

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN**  
**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**DYNAMICS OF CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY**

<b>Course Number:</b>	SW 360K/ SW 393U9	<b>Instructor's Name:</b>	Diana DiNitto
<b>Unique Number:</b>	59755/60090	<b>Office Number:</b>	SSW 3.130B
<b>Semester:</b>	Fall 1999	<b>Office Phone:</b>	471-9227
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<b>Meeting Time/Place:</b>	R, 5:30–8:30 SSW 2.122	<b>Office Hours:</b>	T, 9:30–11:00 R, 4:30–5:30, 8:15–8:45, and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines the incidence and etiology of chemical dependence and its impact on individuals, families, and society. The course also addresses pharmacological properties and physiological, psychosocial, and cultural aspects of psychoactive substances, assessment and classification of substance use disorders, and special characteristics of diverse population groups. The course is organized using a biopsychosocial framework.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the incidence of chemical dependence and its impact on individuals, families, and communities;
2. Compare and critically evaluate major models and theories of chemical dependence including the impact of social and ecological factors on development, maintenance, and treatment of substance abuse and dependence;
3. Discuss the pharmacological properties and physiological and psychological effects of drugs and alcohol;
4. Demonstrate an understanding of assessment and classification of psychoactive substance dependence and abuse and the concept of multiple diagnoses;
5. Identify and describe the effects of chemical dependence on families and communities with special attention to characteristics such as involvement with the criminal justice system, gender, age, culture, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and ability;
6. Discuss and evaluate methods designed to motivate chemically dependent individuals and their families to use available treatment programs and community self-help resources.

**METHODS OF INSTRUCTION**

The primary means of instruction are informal lectures (students are encouraged to ask questions and make comments during lectures) and class discussions. Films and exercises will also be used. Guest speakers will be invited to augment class sessions.

**TEXT**

The primary text book for the course is McNeece, C. A., & DiNitto, D. M. (1998). *Chemical dependency: A systems approach* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon. It is available at the campus-area bookstores. Other readings listed on the syllabus are on reserve in the Learning Resource Center.

**COURSE AGENDA**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPICS and ASSIGNMENTS</b>	<b>READINGS and ACTIVITIES</b>
Week 1 R, Aug. 26	Introduction to course  Defining terms: Chemical use, misuse, abuse, and dependence  Drugs of abuse  Is there a best way to describe chemical abuse and dependence?	Video: <i>Uppers, downers, all arounders</i>  Handout from the Drug Enforcement Administration
Week 2 R, Sep. 2	The brain and chemical dependence: Understanding the pathways to addiction	McNeece & DiNitto, Chps. 1 & 2  Guest speaker
Week 3 R, Sep. 9	Theories of chemical dependence Jellinek's work Challenges to the disease model <b>Paper 1: Etiologic theories</b>	McNeece & DiNitto, Chps. 3 & 4
Week 4 R, Sep. 16	Screening, diagnosis, assessment, and referral: Tools of the trade  <b>Paper 2: Screening or diagnostic tools</b>	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 5
Week 5 R, Sep. 23	Understanding the chemically dependent person  <b>Paper 3: Biography or qualitative research on people with chemical dependence</b>	Read one of the following:  Johnson, V. E. (1973). <i>I'll quit tomorrow</i> . New York: Harper & Row.  Allen, C. (1978). <i>I'm black and I'm sober</i> . Minneapolis: CompCare.  Pluymen, B. (1996). <i>The thinking person's guide to sobriety</i> . Austin: Bright Books.  Or an autobiography or biography of your choice.  Guest speaker

