Clinical Assessment and Differential Diagnosis

I. Standardized Course Description
This course will focus on the incidence, etiology, and assessment of dysfunctional behavior patterns with children, adolescents, adults, and families. Students will learn models of assessment to evaluate human functioning throughout the lifecycle, with emphasis on vulnerable and diverse populations. Major nosological systems, such as Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and the International Classification of Diseases, and other schemes for assessing and understanding human behavior, will be covered.

This course is required of MSSW students in the Clinical concentration.

II. Standardized Course Objectives
By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate familiarity with biological, psychosocial, and cultural theories on the etiology of dysfunctional behavior patterns;
2. Demonstrate the ability to apply multiple methods of assessment, including those developed through classificatory schemes, standardized measures, and qualitative typologies;
3. Describe the relationship between assessment and intervention in social work practice;
4. Demonstrate the ability to adapt assessment models to reflect the needs of persons of diverse social, economic, cultural or ethnic backgrounds, including understanding issues of gender, sexual orientation, and ability;
5. Critically evaluate different theoretical and assessment models as to their efficacy in given situations. This includes: a) the adequacy of the research and knowledge base; b) the range of applicability; c) the value and ethical
issues, including the student’s own value system, and d) the policy implications involved in assessment and delivery of services;
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the limitations in using classification schemes in understanding human behavior and the danger of mislabeling people, particularly those from at-risk populations.

III. **Teaching Methods**
The primary teaching methods will be lectures, discussion, and group exercises. Guest lecturers, group presentations, and audio-visual presentations will also be utilized.

IV. **Required and Recommended Texts, and Materials**
**Required:**

**Optional Texts (limited number available at book store):**


V. **Course Requirements**
The following course requirements will be completed during the semester, with points given for each course requirement. Grading will be based on total points accrued by the end of the course.

**Examinations**
Two examinations will be given during the course of the semester (see course schedule for due dates). All exams will consist of both a take-home and an in-class portion. Students will receive the exam questions at least one week prior to their due date. This portion may include case materials (for assigning diagnoses), short answer, and/or essay questions. Examinations must be TYPED and answers to essay questions must be presented in APA format. The in-class portions of the exams will be similar to the licensing exam.
questions and will give the student an opportunity to practice the necessary test-taking skills needed to pass that exam. Each exam will be worth a maximum of 100 points.

200 points maximum, examinations

Paper
Each student is to select a problem area of interest and write a scholarly paper focused on assessment and treatment. A typed, well-written paper is to be submitted. The paper should be written in APA format (4th edition) and should not exceed 10-15 typewritten pages (excluding references and title page). It is recommended that students start on this assignment right away because the professor expects a thorough search of the literature in social work, psychology, psychiatry and related fields in order to demonstrate that one has mastered the up-to-date, current knowledge and methods concerning assessment and treatment of the problem area. A search of the literature should include journal articles as well as pertinent book chapters and monographs. Assessment instruments can be found in the reference section of the library in the Mental Measurements Handbook; Test Critiques and Tests in Print. Emphasis should be given to the most recent (within the past 5 to 7 years) literature and studies. In addition to the formal paper, students will prepare an annotated bibliography for distribution to their classmates. Papers will be graded on both content and writing style; APA format will also be graded. The paper is worth a possible 100 points. An outline of the paper is provided below.

I. Introduction/Statement of the Problem. This should include specification of your problem area of interest. For example, “depression” can mean many things. You would need to clarify if, by “depression,” you mean Major Depressive Disorder, Dysthymic Disorder, etc. Also, set parameters (e.g., age, gender, etc.) on the problem you are assessing. (For example, “This paper addresses adolescent females, ages 13 to 17, with a diagnosis of Major Depressive Disorder.”)

II. Critical examination of assessment methods and instruments relevant to the particular problem area. What are the preferred methods to assess this problem. If you were a social worker in the field, based on your review of the literature, how would you assess for the existence and severity of this problem in a client system.
A. Standardized measures, such as rating scales and self-report instruments.
   1. Description (e.g., This is a 25-item standardized self-report instrument, measured on a 5-point Likert scale, that measures level of depression).
   2. Summary of reliability (i.e., coefficients, standard error of measurement) and validity (i.e., construct, concurrent known-
instruments, known-groups, factor analysis) characteristics of each available instrument.
3. Discussion of clinical utility of assessment tools and how they are being used in assessment and treatment of clients. Identifying that a measurement tool possesses sound psychometric properties does not necessarily preclude its clinical utility. Describe which tool(s) you would use in the field and why.

II. A review of the literature regarding the efficacy of treatment approaches with the problem area. The primary focus here should be on outcome studies.

