SOCIAL WORK IN HEALTH CARE
SWK 6241
FALL 2017

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course provides students with a conceptual, policy, and practice framework for social work practice in health care. It provides an overview of the U.S. health care system – including the impact of health care reform – the unique knowledge and skill base of social work in health care, the biopsychosocial impact of illness on patients and their family members and support systems, and the special psychosocial needs of populations most often served in health care social work. This course is linked to course content in other first year courses – such as Human Behavior in Social Environment, Foundations of Social Work Practice I & II, Palliative Care: Social Work Practice with Advanced, Serious Illness, and Social Welfare Organization – which aim to sensitize students to social contexts and their impact on individual, family, group, and community functioning. There are no prerequisites for this elective.

I. EXPANDED KNOWLEDGE BASE
Upon successful completion of this course, students should have acquired an understanding of:

- How the health care system in the U.S. is organized.

- How health care services in the U.S. are accessed and paid for.

- An introduction to private health insurance, public health insurance through Medicare and Medicaid, and their wider availability through the Affordable Care Act.

- The status of health care reform and the Affordable Care Act.

- The roles and responsibilities of health care social workers.

- The diverse specialties and settings for the delivery of health care social work;

- An appreciation of the different needs and issues presented by clients and families facing diverse health concerns, as well as social work interventions to address them.

- Palliative care and hospice approaches for compassionate care near the end of life.
II. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This on-line course will include didactic instruction, readings, case studies and exercises, class discussion, experiential group exercises, as well as independent research and writing. All students are expected to keep up to date with the reading and written assignments, which will serve as a background for class activities and assignments, and provide important background material and building blocks for each class module.

III. COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING

Texts for the Course


- Haneke, Michael (Director) (2013). Amour. Sony Pictures Classic. ASIN: B00AIBZLHS; Retail List Price: $5.20


Many Internet booksellers discount new and used versions of these materials. Significant savings are available through on-line book rentals.
Recommended Texts


Note: Most required readings are on-line through electronic reserve (ERES). Your instructor will distribute the password and directions to access these readings.

Grading

Final grades (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C or F) will be based on:

- Quality and scholarship of papers, including promptness and integration of materials:
  - Mid-term: 30%
  - Final: 40%
- Quality of course participation on on-line discussion forums: 30%.

Late papers will result in grade reductions of 2/3 of a point.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ASSIGNMENT 1 – Due TBA

Mid-Term. The mid-term paper should follow the following outline:

1. Introduction. Choose an illness or health condition that interests you. In a brief introduction, describe this illness or health condition. For this assignment mental health/psychiatric conditions may not be chosen as your topic.

2. Case Study. Create a “case study” of a person with this illness, based on an actual or imagined person.

   - Write a one page description of this person's experience with their illness. (If using an actual person, do not use that individual’s real name, unless they are public with their
illness. You may use case experiences found on the Internet/You-Tube; if you do, be sure to provide Internet addresses in your References.)

- Integrate concepts from the professional journals (social work, medical, public health, nursing, and other health care professions).

3. Biology of Illness. Describe the biology of the illness

- For example: What is Alzheimer’s disease and how is it manifested in a person’s brain?

- Use professional journals or medical references as your primary source material. (Illness-specific websites may be used as complementary source materials.)

4. Psychosocial Impact. Discuss the psychosocial impact of this illness for the individual and their family or loved ones.

- For example, the client was diagnosed with MS. He has lost his mobility and can no longer travel on the subway to work. He fears losing his job. He is very isolated.

- What does the social work, medical, and other health literature tell you about biopsychosocial/spiritual assessments?

- What does the social work and other health literature tell you about the effect of illness on family caregivers and other family members?

- Use professional journals, not Internet sites.

5. Social Work Roles. Discuss the skills, responsibilities, and pressures of the social worker with your case (above in 2).

- Create a description of a social worker involved in this case. (This can be you or someone you create. Write about the setting where the client is receiving care as well as the type of care the client is receiving).

