I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on ethical and effective clinical social work practice with adolescents and young adults.

You will learn specific skills for effectively assessing and treating adolescents. We will discuss the science and the art of effectively treating this population – that is we will focus on both the research and knowledge base developed to date to guide treatment and to establish and cultivate the therapeutic relationship necessary for successful treatment to occur. You will learn what to do with adolescents in treatment, and you will also learn how to do it.

We will examine the biological, psychological, and environmental (biopsychosocial) factors that contribute to deficit conditions and resiliency in adolescents. With this foundation, we will focus on techniques to accurately assess and diagnose adolescent problems appropriate for social work intervention, establish goals for treatment, and develop a treatment plan, with attention paid to approaches and techniques that are effective given the adolescent’s strengths, age, motivation level, support systems, and diagnostic profile.

Specific diagnostic categories, risk issues, and potential challenges of this life stage will be covered in detail, with an ongoing focus on how to provide effective, ethical treatment and methods for the evaluation of outcomes and evaluation of the therapeutic relationship.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the importance of the therapeutic alliance with adolescents and young adults of diverse racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds, stressing in particular the issues of confidentiality and mandated status.

2. To develop skill in clinically interviewing adolescents and young adults for the purposes of assessment and intervention.

3. To recognize the impact of human diversity on the development of the adolescent and young...
adult.

4. To recognize the impact of one's own values, biases, and experiences on the understanding and treatment of adolescents and young adults.

5. Building on foundation knowledge of Human Behavior and the Social Environment, to apply dynamic and learning theories to the process of assessment of a young person’s problems within a familial, school, and/or work environment.

6. To understand the role of developmental tasks and normal stressors of this life stage on human functioning.

7. To balance traditional theories and models used to explain or treat deficit conditions with the strengths perspective and competency-based practice.

8. To translate presenting problems into measurable objectives for treatment.

9. To effectively understand and clinically address resistance in the treatment of adolescents.

10. To develop skills in the differential application of theoretically and scientifically based techniques to issues of mental illness, violence, substance abuse, intimacy, and identity formation.

11. To produce a theoretically and scientifically based, professionally written psychosocial assessment of an adolescent/young adult client.

12. To write an annotated bibliography or scholarly paper that draws upon theoretical and empirical social work and related literature to explain or suggest best practice treatment of an issue related to this age group.

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Required Texts**


Scholarly articles (available online through the library) and articles handed out in class

**Recommended Texts**

**Course Assignments**

Each of these assignments is described in more detail in attachments to this syllabus. These assignments are structured to parallel the clinical progression of working with an adolescent, from engaging, assessing and diagnosing the client to developing a clinical hypotheses connected with theory and research, to formulating, implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of the treatment plan. When possible, please use a case from your field placement to complete the assignments. To preserve client confidentiality, please disguise your case material by using pseudonyms for all family members and altering specific identifying details. If you are not seeing adolescents or young adults this semester, please see me.

**Important:** All your assignments must use APA format exactly. Make sure your references are correctly cited and supported in the reference section. Do not include references that are not cited in the paper and do not cite references that are not in the reference section. Papers should be well written and checked for grammar and spelling errors. If you have trouble with writing, visit the writing center for help. Writing skills are necessary for clinical social work and you must be able to produce a quality written product in this class. When handing in all written assignments, attach the cover page to the back of the paper and attach a blank page to the front. I do not want to be aware of the author of the paper until I finish grading it.

**Assignment 1**
Write a brief biopsychosocial assessment of an adolescent or young adult client, including treatment goals and outcome measurement

**Assignment 2**
Write an annotated bibliography summarizing scholarly social work and related literature of an issue within a particular adolescent population that would be appropriate for clinical social work intervention. Remember, you will need to integrate the findings from the topic you select with the clinical treatment plan you develop in assignment 3. Prepare an abstract with key points to be distributed to the class.

**Assignment 3**
Develop a treatment plan for an adolescent or young adult client. Include clear and measurable goals as well as the rationale (theoretical model, evidence-based practices) for the approach you select. Integrate relevant findings from your second paper. Prepare a 1-page handout relevant to the treatment plan.

**Weekly** You are required to participate in the blackboard discussion on the readings for the week, and this will be factored into your class participation grade. You are also expected to participate in class discussion weekly as you would be expected to participate in a clinical team as a social worker. Ask questions – this is an opportunity to learn and exchange ideas. I will call on you to comment on the readings or material presented in the class from time to time. Be prepared! Your thoughtful contributions and consistent attendance will contribute to a positive learning environment. We jointly share the responsibility for maintaining an appropriate environment for sharing and exploring our values and beliefs, free of judgment,
during the semester. Class participation grade will be determined by my evaluation of your preparation for and participation in class discussion, demonstrations, and input on the weekly reading assignments as noted above.

Please sign in at each class. We have less than 26 hours of face to face time in this course. Every minute counts! We will move quickly and you are expected keep up with the readings. Absences beyond one will lower the participation grade. Three absences will result in a grade of F for participation. Please submit assignments on the due date. For each day the assignment is submitted late, 3 points will be deducted.

**Grading Policy**

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The grade for this course will be based on the University Grading system. Please refer to CUA Announcements, or Program Handbooks for Academic Requirements that include scholastic and behavioral requirements.

**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 [evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations](http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations) using your CUA username and password. Additional formal and 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. Engaging in academic dishonesty will result in a grade of F in this course.

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.