III. An overview of any relevant contributions of diversity issues to the understanding of the assessment and treatment of the problem area.

IV. Conclusions that summarize the knowledge discussed in the paper and point out criticisms in available assessment methods.

100 points maximum, paper

Final grades:
A total of 300 points may be earned for the above activities. Grades will be assigned as follows:

- 270-300 points = A
- 240-269 points = B
- 210-239 points = C
- 180-209 points = D
- below 180 pts. = F

Graduate students must earn a minimum grade of C in the course for credit; also, graduate students must maintain an overall B average.

VI. Class Policies

1. Class attendance is expected, as is handing in assignments on time. Students will lose 5 points for each day that an assignment is late. Any adjustments to due dates must be made with the instructor at least 24 hours prior to the regularly scheduled date.

2. Students who fail to attend class on a regular basis (missing more than one class without a valid excuse, e.g., medical documentation) may receive one course grade lower than their final grade when points are totaled.

3. As social work practitioners, we assume responsibility for ourselves. Therefore, it is expected that work handed in will be your own. Scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism and cheating during exams or on papers, violates social work values and will result in recommendation for dismissal from the social work program and a referral to the Dean of Student’s Office.
4. Social workers function as team members. Therefore, the course will be viewed as a joint effort between instructor and students.
5. Respect for others is a primary social work value. Therefore, differences in values, opinions, and feelings of class members and guest speakers will be respected.
### VII. Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Text / Readings</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-6-01</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>DSM-IV (pp. xv-xxxvii)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overview of Syllabus</td>
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<td>Overview of Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-11-01</td>
<td>Introduction to Assessment and Classification Systems</td>
<td>DSM-IV (pp. 1-37)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>DSM Multiaxial system</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-13-01</td>
<td>Disorders usually diagnosed in infancy, childhood or adolescence</td>
<td>DSM-IV (pp. 39-134)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-18-01</td>
<td>ADHD &amp; Conduct Disorders</td>
<td>DSM-IV TR (pp. 39-134)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Paper topic due</strong></td>
<td>Childhood and Adolescent disorders con’t.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-20-01</td>
<td>Disorders of Childhood &amp; Adolescence</td>
<td>DSM IV TR (pp.39-134)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Family Assessment</td>
<td>Childhood and Adolescent disorders con’t.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-25-01</td>
<td>Mental Status Examinations</td>
<td>DSM-IV (pp. 135-190)</td>
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<td>Delirium, Dementia, Amnestic, and other Cognitive Disorders</td>
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<td>Mental Disorders due to a General Medical Condition</td>
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<td>6-27-01</td>
<td>Schizophrenia &amp; other psychotic disorders</td>
<td>DSM-IV (pp. 297-344)</td>
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<td>Antipsychotic medications</td>
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<td><strong>Paper preliminary bibliography due</strong></td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>7-2-01</td>
<td>Mood Disorders</td>
<td>Antidepressant &amp; Anti-manic medications</td>
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<td><strong>Receive take-home portion of Exam I</strong></td>
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<td>CSWE</td>
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<td>7-04-01</td>
<td>July 4th Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-09-01</td>
<td>Anxiety Disorders</td>
<td>Anxiolytic medications</td>
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<td><strong>Take-home portion of Exam I due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>In-class portion of Exam I</strong></td>
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<td>7-11-01</td>
<td>PTSD</td>
<td>Dissociative Disorders</td>
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<td>DSM-IV (pp. 463-472; 519-534)</td>
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<td>7-16-01</td>
<td>Substance-related Disorders</td>
<td>DSM-IV (pp. 191-296)</td>
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<td>7-18-01</td>
<td>Eating Disorders</td>
<td>DSM-IV (pp. 583-596)</td>
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<td>7-23-01</td>
<td>Personality Disorders</td>
<td>DSM-IV (pp. 663-678; 685-730)</td>
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<td>Impulse control disorders NOS</td>
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<td><strong>Paper Due</strong></td>
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<td>7-25-01</td>
<td>Somatoform Disorders</td>
<td>DSM-IV (pp. 485-512; 513-518; 535-582; 597-662)</td>
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<td>Factitious Disorders</td>
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<td>Sleep Disorders</td>
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<td>Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders</td>
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<td><strong>Receive take-home portion of Exam II</strong></td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>7-30-01</td>
<td><strong>Adjustment Disorders</strong>&lt;br&gt;Other Conditions that may be a Focus of Clinical Attention (V-codes)**</td>
<td>DSM-IV (pp. 679-684; 731-742)</td>
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<td><strong>In-class portion of Exam II</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8-1-01</td>
<td><strong>Take-home portion of Exam II due</strong></td>
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VIII. Bibliography

Required:

Optional Texts:


SUPPLEMENTAL:


