

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

SW360K/390R8: DYNAMICS OF CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY

Course Number:	SW 360K SW 390R8	Instructor's Name:	Diana DiNitto
Unique Number:	57155/57265	Office Number:	SSW 3.130B
Semester:	Spring 1998	Office Phone:	471-9227
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Meeting Time/Place:	T, 1:00–4:00 SSW 2.132	Office Hours:	Monday 12:00–1:30 p.m.; Tuesday 4:00–5:30 p.m.; and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the incidence and etiology of chemical dependence on individuals, families, and society. The course also addresses pharmacological properties and physiological, psychosocial, and cultural aspects of psychoactive substances and 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. Demonstrations and films 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.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. It is available at the campus-area bookstores. Other readings listed on the syllabus are on reserve in the Learning Resource Center.

COURSE AGENDA

DATE	TOPICS and ASSIGNMENTS	READINGS and ACTIVITIES
Tu, Jan. 20	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
Tu, Jan. 27	The brain and chemical dependence: Understanding the pathways to addiction Addictions as diseases	McNeece & DiNitto, Chps. 1 & 2 Guest: Carlton Erickson, Professor of Pharmacology
Tu, Feb. 3	Theories of addiction Jellinek's work Challenges to the disease model Paper #1: Etiologic theories	McNeece & DiNitto, Chps. 3 & 4
Tu, Feb. 10	Screening, diagnosis, assessment, and referral: Tools of the trade Paper #2: Screening or diagnostic tools	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 5 Demonstration: <i>The Addiction Severity Index</i>
Tu, Feb. 17	Treatment: Components of the continuum of care Does treatment matter? Paper #3: Therapeutic techniques and treatment outcome studies	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 6

Tu, Feb. 24	Understanding the chemically dependent person Paper #4: Biography or qualitative research on chemically dependent people	Johnson, V. E. (1973). <i>I'll quit tomorrow</i> . New York: Harper & Row or Allen, C. (1978). <i>I'm black and I'm sober</i> . Minneapolis: CompCare or Pluymen, B. (1996). <i>The thinking person's guide to sobriety</i> . Austin: Bright Books. Guest: TBA
Tu, Mar. 3	Family Dynamics and Treatment Paper #5: Family dynamics or family treatment studies	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 10 Guest: TBA
Tu, Mar. 10	From childhood to old age: Chemical abuse and dependence throughout the life cycle Health promotion and risk reduction Paper #6: Age group studies	McNeece & DiNitto, Chps. 9 & 14
Tu, Mar. 17	Spring break	Have fun!
Tu, Mar. 24	Community Week The self-help movement: Better than treatment? Community approaches through drug courts Paper #7: Reactions to attendance at a self-help group meeting or to drug court	Section on self-help groups in McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 6 A. A. World Services. (1976). <i>Alcoholics Anonymous</i> , 3d ed. New York: A. A. World Services.
Tu, Mar. 31	Comorbidity: Mental and physical disabilities in conjunction with chemical dependence and practical interventions for those affected Midterm evaluation of course Paper #8: Theoretical or empirical dual diagnoses studies	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 13 Guest: Debbie Webb, Austin-Travis County MHMR
Tu, Apr. 7	Is gender an issue in chemical dependence?: Myths and realities Paper #9: Gender issues and substance abuse	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 15

Tu, Apr. 14	Gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals: Is there really a substance abuse connection?	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 12 Guest: TBA
Paper #10: Gender or sexual orientation studies		
Tu, Apr. 21	Ethnicity: The cultural implications for prevention and treatment	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 11 Guests: Panel on ethnicity
Paper #11: Theoretical or empirical studies on ethnic issues and substance abuse		
Tu, Apr. 28	Policy as a practice tool: Can politics prevent substance abuse?	McNeece & DiNitto, Chps. 7 & 8
Paper #12: Proposed or current legislation or policy evaluation studies		
Tu, May 5	The future of prevention & treatment Summary and evaluation of course.	McNeece & DiNitto, Chp. 16
Paper #13: Learning Assessment Course Instructor Survey		

