The Catholic University of America
National Catholic School of Social Service
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SSS 656
Social Work Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment of Mental Illness
Randall O’Toole, MSW, LICSW
(3 credits)

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I. COURSE PURPOSE
This advanced year course is designed to build on foundation year knowledge of generalist practice skills, human behavior theory, and human development and psychopathology. The purpose of the course is to provide the student with an opportunity to further develop core social work competencies in the areas of assessing, diagnosing, and treating many of the pervasive, chronic and persistent mental illnesses impacting many people who seek social work services. Students will be able to use the DSM-5 as a tool in mental health field placement settings under guidance from the field instructors, and will gain an understanding of how to use the manual, and understand the diagnostic language in order to be able to participate in diagnostic discussions with mental health professionals from various disciplines. Students will also learn current evidence-based practices to utilize in treatment planning, and to monitor and evaluate treatment plans throughout the helping relationship. Students must complete foundation year as a prerequisite for this course.

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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competency #1 Professional Identity: Identify as a professional social worker &amp; conduct oneself accordingly.</td>
<td>#2. Develop, manage, and maintain therapeutic relationships with clients within the person-in-environment and strengths perspectives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency #2 Ethical Practice:</td>
<td>#1. Social workers recognize and manage personal biases in practice settings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply social work ethical principles to guide advanced practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency #3 Critical Thinking:</td>
<td>#2. Social workers evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of multiple theoretical perspectives and differentially apply them to clients.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency #4 Diversity in Practice:</td>
<td>#1. Social workers use their self-awareness to understand the influence of their personal biases and values in working with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage diversity and demonstrate awareness of the complexities regarding identity differences and how they play out in clinical practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency #5 Human Rights and Social Justice:</td>
<td>#1. Social workers practice with the understanding that societal structures and values may oppress, marginalize, and alienate, or create, enhance, and privilege different cultural groups within a society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance human rights through understanding how social and economic justice factors impact clinical practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency #6 Research Based Practice</td>
<td>Social workers critically evaluate and utilize theoretical models and empirical research methods for the purpose of informing and evaluating social work practice and programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency #7 Human Behavior:</td>
<td>Social workers differentially apply theories of human behavior that address the bio-psycho-social-spiritual nature of clients and the social environment to guide social work practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency #9 Practice Contexts:</td>
<td>Social workers assess the current political, economic, social, and cultural climate as it affects the most vulnerable members of society.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respond to contexts that shape practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency #10 Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate:</td>
<td>Assessment:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage, assess, and intervene with individuals, families, and groups.</td>
<td>Social workers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment:</td>
<td>#1. Use multi-dimensional assessment tools that include bio-psycho-social-spiritual data to assess client’s strengths, capacities, and readiness for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social workers:</td>
<td>#2. Use differential diagnostic processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention:</td>
<td>Social workers:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social workers:</td>
<td>#1. Develop, with clients, an intervention plan that incorporates client strengths, capacities, and protective factors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social workers:</td>
<td>#2. Use culturally appropriate clinical techniques for a range of presenting concerns identified in the assessment.</td>
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<td>Social workers:</td>
<td>#3. Adapt appropriate intervention strategies based on continuous clinical assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation:</td>
<td>Social workers:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
#1. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.
#2. Revise intervention and program implementation plans based on ongoing process and outcome evaluation.

## III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### A. Required Texts

### B. Highly Recommended Resources

**DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria Mobile App**
For use with a smartphone or tablet, this app allows users to search the DSM-5 by symptom, code, or disorder, and view the diagnostic criteria in detail.

### C. Helpful Texts


### D. Other Required Readings
There are other required readings listed for each week that come from scholarly journals. These articles are posted on Blackboard and can be accessed by going to [http://bb8.cua.edu](http://bb8.cua.edu). Students must login using their CUA username and password. Individuals not enrolled in this course may not have access to the Blackboard page or readings.

### E. Course Assignments

#### 1. Attendance and Class Presence/Participation
Students are expected to complete all assigned readings, arrive to class on time, and be fully prepared to actively participate in all class exercises and discussions. All clinical content in discussions must be kept confidential, in keeping with the Student Confidentiality Agreement.