Week 6 R, Sep. 30	Family Dynamics and Treatment From childhood to old age: Chemical abuse and dependence throughout the life cycle	McNeece & DiNitto, Chps. 9, 10, & 14 Guest speaker
<b>Midterm Evaluation of Course</b>		
<b>Paper 4: Family dynamics, family treatment, or age group studies</b>		
Week 7 R, Oct. 7	Comorbidity: Mental and physical disabilities in conjunction with chemical dependence and practical interventions for those affected	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 13 Guest speaker
<b>Paper 5: Theoretical or empirical dual diagnoses articles</b>		
Week 8 R, Oct. 14	Is gender an issue in chemical dependence?: Myths and realities	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 15
<b>Paper 6: Gender issues and substance abuse</b>		
Week 9 R, Oct. 21	Gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals: Is there really a substance abuse connection?	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 12 Guest speaker
<b>Paper 7: Sexual orientation and substance abuse</b>		
Week 10 R, Oct. 28	Ethnicity: The cultural implications for prevention and treatment	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 11 Guest speaker
<b>Paper 8: Theoretical or empirical articles on ethnic issues and substance abuse</b>		
Week 11 R, Nov. 4	Treatment: Components of the continuum of care Does treatment matter?	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 6
<b>Paper 9: Therapeutic techniques and treatment outcome studies</b>		

Week 12 R, Nov. 11	The self-help movement: Better than treatment?  Community approaches through drug courts  <b>Paper 10: Reactions to attendance at a self-help group meeting or to drug court or readings on self help approaches</b>	Section on self-help groups in McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 6  A. A. World Services. (1976). <i>Alcoholics Anonymous</i> , (3rd ed.). New York: A. A. World Services.
Week 13 R, Nov. 18	Policy as a practice tool: Can politics prevent substance abuse?  <b>Paper 11: Proposed or current legislation or policy evaluation studies</b>	McNeece & DiNitto, Chps. 7 & 8
Week 14 R., Nov. 25	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	Have a wonderful day!
Week 15 R, Dec. 2	The future of prevention and treatment  <b>Paper 12: Future issues in chemical abuse and dependence</b>  <b>Paper 13: Learning Assessment Course Instructor Survey</b>	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 16

## STUDENT EVALUATION

Your grade in this course will be based on 9 short, graded papers and one additional paper (a learning assessment) that is not graded but will result in a 10 point penalty on the final course grade if it is not submitted and you do not attend class on the day it is due (the last class period). Undergraduate students should submit one to one and one-half page papers and graduate students should submit two to two and one-half page papers, typed and double-spaced, for each of these assignments. In addition to the assigned reading, undergraduate students are required to read at least one article or report, and graduate students will be required to read at least two articles or reports for each of these assignments, except for the learning assessment assignment which does not require additional reading. Attach at least the first page or the abstract of each reading to your paper (make sure that the full citation to the work is included on the abstract and in the reference list at the end of your paper; for journal articles include author(s), title of the article, journal name, volume, number, and page numbers; for books include author(s), title, city, publisher and date; for book chapters include the chapter author(s), chapter title, and page numbers, as well as the citation information for the book).

There are 13 assignments listed on the course agenda. You are responsible for submitting 10 of them. Everyone must do the self-help group or drug court assignment due on November 11 and the learning assessment paper due on December 2. **In order to receive credit for each assignment, you must submit your assignment at the beginning of the class session, be in class on the day that**

**assignment is due, and be prepared to contribute to the class discussion based on your reading of the assigned material and (except for the learning assessment paper) the additional reading(s) you have chosen.** Each paper must provide a synthesis of your reading of the assigned material for that class session with the additional reading you have chosen. Be sure to refer specifically to the assigned reading as well as to your chosen reading(s) in your papers. These papers should be a **critical analysis** of the material. You are expected to do more than summarize the material. Discuss questions that the material raises for you; address the usefulness of the material; appraise what the writer is saying, etc. You do not have to describe the entire reading. You may find it more advantageous to focus on a few points since the papers are short.

For the class sessions that you do not submit a paper, you are still required to do the additional readings and to attend class prepared to talk about the readings. **You must also submit the abstract(s) of your readings for those days.** Be sure to put your name on the abstract(s), make sure the abstract contains the full citation of the reading, and write on the abstract that you are submitting only an abstract(s) for that week.

**Paper 1 due September 9:** Select an article(s) on etiologic theories of substance abuse or dependence published in 1997 or later. Discuss and compare the information provided in this article(s) with the information you read in the text (for example, does it support or contradict previous work?). Draw a conclusion about the utility of this work for social work practice. What unresolved questions does the reading raise?

