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 accesses 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 (734)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 academic integrity. Please consult your Student’s Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program (online).

Recommended Mental Illness Memoirs/Narratives/Texts:

**Drinking: A Love Story** by Caroline Knapp, 1997 Dial Press

**A Million Little Pieces** by James Frey 2005 Anchor books

**Detour: My Bipolar Road Trip in 4-D** by Lizzie Simon, 2003 Washington Square Press.

**In Small Doses: A Memoir about Accepting and Living with Bipolar Disorder** Mark Pollard , 2004 Vision Books International

**Terry: My Daughter's Life-And-Death Struggle With Alcoholism**
George McGovern, 1997, Plume Books

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


**Willow Weep For Me: A Black Woman’s Journey Through Depression,**

**Living With Prozac and Other Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors: Personal Accounts of Life on Antidepressants,**


**Healing the Blues: A Success Story of a Patient and Her Therapist.**


**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).


**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


**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)


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


Optional Texts


**Helpful Websites**

- [http://www.mentalhealthpractices.org/](http://www.mentalhealthpractices.org/) For article downloads
- [https://www.socialworkers.org/nasw/default.asp](https://www.socialworkers.org/nasw/default.asp) For access to practice related documents
- [http://schizophrenia.com - BLOG](http://schizophrenia.com - BLOG)

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. 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 and are due at the beginning of class on the “due date.”

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
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)

Graded Work

Course Grades will be based on three papers, a group presentation and on class participation.

Diagnostic Group presentation

Due: TBD
30% of Grade
Throughout the semester, students will gain experience with a variety of skills that are critical for working in mental health settings.

On the first day of class we will form small groups who will be responsible to present on assigned diagnostic category. Class time will be allocated for preparing for this presentation each week. Presentations are to be approximately 45-60 minutes long and should include:

First part of your presentation:
1. Detail the history of your diagnostic category.

2. Prevalence of this diagnostic category.

4. Describe the signs and symptoms of your diagnosis.

5. Subtypes, (If applicable)

6. Considerations for special populations that should be taken into account, (LGBT, Elderly, Women, People of color etc.).
7. Suggested treatment options for this disorder/s. (i.e CBT, DBT, Motivational Interviewing, etc. provide a brief overview of this treatment technique/model and how it will be used).

Second part of your presentation:
1. Use a case example of an actual past or present case you may be working with to illustrate this diagnostic category. Present the case as though you were presenting in an to an actual clinical team.

Format:
1. A brief introduction to your client – demographics, initial diagnostic impressions based on your intake (with explanation of what led you to these determinations.)
2. Initial treatment plan 2 Goals, Objectives, Interventions as well as a sample Progress Note which meet reporting/auditing requirements.
3. Your plan to engage the family/Significant others, (Or an explanation of why this is not needed or not possible).
4. Your plan to coordinate with other services. (Or an explanation of why this is not needed or not possible)
5. A discussion of which aspects of the case require additional self-education or research (e.g. utilizing journal articles, conferences, outside experts, agency contacts, etc.) in order for you to feel competent in providing effective treatment services to your client. This could include issues having to do with your client’s cultural/ethnic background; applying non-western/alternative healing approaches to treatment; investigating the most efficacious modalities of treatment for a particular mental disorder (e.g. cognitive-behavioral therapy versus psychodynamic therapy for depression); the problems of violence and mental illness; problems related to dual diagnoses; services for families and caregivers; availability or access to community-based services for the mentally-ill; the impact of insurance and managed care on service delivery; the challenges of working in multidisciplinary teams on client needs and services (e.g. collaborating on treatments, including medications, psychotherapy, psychiatric emergencies; etc.)
6. What Group insights developed based on your work with the case and diagnosis.

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

10% of grade.
Length 7-9 pages.
Due: Thursday 9/26/13
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, and 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?

**Paper 2**

**Self-Exploration in relation to the readings**

Paper 2 is in the form of a Readings Journal. This paper will provide an opportunity to consider the readings in light of your own experiences and should respond to at least three of the readings, in depth. You can consider personal and practice experience as well as current dilemmas you may now face in your work.

Length: 4-6 pages.
20% of Course Grade
Due: Thursday 10/17/13

Throughout the semester we will attempt to become aware of the beliefs and biases that shape our intellectual and emotional responses to work with people who present symptoms of or have been diagnosed with mental illnesses. These beliefs and biases are deeply embedded in our culture’s mythology and ideology regarding:
- acceptable feelings and behaviors
- what we define as civilized conduct
- what are appropriate expressions of one’s gender identity, age, familial role, citizenship
- illness, disease, and impairment
- the role of the helper
- who may become a client/patient/consumer
- the long term consequences of being psychiatrically-labeled and treated in the mental health system

These same biases have influenced the ways in which psychiatry, social work, and psychology have organized systems of diagnosis, treatment, and care-giving. As we read, we will attempt to uncover some fundamental assumptions about normality, “humanness,” and illness/disease that underlie our practices as social workers in mental health care roles and settings, as well as speculate about who these practices may serve or
disserve. You may want to use these ideas as ways to approach your own reading and journaling.

