Course Description
This course will cover the various mental health services and programs for adults, children, and youth, and the roles that social workers perform. Promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services to the mentally ill, developmentally disabled, learning disabled and substance abuse populations will be surveyed. Contemporary policy issues, legislation, ethical issues, controversies, social movements, and trends affecting services to those with mental illness and mental disorders will be discussed. The historical context of services and how the mentally ill have been historically stigmatized and conceptualized will be reviewed, so that students will be able to develop critical thinking about mental health services. The impact of differences in the key diversity dimensions such as ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression) marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation will be examined, as these relate to various mental health policies and services. This course will also survey the various self-help, mutual aid, and natural/informal helping systems.

Course Content
The processes and politics of mental health policy making and program development will be examined from the perspective of historical, contemporary, and future models of the mental health system. Alternative approaches to defining mental health and mental illness, developmental and other disabilities, and substance related disorders will be addressed. Epidemiological findings about the incidence and prevalence of disorders and the utilization of mental health services will be examined. A review of local, state, and national models for mental health programs and systems, along with consideration of self-help services and advocacy programs, will provide students with an opportunity to understand a range of approaches to promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services, financing, and service delivery. This course will include consideration of individual rights, especially the rights of populations at risk, rights regarding civil commitment and treatment, professional roles vis.-a-vis. consumer rights, and consumer advocacy.

Attention will be given to persons with mental illness, developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, and substance abuse disorders-or combinations of these conditions-with special focus on individuals with severe and persistent mental conditions. U.S. mental health policy will be examined as it is enacted in programs and services, social entitlements, financing arrangements, and organizational missions. Ethical and value dilemmas connected to these topics
will be examined within an American as well as comparative historical and cultural context. The major focus of this course will be on public policies and services, with an ongoing examination of the relationships of this public domain to the non-profit and for-profit sector. Special consideration will be given to how the contemporary mental health system relates to and is experienced by economically disadvantaged persons, women, transgendered, lesbian, bisexual, gay, and queer persons, and persons of color.

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

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the historical context of mental health policies and services, and apply this knowledge in making a critical analysis of existing and proposed mental health systems.
2. Identify the social work practitioner's role in mental health policies and services in relation to:
   a. initiating and modifying policy and programs by providing professional activities, such as advocacy, public education, and service coordination.
   b. applying the values and ethics of the social work profession to the mental health field, especially the rights of individuals regarding civil commitment, treatment, and social services.
3. Explain how public health concepts and epidemiological data are used in developing and changing policies and monitoring mental health programs.
4. Identify and analyze the effects of oppression, discrimination, stigma, and other negative social influences on consumers of mental health services.
5. Analyze current mental health policies, legal issues, delivery systems, service settings, target populations, and service approaches in relation to contemporary social work practice in mental health.
6. Apply knowledge of the etiology of mental illness and other disabilities and the effects of psychiatric labels on the creation of programs for the prevention of illness and promotion of health in keeping with professional goals of social justice.
7. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to mental health policies and services.

**Course Design**
The instructor will utilize lectures, guided discussions, and may draw upon exercises, guest speakers, and field visits. References and required readings provide the basis for class discussion, exercises, and written essay assignments.

**Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity:**
Multiculturalism and diversity issues will be presented in relation to the various definitions of mental health, mental illness, disabilities, and substance related disorders. Data from epidemiological studies will be examined in order to focus on populations at risk including those defined by ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression) marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation, in regard to a) incidence and prevalence rates, and b) acceptability, accessibility, availability, and utilization of services.
The study of the mental health service delivery system will provide students the opportunity to assess the system in terms of injustice and the effects of stigma and discrimination on those with psychiatric labels and populations at risk. The objectives of social change and social justice will be explored in relation to legal issues and individual rights that pertain to mental health policy making and program development.

An examination of the community mental health movement will allow for an emphasis on promotion of mental health and prevention of mental illness and disabilities. Research on risk and protective factors related to mental health prevention programs and how knowledge can be translated into effective interventions will be explored.