**Paper 2 due September 16:** Select an article(s) on one or more instruments used in the screening, diagnosis, or assessment of substance abuse or dependence. Provide an evaluation of this tool(s) in terms of information on its validity, reliability, ease of administration and interpretation, and general utility for social work practice. Compare this information with information in the text about these or other instruments used in the field. If possible, select an article(s) published in 1997 or later or use recent manuals or other reports on the instrument.

**Paper 3 due September 23:** Select an article(s) or a book describing or chronicling the life of a person(s) with chemical dependency problems. Briefly describe one or more of the life stories, compare it with the assigned reading, and suggest implications for social work practice from your reading.

**Paper 4 due on September 30:** Select an article(s) published in 1997 or later on family dynamics, family treatment techniques, or family treatment outcome studies. Compare and contrast your selected reading(s) with the material in the text, and comment on the utility of the information for social work practice. OR Select an article(s) on an aspect of chemical dependency published in 1997 or later that relates to people in a particular age group. Compare and contrast the article with information in the assigned readings, emphasizing the implications for social work practice at the micro, mezzo, or macro practice level(s).

**Paper 5 due October 7:** Select an article(s) published in 1997 or later on some aspect of dual diagnoses (for purposes of this assignment, dual diagnoses are defined as a diagnosis of one or more physical or mental disabilities that a person has in addition to one or more diagnoses of substance abuse and/or dependence). Compare and contrast this material with the information in the assigned reading, and discuss implications for social work practice, including any ideas you might have for improving services to individuals with these multiple diagnoses.

**Paper 6 due on October 14:** Select an article(s) on any aspect of gender issues and substance use or abuse published in 1997 or later. Compare and contrast this material with the material in the text. What implications does this material have for social work practice at the micro, mezzo, or macro practice level(s)? Include any ideas you might have for improving services to members of this group(s).

**Paper 7 due on October 21:** Select an article(s) on any aspect of sexual orientation and chemical abuse or dependency issues. Compare and contrast this material with the material in the text. What implications does this material have for social work practice at the micro, mezzo, or macro practice level(s)? Include any ideas you might have for improving services to members of this group(s).

**Paper 8 due on October 28:** Select an article(s) on any aspect of ethnicity or culture and substance abuse or dependence published in 1997 or later. Compare and contrast this material with the assigned reading, and discuss implications for social work practice at the micro, mezzo, or macro level(s), including any ideas you might have for improving services to members of this group(s).

**Paper 9 due on November 4:** Select an article(s) on treatment techniques or treatment outcome studies published in 1997 or later. Compare and contrast this with the material assigned from the text. Include a conclusion about the utility of this technique or evaluative information on this technique for social work practice. If you choose evaluation studies, include a critique of the study(ies) using your knowledge from research methodology courses.

**Paper 10 due November 11:** Select a reading(s) on twelve-step or other self-help groups and compare and contrast this material with the reading on self-help groups from Chapter 6 or one of the chapters on particular populations such as women; ethnic groups; gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals; families; youth; or people with dual diagnoses. You may wish to address the utility of these groups for a particular population. OR Attend a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous and/or a meeting of the local drug court (you may do this in lieu of or in addition to readings you select). If you have already attended some meetings of self-help groups, you may wish to attend another self-help group for chemically dependent individuals with which you are less familiar or a group for other concerned persons such as Al-Anon or Adult Children of Alcoholics. Meeting schedules for self-help groups will be made available and preparation for the assignment will be discussed in class in order to help you select an appropriate meeting (e.g., non alcoholics should attend an *open* meeting of AA). If you choose this option, the paper should begin with a brief, general summary of the meeting. The bulk of the paper should contain your impressions of the meeting including thoughts on topics such as whether or not you would make referrals to the group based on this initial experience, the types of individuals you think might do well in this particular group, and how you felt as an individual attending for the first time, or how you think a “newcomer” with a chemical dependency problem might feel attending for the first time. **Please take the utmost care in writing this paper to ensure that you do not reveal anyone’s identity. It is not appropriate to retell “stories” that speakers may have relayed during the meeting in your paper. Do not bring a tape recorder or take notes during the meeting. We will discuss other protocol issues in class.** If you wish to attend a session of the drug court, meeting times will be discussed in class as well as etiquette for attending. Your paper should discuss your reaction to the drug court approach. Your paper can also combine your experiences at a self-help meeting and drug court, perhaps by comparing and contrasting the approaches. Regardless of which approach you take to the paper, be sure that your understanding of the text readings is reflected

