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SW 423.01: Addiction Studies

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ADDICTION STUDIES
SW 423 / Psych 423
3 Credits, Spring 2002
Cindy Garthwait, MSSW, Instructor
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Addiction Studies is designed to help students develop an understanding of addictions from an eco-systems perspective. Students will examine both chemical abuse and behavioral compulsions, including alcohol and other drugs, smoking, compulsive gambling, eating disorders, and sexual addictions. There will also be a focus on diversity in addicted populations, fetal alcohol syndrome, the business of drugs, and prevention.

The eco-systems perspective on both the addictive process and recovery will be taken, highlighting the reciprocal interaction between addicted individuals and the various social systems of which they are a part. Attention will be given to biological/genetic factors in addiction, family contributors, and community responses. This course will draw on current research in the field of addictions, and will emphasize critical thinking and analysis of the current controversies in the field.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will understand:

The definitions of drug use, abuse, dependency, and addiction.

The models of addiction development, including disease, social learning, family systems, and transtheoretical, all considered from an eco-systems perspective.

The major research findings regarding the genetic predisposition to substance abuse.

Basic physiological responses to drug use.

The use of assessment criteria and tools.

Treatment models including self-help, behavioral, family systems, disease, and innovative programs.

Family dynamics of chemical abuse, including co-dependency.

Current controversies in the field of addictions, including the harm reduction model versus the disease model.

The effects of addictions on special populations, including diversity in age, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.

The continuum of responses to addictions, from prevention to treatment to law enforcement/control.

The impact of one's own values, attitudes and life experiences on one's views of addiction.

How knowledge and skills learned in the classroom setting can be applied in actual community settings.

How to identify and examine the ethical dimensions of addictions.

REQUIRED READINGS

Chemical Dependency: A Systems Approach by C. Aaron McNeece and Diana M. DiNitto, Allyn and Bacon, 1998.

Motivational Interviewing: Preparing People to Change Addictive Behavior by William R. Miller and Stephen Rollnick, Guilford Press, 1991.

Other readings as assigned

ASSIGNMENTS

(1) Abstinence or Acquisition Project and Journal
(Journal Due March 7)

Starting on February 5, you are asked to abstain from a mood altering chemical/substance/food/activity for 30 days. The substance will be of your choosing, and can include alcohol, other drugs, nicotine, caffeine, sugar, or other similar substances. The purpose of your abstinence is to assist you in understanding what chemically dependent people face in treatment and recovery in this culture. You will also hopefully begin to assess the role chemicals play in your life.

You are to keep a journal describing and reflecting upon your abstinence, with at least 3 journal entries (2 double spaced pages per week) describing your experiences, thoughts, feelings, successes and struggles.

You are to inform the instructor at the outset what substance/activity you will be abstaining from, and are to tell at least 2 significant persons in your life about this project and the reasons for it. You are to develop a plan for dealing with the challenges of abstinence, including the possibility of relapse.

In your journal, describe:

- * Your reasons for choosing this substance
- * Who you told about this experiment and who you look to for support
- * Your daily experiences and emotions
- * Your physical state
- * Your psychological state
- * Your spiritual state
- * The reactions of others around you
- * What you learn about yourself
- * What you learn about your environment
- * What you learn about addiction
- * What you learn about behavior and attitude change
- * Questions you have formulated as a result of this project

Finally, write a 3 page double spaced conclusion about how this experience will assist you in understanding or working with chemically dependent people. Be specific. YOU WILL NOT BE GRADED ON SUCCESS OR FAILURE IN ABSTAINING, BUT ON YOUR GROWTH IN UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF AND THE DYNAMICS INVOLVED IN DEALING WITH ADDICTIONS. However, it is important to make your best effort to abstain for the full 30 days.

Alternative Assignment

Choose a behavior or habit that you wish to acquire. Use the same reporting and journaling process as if you had chosen abstinence. Examples include: starting a regular exercise program, meditation, self care, healthy eating habits.

(2) Attendance at 2 Twelve Step Group Meetings and Discussion Paper

(Paper due April 11)

Each student will attend two meetings of a Twelve Step group such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, or Overeaters Anonymous. If you have already attended meetings of a particular group prior to this course, attend a different group with which you are not familiar. It is recommended that students

attend one group for addicted individuals and one group for those persons affected by an addicted individual, such as Alanon, Adult Children of Alcoholics, or Alateen.

Call before attending a meeting (if possible) to make sure that you are attending an open (not closed) meeting. Should someone ask, be honest about your reasons for being there. People are typically appreciative of your interest in the organization, but remember that you are there to respectfully observe, not interview participants. Above all, respect the anonymity of people you meet there. You may see people you know, and if so, respect their anonymity. Do not take notes or bring a tape recorder. Schedules of Twelve Step meetings will be made available by the instructor.

