SWRK 643: Assessment of Individuals and Families 3.0 Units

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Thursday 11:00 – 12:30, 3:30 – 5:00
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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION
SWRK 643: Assessment of Individuals and Families 3.0 Units
Prerequisites: Completion of foundation year and concurrent enrollment in SWRK 641 or SWRK 642, SWRK 648, and SWRK 653.
This course provides content on assessment of families and individuals experiencing problems-in-living, including biospsychosocial considerations. Includes assessment methods and diagnostic techniques including mental status, person-in-environment (PIE), psychosocial, risk, and safety assessments, and use of the current DSM. The legal, social, cultural, and ethnic factors impacting assessment and intervention are explored.

II. PURPOSE OF THE COURSE
Provides content on assessment of families and individuals experiencing problems-in-living, including biospsychosocial considerations. Includes assessment methods and diagnostic techniques including mental status, person-in-environment (PIE), psychosocial, risk, and safety assessments, and use of the current DSM. The legal, social, cultural, and ethnic factors impacting assessment and intervention are explored.

III. MAJOR COURSE CONTENT OUTLINE
Students will learn how to utilize the DSM-IV-TR, the interdisciplinary tool used for making individual diagnoses of mental dysfunctions and differentiating them from non-pathological adaptations or situations that may, nevertheless, be the focus of treatment. This is a fundamental skill that adequately trained practitioners in all disciplines are assumed to possess. Specific attention will be given to normal cultural features that can be erroneously attributed to mental dysfunction and attributed to client non-cooperation. Included within the DSM are learning disorders, other developmental disorders, psychopathological features associated with the end of the life span, and a wide range of situational problems. In particular, Unit IV will focus on identification and assessment of abuse and neglect of children and elders. In addition, students will begin to learn about the psychodynamic model of understanding human behavior which offers suggestions about causation and intervention, insights into the inner lives of troubled individuals that can help the practitioner maintain a stable, empathic professional stance toward the difficult client and/or client system, and insights into the inner responses practitioners may experience in relation to working with more troubled and/or
long-term clients. Finally, students will learn about how mental dysfunctions may play a part in situations outside of the practitioner-individual client context, particularly families.

**Unit 1: The Cultural Context of Mental Health Assessment and Norms**
- Historical Understandings of Mental Disorders
- Culture and Era
- Cultural Dominance and Oppression

**Unit 2: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders**
- Context and Rationales
- Disorders Usually First Diagnosed in Infancy, Childhood, or Adolescence
- Delirium, Dementia, and Amnestic and Other Cognitive Disorders
- Mental Disorders Due to a General Medical Condition Not Elsewhere Classified
- Substance related Disorders
- Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders
- Mood Disorders
- Anxiety Disorders
- Somatoform Disorders
- Factitious Disorders
- Dissociative Disorders
- Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders
- Eating Disorders
- Sleep Disorders
- Impulse-Control Disorders Not Elsewhere Classified
- Adjustment Disorders
- Personality Disorders
- Other Conditions That May Be a Focus of Clinical Attention

**Unit 3: Assessment and the Family Context**
- Psychosocial stressors and Family Function
  - Poverty
  - Economic Disruption
  - Inter-partner Conflict
  - Cultural oppression
  - Mental Illness
  - Intergenerational Repetition
  - Medical Illness
  - Sexual Orientation
  - Gender Discrimination
  - Use and Misuse of Diagnosis and Mental Health Assessment

**Unit 4: Assessment of child and elder abuse and neglect**
- Areas of critical risk in assessment for child abuse and neglect.
  - Signs of child abuse and neglect
  - Persistent negative effects of child abuse and neglect
  - Caretaker mental health problems and child abuse and neglect
IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES
A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

1. Make well reasoned and usually correct multi-axial diagnoses of case examples and clients seen in placement.

2. Understand the fundamentals of developmental, interpersonal, and socio-cultural factors that influence the inner lives of individuals, including themselves.

3. Understand how mental health issues impact on families.

4. Understand how mental health issues impact on groups, including non-client groups.

5. Identify the risk factors and conduct assessments for child neglect and abuse;

6. Identify the risk factors and conduct assessments for elder neglect and abuse;

V. INTEGRATION WITH OTHER COURSES
As with other concentration year courses, SWRK 343: Assessment of Individuals and Families is linked with the knowledge and skills gained throughout the educational career of the student. This course builds upon human development knowledge gained in SWRK 301: Human Behavior in the Social Environment. It links with SWRK 302: Social Work in Multicultural Contexts as cultural sensitivity is critical to accurate and empathic assessment. It relates to SWRK 321: Generalist Social Work Theory and Practice I, and SWRK 322: Generalist Social Work Theory and Practice II (Groups) through the examination of the effect of mental health problems on individual, family and group functioning. In addition, it serves as preparation for the following electives: SWRK 381: Advanced Family and Child Treatment; SWRK 374: Policies and Practice with Older Americans and Their Families; and SWRK 383: Trauma and Loss. Students will apply the knowledge and skills gained in this class during their advanced practicum.