in the paper. **Attendance at these meetings is optional. If you do attend, please sign a release form that will be provided in class.**

**Paper 11 due on November 18:** Select a bill that was introduced to the 76th Texas legislature related to substance use or abuse, and select an article(s) related to this proposed policy. Based on the information from the assigned reading and your selected reading(s), make a case for enacting the proposed legislation, rejecting it, or modifying it. Prepare this assignment in the format of a letter to a state senator or representative.

**Paper 12 due on December 2:** Select a reading(s) that looks toward the future of the fields of substance abuse and dependence in terms of prevention, treatment, identification of the etiology of these problems, or some other aspect of the field. Prepare a paper which compares and contrasts these readings with the material assigned for this class session.

**Paper 13 due on December 2:** Write a one to two page assessment of what you have learned during the semester. You might organize the paper in terms of the 3 or 4 things you learned that you feel will be most important for social work practice or your chosen field and why you believe this is so. You may also include a consideration of what else you feel would be necessary for beginning practice in the chemical dependency or mental health field. (This assignment is your personal learning assessment; it is not intended to be a critique of the course. You will have an opportunity to critique the course anonymously on the Course Instructor Survey.) There is no grade for this assignment but failure to submit it in lieu of a final exam will result in ten points being subtracted from your final grade.

Note:

Each paper will be graded on the following criteria:

1. Adherence to the instructions for the assignment (see pages 4–7 of syllabus).
2. Quality of the writing: organization, clarity, syntax and grammar, and so forth. (Your ability to express a substantial amount of information succinctly is critical to these assignments.)
3. Appropriate referencing.
4. Quality of the ideas presented.
5. Originality of the ideas presented.

The grading scale for all assignments and the final grade is:

90–100 = A  
80–89 = B  
70–79 = C  
60–69 = D  
59 and below = F

Each assignment will count as one-ninth of the final grade (i.e., all grades will be summed and divided by 9).

### **IMPORTANT NOTES**

1. While scholastic dishonesty is not anticipated, students should be familiar with The

University of Texas at Austin's policy on this subject found in *General Information 1999–2000*. Be especially careful about giving due credit to other authors. Scholastic dishonesty in this class may result in a grade of F for the course and reporting to the Undergraduate or Master's Program Director, Dean of the School of Social Work, and Dean of Students or Dean of Graduate Studies.

2. Students are expected to attend all classes, to be prepared for each session, and to participate in class discussions, exercises, etc. **If you are called on in class and are not prepared to discuss the readings, 5 points will be deducted from your grade for each class session this occurs.**
3. Each assignment is due at the **start** of class. Late assignments will **not** be accepted. In order to receive credit for an assignment, you must **attend** the class session relevant to that assignment and be prepared to contribute to the class discussion. Since illnesses or emergencies often arise, it is best to begin submitting assignments as soon as possible. Due to the flexibility that this assignment plan provides with regard to submitting papers, it is unlikely that exceptions will be made, such as granting extensions to students who do not submit work on time.
4. Attendance is expected at all class sessions. Although attendance will not add to your grade, more than one absence will result in a lower grade in the course.

## **EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTOR**

Students will have two opportunities to evaluate the instructor. At mid-term, I will use my own form for obtaining your views on the course to date, and at the end of the term, I will use the official Course Instructor Survey (CIS) of the University of Texas at Austin, School of Social Work. I am also available during office hours and at other mutually agreeable times to discuss the course with you.

*I look forward to a productive term.*