Behavioral and social science conceptual frameworks and empirical findings will be presented throughout the course, on such topics as: epidemiology of disorders and disabilities; causes of illness and disability; program evaluations on the effectiveness of community-based mental health programs; financing of mental health services; and services to women, ethnic minorities, and economically disadvantaged populations.

This course will examine current ethical issues and controversies in the field of mental health policies and services. The NASW Code of Ethics will be used to inform practice in this area. Students will analyze ethical issues related to: stigmatization and psychiatric labels; client confidentiality; client rights and prerogatives, especially the rights of populations at risk and those related to civil commitment and treatment; prevention and elimination of discrimination; equal access to resources, services, and opportunities; respect for the diversity of cultures; changes in policy and legislation that promote improvements in social conditions; and informed participation of the public.

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice, and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate social injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self knowledge and self awareness to facilitate PODS learning.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course has five major requirements:

1. Class participation and attendance – 2%

   This class will draw heavily on the insights of students, with class sessions that include a mix of lecture and discussion. It is critical that students prepare ahead of time by completing the assigned reading. A good grade will only be possible for students who are familiar with the course readings and participate in class. The number of weekly readings has been limited to a manageable amount to enable students to complete them. Participation in class entails arriving on time, actively listening, and contributing to discussion.

   Class attendance is essential and expected. A sign-in sheet will be used to record attendance. If you are ill or encounter an unforeseen emergency that will cause you to miss class, please contact me as soon as possible. Missing more than two classes means that you will be missing a significant portion of the course, and you will need to speak with me about a plan to make up the coursework and class time. More than two unexcused absences will also result in a grade penalty.

2. Reaction paper on attending a self-help group meeting – 20%

   While this course primarily focuses on mental health services delivered by professionals, the support and resources peers can provide each other can be incredibly valuable as well. Visit a self-help group meeting and write about the experience. What was it like to attend the meeting? What value do you place in self-help groups and how, if at all, should they fit in with therapeutic treatment conducted by mental health professionals? Would you recommend a self-help group to a client? How would you allay his/her fears about attending the meeting? We will not have class on February 4th to give you time to attend a meeting. Possible meetings include NAMI, PFLAG, an open A.A. meeting, Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, and CHADD; if you are interested in attending a different self-help group meeting or have self-help experience that you would like to write about instead, please talk to me. Reaction papers are due in Ctools/Assignments and as a hard copy at the start of class on February 18th.

3. Facilitate a Class Discussion – 5%

   Choose a day on which you will help facilitate our class discussion. I will pass around a sign-up sheet on January 21. Each group will present 4 or 5 discussion questions based on the assigned readings. Group members will then facilitate discussion within smaller break-out groups. Your group’s discussion questions are due to me via email (jrkaplan@umich.edu) by 5pm on the Monday before the class in which you will be facilitating.
4. Policy Memo – 30%

Social workers and our clients are regularly affected by all sorts of policies that were not created by state or federal legislation, affording us many opportunities to be advocates. For this assignment, chose an institutional policy you are familiar with and that falls under the purview of this course. Write a 1-2 page memo that explains the policy, explores its impact on the relevant population, and makes recommendations for action and/or change. The paper must be in memo format and be addressed to the appropriate person (for example, the director of your agency), not to your professor. This is not a research paper, but do cite any relevant sources. Memos are due in Ctools/Assignments and as a hard copy at the start of class on February 25th.

5. Policy Position Letter – 40%

Choose a piece of legislation that specifies a policy pertaining to mental health and is connected to your interests. It may be an existing law at the federal or state level or a pending bill under consideration at the federal or state level. Write a letter to the appropriate elected official (i.e. your representative) urging him/her to take your recommended position on the bill. For the purposes of this assignment, treat existing laws as pending legislation.

Briefly describe what the policy does – does it create new programs, fund services, or prohibit discrimination? Is there any history that is important for understanding what led to the creation and passage of the policy?

Explain your position. Will the implementation of this policy do what it is supposed to do? How will it affect the intended population? What is good about this policy? What is detrimental? Why is it a needed (or unneeded) change? How will it affect subgroups within this population? Pay special attention to socio-economic status, race and ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, and other relevant groups.