This course links is integrated with SWRK 341: Advanced Practice in Mental Health Settings and SWRK 342: Advanced Practice in Families, children & Youth Services, as the material is intrinsically relevant to treatment of both individuals and families across the lifespan.

From all of their academic experience, but particularly field placement, students integrate social work values, ethics, skills, and self-awareness to continue developing their professional selves.

VI. COURSE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
A. Students with Disabilities or Physical Limitations
It is the responsibility of students with a disability or physical limitation to initiate requests for services and accommodations at Disability Support Services, University Center, (530) 898-5959 v/t, (530) 898-4411 fax, e-mail dss@csuchico.edu. Students with a disability are encouraged, but not obligated, to register with DSS. After reviewing the student’s records, the DSS adviser will determine eligibility and consult with the instructor to facilitate access. If you need assistance in evacuating the building during a fire or other emergency please inform the instructor immediately so that arrangements can be made for your safety.
B. **Attendance**
Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Absence from class, whether "excused" or "unexcused," may result in a lowered course grade or, in extreme instances, in the awarding of a failing grade for the course.

C. **Policy on Academic Honesty**
It is expected that all students will conduct themselves with honor and honesty regarding their academic work during the course. All academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, and misrepresentation is prohibited. Please read the university policy regarding academic misconduct located in the University catalog and MSW Student Handbook. It includes taking information, providing information, plagiarism, misrepresentation, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Deliberate failure to properly cite another’s work is cheating.

D. **Writing Standards**
All papers are to be double spaced with one-inch margins and 12-point font. After you spell check your papers, be sure to proofread again to ensure that simple spelling and grammatical errors do not detract from the presentation of your work. Areas in which grammatical errors frequently occur are homonyms, possessive forms of nouns and pronouns, and consistency of tense. American Psychological Association (Fifth Edition) documentation is required. You are required to use the writing guidelines as described by CSUC and professional writing standards. The use of nonsexist language is expected in class discussions and written assignments.

E. **Evaluation**
Students’ work will be graded on criteria for each assignment, exam, level of participation, etc. as described for the course as a whole. They are encouraged to meet with the instructor regarding any request to change a particular assignment or requirement to better meet her or his particular goals or learning needs.

Student are encouraged to meet with their instructors to provide feedback regarding relevance of course content, reading assignments, texts, evaluation methods and other learning experiences. This is the best way for students to provide feedback to the instructor for ongoing evaluation and course/curriculum improvement. Students also have the opportunity to provide feedback through the university’s formal Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) process.

F. **Incomplete Grades and Withdrawing from the Course**
Incomplete grades are given only in rare instances. To be considered, a student must have a passing grade and be up to date on assignments. All incompletes must be cleared prior to the beginning of the next semester. If incompletes are NOT cleared prior to the beginning of the next semester, students will be prevented from proceeding in the MSW program. Also see the University Catalog for details. University polices also specify the criterion for withdrawing from classes during certain time periods of the semester. Please also consult the catalog for these policies. Late drops are allowed after the official drop date only for medical or other compelling reasons.

G. **Cell Phones and Pagers**
The classroom is a professional environment; please respect it by turning cell phones and pagers off or, alternately, setting them on ‘vibrate’ mode. If you are expecting to be contacted during class, notify the instructor before class begins and take a seat near the door where you will be
able to leave the room quickly and quietly so as to not disrupt the learning experience of your colleagues.

H. Confidentiality
Learning products or discussions associated with the class will be treated as privileged; as such, they will not be shared beyond the classroom with three exceptions: 1) those discussions that indicate the likely endangerment or the compromising of the well-being of enrollees or specific persons identified as being targeted for such activity; 2) those discussions related to consultation with faculty regarding classroom conduct and student learning; and 3) those learning products that are referenced by the School of Social Work as one aspect of the instructor’s retention, tenure and promotion (RTP) process and the general education review process. Student learning products included in review processes will be modified in such a way as to safeguard the identity of the student(s) and the identity of his/her/their object of study.

VII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

A. Required Reading

Electronic Reserves
B. Recommended Reading
There will also be additional readings from newspapers, news magazines and journals to enhance your understanding of current social work assessment models.

C. Assessment of Student Learning and Grades
Grades are determined by each student’s point totals applied to the following percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 - 100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90 - 93</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>87 – 89</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>84 – 86</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>74 – 76</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>70 – 73</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>≤ 70</td>
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D. Course Assignments and Exams
I. Tests
Students will have a mid-term and a cumulative examination. In addition they will have a take home test in which they will analyze scenarios for risk of abuse and neglect of children and elders.