Missing more than two class sessions will result in a significantly reduced grade. The only exceptions are student illness (with doctor’s note), illness of immediate family member, accident/hospitalization, or death of immediate family member. Arriving to class late or leaving early (30 minutes or more) will be considered an absence.

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Class participation requires the student to have reviewed the readings in advance, and be fully present and engaged in the material for the entire class meeting. When in class, all pagers, cell phones, and other electronic devices should be turned off or set to silent operation. Phones should be stored out of reach so as not to be a distraction. Computers or tablets should be used in class to further learning only, and not for other purposes. The instructor reserves the right to create a technology-free classroom should the use create problems in the learning environment.

2. Discussion Board Postings
Students are expected to post one question from the readings to the Blackboard Discussion Board no later than 12:00 pm the day of class for classes 2-13. These will be used to guide discussion.

3. Mid-term Examination Due Class 7

4. Final Paper Due Class 14
See outline provided by the instructor.

Note: Papers are due at the beginning of the class. Papers handed in late will be deducted 10 points for each 24 hour period after the start of the class meeting.

F. Grading Policy
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 assignments described above will be the basis for the final grade. Grades will be based on the extent to which students achieved course objectives as demonstrated by the quality of course assignments and class participation. The following weighting of course assignments will apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Postings</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term Examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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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>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 94</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86</td>
</tr>
<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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9/21/15
G. 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.

H. 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. Additionally, 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

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 much present that documentation to your instructors and arrange a meeting with as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Session</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/2</td>
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<td>9/16</td>
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<td>9/23</td>
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<td>9/30</td>
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<td>10/7</td>
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<td>10/14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam Due</td>
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<td>10/21</td>
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<td>10/28</td>
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<td>11/18</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>11/25</td>
<td>No Class – Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/2</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Final Paper Due</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

9/21/15
V. CLASS SCHEDULE

I. Introduction: Competencies and Context

Class 1: Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment in Social Work: Core Competencies for Clinical Social Work Practice

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

Class 2: Stigma, Mental Health, and Provider Bias in Diagnosis

Required Readings:

Class 3: The Context of Practice: Organizational Context and Delivery of Mental Health Services

Required Readings:
Blome, W., & Steib, S. (2014). The organizational structure of child welfare: Staff are working hard, but it is hardly working. *Children and Youth Services Review, 44*, 181–188.
II. Assessment of Mental Health Disorders

Class 4: Conducting Assessments in Social Work Practice
Required Readings:
O’Hare (2016). Chapter 4: Conducting the Assessment and Planning the Evaluation, pp. 91-125.

Class 5: Assessment Skills
Required Readings:
Recommended Readings:
DSM-5. Assessment Measures, pp. 733-748.

III. Diagnosis of Mental Health Disorders

Class 6: Diagnosis: The History of the DSM-5: Benefits & Limitations of its Use in Social Work Practice
Required Readings:

Class 7: Diagnosis: Using the DSM-5 as Part of Culturally-aware, Strengths-based Clinical Social Work Practice
Required Readings:

NOTE: MID-TERM EXAM DUE

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IV. From Diagnosis to Treatment Planning and Intervention

Class 8:  Diagnosis and Treatment of Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence: Autism Spectrum Disorders, Depression, Anxiety and Trauma.

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:
DSM-5. Autism Spectrum Disorder (pp. 50-59); Separation Anxiety Disorder (pp. 190-195); Selective Mutism (pp. 195-197); Reactive Attachment Disorder (pp. 265-268); Disinhibited Social Engagement Disorder (pp. 268-270); PTSD (pp. 271-280).
O’Hare (2015). Appendixes B, G, & H (see pg. 649).

Class 9:  Diagnosis and Treatment of Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence: ADHD, ODD, Conduct Disorder, and Learning Disorders.

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

Class 10:  Diagnosis and Treatment of Disorders of Adolescents and Young Adults.

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

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Class 11: Diagnosis and Treatment of Adult Disorders: Schizophrenia, Mood, and Anxiety Disorders

Required Readings:
O’Hare (2016). Chapter 8: Schizophrenia, Mood Disorders, and Anxiety Disorders, pp. 195-234; Chapter 7: Case Management Skills, pp. 177-192.

