COURSE NUMBER: SOWO 709

COURSE TITLE: Service Members, Veterans, and their Families: Toward an Integrative Perspective for Social Work Practice

SEMESTER: Spring 2011 (Tuesday, 5:30-8:20 PM, RM 439 in TTK)

PROFESSOR: Gary L. Bowen, Ph.D., ACSW
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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday (1:00 – 4:00 p.m.)/By Appointment
UNC-CH Safe Zone

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
An application of behavioral and social science theories and research to examine the resilience of service members, veterans, and their families and communities in the context of adversity with implications for practice.

OBJECTIVES:

By course end, students will:

1. Understand the military culture, core values, language, and lifestyle and how these influence social work practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
2. Appreciate the special nature of military service as an occupational choice.
3. Appreciate the special opportunities and challenges faced by different populations of service members and veterans across the work and family life course, including DoD civilians and noncombatant uniformed service members.
4. Understand the role of research and theory in evidence-based social work practice.
5. Understand the reciprocal and dynamic links among theory, research, and evidence-based social work practice within the context of military social work.
6. Understand distinctions between problem theory and program theory in addressing social problems faced by service members, veterans, and their families and communities.
7. Understand the development and application of problem and program theories, including the development of evidence-based interventions in the context of personal identities and statuses, including age, sex, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status (pay grade), disability status, religion, sexual orientation, and culture and history.

8. Apply specific explanatory theories for framing and understanding social problems faced by service members, veterans, and their families and communities, and develop conceptual models from these theories to inform models and processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

9. Evidence awareness of and respect for military and veteran cultures, and potential boundary and integration issues at the interface between these cultures and social work values and ethics.

10. Gain self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values that may interfere with assuming leadership and conducting effective social work practice in addressing issues and challenges faced by service members, veterans, and their families and communities.

EXPANDED DESCRIPTION:

This course examines variations in the ability of service members, veterans, and their families to meet their role responsibilities in the context of the positive challenges, as well as the adversities, commonly encountered in the context of life and military service. Multiple theories and conceptual perspectives are used to build an integrative perspective for social work practice with military populations. In the context of both theory and the empirical research, students will evidence competency in conceptualizing social problems for purposes of informing intervention planning at the policy, program, and direct practice levels. Students will identify a specific social problem faced by service members, veterans, their families or their communities; describe its incidence/prevalence and significance for social work intervention; specify a problem theory for understanding variation in the social problem; and specify a program theory, including identifying one or more evidence-based interventions associated with treatment and/or prevention of the social problem. A special theme in this course is the importance of knowing about and appreciating the history, culture, composition, and mission of the armed forces in the delivery of effective social work services—the basis for contextual military social work practice.

CLASSES:

January 11, January 18, January 25, February 1, February 8, February 15, February 22, March 1, March 8 (no class, Spring Break), March 15, March 22, March 29, April 5, April 12, April 19, April 26
MAIN TEXTS:


http://www.realwarriors.net/materials/order/PBSHandbook.php

The Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) recently collaborated with PBS to produce a handbook for military families. Created as a companion to the PBS series "This Emotional Life," A Handbook for Family & Friends of Service Members explores the stressors and feelings individuals may encounter throughout the different phases of deployment. The handbook aims to provide solutions for Service members and identifies outside tools and resources that may be useful to friends and family members before, during and after deployment. Topics include what to expect during deployment and how to strengthen or repair relationships (quoted from Website). A detailed list of Websites are listed from page 119 to page 137. Order the handbooks from the Real Warriors Campaign website at http://www.realwarriors.net/materials/order.

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS:


TEACHING METHODS:

This course has been designed to maximize student involvement, and it will be facilitated using a transformative learning model. From this model, students work with the instructor as full partners in assuming responsibility for the success of the course.

BAD WEATHER POLICY:

Please check your email by 7:00 a.m. on the day of class in case of snow, ice or other threatening and/or unsafe conditions. Use your best judgment about travel safety if you are driving to Chapel Hill from surrounding areas with inclement weather or threatening and/or unsafe conditions. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.
RULES OF ENGAGEMENT:

Class Attendance
Students are expected to attend all class sessions, and classes will begin and end on time. If there is some reason that you cannot attend a class, please contact the instructor or leave a message for the instructor at the School of Social Work (919-962-6542). Students who miss two class sessions will be penalized by one letter grade (special exceptions may apply). Students who miss three or more class sessions will receive an "F" as their final grade for the class.

Email Accounts
All students are required to have a valid UNC email account. A valid UNC email address has the following extension: @email.unc.edu or @ unc.edu.

Required Reading
To facilitate class involvement and discussion, students are expected to read all required materials prior to class.

Class Participation
Students are expected to contribute meaningfully to class discussion. At the beginning of each class session, time will be allocated to address questions about readings and assignments.

APA Format
All written assignments should conform to the style guidelines of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). If you do not have a copy of this manual, I would suggest that you buy one.


SSW Writing Support Team
School’s Writing Resources Page: http://ssw.unc.edu/students/writing. This link provides access to an array of resources including the newly updated “APA Quick Reference Guide.”

ASSIGNMENTS:

Additional Readings

Students are asked to identify at least five additional readings during the course of the semester for adding to the syllabus, including a brief justification for the importance or contribution of the reading. Please send the readings to Professor Bowen who will post them on blackboard.
Reflective Essay

Four short reflective essays are due during the course of the semester. These essays are intended to: (a) Increase self awareness of values, beliefs and assumptions derived from the student’s own background and life experiences; (b) Develop critical analysis skills to review and evaluate literature; and (c) Integrate class readings with the student’s personal worldview. These essays should focus on your reactions to class discussions and/or to relevant military-related situations in your professional and/or personal life and/or your critical reaction to at least one of the required readings. Please keep your reflective essays to a reasonable length – ideally no more than 1 to 2 typed pages. The quality of the content, not the length, is the objective of the assignment. Please submit these essays in class on the due date. At times, we will use them to stimulate discussion. Evaluation of reflective essay entries will be based on instructor’s assessment of timeliness, completeness, and relevance to class discussion and assigned readings. (Due Dates: 2/8, 2/22, 3/15, 4/5)

Website Presentation

Students will be assigned a DoD Website from A handbook for family & friends of service members before, during and after deployment to present to the class in Week 2. A PowerPoint projector will be available for presentation purposes. The presentation should be approximately 12-15 minutes. (Due Date: 1/18)

Military Culture Essay

Fraser & Galinsky (2010) discuss the importance of adapting established programs to fit the culture and context of implementation: “Cultural and contextual adaptation refers to the practice of altering the content of a proven program to improve its relevance to a population” (p. 464). In approximately two double-spaced pages, students will identify three important cultural considerations in designing or adapting interventions for application in the U.S. Military. Students may decide to focus their discussion on a specific service branch or component. (Due Date: 1/25)

Class Presentations

Students will assume the lead role in developing/augmenting the reading list and promoting class discussion around a special population group in the U.S. Military. Students should plan on 30 minutes for each topic, although additional time may be negotiated, especially if audiovisual materials are used. (Due Date: 3/22)

Major Paper

Students will select a presenting issue or challenge faced by either service members (active duty, Reserve component, National Guard), veterans, or their family members (extended family, spouse/partner, or children) or communities. They will prepare a formal paper for
submission, as well as make a in-class presentation, that: (1) identifies the priority issue/challenge, including the incidence/prevalence of the priority issue or challenge and target groups for intervention planning (universal, selected, indicated); (2) defines resiliency/recovery outcomes if this priority/challenge is being addressed, including how the outcome(s) would be assessed; (3) specifies a problem theory that identifies bio-psycho-social-spiritual processes (antecedents) that promote the achievement of desired resiliency/recovery outcomes at the individual, family, unit, or community level; and (4) identifies an evidence-based intervention and/or promising practice that is designed to directly influence one of more of these bio-psycho-social-spiritual processes, including a discussion of the underlying program theory and the evaluative processes that have been involved in estimating intervention efficacy and effectiveness. Format all references using APA guidelines. Students will submit section outlines of the major paper as we progress through the semester. (Due Dates: 2/15, 2/22, 3/1, 3/29, 4/12); (Final Paper Due: Exam Date)

Students will present a PowerPoint summary of their papers on April 19: (10-12 slides) (30 minutes for presentation).

**GRADING SYSTEM:**

The core assignments and their relative weights in the grading system are listed below:

1. Additional Readings (5 x .01) 5.0%
2. Reflective Essays (4 x .03) 12.0%
3. Website Presentation 4.0%
4. Military Culture Essay 4.0%
3. Class Presentation 15.0%
4. PowerPoint Summary (Major Paper) 10.0%
5. Major Paper 40.0%
6. Class Participation 10.0%

Each assignment/requirement will be graded using the following numeric system:

H = 94-100
P = 80-93
L = 70-79
F = 69 and below

To qualify for a grade of Clear Excellence (H), students will need to complete all assignments with a grade of 70% or better, with an average grade of 94% or better.

**POLICY ON INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS:**

Unless negotiated in advance with the professor, assignments are due on the date specified in the syllabus. All assignments must be completed to receive a Passing Grade for the course.
(H/P/L). Students will receive 0 credit for assignments submitted past the due date unless approved for late delivery in advance of the due date.

**POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

All academic work submitted by students will be conducted within the letter and spirit of the Honor Code, which is described in *The SSW Manual* and the *Graduate School Record*. Please refer to the *APA Style Guide, The SSW Manual, and the SSW Writing Guide* for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism and appropriate use of assistance in preparing assignments. All written assignments should contain a signed pledge (/signed/) from you stating that, “I have not given or received unauthorized aid in preparing this written work.” In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required.

**POLICY ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Students with disabilities that affect their participation in the course and who wish to have special accommodations should contact the University’s Disabilities Services and provide documentation of their disability. Disabilities Services will notify the instructor that the student has a documented disability and may require accommodations. Students should discuss the specific accommodations they require (e.g., changes in instructional format, examination format) directly with the instructor.

**POLICY ON THE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN THE CLASSROOM**

Computers and other electronic devices may be used in the classroom only for purposes of presentation and note taking. The use of electronic devices for non-class related activities (e.g., checking email, playing games) is prohibited.
COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Week 1: January 11, 2011

Introductions and Syllabus Review

Required Readings


Model Article


Assignment (Due: January 18, 2011)

Students will be assigned a DoD Website from A handbook for family & friends of service members before, during and after deployment to present to the class in Week 2. A PowerPoint projector will be available for presentation purposes. The presentation should be approximately 12-15 minutes.

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1 Readings with an asterisk are available on blackboard.
Week 2: January 18

Steps in Developing Social Interventions

In-Class Presentations: Websites

Required Reading


Example: Problem Theory


Example: Program Theory


Supplemental Reading


Assignment (Due: January 25, 2011):

Fraser & Galinsky (2010) discuss the importance of adapting established programs to fit the culture and context of implementation: “Cultural and contextual adaptation refers to the practice of altering the content of a proven problem to improve its relevance to a population” (p. 464). In approximately two double-spaced pages, please identify three important cultural considerations in designing or adapting interventions for application in the U.S. Military. You may decide to focus your discussion on a specific service branch or component.
In-Class Reports: Cultural Considerations

The Military Culture, Language, and Lifestyle

Required Readings


Supplemental Readings


Class 4: February 1, 2011

In-Class Video Showing: This Emotional Life (Facing Our Fears)

**War, Deployment, and Resiliency: Positive challenges and adversities faced by military members and families (Service Members)**

**Required Readings**


**Assignment: Reflective Essay 1 (Due February 8, 2011)**

Class 5: February 8, 2011

Due: Reflective Essay 1

**War, Deployment, and Resiliency: Positive challenges and adversities faced by military members and families (Families)**

In-Class Video Showing: This Emotional Life (Family, Friends, & Lovers)

**Required Readings**


**Supplemental Readings**


Assignment (Two-page Outline Due February 15, 2011)

(1) Identify a priority issue/challenge (social problem) faced by service members (active duty, Reserve component, National Guard), veterans, their family members (extended family, spouse/partner, or children) or their communities, including the incidence/prevalence of the priority issue or challenge and target groups for intervention planning (universal, selected, indicated).

- **Introduction.** Provide an opening that introduces the topic, identifies the focus of your review, including the population of interest, and provides the reader with a roadmap for your review. (1.5 pages)
- **Statement of the social problem.** Describe/illustrate the phenomenon or problem. Present what is known about the scope or the problem (e.g., the incidence and prevalence of the problem). (1.5 pages)
- **Significance of the problem.** What relevance/implication does the social problem have for comprises the welfare and/performance of service members, their families, their communities. (1 page)
- **Background review.** What is currently known and understood about the phenomenon, problem or issue? Identify unresolved research issues (gaps in knowledge, unresolved puzzles, measurement problems, research design/methodological issues, analysis limitations) (3 pages)

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Class 6: February 15, 2001

In-Class Reports: Assignments

**The Concept of Resilience**

**Required Readings**


**Supplemental Readings**


**Assignment (One-page Outline Due: February 22, 2011)**

Specify and define resiliency/recovery outcomes if this priority/challenge is being addressed, including a nominal definition of this/these outcomes.

**Assignment: Reflective Essay 2 (Due: February 22, 2011)**

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**In-Class Reports: Assignment**

Due: Reflective Essay 2

Preparation Assignment: Students will be provided with ticket codes on February 15 for taking the AF Support and Resiliency Inventory Assessment Tools.

In-Class Video Showing: This Emotional Life (Rethinking Happiness)

**Resiliency Measures**

**Required Readings**


**Assignment (1/2-page Outline Due: March 1, 2011)**

How would the resiliency/recovery outcome(s) be assessed? Identify one or more specific measures and discuss the reliability and validity of these measures (1 pages).

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**Class 8: March 1, 2011**

In-Class Reports: Assignment

**Problem Theory: Conceptual Frameworks and Perspectives**

**Life Course Perspective**

**Required Readings**


**Supplemental Readings**


**Symbolic Interactionism**

**Required Readings**


**Supplemental Readings**


**Assignment: Reflective Essay 3 (Due: March 15, 2011)**

**Spring Break: March 8, 2011**
Due: Reflective Essay 3

Problem Theory: Conceptual Frameworks and Perspectives

Contextual Model of Family Stress and Coping


Supplemental Readings


Theory of Community Action and Change


**Supplemental Readings**


**Assignment (Three-page Outline Due: March 29, 2011)**

(3) Specify a problem theory that identifies bio-psycho-social-spiritual processes (antecedents) that promote the achievement of desired resiliency/recovery outcomes at the individual, family, unit, or community level.

- *Theoretical perspective.* A presentation and critical analysis of a theory or conceptual perspective that frames and informs the desired outcome. Discuss the conceptualization of the desired outcome from the perspective of this theory or conceptual perspective. In other words, rather than review the theory per se, apply the theory to your topic at hand, although it is important to specify key assumptions and concepts from the theory that frame and inform your analysis. (2-3 pages)

- *Theoretical model.* Include the development of a heuristic in the form of a conceptual/empirical model that explains variation in the desired outcome. Identify the major components and variables of this model in a table and provide a diagram that specifies the proposed linkages among the components. Discuss each component of this model, as well as proposed linkages among the components. (2-3 pages)

- *Empirical support.* How does the theoretical model fit with the available data? Evaluate the empirical support for the theoretical model. (2-3 pages)

**Examples:**


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**Class 10: March 22, 2011**

**Special Populations/Challenges**

*(Student Presentations)*

**Reserve Component and National Guard Members and their Families**


**Veterans**


**Single Service Members**


**Dual Military Couples**

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2 Presenter will assign readings.

3 The issue of homelessness among veterans would be an excellent presentation topic (see work by Jay Mancini and Hugh Milroy).

4 Presenter will assign readings.

5 Presenter will assign readings.
Single Parents


Sexual Orientation (LGBT)


Class 12: March 29, 2011

In-Class Reports: Assignment

Special Populations/Challenges

Children and Adolescents: Growing Up in Military Families

Required Readings


6 Presenter will assign readings.

7 Definitely use.
Supplemental Readings


Military Families with Children with Special Needs (Guest Lecturer)


Assignment: Reflective Essay 4 (Due: April 5, 2011)

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Due: Reflective Essay 4

Catch-UP Session (No Readings)

Assignment (One-page Outline Due: April 12, 2011)

Identify an evidence-based intervention/promising practice that is designed to directly influence one of more of these bio-psycho-social-spiritual processes, including a discussion of the underlying program theory and the evaluative processes that have been involved in estimating intervention efficacy and effectiveness.

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In-Class Reports: Assignment

**Program Theory: Evidence-based Interventions**

Required Readings


Supplemental Readings


Class 15: April 19, 2011

Special Project Presentations
Toward an Integrative Perspective for Military Social Work Practice

Class Discussion

SOWO 709 is framed by a course description (30 words), an expanded description, and ten objectives. Please be prepared to discuss the extent to which we accomplished course objectives.

Course Evaluation

Students will be asked to complete end-of-course evaluations. A student will volunteer to administer the evaluation and submit the evaluation package to Beth Sauer. The Professor will leave the classroom during the course evaluation.

Final Exam
**Evidence-Based Research Web Sites**

*Evidence Based Practice Annotated Bibliography and Resource Guide*

See [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/musher/EBP%20Resource%20Guide%205_28_04.doc](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/musher/EBP%20Resource%20Guide%205_28_04.doc) from which the descriptions below of the Campbell Collaboration were copied.

*Campbell Collaboration (C2): The Campbell Collaboration Library and Database*

Philadelphia, USA


“The C2 website posts a searchable database of randomized controlled clinical trials and systematic reviews of social, psychological, education, and criminological research. All research presented on the website has met rigorous methodological standards and are designed to provide researchers, policy makers, and practitioners with critical reviews of current research. Currently twenty one full reviews are available to download from the website and several more are currently in progress.”

*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP): Model Programs and National Registry of Effective Programs.*

Maryland, USA


“The website provides information about substance abuse and mental health programs tested in communities, schools, social service organizations, and workplaces in the United States. Nominated programs are reviewed by research teams who rate the programs primarily on methodological quality, but also consider other factors such as theoretical development and community involvement. Programs are rated in increasing order of quality as either: promising, effective, or model. Information briefs are provided regarding each of the programs including an overview description, estimated costs, background, target areas, references, and creator or developer contact information. The website also includes information about funding, helpful topic-specific links, and technical assistance information. Also available for download from this site is the “Comparison Matrix for Science Based Prevention Programs,” an outline of research-based programs and their comparative ratings by five different U.S. federal agencies as well as their rating standards.”

*The Cochrane Collaboration*

[http://www.cochrane.org/](http://www.cochrane.org/)

“The Cochrane Collaboration is an international non-profit and independent organisation, dedicated to making up-to-date, accurate information about the effects of healthcare readily available worldwide. It produces and disseminates systematic reviews of healthcare interventions and promotes the search for evidence in the form of clinical trials and other studies of interventions. The Cochrane Collaboration was founded in 1993 and named for the British epidemiologist, Archie Cochrane.” (This description was copied from the web site.)