You must support your assertions with research from scholarly journals. Preference should be given to references that are peer reviewed, evidence-based, and current.

The letter should be 8-10 pages in length, double-spaced in 12 point font with 1 inch margins all around. The paper is due in Ctools/Assignments as an attachment and as a hard copy at the start of class on April 15.

6. Presentation of your paper – 3%

Prepare a brief presentation to the class of the policy you chose and your analysis. Prepare at least one Powerpoint slide or a handout. The presentations will be on April 15 and 22. Students presenting on the same legislation will do so as a group. Presentation materials are due to me by 5pm on Monday, April 14.
PREPARING THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

A successful course is only possible with good discussion and an open classroom environment. Students are highly encouraged to participate in class, offer insights, critique the material, and ask questions. Sometimes students do not ask questions because they seem “obvious”. However, it is most often the case that if you have such questions, others do too, so they can be the most important ones to ask.

A successful class also depends on a respectful exchange of a diversity of views. When someone voices an opinion counter to your own, I challenge you to both respond respectfully with your thoughts, but also to fully consider the merits of the differing view. What has led your colleague to this opinion? Could you make a compelling case for this viewpoint? It is important that social workers be intellectually open and thoughtful, and that positions be taken after careful analysis of empirical data and consideration of the profession’s normative values. Be respectful of others. If you are waiting for someone to finish so you can say something, then perhaps you’re not listening closely enough. In turn, demand that others respect your views.

Students are encouraged to critique the readings. That said, please extend the same respect to the authors that you do your fellow students. All of them are on the syllabus because they have thoughtfully considered an issue covered in this course. As graduate students, learning to criticize them is key, but please do so in a respectful way.

Finally to ensure a good course, it is necessary that all students have access to the resources they need to fully engage with the material. Therefore, please notify me early on if you require any accommodations due to a disability. Also, please notify me if you will miss a class because of a religious observance, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Computers, tablets, cell phones, etc. are a distraction and a barrier to active engagement in our discussions. Therefore, they are not allowed in class.

**If you find yourself having trouble with the classroom environment at any point, I hope you will feel welcome to make an appointment to talk with me about it.**

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

The readings for this class come from the required textbook, “Mental Health and Social Policy: Beyond Managed Care” Sixth Edition (2014) by David Mechanic, Donna McAlpine, and David Rochefort. Additional readings are posted on the course’s CTools site under Resources.

| Jan 14  | Session 1: Course Overview |
| Jan 21  | Session 2: Policymaking and the history of Mental Health Policy in the U.S. |
|         | Video: When Medicine Got it Wrong |
Readings:
- Chapter 3 in MHSP

Jan 28
Session 3: The MI Mental Health Code
*Video: The New Asylums*
Readings:
- Chapter 11 in MHSP

Feb 4
Session 4: Self-help groups
*No Class. See Assignment 2 for details*
Readings:

Feb 11
Session 5: Parity and Insurance Reform
Readings:
- Chapter 7 in MHSP

Feb 18
Session 6: A medical model for mental health service delivery
*Reaction papers due*
*Video: The Medicated Child*
Readings:

Feb 25
Session 7: A medical model continued; the push towards evidence-based practice
*Policy memos due*
Readings:

Additional resource to browse:
- Choosing the Right Treatment: What Families Need to Know about Evidence-
March 4  No class – Have a good spring break!

March 11  Session 8: Barriers to and Disparities in Treatment
Readings:
  - Pages 83-94 and Chapter 6 in MHSP

March 18  Session 9: Case Studies
*You may use laptops in class today.*
Readings:

March 25  Session 10: Mental Health in Schools
Readings:

April 1  Session 11: Mental Health on College Campuses
Readings:
  - H.R. 1100
  - UM Policy: Emergency Mental Health Withdrawal

April 8  Session 12: Mental Health and the Military
*Video: The Soldier’s Heart*
Readings:

April 15  Session 13: Paper presentations
*Presentation materials due on April 14th by 5pm.*
*Research papers due*

April 22  Session 14: Paper presentations continued