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 due to the expanding number of individuals and families having served in our recent wars in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom) (OEF) and in Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom) (OIF). Service member and veteran clients often view social workers without military-specific knowledge as outsiders and/or as poorly prepared. 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 cultural awareness to better equip them to provide services from a culturally responsive perspective. Assignments are designed to assist students with reconciling their personal values and beliefs with the values and beliefs of the military. Students will be better prepared to provide more culturally sensitive and effective services to military clients when working within the worldview of the military culture.

II. ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

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

1. Appreciate the background, structure, and roles of the branches of service in the U.S. military (consisting of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, and
Uniform Services). Understand the differences between Active Duty, Reserve, and Guard.

2. Compare the life styles and issues of service members, veterans, and their families with their civilian counterparts; demonstrating an understanding of the reasons for military service, the challenges and opportunities of military life, and the implications for direct practice, policy, and advocacy.

3. Discuss the epidemiology of mental health problems for military members and the impact of military culture on identity and willingness to seek help.

4. Appreciate the level of diversity within the military; gaining insight into the experiences of minorities (racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, gender, religious) within the military and the importance of facilitating culturally competent practice and policy.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Reading


B. Recommended Reading

C. Other Recommended Resources and Media
http://www.womensmemorial.org

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

Assignment 1 – Reflection Journal: Students are required to keep a journal during this course. The student will write two paragraphs in response to each class and the material covered, commenting on how assumptions, attitudes, thoughts, and personal biases about the military have been confirmed or changed. The student will then write a three page paper (APA, version 6 format), summarizing how learning from this course has prepared the student to work with military clients in a more culturally sensitive manner. Journal
and summary paper are due one week following the last class and should be emailed to the instructor.

**Assignment 2 – Application Paper:** 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 five-page paper should be formatted following APA, version 6, and will be due week four.

**E. 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>40%</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>10%</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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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 94</td>
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<tr>
<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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<td>F</td>
<td>0 – 69</td>
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**F. 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.

G. 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](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](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. 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 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** *(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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>TOPIC AND READINGS</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  
| 2     | Military composition and diversity, rank, core values, and norms  
This class discusses the military structure in more detail and focuses on cultural elements such as dress, language, customs, beliefs, values, and norms of behavior. |
|       | Required Readings  
| 3     | Life for military service members, spouses, and families  
This class focuses on the military lifestyle. 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


ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE ONE WEEK AFTER THE LAST CLASS
ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE CLASS 4