Changes Paper: Due in Class)**


**Recommended Reading**


**Session 8 (October 28)- Advance Directives and Guardianship: Advocacy for Social Justice**

**Required Reading**

Hommel, P (2003). Written testimony before Special Committee on Aging, U.S. Senate.


**Recommended Reading**

Michigan Bar Association (2002). Five of the 120 most frequently asked questions from clients at the legal hotline for older Michigankians. [www.michbar.org/sections/elderlaw](http://www.michbar.org/sections/elderlaw).


**Session 9 (November 4)- Cognitive Functioning: Assessment**

**Required Reading**


Recommended Reading

Session 10 (November 11)- Cognitive Functioning: Prevention and Intervention Required Reading

Recommended Reading

Session 11 (November 18) -Mental Health Functioning: Prevention and Intervention Required Reading

Recommended Reading

***** November 27: Thanksgiving *****
Session 12 (December 2)- Sexuality and Sexual Orientation

**Required Reading**

**Recommended Reading**

Session 13 (December 9) Caregiving: Prevention and Intervention

**Required Reading**
**Recommended Reading**

***** Prevention/Intervention Paper: Due December 16, 2004 *******
(Leave on my office door, room 3846)