I. DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

This course will give an analysis of biological, social, environmental and psychological processes that impair social functioning of individuals. Emphasis will be given to theoretical constructs needed to understand and recognize internal and external processes that affect individual behavior in relation to self, family, and significant others.

This course examines individual behavior in the context of the environment, using the ecological perspective. A competency-based model of assessment will be presented along with an emphasis on client strengths. This course provides theoretical and substantive information to support the understanding of mental illness in children and adults as a requisite knowledge base for clinical social work. Special emphasis is placed on the influence of diversity (such as age, color, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, race, religion, culture, sex, and sexual orientation) in each unit. Each unit will also emphasize issues around ethical practice and client self-determination, in addition to the unique risk factors associated with certain populations, i.e., the poor and oppressed.

II. OBJECTIVES OF COURSE

Students will demonstrate:

1. Knowledge that behavior results form multiple interacting factors, based on ego adaptation, social learning, genetic determination, biological and chemical factors, and environmental forces such as family school, culture, and traumatic events.

2. Understanding that at times mental illness is an adaptive process, resulting in functional behavior for that system.

3. Knowledge of the symptoms of the most commonly encountered mental illnesses of adults and children.

4. Understanding common non-pathological transitions in the context of the life cycle.

5. Knowledge about the DSM IV-TR as a diagnostic tool (including the axes and the pros and cons of its use).
6. Knowledge of how issues related to client diversity (age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disabilities, culture, etc.) impact upon assessment, diagnosis and treatment of mental illness.

7. Understanding of how populations at risk carry unique risk factors, which must be considered in the assessment process.

8. Understanding of the competency-based model of assessment, which draws from the ecological and strength perspective as it applies to an individual with a mental illness.

III. UNITS, CONTENT & REQUIRED READING ASSIGNMENTS

Other readings may be assigned as optional or required and will be posted to WebCT.

**Unit 1: Overview of Mental Health and Mental Illness (1 week)**
- A. Introduction to course, discussion of expectations
- B. Basic concepts of mental illness
- C. Overview of major mental disorders
- D. Medical terminology
- E. Issues of diversity, oppressed populations, social and economic justice & mental illness (will addressed throughout each section)
- F. Ethical practice

**Unit 2: Overview of Etiology and Theoretical Frameworks (1 week)**
- A. The biopsychosocial framework
- B. The ecological perspective
- C. The strength perspective
- D. Systems theory
- E. Recognition and empowerment
- F. Cultural assessment
- G. The multiaxial system

Readings:

Corcoran & Walsh, Introduction and Chap. 2.


Review this web site on the basics of neurotransmission
(http://www.williams.edu/imput/synapse/index.html)

**Unit 3: Treatment of Mental Disorders (2 weeks)**
- A. Biological, psychological & social/cultural causes of mental illness
B. Standard psychiatric assessment with emphasis on competency, strengths, and cultural variations in symptom expression
C. Overview of treatment approaches for mental disorders (client self-determination, ethical treatment)
D. Assisting clients in negotiating systems of care in addition to issues Social workers face in making social institutions more human and responsive to human needs

Readings:

DSM-IV-TR Appendix 1, Outline for Cultural Formulation and Glossary of Culture-Bound Syndromes, pp 897-903.


Review medication list from NIMH (http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/medications/index-of-medications.shtml)

**Unit 4: Using the DSM-IV-TR (2 weeks)**

A. General organization of the DSM
   B. The multiaxial format
   C. Case exercises

Readings:


**Unit 5: Schizophrenia and other Psychotic Disorders (2 weeks)**

A. Understanding schizophrenia (cultural considerations/etiology)
   B. Diagnosis/DSM IV
   C. Clinical Features (negative/positive symptoms)
   D. Course and prognosis
   E. Diagnosis and treatment (emphasis on cultural considerations and populations at risk)

Readings:


DSM-IV-TR Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders. pp 297-343.
Corcoran & Walsh, Chap. 14

**Unit 6: Mood Disorders & Substance-Related Disorders (2 weeks)**

A. Understanding mood disorders
B. Etiology of mood disorders
C. Major depression
D. Bipolar disorder
E. Minor mood disorders
F. Understanding substance-related disorders
G. Etiology of substance disorders
H. Diagnosis and treatment

Readings:


DSM-IV-TR Substance-Related Disorders pp 191-296.

Corcoran & Walsh, Chaps. 10, 11 & 13

**Unit 7: Adjustment & Personality Disorders (2 weeks)**

A. Understanding adjustment disorders
B. Understanding personality disorders
C. Etiology
D. Cluster A, B, & C disorders
E. Diagnosis, treatment and the importance of culture

Readings:

DSM-IV-TR Adjustment Disorders, Personality Disorders. pp 679-730

Corcoran & Walsh, Chap. 15

**Unit 8: Anxiety Disorders (2 weeks)**

A. Understanding anxiety disorders (panic attacks/agoraphobia)
B. Etiology of anxiety disorders
C. Overview of anxiety disorders
D. Diagnosis and treatment

Readings:
IV. TECHNIQUES OF INSTRUCTION

In order to assimilate the information so that it is useful, students are expected to read and make notes on the material prior to coming to class so that they can engage in a critical discussion with the professor. The instructor will provide information in both lecture and seminar fashion. Students are expected to participate in classroom discussions. Articles listed in this course outline are fall full-text and can be retrieved through the UALR library articles and data base web service.

V. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS


Please note that all journal articles are available via the on-line database Academic Search Elite held by UALR Ottenheimer library.

VI. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

The paper required for this course represents 40% of the final grade. The instructor will provide a detailed outline for the paper and the date the paper is due.
VII. METHODS OF EVALUATION

Exam #1 30%
Exam #2 30%
Paper 40%

VIII. GRADING SCALE

92-100 A
82-91 B
72-81 C
0-71 F

IX. CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY

Learning in a graduate professional program is based in large part on the interaction that occurs between the instructor and students in the classroom. Regular attendance at class is an expected professional responsibility of the student. Absences of greater than 20 percent of the total class time may constitute grounds for course failure.

X. HONOR CODE

All students registered for courses in the School of Social Work are expected to adhere to the rights, responsibilities, and behavior as articulated in both the UALR Student Handbook and the NASW (National Association of Social Workers) Code of Ethics. An essential feature of these codes is a commitment to maintaining intellectual integrity and academic honesty. This commitment insures that a student of the School of Social Work will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thereby affirming personal honor and integrity.

XI. DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Students with Disabilities: It is the policy of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or to accurate assessment of achievement—such as time-limited exams, inaccessible web content, or the use of non-captioned videos—please notify the instructor as soon as possible. Students are also welcome to contact the Disability Resource Center, telephone 501-569-3143 (v/tty). For more information, visit the DRC website at http://ualr.edu/disability/.