The discussion paper is to be a compilation of your field notes following attendance at the meeting, combined with your learning from the assigned readings and class discussions regarding Twelve Step programs. Begin with a short description: name of group, place, time of meeting, brief description of the demographic characteristics of the group, physical surroundings of the meeting, atmosphere and tone. The remainder of the paper should focus on:

* Your personal reactions as an individual attending for the first time. What did you observe/learn about yourself by attending? Were you nervous? Why or why not? Did you have any stereotypes that were confirmed or shattered? What emotions did you experience?

* Implications for your professional practice. Who do you think would benefit from such a group? How would you go about preparing a client for such a group based on your initial experience? Who might have a hard time participating in such a group? What do you think are the keys to the success of this approach?

* Integration of classroom materials with Twelve Step observations. How does this experience fit or not fit with information presented in class or read for this class? What social, psychological or spiritual principles of human behavior are the Twelve Step programs based on?

Compile your reactions into a 4-5 page double spaced paper. In addition, be prepared to discuss your findings and observations in class.

(3) Service Learning Experience

You are to donate 20 hours of volunteer service to a community organization which provides service in some area of addictions. You can work individually, paired with another student, or in a small group. Your service project needs to be approved by the instructor before it is begun. The instructor will provide a list of suggested projects and/or agencies from which to choose. Students may also choose a project of their own, but it MUST BE APPROVED BY THE INSTRUCTOR IN ADVANCE.

You will be asked to select your top three choices of projects from the list provided, and the instructor will make as many matches of first choice as possible. You are to inform the instructor of your choices by February 5, and the assignments will be made by February 12.

You are to make a verbal report on your project during class at the end of the semester, or you may choose to write a 4-5 page summary of your project. A format for both will be provided by the instructor. This will allow you to share your experiences with other students, will help them learn from your project, and will allow you to deepen your understanding of how knowledge about addictions is translated into an intervention in the real world.

(4) Examinations

Two examinations will be given during the semester. (March 28 and May 2)

TOPICS AND READINGS BY WEEK

January 29	Introduction
January 31	Theories and Models of Addiction McNeece 1 "Definitions and Epidemiology of Alcoholism and Drug Addiction" McNeece 2 "The Etiology of Addiction"

February 5	Disease Model of Alcoholism
February 7	Biological and Genetic Factors in Addictions McNeece 3 "Becoming Addicted" McNeece 4 "The Physiological and Behavioral Consequences of Alcohol and Drug Abuse"

Miller 11 "A Practical Case Example"

March 15 Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
FAS/E Support Group
-----March
19 Spring Break

March 21 Spring Break
-----March 26
Family Systems
McNeece 10 "Family Systems and Chemical
Dependency:

March 28 Examination #1
-----April
2 Gender Issues
McNeece 15 "Gender and Drugs: Fact,
Fiction, and Unanswered Questions"

April 4 Native American Issues
McNeece 11 "Ethnicity, Culture and
Substance Abuse"
-----April
9 Sexual Orientation and Addictions
McNeece 12 "Gay Men, Lesbians, Bisexuals
and Chemical Dependency"
McNeece 22 "Motivational Interviewing
for HIV Risk Reduction"

April 11 Chemicals and Driving
Twelve Step paper due
-----April 16
Age and Addictions
McNeece 14 "Alcohol and Drug Use
among the Elderly"

April 18 Dual Diagnosis
McNeece 13 "Compounding the Problem:
Substance Abuse and Other
Disabilities"

April 23 Regulation of Drugs
"Searching for Solutions" video
Miller 21 "Motivational Interviewing
with Heroin Users Attending a
Methadone Clinic:

April 25 Prevention
McNeece 7 "Preventing Alcohol and Drug
Problems"

April 30 Professional Issues/Ethics

May 2 Examination #2
 -----May 7
 Service Learning Project Reports
 May 9 Service Learning Project Reports

GRADING

Class Attendance and Participation	100 points
50% attendance	
50% participation	
Abstinence / Acquisition Project	100 points
Twelve Step Program Paper	100 points
Service Learning Project	200 points
Examination #1	100 points
Examination #2	100 points

	700 points

A	630-700 points	(90-100%)
B	560-629 points	(80-89%)
C	490-559 points	(70-79%)
D	420-489 points	(60-69%)
F	9-419 points	(0-50%)

NOTE: LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE GRADED A .5 LETTER GRADE LOWER FOR EACH CLASS PERIOD THAT THEY ARE LATE.