

George Mason University
Spring 2006
Psych 461 Section 011
Special Topics in Psychology: Seminar in Addictions: Substance-Related Disorders
Robinson Hall B 103

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OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays, 8:30am - 9:30am

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Levin, J.D., Culkin, J., & Perrotto, R.S. (2001). Introduction to chemical dependency counseling. New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc.

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES:

The aim of this course is for students to acquire advanced knowledge and understanding regarding the nature, causes, & treatment orientations for substance-related disorders including alcoholism and other drug addictions. A pan-theoretical approach will be utilized that addresses and considers biological, sociocultural, and psychological forces that contribute to substance-related problems. This course will attend to various paradigms including: the disease model of chemical dependencies, psychodynamic models, cognitive models, behavioral models, relapse prevention models, and motivational interviewing models.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS & REQUIREMENTS:

Students are expected to attend each class, complete assigned readings according to schedule, and to contribute to in-depth discussions/critical analysis regarding the course material.

All students are required to write a total of two (3) Position Papers. For Position Paper One, students will receive a case profile. Position paper #1 will focus on drug dependence & related issues. The case provided will be detailed and include rich information pertaining to individual, familial, interpersonal, and various sociocultural factors. The goal is to for the student to demonstrate understanding and critical reflection regarding various etiological factors as well potential interventions for effectively addressing the drug dependency. Students are to select two* theories from the listing of the theories below and to "conceptualize" this case according to each of these theories. Additionally, the student with take a "position" by identifying which of the two theoretical approaches (and related methods of intervention) they favor, and describe and explain the rationale for that choice. Due 3/10/05.

For Position Paper Two, students will again receive a case profile. The case for position paper #2 will pertain to problems with alcohol. The case provided will be detailed and include rich information pertaining to individual, familial, interpersonal, and various sociocultural factors.

The goal is for the student to demonstrate understanding and critical reflection regarding various etiological factors as well as potential interventions for effectively addressing substance-related disorders and related lifestyle problems. Students are to select two* of the major theories or frameworks and to "conceptualize" this case according to each of these theories. Additionally, the student will take a "position" by identifying which of the two theoretical approaches (and related methods of intervention) they favor, and describe and explain the rationale for that choice. Due 4/21/05.

*It is IMPERATIVE that you select different theories for each paper. Thus, neither of the 2 theories you use for Paper One can be used again in Paper two. Thus, you will have utilized a total of 4 different theories between papers 1 & 2.

*Theories to Choose From:

" Motivational Interviewing Theory

" Cognitive Theory

" Behavioral Theory

" Psychodynamic Theory

" Family Systems Theory

" 12-Step Theory

For Position Paper #3, students will write a Self-Reflection Paper. The aim of this paper is for students to critically examine their own viewpoints and biases regarding alcoholics and drug addicts. Specific guidelines will be provided. Due 5-12-05.

Grading Criteria for Writing Assignments

Each of the position papers are potentially worth up to 100 points. Although quality (as opposed to length) is most important, the paper must be at least 5 pages long and no longer than 10 pages. The paper must be double-spaced and written in accordance with the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition. Papers will be graded according to:

" Level of responsiveness to instructions & any guiding questions

" Clarity shown in the understanding of selected theories/paradigms

" Depth of specific content areas

" Organizational flow and logical consistency

" Spelling and grammar

" Incorporation and appropriate citation of relevant sources

OVERALL GRADING CRITERIA:

Final grades will be computed according to a 150-point scale. This derives from a total of three position papers - each worth 50 points.

Specifically, 135-150 points =A; 134-120 points =B; 119-105 points =C; 104-90 points =D; 89 points and below =F. Participation in discussions will be considered in "borderline" cases for computing final grades.

HONOR CODE:

The Honor Code of George Mason University will be adhered to in this course. It is the responsibility of each student to know and abide by this code. Please refer to the current George Mason University Catalog to access the Honor Code.

DISABILITIES:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Last day to add Feb. 7th. Last day to drop Feb. 24th.

Course "Schedule"

TOPICS READINGS DATES:

Overview of Addictive & Substance-Related Disorders	Chapters 1,2,10	1/24 & 1/31
Diagnostic & Assessment Issues	Chapters 3, 4, 8	2/7 & 2/14
Causes & Etiology 3/7	Chapters 5, 6, 9	2/21, 2/28, &
Models of Treatment	Chapters 12, 13	3/21 & 3/28
Issues Unique To Alcoholism	Handouts	4/4 & 4/11
Treatment Issues Levin, Culkin & Perrotto	Chapters 14,15	4/18 & 4/25
Relapse Issues	Handouts	5/2
Wrap Up & Evaluations	5/9	7:30-10:15pm