I. COURSE PURPOSE

This course introduces students to the military culture and lifestyle, with a focus on stressors and challenges from both an individual and family perspective. Special emphasis is placed on studies and literature emerging from Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) documenting the impact of sustained, overseas efforts on individual and family functioning. The effects of repeated, extended separation, as well as active duty service members’ and veterans’ physical, psychological, and cognitive injury, are examined through the lens of the Cognitive Theory of Stress and Coping, Family Stress Theory, and Ambiguous Loss Theory. Military-specific stressors are viewed from a strengths-based perspective, underscoring how individuals’ and family members’ internal and external resources may moderate or mediate the effects of deployment-related separation, trauma, loss, and/or transition. Students will examine the policies, programs, and services that contribute to military and veteran family health and well-being and will be introduced to direct practice interventions that are being used with active duty service members, veterans, and their families. Awareness-building assignments are used to enable students to reconcile personal and professional values and principles with the values and principles embedded within the military culture. Students are provided with an historical overview of the critical role that social workers play in serving the military and veteran population. Students are encouraged to consider how the social work profession’s flexible skill-set may be particularly beneficial in responding to the complex and evolving needs of today’s military and veteran families.
II. COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), requires that students meet 10 core competencies, which are operationalized as practice behaviors. Each course is designed to cover one or more of the ten core competencies and each course is also designed to cover some, but not all of the practice behaviors within a competency. Upon completion of this course, students will able to demonstrate the following practice behaviors within the noted competencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Related Assignments</th>
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</table>
| **Professional Identity:** Identify as a clinical social worker & conduct self accordingly | 1. Social workers practice with a clear understanding of the professional strengths, capacities, and limitations of clinical social work.  
2. Social workers understand how clinical theories from multiple disciplines inform the practice of clinical social work. | Practice Issue Paper |
| **Ethical Practice:** Apply social work ethical principles to guide clinical practice | 1. Social workers recognize and manage personal biases as they affect the clinical relationship in the service of clients’ well-being. | Personal Reflection |
| **Critical Thinking:** Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate clinical judgments | 1. Social workers distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom in an ongoing process of assessment and intervention.  
2. Social workers demonstrate effective oral and written communication with clients and other professionals.  
3. Social workers include personal reflection in clinical decision making, are adept at differential diagnosis, and articulate both client strengths and vulnerabilities in the diagnostic process. | Practice Issue Paper |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Diversity in Practice:</strong> Engage diversity and demonstrate awareness of the complexities regarding identity differences and how they play out in clinical practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Social workers view themselves as cultural learners and engage those with whom they work as collaborators and experts about their own identity and life experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Social workers use their self-awareness to reflect on and diminish the influence of their personal biases and values in working with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Social workers recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping the life experiences of clients, themselves, and the working alliance.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Human Rights &amp; Justice:</strong> Advance human rights through understanding how social and economic justice factors impact clinical practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Social workers use knowledge of the effects of oppression, discrimination and historical trauma on the client and client system to guide treatment planning and intervention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Social workers understand how power and inequities are initiated and reinforced, and are cognizant not to replicate power inequalities in the relationship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Social workers advocate at multiple levels for mental health parity and the reduction of health disparities for marginalized populations, and they identify social and economic inequalities that exist in various populations and advocate for justice in a domestic and global context.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research Based Practice:</strong> Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Social workers critically evaluate and utilize theoretical and empirical research relevant to the problems and/or populations seen in clinical practice.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Reflection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice Issue Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice Issue Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Description</td>
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<td>Resource Description</td>
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</table>
| **Human Behavior:**  
Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment | 1. Social workers synthesize and differentially apply theories of human behavior that address the bio-psycho-social-spiritual nature of clients and the social environment to guide clinical practice.  
2. Social workers consult with other professionals when assessing clients, and partner with other professionals to coordinate treatment plans and monitor progress and challenges. | Practice Issue Paper  
Resource Description |
|---|---|---|
| **Practice Contexts:**  
Respond to contexts that shape clinical practice | 1. Social workers continuously assess and identity changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services and develop needed policies.  
2. Social workers consult and collaborate with colleagues from other disciplines and demonstrate an understanding of the social worker's role in a multidisciplinary context. | Practice Issue Paper  
Resource Description |
| **Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate:**  
Engage, assess, and intervene with individuals, families, and groups. | 1. Social workers use empathy, active listening, and other interpersonal skills to establish therapeutic rapport, and set treatment goals with the client system.  
2. Social workers develop culturally responsive therapeutic relationships.  
3. Social workers attend to the interpersonal dynamics and contextual factors that may strengthen or harm the therapeutic working alliance.  
4. Social workers co-construct and select therapeutic interventions that best address the client’s | Personal Reflection  
Practice Issue Paper |
presenting problem and risk factors, and use multiple intervention plans to address compound problems or complex trauma.