- What does the social work literature say about specific social work skills that are needed in health care?

- What are the primary responsibilities of the social worker in this case?

- How can the social worker address the complexity in covering the costs of health care, and other barriers to accessing care (you may use assigned readings to answer this question).

**REQUIREMENTS:** Eight (8) typed, double spaced pages, excluding references. Please use headings based on the assignment outline to organize your sections.
Remember to proof read your paper. Provide a cover sheet with a full title for the paper reflecting your topic and name. Paginate your entire paper.

**References:** In your research, you are required to use a minimum of 7 sources; 5 must be from non-assigned readings from professional literature. You may additionally use assigned readings, Internet sources, media, and national newspapers (*New York Times, Washington Post, or Wall Street Journal*). You need to cite generously throughout your paper, and cite the sources of all quotes. Interviews with experienced health care professionals are encouraged, but not required; interviews do not substitute for using references. **Do not use web encyclopedias (such as Wikipedia, Answers.com, About.com, etc.).** All papers must use APA style.

**ASSIGNMENT 2 – Due TBA**

**Final.** The final paper should follow the following outline:

**NOTE:** Your topic for the final assignment should reflect a different condition or population than was addressed in the mid-term assignment.

1. Based on your interests, select from one of the following vulnerable populations or health issues to write about: HIV/AIDS; Palliative, Hospice, and End-of-Life Care; Oncology Care; Elder Care / Long-Term Care / Caregiving for our Elders; Women’s Issues / Domestic Violence; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered People.

   - References for each group are provided at the end of this syllabus to help you frame your paper and start your research. These are provided to help you get started. You are not required to use these sources for your background, nor are you limited by them.

2. **Introduction.** In an introduction, provide a concise, one (1) paragraph overview of how you will focus your paper.

3. **Data from Affected Population.** Provide relevant statistics/data on the scope and size of the health issue you are addressing.

   - Please use recent statistics only. Recent statistics are based on data published within the last five (5) years; if you need to use older data, they must be published within the last ten (10) years. Unless used for comparison purposes to show trends, data more than a decade old may not be useful (and should not be used unless you have an important reason to do so).

Note: Excellent sources of data are available from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)); the CDC’s *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* ([www.cdc.gov/mmwr](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr)); the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
(www.rwjf.org); and the Kaiser Family Foundation (www.kff.org). Go to these reputable sources of data first.

- Data should note the size of the affected population in recent years. If important, provide data that note health disparities based on age, gender, racial/ethnic background, and/or sexual orientation.

- For example, if you are writing about women facing domestic violence, provide data on how many women face different types of violence (such as physical, psychological, etc.). You may also wish to show different rates of domestic violence based on age, gender, and/or racial/ethnic backgrounds.

4. Case Study. Create a “case study” of a person from the community/health issue selected, based on an actual or imagined person.

- Write a one page description of this person’s health experiences. (If using an actual person, do not use that individual’s real name, unless they are public with their illness. You may use case experiences found on the Internet/You-Tube; if you do, be sure to provide Internet addresses in your References.)

- Integrate concepts from the professional journals (social work, medical, public health, nursing, and other health care professions).

5. Biological Issues. Describe the biological / physical issues faced by members of your community.

- Use professional journals or medical references as your primary source material. (Illness-specific websites may be used as complementary source materials.)

- For example: If elder care is selected, what are the health issues facing older individuals, and how are they manifested physically?

6. Psychosocial Impact. Discuss the psychosocial impact of this issue / illness for the individual and his/her family or loved ones, and the broader community.

- For example, the client was diagnosed with HIV. She has been in and out of the hospital with serious medical issues, resulting in concerns regarding who will care for her children. She struggles with whether or not to be open with others about her medical condition. Her social worker has connected her to HIV support groups so other clients with HIV may learn from each other’s experiences.

- What does the social work and mental health literature tell you about the impact of serious illness on family caregivers and other family members, and the broader community of affected individuals?
- Use professional journals or medical references as your primary source material. (Illness-specific websites may be used as complementary source materials.)