Recommended Readings:
DSM-5. Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders, pp. 87-122; Bipolar and Related Disorders, pp. 123-154; Depressive Disorders; 155-188; Anxiety Disorders; 189-234.
O’Hare (2015). Appendix A (see pg. 649).

Class 12: Diagnosis and Treatment of Adult Disorders: Trauma, Substance Abuse and Personality Disorders

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:
DSM-5. Trauma and Stressor-Related Disorders, pp. 265-290; Substance and Addictive Disorders, pp. 481-589; Personality Disorders, pp. 645-684.
O’Hare (2015). Appendixes D, E & F (see pg. 649).

Class 13: Diagnosis and Treatment of Neurocognitive and Aging-Related Disorders

Required Readings:
DSM-5. Neurocognitive Disorders, pp. 591-643

Class 14: Ongoing Analysis, Evaluation and Monitoring of Interventions PAPERS DUE

Required Readings:
Grady & Dombo (2016): Chapter 15: Evaluating Practice
O’Hare (2015): Chapter 4: Testing Interventions and Evaluating Programs, pp. 54-73.

Recommended Readings:
O’Hare (2015). Appendix C: Practice Skills Inventory (see pg. 655).

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Final Paper

1. Select a memoir from the approved list below. Carefully read the book paying attention to the specific criteria for assessment and diagnosis of the mental health disorder it explores.

2. Conduct a search of the scholarly literature in the past 10 years on social work practice and interventions with individuals who present with the mental health disorder (12 references minimum).

3. Write a 12 page paper addressing the following:
   a. Introduce the main characters, themes, and main ideas of the book (2 pages)
   b. Address how the writer conveys the symptoms of the mental illness (2 pages).
   c. Present a summary of the scholarly literature on the disorder (4 pages)
   d. Imagine you are the social worker assigned to work with this client. Write up a psychosocial assessment (2 pages)
   e. What would your treatment plan look like (1 page)?
   f. Conclude your paper with final thoughts and a critical evaluation of the literature.

Approved Books:
ADHD: Memoirs of an ADHD Mind: God Was a Genius in the Way He Made Me
   by Melissa Hood
Anxiety – If Seen . . . My Journey Living with Anxiety by Karla Yazzolino
Autism Spectrum – The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon or
   Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger's by John Elder Robinson
Depression & Bipolar – Darkness Visible by William Styron or Madness: A Bipolar Life by
   Marya Hornbacher or An Unquiet Mind by Dr. Kay Redfield Jamison.
Eating Disorders - Purge: Rehab Diaries by Nicole J. Johns
Neurocognitive – Still Alice by Lisa Genova
Personality Disorders – Girl, Interrupted by Susanna Kaysen or Get Me Out of Here by Rachel Reiland
Substance Use – Dry by Augusten Burroughs or Drinking: A Love Story by Caroline Knapp
Trauma - A Child Called "It" by Dave Pelzer or Beautiful Child by Torey L. Hayden

9/21/15
Professional Conduct

Class participation is more than mere attendance. It is arriving on time, reading the assigned material, preparing for class with questions, contributing appropriately to class discussions, doing assignments, and participating in class activities. The class participation grade is a subjective grade given by the professor. The professor will use this matrix to determine the class participation grade (modified from Maznevski, M. (1996). Grading Class Participation. Teaching Concerns. http://www.virginia.edu/~trc/tcgpart.htm).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Class Participation Criteria</th>
<th>(Carpenter-Aeby, 2001)</th>
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<tr>
<td>0 No effort</td>
<td>Absent No effort, disruptive, disrespectful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-70</td>
<td>Present, not disruptive (This means coming in late.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrequent</td>
<td>Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-80</td>
<td>Demonstrates adequate preparation: knows basic case or reading facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Offers straightforward information (e.g. straight from the case or reading), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrates sporadic involvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-90</td>
<td>Demonstrates good preparation: knows case or reading facts well, has thought through implications of them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good Effort</td>
<td>Offers interpretations and analysis of case material (more than just facts) to class.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students’ points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analyzed case exceptionally well, relating it to readings and other material (e.g., readings, course material, discussions, experiences, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of case material, e.g. puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students’ comments, contributes to the cooperative argument-building, suggest alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches were effective.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Demonstrates ongoing very active involvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Pts</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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