5. Social workers incorporate client strengths, capacities, and protective factors in the therapeutic intervention plan.


III. ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

At the completion of the course, the student should also be able to:

1. Articulate Cognitive Theory of Stress and Coping, Family Stress Theory, and Ambiguous Loss Theory as frameworks for understanding, and responding to, active duty service members’, veterans’, and families’ psychological health and functioning in the context of deployment- and OPTEMPO (operational tempo as defined by time away from home)-related stress, separation, injury, and loss.

2. Demonstrate foundational knowledge of combat deployment- engendered issues affecting active duty active duty service members, veterans, and their families, including post-traumatic stress responses, depression, substance use, traumatic brain injury (TBI), physical injury, chronic pain or disability, suicide risk, and/or traumatic death.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Text

All required readings are on the course BlackBoard, CUA library, or in the following texts.)


B. Recommended Text


C. **Course Assignments**

The assignments for this course consist of active class participation, an exercise in personal reflection, a formal group presentation to peers, and a scholarly paper. See attached outline for details of the assignments.

D. **Grading Policy and Weights of Assignments**

Grades will be based on the CUA Grading Policy as described in the *Graduate Announcements*. Assignments are to be submitted to the instructor on the date due. **Unless you have prior permission from the instructor, five points will be deducted for each day the assignment is submitted late. Extensions will not be granted the day an assignment is due. The paper is due at the beginning of class and will be considered late if it is turned in later than that.** If you should need an extension, the student **must** discuss this with the instructor at least 48 hours ahead of the due date (excluding weekends and/or holidays). **No credit will be given for assignments submitted after they have been reviewed in class.** The following provides weights for the various course assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment 1</th>
<th>Military Social Work: Personal Reflection</th>
<th>20%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>Military, Veteran, or Civilian Resource Description (Group Activity)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
<td>Military, Veteran, or Civilian Resource Group Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 4</td>
<td>Policy or Practice Issue Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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</table>

**Preparation, Attendance, and Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numeric Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 – 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 – 69</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

E. **Preparation, Attendance & Participation**

Students are required to attend classes and are expected to participate meaningfully in class discussion/exercises and online forums as required. The class participation
grade will be determined by the instructor’s perception of the student’s preparation for and contributions to class discussion/activities. Different students will make different kinds of contributions. Some will have an easy time with spontaneous interactions while others will be more comfortable making planned statements about key ideas from the readings or other sources. Both types of contributions are valued.

F. Course and Instructor Evaluation

NCSSS requires electronic evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, the evaluation form may be accessed at http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations using your CUA username and password. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

V. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements, or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements (http://ncsss.cua.edu/courses/index.cfm), including scholastic and behavioral requirements. NCSSS is committed to creating an open and inclusive learning environment where all members - including students, faculty, administrators, and staff – strive to listen to and learn from one another. We recognize that in a multicultural society, it is inevitable that issues or tensions relative to diversity and different life experiences will arise. It is how we handle these events that matters. Therefore, when such issues occur – inside or outside of the classroom - we agree to engage in respectful and productive discussion with one another until learning is enhanced and understanding is deepened by all involved.

