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 (with special emphasis on relapse prevention), and the delivery of psychosocial treatments 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. 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 population) 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. A second major focus is on culturally competent and gender-specific interventions and special issues for groups who have been subject to oppression. Privilege and social justice concerns will be a major emphasis of the course. Mental health disparities will be considered in relation to diagnoses, treatment options and case disposition within the mental health system.

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.
8. Writing Assistance
For further assistance with writing, you may go to the Writing Workshop 1139 Angell Hall 764-0429.

9. Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:
All academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and misrepresentation will be treated seriously. You will find a discussion of plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity if you consult your Student’s Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program (available online).

Recommended Mental Illness Memoirs/Narratives/Texts:

Under Observation: Life Inside McLean Psychiatric Hospital

We Heard the Angels of Madness: A Family Guide to Coping with Manic Depression, Diane and Lisa Berger, 1991, Quill Press.


The Hillside Diary and Other Writings, Robert Gary Neugeboren, 2004.

Natalie on the Street, Ann Nietzke, 1994, Calyx Books (a memoir about the author’s relationship with an elderly homeless woman).


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).


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.


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


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.


Unholy Ghost: Writers on Depression, Nell Casey, 2002, Perennial.
Required Texts
   Plus selected articles available as full text on the web.

Required Websites
http://www.mentalhealthpractices.org/
For article downloads
https://www.socialworkers.org/nasw/default.asp
For access to practice related documents
http://www.nimh.nih.gov/
http://www.nami.org/

Recommended but Optional Texts

Course Assignments, Requirements, and Grading
10% of your grade will be based on class participation. Class participation will be graded according to attendance, currency in reading, and participation in group discussions. 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;
• APA style for final paper

While papers are judged on their individual merit, in any class a “standard” emerges 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. You will receive a final grade sheet with the final paper which articulates all the components of your 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: October 7th

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 (on-going small group case presentation)

35% of grade
Presentations will occur during the last weeks of class

Each student will participate in a Search-Research (S-R) Group which will function as a home-base group for the Service Delivery Innovation Project. The S-R group will work with an individual case which will involve thought about assessment, diagnosis, understanding cultural implications and identifying intervention strategies and resources. The case will serve as the clinical example for the presentation and for the final paper. Some examples of challenges related to treatment and service delivery in the case would include:

- Problem of violence and mental illness
- Problems related to dual disorders
- Challenges of working on an interdisciplinary team
- Incorporating alternative and complementary treatments
- Services for families and care-givers
- Innovative community-based treatments and restrictions to executing those evidence-based treatments

The presentation may be structures as a professional in-service training. Each group must prepare an evaluation form for the rest of the class to use. The presentation will take approximately 45 minutes.

Final paper

25% of grade
Length: approximately 10 pages
Due: December 17th

1. Choose a severe and persistent mental health disorder you would like to explore in more depth (Discuss disorder features in a narrative and use the DSM IV multi-axial assessment somewhere in your paper). The information may come from close knowledge of someone you have worked with at your filed placement, a family member, a vignette (I will provide) or you may use the case from class.
2. Choose one or more empirically focused, evidence-based treatment(s) for the treatment of the disorder – you may use the one from your presentation or something else you feel is a good fit for the case you are presenting.

3. Choose the social work role(s) that align best with delivery of this treatment from the Bentley book and discuss the role in relation to the case.

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 and talk about that in the paper (e.g. a Latino male in prison with severe depression and substance abuse).

5. Describe who you are as a therapist and what you bring to the treatment (e.g. race, experience, age, gender).

6. Clinical next steps – where do you go from here.

7. What do you think about evidence-based practice? (think piece)

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  September 9  Introduction to class & each another

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?

***NY Times article on Evidence-based Practice (In-class discussion)

**Video  “Titicut Follies” – Frederick Wiseman

Class 2  September 16  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”

Cuellar & Paniagua
Chpt 1  “Culture and Mental Health”


**Video  “Eyes of Dust”
Class 3  September 23  Contextualizing Health, Illness & Recovery: Introduction to Psychosocial Rehabilitation

Readings

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

Cuellar & Paniagua  Chapt 2 Cultural Models of Health & Illness


**VIDEO – “People Say I’m Crazy”

Class 4  September 30  Trauma

Readings

Cuellar and Paniagua  Chap 4  Gender as Subculture

Castillo  Chap 6  Personality Disorders
Chap 9  Substance-related disorders
Chap 13 Dissociative Disorders

Speaker: Jane Hassinger or Orli

Class 5  October 7  Consumers and the Process of Recovery

Readings

Castillo  Chap 14 Psychotic Disorders
Spaniol Chap. 2, “The Experience of Recovery”
Chap. 6 “Self Help”
Chap. 8, “Advocacy and Empowerment

** First paper due – memoir  Speaker: Donna Orrin or Deborah

Class 6  October 14  Assertive Community Treatment
Supported Education/Supported Employment

Readings

Mentalhealthpractices.org article download
Class 7  October 21  Homelessness/Housing/Legal Issues

Readings
Mentalhealthpractices.org  article download
Hughes  Chap 11 Housing
Bentley  Chap 5 Social Workers as Mediators
Rog  The Evidence on Supported Housing

Speaker  Tim Florence

Class 8  October 28  Dual Stigmas
Co-Morbid Physical Health Problems – Treatment Adjustments
Mental Illness & Aging

Readings
Cohen et al  Schizophrenia and Older Adults (2000). American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry 8(1)*

Sokal et al  Comorbidity of medical illnesses among adults with serious mental illness who are receiving community psychiatric services. Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease. 192(6):421-7, 2004 Jun*
*available on line – full text

Class 9  November 4  Family Psychoeducation/
Families Coping with Mental Illness

Readings
Mentalhealthpractices.org  article download
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 10  
November 11

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

Readings
Mentalhealthpractices.org article download
Bentley  Chap 9    Social Workers as Medication Facilitators
Chap 7    Social Workers as Skills Trainers
*Demonstration of community re-entry module


Speaker  Dr. Joe Harvey

Class 11  
November 18th  
Co-Occurring Disorders: Integrated Dual Disorders Treatment

Readings
Evidence-based practices web-site article downloads
Castillo  Chap. 9, “Substance-Related Disorders
Cuellar & Paniagua  Culture Bound Syndromes Substance related disorder
pp 155-156

Class 12  
Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class – November 25th

Class 13  
December 2nd  
The Future of Social Work Practice in Mental Health

Readings
Bentley  Chap 4    Social Workers as Therapists
Chap 14 Social Workers as Administrators & Policy Analysts
Chap 15 Emerging Knowledge & Future Trends in Mental Health

***Group Presentations
Class 14  December 9th – Last Class
What is advanced Social Work Practice?
What else will you need to know to be an effective practitioner?
Exit Interviews

***Group Presentations

Final Paper due by Friday, December 17th