Boise State University  
Department of Counselor Education

Diagnosis, Assessment, and Treatment Planning  
COUN 550/ MHLTHSCI 568

Instructor: Aida Hutz, Ed.D.  
Assistant Professor  
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Class Dates:  
Fri 9/11 from 4-10pm  
Sat 9/12 from 8-5pm  
Fri 11/6 from 4-10pm  
Sat 11/7 from 8-5pm  
Office Hours:  
Mon 10-12pm  
Tues 10-12pm  
Wed 11-12pm  
*Call or email to meet at a different time

Course Description
This course will introduce students to psychopathology and build skills in conducting initial clinical interviews and utilizing the DSM classification system. Additionally, students will become familiar with the use of assessments in aiding diagnosis and treatment planning. The role of culture, race, and group membership for both client and clinician will be explored through activities aimed at deepening students’ self-awareness, knowledge and skills. This course meets curricular requirements for Idaho LCPC licensing and meets partial requirements for the state (CACD) and national credentials (MAC).

Course Objectives
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the current diagnostic system (DSM-IV-TR) and apply it proficiently to clinical cases.
2. Conduct a first clinical interview and communicate professionally through report writing.
3. Be self-reflective and aware of how own reference identity groups and that of client’s impact the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment process.
4. Formulate treatment plans with measurable and concrete goals attending to cultural considerations and social justice advocacy.
5. Recognize commonly used assessments that aid in the diagnosis and treatment process.

Course Structure
Instructional procedures will consist of lectures, videos, vignettes, small group activities, and class discussions. Students’ commitment to learning through active engagement is vital!
**Required Readings**


The following articles are also required and can be found online through the Albertsons Library’s website. You are responsible for retrieving these articles – if you have any trouble, please contact a librarian. A librarian will be more than happy to help you! Eventually these readings will also be posted through the Library’s online reserve system. Be sure to check there as well.


**Chapters:**

4 (The Use of Assessment in Diagnosis and Treatment Planning), and 6 (The Nature and Importance of Treatment Planning) from: Seligman, Linda. (2004). *Diagnosis and Treatment Planning in Counseling – Third Edition.* New York, NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers. I will provide you with more information on how to obtain these chapters during our first class meeting.

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**Course Requirements and Evaluation Methods**

Your final grade is based on the following:

A. **Class Attendance**
   Since we only meet four times during the semester, you are expected to attend the course in its entirety. Late arrivals and early departures (including from breaks) can affect your final grade.

B. **Class Participation**
   To participate meaningfully, you must come to class prepared. In order to be prepared, you must read and reflect on the assigned readings for the day. This includes reading before the first weekend of class (9/11-12). Students will be expected to take responsibility for their own learning by remaining alert and engaging in classroom discussions and small group exercises.

   At the outset of each day, students will participate in setting a break schedule. This is designed to be flexible, meet students’ needs, and maximize classroom productivity.

C. **Self-Awareness Exercise** (adapted from Alex L. Pieterse, 2006)
   In small groups, you will be asked to discuss the items below from a personal perspective. The goal is to build awareness of self, which leads to greater awareness of others. After discussing the items below with your small group, you will be asked to share themes, interesting points, controversies, etc. with the larger group.

   **A 2-3 page reflection paper addressing the items below will be due on Nov 6.**
   Your grade will be based on completion and thoughtfulness. This assignment is worth 20 points.

   - Definition of mental illness (what factors have influenced your definition such as messages from parents, media, family experiences, individual experiences, acquired knowledge, etc)
   - Describe how at least one of your reference group identities impacts how you define and/or relate to mental illness. Reference group identities include religious affiliation, racial group membership, sexual orientation, ethnic group membership, socio-economic-status, etc. The underlying supporting assumption is that we have all been socialized within reference groups which help shape our worldview (i.e., how we perceive and engage in the world – this includes our emotional reactions, ideas, values, and behaviors).
   - Discuss any concerns or anxieties you might have about working with people with mental illness.

D. **Clinical Vignettes: Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Plan**
   You will be provided with a vignette (either in video or writing). In small groups, you will discuss and take notes on the following:
• Diagnosis: Provide a complete multiaxial diagnosis.
• Assessment: How did you arrive at that diagnosis? What additional questions or tools would you have liked to use prior to arriving at an initial diagnosis?
• Treatment Plan: Develop a measurable and concrete treatment plan that includes socio-racial considerations and advocacy role. How would you measure treatment outcomes?

Each will present their brief report to the larger class. A class discussion will follow. **These assignments will be graded based on completion and are worth 30 points.**

**E. Report**

Each student will be responsible for completing one semi-structured clinical interview on a volunteer. Information gathered will be presented in a short report. Format for the report and a sample will be provided in class. Reports will be scored based on the following:

This assignment is worth a total of 100 points. Each item will be awarded up to 10 points where:

1 = not at all  2-3 = minimally  4-5 = somewhat  6-7 = acceptable  
8-9 = well done  10 = very well done

1. Is the student’s tone respectful of the client?
2. Is the student’s writing style professional?
3. Does the student provide enough information in a concise fashion?
4. Is the information helpful in guiding the student to arrive at an initial diagnosis?
5. Does the multi-axial diagnosis follow logically from the narrative provided?
6. Is the student able to identify different reference identities?
7. Does the student seem to understand how reference identities could impact case conceptualization, diagnosis, treatment and social justice advocacy?
8. Are the treatment goals reasonable and helpful?
9. Are the treatment goals measurable and concrete?
10. Did the student provide useful social justice advocacy recommendation?

Your report will be due on December 1st. Please leave your report in a sealed manila envelop in the box outside my office. Be sure it does not contain ANY identifying information! Informed consent forms will be due separately in class on Nov 11.

**Grading**

Course Requirement

| I. Self-Awareness Exercise | 20 points |
| II. Clinical Vignettes | 30 points |
| III. Report | 100 points |

Your final grade will be based on the following scores:

- A 135-150 points
- B 120-134 points
Disability Statement
If there is someone in the class who has a special need that may be the result of a disability or alternative learning style, I would appreciate hearing from you. I am reasonably certain that we can make the appropriate arrangements if necessary to assist you. The accommodations can take many forms, whether it be seating, testing, or the like. Please see me after class or during my office hours.

Academic Integrity Statement
Academic misconduct or dishonesty such as cheating and plagiarism is unacceptable and appropriate penalties will be imposed. This includes referencing material that has not been read by you, such as secondary references.

Course Outline
This outline presents a general picture of the course but topics, sequence, and activities might be changed to accommodate students’ needs.

Date  Topics
9/11  Welcome and Introductions
      Syllabus and expectations
      What is Mental Illness?
      Why talk about race and culture?
      Strengths and Controversies of Diagnosing
      DSM Multiaxial system

Corresponding Readings (please read prior to attending class)
DSM-IV-TR: Introduction
Lopez & Guarnaccia, 2000

Date  Topics
9/12  Axis I – Clinical Disorders
      Axis II – Personality Disorders

Corresponding Readings
McRae, Lockenhoff, & Costa, 2005.
Watson, 2005

Date  Topics
11/6  Axis III & IV (V Codes)
      The Initial Interview
Corresponding Readings:
DSM-IV-TR: 731-744
Ivey & Ivey, 1997
Smart & Smart, 1997
Takushi & Uomoto, 2001

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/7</td>
<td>Assessment (including strengths based)</td>
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<td>Documentation</td>
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<td>Treatment Planning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review</td>
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<td>Future Trends</td>
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Corresponding Readings
Mead et al. 1997
Seligman, Ch 4 & 6
White, 2002
Widiger & Clark, 2000