I. COURSE PURPOSE

The purpose of this course is to provide students with a frame of reference for understanding military culture in order to prepare them to work more effectively with active duty service members, veterans, and their family members. The organization of the military will be examined along with its core values, beliefs, customs, socialization patterns, customs, gender roles, dress, language, and norms of behavior. Military-specific stressors will be examined from a strengths-based perspective. The need for social workers with military cultural competence has increased in recent years for several reasons. One reason is the expanding number of individuals and families who served in our recent wars in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom) (OEF) and in Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom) (OIF). Additionally, Vietnam Veterans are entering care at an increasing rate due to aging and stressors subsequent to retirement. These clients often believe that a practitioner must possess some knowledge about military life and culture in order to understand their issues and to treat them effectively. Therefore, it is imperative that social workers develop a military and Veteran cultural awareness to better equip them to provide services from a culturally responsive perspective. Assignments are designed to provide students with insight into some of the shared cultural norms within this population. Students will be better prepared to provide more culturally sensitive and effective services to military and Veteran clients.

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>Course Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Thinking:</strong> Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments</td>
<td>1. Social workers distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom.</td>
<td>Application Paper</td>
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</table>
| **Diversity in Practice:** Engage diversity and difference in practice. | 1. Social workers recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power.  
2. Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups  
3. Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences  
4. View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants | Reflection Paper  
Application Paper |
| **Practice Contexts:** Respond to contexts that shape practice | 1. Social workers continuously deliver, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services and develop needed policies | Reflection Paper  
Application Paper |
| **Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate:** Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities | 1. Social workers collect, organize, and interpret client data  
2. Assess client strengths and limitations | Application Paper |
III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts


B. Recommended Text

C. Course Assignments
The assignments for this course consist of active class participation, a reflection paper, and an application paper.

**Assignment #1 – Reflection Paper**: Select a time period in US history identified by a military or peacekeeping mission that included US participation (i.e., Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, the Cold War). Do a brief literature and media search related to this time period and identify specific needs a military Servicemember or Veteran and their families may encounter. The student should address issues related to the life course, stigma present during that time period related to the military, and identify relevant issues that may be relevant to social work practice with this population. This will be due the second week of class.

**Assignment #2 – Application Paper**: Select one:

*Interview*: Students will interview one or more service members, veterans, or their family members on one or more topics related to the way that military culture impacts social work practice with the military. If students are themselves a service member, veteran, or a family member, then the person(s) they interview must be from another category (for example, a service member cannot interview another service member). The instructor will assist the student with locating a participant for the interview, if necessary. The interview will focus on one or more of a variety of topics such as the stigma related to help seeking, access and effectiveness of services, gender relations, or the impact of isolation, frequent moves, deployments, and combat exposure. The student should evaluate the cultural factors that perpetuate certain practices and values and their impact on both individuals and on military effectiveness. The paper should include three research based articles from the relevant literature. Also include consideration of the way that cultural counter-transference could impact the therapeutic relationship and treatment effectiveness. This paper should be five double-spaced typed pages and will be due week three.
Issue: Select a social problem or social issue (e.g., traumatic brain injury, domestic violence, sexual orientation, women in combat, military sexual trauma) and related DoD/VA/Congressional policy. Identify the skills needed for intervention with individuals facing this problem as well as resources available in the community. There are three main components to this paper (1) Identify an evidence-based practice or intervention in the literature used to treat or address this issue, identify the training needed to provide this intervention, (2) Identify DoD, VA, and community resources to assist individuals facing this issue, (3) Identify policy recommendations or current policy surrounding this issue. This paper should be seven double spaced pages and will be due week three.

D. Grading Policy and Weights of Assignments
Grades will be based on the CUA Grading Policy as described in the Graduate Announcements. Full credit will not be given for assignments that are submitted late. **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>20%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 – 69</td>
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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](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://graduatescience.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. I 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 much present that documentation to your instructors and arrange a meeting with as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

F. **Use of Electronic Devices** *(faculty agreed it is up to each instructor to allow or disallow laptops)*

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.

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**CLASS SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>TOPIC, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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| 1     | **The military as a culture: overview of military structure, roles and branches of service**  
This class presents an overview of the military including the various service branches for the purpose of providing a broad framework to use in understanding the unique challenges faced by service members.  

**Required Readings:**  
Cincinnati, OH: Writer’s Digest Books |


2 Veteran cohorts in their historical context
This class focuses on Vietnam Veterans and their experiences. This discusses the existential crisis many Veterans faced during and after conflict. The cultural norms of this population as well as the moral code of the Servicemember will be discussed.

Required reading:


3 Life for military Servicemembers, spouses, and families
This class focuses on the military life style. Military unique stressors and available supports will also be explored.

Required Readings:
Blaisure et al. (2012). Defining features of military family life. Chapter 3; Military support for military families: Military policies and programs. Chapter 9; Supporting military families recent and new programs. Chapter 11.


Mental health counseling with military clients
This class focuses on the reasons military clients seek help, barriers to treatment, and treatments available.

Required Readings:

Suggested Readings

ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE CLASS 3

ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE CLASS 4