A. Scholastic Expectations

All written work should reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA format, and should be carefully proof read by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

B. Behavioral Requirements:

Students are expected to maintain accepted standards of professional conduct and personal integrity in the classroom. Students should:

- Attend all classes and contribute constructively to the classroom culture
- Recognize and avoid behavior that jeopardizes the learning/teaching environment of other students or the instructor
- Demonstrate competence in planning academic activities and in following through on those plans
- Reasonably respond to and respect others’ reactions to one’s comments or actions in the classroom
- Use an appropriate level of class time and instructor’s time and attention in and out of class
- Behave in a manner that is consistent with the ethical principles of the social work profession.
C. **Academic Honesty**
Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to University Policy (http://graduatestudies.cua.edu/currentstudents/academintgrt.cfm) and appropriate Program Handbooks.

D. **Confidentiality**
Each student is expected to adhere to the Confidentiality Agreement that is signed at the beginning of every semester. This agreement covers “practice materials” in classes, supervisory sessions, case conferences, seminars, and other educational settings within the NCSSS BSW or MSW programs are for **professional learning purposes only** and are subject to strict professional standards of confidentiality. These same standards of confidentiality also extend to various forms of written communication and peer consultation. Adherence to these standards means all students refrain from communicating beyond the classroom setting about practice material that is presented in class. Students will also refrain from using social media outlets (blogs, twitter, Facebook, etc.) or email to discuss practice settings, program responsibilities and projects with individuals who are not in teaching or supervision roles directly related to the situation.

E. **Accommodations**
Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability. If you have documented such a disability to DSS that requires accommodations or an academic adjustment, you must present that documentation to your instructors and arrange a meeting with as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

F. **Use of Electronic Devices**
**No laptops or other electronic devices are permitted in the classroom,** unless you have a specific documented learning disability. Please turn off all cell phones or other devices that would disrupt the learning environment of the classroom and put them away and removed from the classroom environment.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part I:</td>
<td><strong>THE MILITARY CULTURE AND SYSTEM: OVERVIEW OF MILITARY VALUES, PRINCIPLES, AND BASIC STRUCTURES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to course; recognizing the military as a culture</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Military system: Rank, service, status; lifestyle, values, customs, and diversity


3 Role of the social worker in advancing the needs and interests of active duty service members, veterans, and their families; practice and policy perspectives


Part II: RESPONDING TO ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES AFFECTED BY PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURY
Physical injury: Implications for family members


Assignment # 1: Personal Reflection Due

Psychological injury: Implications for family members; ambiguous loss; moral injury

Blasure et al. (2012). The effects of war on service members. Chapter 8.


Psychological injury (cont’d); cognitive injury: Implications for the service member/veteran and family members; ambiguous loss


Sexual injury; gender and equality issues in the military; same-sex partners; veteran women; military sexual trauma (MST)


Suicide prevention in military and veteran populations; Family coping in the face of service member’s injury-related death


**Part III:** RESEARCH AND THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE ON BEHALF OF MILITARY AND VETERAN POPULATIONS

**9-10**

*Introduction of the Cognitive Theory of Stress and Coping as a lens for practicing social work with military and veteran populations*


**11**

*Introduction of family stress theory as a lens for practicing military and veterans’ families social work; Double ABCX Model of Family Behavior*


**Assignment 2:** Overview of military/veteran program/service due class 11; Also due Assignment 3: Presentations of Assignment 2

**Part IV:** LOOKING AHEAD: ANTICIPATING THE LONG-TERM NEEDS OF MILITARY AND VETERANS’ FAMILIES IN THE SHIFTING SOCIOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE

**12**

*Examining policy decisions and implications for active duty service members, veterans, and their families; current budget cuts/sequestration; quality assurance and accreditation within DoD and VA.*

Presentations of Assignment 2 (cont’d)

13 VA-sponsored programs and services; public-private partnerships and community-based resources; the expanding role of the Veterans Affairs (VA) social worker in responding to the ongoing needs and interests of veterans and their families across the lifespan


14 Building bridges: The importance of military, VA, and civilian partnerships in being fully responsive to military and veteran families; the value of the collaborative social worker; compassion fatigue and professional resilience


Final Assignment #4 due: Individual or Family Practice Issue Paper