II. Papers
Each student will be required to write two papers that integrate and synthesize material learned in class with field placement and /or work experiences. These papers should reflect the student’s thoughts, ideas, and insights especially with regard to the application of theory to practice. Each paper is worth 20% of the course grade.

Paper #1:
This paper should begin with a description of a client for whom a DSM diagnosis is being considered. Disguise of personal, identifying information should be used in order to protect client confidentiality. The description should include the following elements, each of which is crucial:

1. The presenting symptoms and signs.
2. Symptoms and signs not present which will help with the differential diagnosis
3. A description of the client’s current biopsychosocial situation especially any current stressors.
4. An abbreviated social history that includes mention of relevant historical information such as abuse during childhood, traumatic events, and dominant interpersonal styles of the client and important others.
5. Cultural background and any features thereof relevant to differential diagnosis and assessment.
6. A diagnosis on each of the five axes each of which is supported by data.
7. Differential diagnosis
8. The impact of the client’s difficulties on important others and their impact on the client.

Paper #2
This paper is to be a self-assessment in which the student addresses items 3, 4, 5, & 8. Students are not expected to diagnose themselves, as this is rarely helpful. Rather, they should use this exercise to explore the development of interpersonal style, underlying beliefs, and how these relate to underlying personal assumptions, beliefs, and values that influence assessment of clients. This assignment is to be written in the first person.

The papers will be evaluated using the following criteria:
1. Quality of the integration and application of readings, references, and class discussions.
2. Demonstrated empathy.
3. Correct and thorough assessments.
4. Overall sensitivity, ethical application and attention to strengths, larger systems and empowerment.
5. Sensitivity to issues of culture and oppression
6. Overall writing skill and presentation

DUE DATE: December 8, 2005—Both Papers

Assignment Grades
Paper #1 -------------------------------------------------------------- 20 %
Paper#2 -------------------------------------------------------------- 20%
Take-home examination ----------------------------------------------- 10%
Mid-term examination ----------------------------------------------- 10%
Cumulative examination -------------------------------------------- 20%
Participation -------------------------------------------------------- 20%
Total 100%

VIII. WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE
The following schedule is provided as a guide, however variations may occur. Readings should be
completed prior to the specified weeks in order to stay caught up. Class activities will be based on the
assumption that you will have completed the assigned reading prior to coming to class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/Assignments Due</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 25, 2005</td>
<td>Introduction &amp; Overview</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1, 2005</td>
<td>The Cultural Context of Mental Health Assessment and Norms</td>
<td>Sue &amp; Sue</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 8, 2005</td>
<td>Context and Rationales</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Disorders Usually First Diagnosed in Infancy, Childhood, or Adolescence</td>
<td>Kaplan &amp; Sadock DSM-IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 15, 2005</td>
<td>Delirium, Dementia, and Amnestic and Other Cognitive Disorders</td>
<td>Kaplan &amp; Sadock</td>
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<td>Mental Disorders Due to a General Medical Condition Not Elsewhere Classified</td>
<td>DSM-IV</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Substance related Disorders</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 22, 2005</td>
<td>Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders</td>
<td>DSM-IV Kaplan &amp; Sadock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 29, 2005</td>
<td>Mood Disorders</td>
<td>DSM-IV Kaplan &amp; Sadock</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety Disorders</td>
<td>DSM-IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 6, 2005</td>
<td>Somatoform Disorders</td>
<td>DSM-IV</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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<td>October 13, 2005</td>
<td>Dissociative Disorders</td>
<td>Kaplan &amp; Sadock</td>
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<td>Factitious Disorders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders</td>
<td>DSM-IV</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Normal Variant Sexuality</td>
<td>Kaplan &amp; Sadock</td>
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<td><strong>Mid-term Examination</strong></td>
<td>Isay</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 20, 2005</td>
<td>Eating Disorders</td>
<td>DSM-IV</td>
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<td>Sleep Disorders</td>
<td>Kaplan &amp; Sadock</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Impulse-Control Disorders Not Elsewhere Classified</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 27, 2005</td>
<td>Adjustment Disorders</td>
<td>DSM-IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 3, 2005</td>
<td>Core Psychodynamic Concepts</td>
<td>Berzoff</td>
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<td>November 10, 2005</td>
<td>Personality Disorders</td>
<td>Berzoff</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 17, 2005</td>
<td>Personality Disorders</td>
<td>Berzoff</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 21-25, 2005</td>
<td>THANKSGIVING BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 1, 2005</td>
<td>Assessment in the Family Context</td>
<td>Bassett &amp; Johnson</td>
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<td>December 8, 2005</td>
<td>Assessment of Child and Elder Abuse and Neglect</td>
<td>Doumas</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Cumulative Examination</strong></td>
<td>Zuravin et al.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 15, 2005</td>
<td>Wrap-up and catch-up</td>
<td></td>
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Bibliography