In general, try to answer the following:
a--Describe your personal responses to the reading. What are the central ideas that seems most salient or significant to you? Why? Which are appealing, problematic, troubling?
b--What questions do the readings pose for you or answer for you?
c--How do the perspectives described make claims about health or illness that are adequately or inadequately inclusive, stigmatizing, and/or potentially empowering to clients?

**Paper 3 – Reviewing a case – Diagnosis, assessment, treatment strategies and cultural implications for treatment**

30% of grade
Length 7-10 pages
Due: Thursday 12/5/13

Each student will choose an individual case which will involve thought about assessment, diagnosis, understanding cultural implications and identifying intervention strategies and resources. If you are not seeing individuals, you can use the person in the memoir. Examples of challenges related to treatment and service delivery in the case might 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 paper will have 5 parts:

1. Define the severe and persistent mental health disorder represented in your case (Discuss disorder features and use the DSM multi-axial assessment in the first section of the paper to describe your case) – 1 page **3 points**
2. Choose an empirically focused treatment for that disorder – use something from class presentations or something we have not covered that you feel is a good fit. You may talk about complementary or alternative treatments for this case. You should justify your choices in terms of the disorder as you defined it. (2-3 pages) Use references here. **10 points**
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. (1-2 pages) **5 points**

4. Adjust and alter the delivery of the treatment for a particular ethnic group, gender, developmental life-stage, location, socio-economic group that is presented in your case (1 page) e.g. a Latino male in prison with severe depression and substance abuse **5 points**

5. Discuss who you are as a practitioner – your characteristics and what you bring as the ‘treater’ in this therapeutic relationship (1 page) **5 points**

6. Grammatically correct, professionally written **2 points**

**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.

**September 5th**

*A Cultural Framework for Understanding Mental Illness and Mental Health/The Importance of Evidence-Based Practice*

- **Introductions**
- **Course overview**
- **Group formation**

**Readings:**
Thyer & Wodarski  Chapter 1
Castillo  Chapter 1 and 2

**September 12th**

A Cultural/Strengths-based Framework for Assessing and Treating Mental Illness
Choose a memoir and begin reading
Video; The Way Home
Group formation discussion time allocation

**September 19th (Part one)**

**Readings:**
Chapter 1: Introduction (pp. 1-13),
Chapter 2: Patient assessment (pp. 14-53).
*Castillo*, Chapter 3 and 4,
*Thyer and Wodarski*, Chapter 2

Intake and Assessment Bio- psychosocial Assessments/Screening Tools. Practice exercises.
September 26th (Part two)

Readings:
Chapter 1: Introduction (pp. 1-13),
Chapter 2: Patient assessment (pp. 14-53).
Castillo, Chapter 3 and 4,
Thyer and Wodarski, Chapter 2

Intake and Assessment Bio- psychosocial Assessments/Screening Tools. Practice exercises.
Group allocation time
Paper 1 due

October 3rd

Social Justice and Psychiatric Disability/The Power of “Recovery”

Thyer and Wodarski, Chapter 3, 4 and 5
Castillo, Chapters 14

Video: New Asylums
Group allocation time

October 10th (Begin Group presentations)

Disorders of Mood
1. Major Depression
2. Bipolar Disorders I and II
3. Post Partum Depression

Readings
Castillo, Chapters 3 and 12
Thyer and Wodarski Chapters 13 and 14

October 17th

Anxiety Disorder

1. Generalized Anxiety Disorder
2. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
3. Panic Disorders
4. P.T.S.D.

Second paper due

Readings:
Thyer and Wodarski Chapters 15-19
Castillo, Chapter 10

October 24th

Medication Management in Psychiatry/Cultural Sensitivity in Medication Use
1. Schizophrenia
Family Psycho- Education
Assertive Community Treatment

Video Schizophrenia

Readings:
Castillo, Chapter 5 and 14
Thyer and Wodarski, Chapter 12

October 31st

Personality Disorders

1. Cluster A
2. Cluster B
3. Cluster C

Readings:
Thyer and Wodarski, Chapter 23

October 31st

Substance abuse Disorders and Treatment

Readings:

**Castillo** Chapter. 9, “Substance-Related Disorders”.

**Thyer and Wodarski**, Chapters 9 -11
Video: “Addiction”

**November 7th**
**Substance Dependency Disorders cont.**

**Practice:** *Developing Goals and Objectives and Progress Note. Practice case.*

**November 14th**

**Eating disorders**
**Diagnosis and treatment**

Video “Dying to be Thin”

**November 21st**  **Disorders in Childhood and Adolescents**
**Diagnosis and treatment**

1. ADHD  
2. Autism/Asperger’s  
3. Gender Dysphoric

**November 28th**  **Holiday Break No Class**

**December 5th**

*Social Justice and Psychiatric Disability/The Power of “Recovery”*

**Thyer and Wodarski**, Chapter 3, 4 and 5  
**Castillo, Chapters** 14

**Wrap-up**