CL732: Disorders of Adulthood II

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Course Description:

This course is designed for students who have had exposure to theoretical concepts and practice experience in learning to utilize assessment and treatment methods as individualizing rather than as labeling or stereotyping processes. Clients’ relative abilities to utilize interpersonal relationships as vehicles for the creation of meaning are seen as the central element of this diagnostic assessment. Therefore, the focus is on comprehending the communication within treatment relationships themselves both as a basis for assessment and as the route through which social workers can have a therapeutic influence.

The content is mainly presented through the use of case material which illustrates varying levels of personality organization, beginning with the disorganization of schizophrenic experience to the more highly refined conflict in neurotic character formation. Case material from a variety of types of practice settings and from both individual and family treatment is utilized. The case material selected introduces content related to the therapeutic uses of a milieu, child abuse, racial and cultural differences, women's issues, homosexuality, prostitution, probation, the role of fathers in family structures, unemployment, and other concerns for social workers. Issues of social and economic justice, especially as they are manifested in clinical treatment situations are primarily addressed through case discussions. Course readings are drawn heavily from classics in the field and newer, relational approaches to treatment. The rationale for this is to expose students to original and seminal writing and recent trends which have formed the basis for modern clinical thinking.

This course emphasizes the unique qualities of the experiences of human beings. Treatment is viewed as a process within which communication, through both words and actions, is inevitably an essential and a prominent feature of clinical social work intervention. The course, therefore, focuses on ways of achieving meaningful client-worker communication through a variety of techniques and modalities. We will look at concepts of transference and counter-transference as measures of the interactive and constructed meaning of the treatment experience.

Learning Objectives:

In this course, students should demonstrate through assignments their mastery of the following objectives:

Knowledge:
1. An understanding of the individuality of human experience (including family life, racial and ethnic backgrounds, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and other cultural factors) and a respect for the adaptive growth potential inherent in all people.

2. An understanding of a framework for assessment which can be used to individualize clients and their situations, including relational concepts such as transference and counter-transference.

3. A critical and self-reflective understanding of how the theoretical orientations of clinical social workers inform their understandings and responses to client communications.

Values:

1. Respect for and affirmation of the dignity and rights of all individuals, which includes an appreciation and respect for diversity.

2. An appreciation of the notion that social and economic justice is fundamental to the practice of clinical social work, and that meeting individual needs is an essential component of this goal.

3. A commitment to professional social work values and ethics, especially as they constitute a fundamental aspect of clinical social work assessment and treatment.

Skills:

1. An ability to integrate data from worker-client interactions with historical material and client goals to form relevant and sound assessments and interventions.

2. Ability to utilize an assessment critically in the development of treatment goals and methodologies based upon the needs of diverse clients.

3. An ability to communicate therapeutically with clients, both verbally and non-verbally.

Teaching Methodology:

The course primarily utilizes case discussion as the vehicle for explaining and illustrating course concepts and techniques. Courses are drawn from case narratives and from class discussions. There will be some didactic lectures, particularly early on, in order to assist students in mastering the essential material upon which the course is based.

Respect for Diversity:

The instructor is committed to the recognition and respect for variations in racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and in class, gender, age, physical and mental ability, religion, and sexual orientation. Further, the instructor values ethnically sensitive and culturally competent social work education and practice. The instructor upholds the ethical standards set forth by the profession. This is demonstrated through readings, lectures, case presentations, and assignments. The instructor expect that students will
demonstrate comparable respect for diversity of their classmates, faculty and clients, and commit to address issues of marginalization, oppression, prejudice and discrimination.

Students with Special Needs:

Any student with special needs or difficulties in learning and completing course assignments is strongly encouraged to see the instructor as soon as possible.

Required Texts:


Course Reader (available from Beck’s Bookstore or Amazon)

Case Narratives (compilation in “Casebook”). Please read and leave case narratives in locations and circumstances which protect client confidentiality. At the end of the course please destroy all course case material. The Case Narratives will be on reserve.

Assignments:

The final assignment requires students to use their developing assessment skills as guides to clinical interventions in a clinical case

Grades:

Grades will be derived from a composite of the grades received on the mid-term assignment, the final paper, and class participation. The weighting of grades is as follows;

- Final Paper: 80%
- Participation: 20%

While class participation is necessary in order to complete this course, it does not directly constitute the grade for class participation. Participation is defined as an active engagement in the course material and a professional orientation toward one’s learning. Indicators of participation are quality of class comments, use of the instructor as an educational resource, extending one’s study beyond assigned work to meet related professional needs, and comportment in accordance with professional ethics.

Weeks I - II Introduction

- Meaning as a bridge between the intrapsychic and the interpersonal, between the individual and the environment.
- Selective perception and the need for an individual construction of
The relationship between the ability to organize experience and the ability to function effectively.

* The fundamentally social basis of human experience.

Required Readings:

Chapter 2. The interpersonal and the intrapsychic
Chapter 3. Identity and the self
Chapter 4. Culture as a shared meaning system


Fishman, G.G. (1999). Knowing another from a dynamic systems point of view: The need for a multimodal concept of empathy. Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 68, 376-400. (PEP Archive)


Weeks III - IV Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic States

* Understanding the terror of the inability to organize experience consistently.

* Boundary difficulties as affecting both interpersonal interactions and the ability to manage the situation.
* Interactions between boundaries at individual and family system levels.
  * The use of the environment and/or the institution to enhance functioning in individuals with difficulties in personality structuralization.
  * Relationships between intrapsychic disturbances and societal oppression.
  * Interpsychic space, the need/fear dilemma and the boundary setting function of anger.
  * The importance of object permanence for functioning.
  * Encouraging intrafamilial differentiation without scapegoating parents.
  * Responding to potentially assaultive situations in ways that maintain the safety and integrity of both worker and client.
  * Understanding the meaning of and therapeutic responses to self mutilating behavior.

**Required Readings:**


**Case Discussion: Michael**

**Weeks V Borderline Disorders**

*Understanding the relationship of a personal meaning system (identity) to a common meaning system (culture).
* Dealing with internal chaos due to affect instability.
* The psychological need to differentiate thought and action.
* The nature of the human relationship with the physical environment.
* Fantasy, transitional phenomena and the development of symbolic thinking.
* The use of metaphor in therapeutic communication.

* Understanding the issues of homosexuality and Gay identity and their relation to family dynamics and treatment.
* The role of political and ethnic persecution and its intergenerational effects upon biopsychosocial functioning.
**Required Readings:**


Case Discussion: Carol B.

**Weeks VI Narcissistic Disorders**

* Dealing with a superficial construction of self and an inability to tolerate affect.
* The use of empathy as a major form of treatment intervention.
* Understanding the use of sexuality as an attempt at achieving a sense of personal identity.
* Understanding the issues of gender and sexual exploitation and the clinician's role in intervening in these matters.

**Required Readings:**


Case Discussion: Liza

**Weeks V11 Neurosis**

* Integrating intrapsychic and interpersonal conflicts.
* Separating issues of object choice and object relationship.
* Re-interpreting the "oedipus conflict" as a conflict over independent but interconnected modes of relating in becoming a psychological adult.
* Understanding the role of narrative in treatment.
* The influence of dominant culture on the content of acceptable stories—whether about the society or the person.
* Communicating within the framework of the treatment relationship itself.

* Understanding of and clinical responses to the relational dynamics of clinical work with racial minority clients, and the effects of racism upon biopsychosocial functioning.

**Required Readings:**


**Weeks V111 Selected Student Case Presentations**

**Required Readings:**

Assigned readings may depend upon case content.


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