1. Course Statement

This course presents advanced topics in interpersonal practice, specifically family interventions for individuals with major mental illnesses. The course focuses on Multi-family Psychoeducation (FPE) as developed by Dr. William McFarlane, an Evidence Based Practice that is promoted by SAMHSA and Michigan DHS. The class trains students in how to run a Multi-family Psychoeducation group, as well as the theoretical underpinnings of the approach, and research supporting its efficacy. The course also discusses Family Focused Treatment for bipolar disorder, as well as Open Dialogue, which is a family intervention for schizophrenia from Finland that has had consistently better outcomes than traditional psychiatry in the US, with the use of dramatically less medication. Open Dialogue is an emerging practice in the U.S..

Relationship to Social Work Core Competencies:

1) **Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**: The role of the Social Worker running a Multi-family Psychoeducation Group is discussed in depth during this course.

2) **Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**: These issues will be addressed through the readings, and class discussion. Since people with schizophrenia, or other severe mental illnesses, are discriminated against and struggle with stigma, stigma reversal is a
core value of the FPE approach. FPE has been modified in the U.S. for use with different cultural minorities, and the method has been used in Asia and Europe with equal success.

3) **Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice:** Since people with schizophrenia, or other severe mental illnesses, are discriminated against in many cultures and struggle with stigma, stigma reversal is a core value of the FPE approach. People with serious mental illnesses in the United States rarely receive the best treatments that are available, and the economic supports (SSDI, housing, insurance) are often minimal.

4) **Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice:** This class focuses on three evidence-based practices (MFG, FFT and Open Dialogue), and selected research behind them. Assertive Community Treatment, Integrated Dual Diagnosis, and Motivational interviewing are discussed as well.

5) **Engage in Policy Practice:** Social Policy is not a focus of this course, but the limitations of current social policy in the U.S., and how poor policies impact people with major mental illnesses are discussed briefly. People with serious mental illnesses in the United States rarely receive the best treatments that are available, and the economic supports (SSDI, housing, insurance) are often minimal.

6) **Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities:** Multi-family Psychoeducation, Family Focused Treatment, and Open Dialogue have engagement strategies and techniques as part of their evidence practices and are taught during the course. Motivational Interviewing techniques are discussed during the course. Family interveentions for people with major mental illness focus on the importance of social environments. Multi-family Groups and Family Focused Treatment are interventions to change and support the social environment of people with major mental illness.

7) **Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities:** Multi-family Psychoeducation, Family Focused Treatment, and Open Dialogue have assessment strategies and techniques as part of their evidence practices and are taught during the course.

8) **Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities:** Family work with people with serious and persistent mental illness focuses on helping the whole family come to terms with the illness, recognize and overcome stigma, reestablish the dignity and value of the ill family member, and learning to cope with the illness. Issues of safety and limit setting are also discussed.

9) **Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities:** This class focuses on three evidence-based practices (MFG, FFT and Open Dialogue), and selected research behind them. Assertive Community Treatment, Integrated Dual Diagnosis, and Motivational interviewing are discussed as well.
a. Course description
This course will cover the theory and some of the research on the psycho-biology of schizophrenia, and how this led to the development of these types of family treatments. After discussing the theory behind the approach, students will be trained in Multi-family Psychoeducation as developed by Dr. William McFarlane using in class exercises and a mock group. We will also explore what is known about bipolar disorder, how it impacts the individuals with the illness and their families. We will also discuss, compare and contrast McFarlane’s approach with Family Focused Treatment, a family intervention for individuals with bipolar disorder that has been created and researched by David Miklowitz. We will also discuss Open Dialogue, which is a family intervention for schizophrenia from Finland that has had consistently better outcomes than traditional psychiatry in the US, with the use of dramatically less medication.

b. Course content
This course will first cover the psycho-biology of schizophrenia, family factors that either protect or worsen the illness, and the ramifications of the illness for both the individual and his/her family. Next we will explore what and how Family Psychoeducation (FPE) attempts to change and improve the situation for the family and the client. The use of these groups for different illnesses, age groups, or ethnic groups will be discussed, as well as multi-family vs. single family treatment strategies. Research supporting the efficacy of this approach will also be covered. During the latter part of the course the students will learn how to form and run an FPE group. A similar, but shorter, review of bipolar disorder and Family Focused Treatment will be presented.

c. Course objectives and competencies
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Discuss the psycho-biology of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, the effects of the illnesses on the individual and their families.
2. Learning to educate families and people with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder about how to cope with their illness.
3. Use the problem-solving method and other FPE techniques to help run or start a group, or using it with individual families.
4. Discuss the efficacy of these approaches and how they are different from standard treatment for schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.
5. Understand what other illnesses/disabilities this approach has been used with, and conceive of other problems it could be used with.

d. Course design
This course is designed to teach students about the serious illnesses of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, how they affect not only the patient, but the family, and several evidence based family interventions for those illnesses. The course approaches this with lectures, readings, videos, and in class role plays of running a Multi-Family Psychoeducation group.
e. Relationship to social work ethics and values
   See section 1.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

   McFarlane, W.R., *Multifamily Groups in the Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders*, New York, NY, Guilford, 2002  **Student must buy this text**


b. Class schedule

   2-2-19
   **Overview of Family Psychoeducation**
   **Overview of the Psychobiology of Schizophrenia and Family Psychoeducation technique**
   Reading Assignment: Multifamily Groups in the Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders, Chapters 1-5 (p. 3-103)

   **Selecting and Joining with Families for the Group**
   **Family Psychoeducation Workshop**
   **Family Guidelines and Recommendations for Families**
   **Role Play Joining with Families in Class**

   Reading Assignment: Multifamily Groups in the Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders, Chapter 6 (p. 104-126)


   **Overview of First and Second Groups**
   **Role Play First and Second Groups**

   Reading Assignment: Multifamily Groups in the Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders, Chapter 8 (optional)
   **Demonstration of Problem Solving with class**
2-9-19
Overview of the “Problem Solving Method” and Group Format for the Groups Role Play Problem Solving Session

Reading Assignment: Multifamily Groups in the Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders, Chapter 9

Open Dialogue and the Finnish approach to treatment of schizophrenia will be discussed.

Overview of other FPE variations and Family Focused Treatment with specific focus on bipolar disorder.
Discussion of PODS issues

Optional Reading Assignment: Multifamily Groups in the Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders, Chapters 12 & 13


c. Assignments
2-2-19 Readings:
Multifamily Groups in the Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders, Chapters 1-6 optional-7 and 8


2-9-19 Readings:
Multifamily Groups in the Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders, Chapter 9


Paper due the following Saturday, on 2-16-19
Write an up to 5 page paper describing 1) what emotional reactions you had role playing a family member or person with a major mental illness during the class (no more than 1-2 pages), 2) how did your feelings about living with a major mental illness change or evolve during the class (no more than 1-2 pages). 3) What do you think about the role of psychotherapy in helping people (families, patients) with major mental illnesses? Site articles or data from the class. 4) What do you think about medications in the role of treating mental illness after this class, did that view change or evolve? Site evidence, articles.

d. Attendance and class participation
Class attendance and participation is essential in such a short class. Participation in the role plays of the group is a core part of the class. 50% of your grade is based on participation.

e. Grading
1) This is a mini course and graded as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (unless you are in a joint program and require a letter grade).
2) 50% of the grade will be based on class participation and 50% on the paper due one week after the last day of class.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources. They include:

- Safety and emergency preparedness
- Mental health and well-being
- Teaching evaluations
- Proper use of names and pronouns
- Accommodations for students with disabilities
- Religious/spiritual observances
- Military deployment
- Writing skills and expectations
- Academic integrity and plagiarism