STUDENT EVALUATION

Your grade in this course will be based on 10 short papers. Undergraduate students should submit one to one and one-half pages and graduate students should submit two to two and one-half pages, typed and double-spaced, for each of these assignments. In addition to the assigned reading, undergraduate students will be required to read one article or report and graduate students will be required to read two articles or reports for each of these assignments, except for the learning assessment assignment which is due on the last day of class (this assignment requires only the assigned reading for that class). Attach at least the first page or an abstract of each reading to your paper (make sure that the full citation to the work is included; 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; and for book chapters also 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 reaction paper due on March 24 and the learning assessment paper due on May 5. **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. Refer specifically to the assigned reading as well as to your chosen reading(s). These papers should be a **critical analysis** of the material. Do not only summarize the material. When possible, discuss questions that the material raises for you. Address the usefulness of the material. Appraise what the writer

is saying, etc.

1. **Paper due February 3:** Select an article(s) on etiologic theories of substance abuse or dependence published in 1996 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?
2. **Paper due February 10:** 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 1996 or later or use recent manuals or other reports on the instrument.
3. **Paper due February 17:** Select an article(s) on treatment techniques or treatment outcome studies published in 1996 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.
4. **Paper due on February 24:** 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.
5. **Paper due on March 3:** Select an article(s) published in 1996 or later on family dynamics, family treatment techniques, or family treatment outcome studies. Compare or contrast your selected reading(s) with the material in the text, and comment on the utility of the information for social work practice.
6. **Paper due on March 10:** Select an article(s) on an aspect of chemical dependency published in 1996 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).
7. **Paper due March 24:** This paper will be based on attendance at a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous and/or a meeting of the local drug court. **Attend both a self-help meeting and a session of the drug court.** Your paper can focus on one experience or the other or you can combine them.

With regard to the self-help meeting: If you have already attended meetings of self-help groups, attend another self-help group for chemically dependent individuals with which you are less familiar (such as Cocaine Anonymous or a group for those with dual diagnoses) 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). The paper should begin with a brief, general summary of the meeting. The bulk of the paper should contain the student's impression 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 substance abuse 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.**

With regard to attending 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. If you choose to focus your paper on the drug court, you may wish to select additional readings that address this approach.

Your paper can also combine your experiences at the 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 readings is reflected in your paper.

8. **Paper due March 31:** Select an article(s) published in 1995 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 dual diagnoses.
9. **Paper due on April 7:** Select an article(s) on any aspect of gender issues and substance use or abuse published in 1996 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)?
10. **Paper due on April 14:** Select an article(s) on any aspect of sexual orientation and chemical 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)?
11. **Paper due on April 21:** Select an article(s) on any aspect of ethnicity or culture and substance abuse published in 1996 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).
12. **Paper due on April 28:** Select a bill that was introduced to the 75th 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 keeping the legislation or proposed legislation as it is, abandoning it, or modifying it. Prepare this assignment in the format of a letter to a state senator or representative. (You may wish to actually send it to him or her with suggestions for the next legislative session.)
13. **Paper due on May 5:** This paper does not require reading in addition to the assigned reading for this session. Your paper should provide an assessment of what you have learned during the semester. For example, you might organize it in terms of the 3 or 4 things you learned that you feel will be most important for social work practice 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 substance abuse 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.)

Each paper will be graded on the following criteria:

1. Adherence to the instructions for the assignment.
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-tenth of the final grade (i.e., all grades will be summed and divided by 10).

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 1997-1998*. 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 Coordinator, 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.
3. Each assignment is due at the **start** of class. Late assignments will **not** be accepted. In order to receive credit for an assignment, the student must have **attended** the class session relevant to that assignment and been prepared to contribute to the class discussion. Since illnesses or emergencies often arise, it is best not to delay turning in your assignments. Due to the flexibility that this assignment plan provides with regard to submitting assignments, it is unlikely that exceptions will be made, such as granting extensions to students who do not submit work on time.

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.