SSS 562
Spring 2013
(1 credit)
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I. COURSE PURPOSE

This course provides essential knowledge and engages students in critical thinking about drug abuse and dependence and related public policies and their impact on individuals, families, and communities. It introduces students to the impact on clients and their families, especially ethnic minority populations, of disparate intent and impact of law, regulation, policy, and practice. Students will be introduced to the pervasive consequences of drug abuse and addiction upon the individual user attendant to associated problem behaviors, social problems, medical conditions, and even drug abuse history. Students will examine the consequences of policies that distinguish illegal drug abuse from abuse of tobacco and alcohol in terms of how the implementation of these policies affects their well-being and that of their family. Implications for accessing services for clients and advocating on their behalf will be addressed. This course is one of a series of three one-credit companion courses in drug abuse, each of which can be taken independently, with no prerequisite. Each has a different focus. The focus of this course is current policy issues, their effect on clients, and the national debate; the focus of SSS 560 is the conflict between individual and societal rights; and the focus of SSS 561 is treatment, its effectiveness, policy and politics.
II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

A. To introduce students to the ideology underlying drug abuse and dependence and related policies to understand why society treats drug abuse and dependence differently from other public health problems, including addictions to other substances, and the impact of this distinction on the poor, the underserved, and on minority populations.

B. To make students aware of the effect of science versus ideology as policy drivers in issues such as health insurance parity for substance abuse and to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to advocate that client with drug abuse problems should be treated comparably to individuals with other medical conditions, including in terms of reimbursement policies.

C. To have essential knowledge about the distinction between drug abuse history, status and behavior, addiction as a disability, and to understand the implications of a drug abuse history on eligibility for or exclusion from student loan programs, SSI and other disability benefits, and public housing.

D. To understand the bilateral interrelationship between trauma and drug abuse behaviors, and what role social workers can play.

E. To understand the relationship between service-related injuries, mental health issues, and substance abuse.

F. To familiarize clinical concentrators on content on and analysis of policies to understand the full range of clinical issues faced by clients and their families and the need for advocacy on their behalf.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts


B. Recommended Texts


C. Required Journal and Other Articles

Because of the intense and ongoing public debate related to issues of drug abuse, public health, and public safety, the content of this course is updated during the semester. Accordingly, additional readings or citations to websites, beyond the
required readings that are listed in the Class Schedule for each class, are
distributed in class for review and discussion.

D. Other Recommended Readings

New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
treatment: Science and policy for the twenty-first century.* Baltimore, MD:
The Johns Hopkins University Press
Campbell, N. D. (2007). *Discovering addiction: The science and policy of
substance abuse research.* Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan
Press.

E. Course Assignments

**Participation:** Each student is responsible for active oral class involvement on
weekly assigned readings and interactive discussions on materials distributed in
class for group exercises. Presentation of point of view and the arguments
supporting them are expected and encouraged at each class. **Due Date: each class**

**Written Assignment:** Each student will develop a 7- to 10-page original paper
examining how a current policy may negatively affect clients. Issues may
include, but are not limited to, the effect of drug use or conviction upon receipt of
SSI benefits, welfare, and student loans; health policy coverage for substance
abuse; parity for substance abuse disorders; the interrelationship between trauma
and substance abuse; or special issues affecting military personnel, whether active
or retired, and their families. If a student chooses to write on one of these topics,
no approval is needed. If a student chooses to write on another topic, prior
consultation with and approval of the instructor is needed. **Due Date: May 3,
2013, which is two weeks after the last class. Papers are to be submitted electronically.**

F. Grading Policy

Active participation and involvement in discussions 40%
Written Paper 60%

Grades for this course are based on the University grading system. The grade is
based on content (substance, attention to assignment, attention to page limit), style
(scholarly writing style, APA format), and timely submission (assignments
submitted later than the assigned or date, or an otherwise agreed upon date
determined prior to the due date of the assignment, will be downgraded).
G. Attendance and Participation

Students are required to attend classes and are expected to participate meaningfully in class discussions. Active involvement and presentation by each student of his or her point of view and the arguments supporting them are expected and encouraged at each class. The grade for attendance and participation will be lowered unless the student notifies the instructor and requests an excused absence before the class.

H. Course and Instructor Evaluation

NCSSS requires written evaluation of this course and the instructor. Forms for this purpose will be distributed at the last meeting of the class. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

IV. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

A. Scholastic Expectations

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements, or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. 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 proofread by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

B. 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 and appropriate Program Handbooks.

C. 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, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.
### Class Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topics and Readings</th>
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| 1     | **Legal Consequences of Drug Use or Conviction of a Drug-Related Crime.**  
Implications of drug use or a drug conviction for receipt of SSI and disability benefits, welfare, and student loans. The role of trauma as explanatory or exculpatory. |

**Required Reading**

Cohen, Chapter 13  


Recommended Reading


2 **Health Insurance Coverage for Substance Abuse.** Medicaid and implications of potential Medicaid changes. The effect of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and its Parity Act provisions for substance abuse treatment, and the implications of potential changes or repeal. Military and VA substance abuse coverage.

Required Reading

http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/files/Parity_Toolkit_Final.pdf


Parity Implementation Coalition (September 2010). *Parity toolkit for addiction and mental health consumers, providers & advocates: Simplifying the appeals process: Strategies for winning disputes with your health plan.* Read pages 4 – 8 and skim the remainder of the Toolkit.


Zoroya, G. (2011, March 24). Miscommunication hinders vets’ care, study finds. *USA*


Recommended Reading


3 Unemployment, Substance Abuse, and Other Health and Social Problems.
Implications of unemployment for substance abuse behaviors. Relationship of unemployment and discontinuation of health insurance benefits. Interrelationship of a cascade of negative behaviors. Role of the military services and the VA in the treatment of active and retired service personnel and their families.

Required Reading


Kottke, T.E., & Pronk, N. P. (February 2009). Taking on the social determinants of

Recommended Reading


4 **Principles Guiding Rational and Humane Policies.** Social workers as advocates, change agents, and cross-disciplinary thought and action leaders.

Required Reading

Goldstein, Chapter 20
Cohen, page 335

Recommended Reading

Kleiman, Conclusion, pages 197-206