7. Social Work Contributions. How does the profession of social work address the needs of the community impacted by this health care issue / illness? Would you recommend any changes or improvements on how care and services are delivered, consistent with social work values and ethics?

- Use the National Association of Social Workers’ Code of Ethics (2008 edition is posted on the Wurzweiler website) to support changes or improvements that you recommend.

**REQUIREMENTS:** Ten (10) typed, double spaced pages, excluding references. Please use headings based on the assignment outline to organize your sections. Remember to proof read your paper. Provide a cover sheet with a full title for the paper reflecting your topic and name. Paginate your entire paper.

**References:** In your research, you are required to use a minimum of 7 sources; 5 must be from non-assigned readings from professional literature. You may additionally use assigned readings, Internet sources, media, and national newspapers (New York Times, Washington Post, or Wall Street Journal). You need to cite generously throughout your paper, and cite the sources of all quotes. Interviews with experienced health care professionals are encouraged, but not required; interviews do not substitute for using references. Do not use web encyclopedias (such as Wikipedia, Answers.com, About.com, etc.). All papers must use APA style.

**FORMAT FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

Papers are to be typed, double-spaced, 1 inch margins (all sides) and conform to APA style for citation. Papers must draw from relevant literature from social work and other health care disciplines, and include citations and bibliography.

How you write is important. Begin with an introduction and end with a conclusion. Please use headings based on the assignment outline to organize your sections. Remember to proof read your paper. Be creative where appropriate and enjoy your experiences with these assignments.

V. **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations are asked to make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, Rochelle Kohn, Beren Campus, 917-326-4828, rkohn1@yu.edu, Abby Kelsen, Wilf Campus, 646-685-0118, akelsen@yu.edu, during
the first week of class. After approval for accommodations is granted, please submit your accommodations letter to Disability Services Office immediately.

VI. E-RESERVES

What is eReserve?

eReserve (Electronic Reserve) is Yeshiva University’s on-line web based system used to provide access to journal articles, book excerpts, and other course materials. Most articles listed in each syllabus are available on eReserve. You can access full text articles from your home or from a university computer.

How do I use eReserve?

1. Go to the library’s online resources page: http://www.yu.edu/libraries/
2. Click on online resources.
3. Click on eReserves
4. If you are off-campus, at this point you will be prompted for your Off Campus Access Service login and password (obtain this from the library).
5. In the 'search for Courses' box, type in the name of your course.
6. Click on the link to your course.
7. Enter the password given to you by your instructor (ALL UPPERCASE).
8. Locate and click on the item you wish to view. Titles beginning with "A", "An", or "The" are alphabetized under "A" and "T" respectively.
9. When the article text or book record appears on the screen, you can print, email, or save it to disk.
10. If you have any problems, please contact: eres@yu.edu.

VII. PLAGIARISM

Students should remember that the School will not condone plagiarism in any form and will sanction acts of plagiarism. A student who presents someone else's work as his or her own work is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking and writing. Plagiarism occurs when a student directly copies another's work without citation; when a student paraphrases major aspects of another's work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also plagiarism to use the ideas and/or work of another student and present them as your own. It is not plagiarism to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept as a reaction to someone else's work; however, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. Any student who can be shown to have plagiarized any part of any assignment in this course will automatically **FAIL** the course and will be referred to the Associate Dean for disciplinary action, which may include expulsion.
VIII. HIPAA ALERT

In line with the new HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your work will need to be de-identified. What this means is that any information that would allow another to identify the person needs to be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious things like names and birth dates but may also contain other information that is so unique to the person that it will allow for identification, including diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity, gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.
IX. COURSE OUTLINE

Module 1, Weeks 1 and 2

Families in their Environments: Macro and Micro Systems Interacting to Create Caring Environments

Learning Themes
- Viewing patients and their families in the context of their environments
- Introduction to the roles of health care social workers
- Assessing patient and caregiver needs
- Considering interventions that make a difference

Required viewing:
Amour (video)

Required reading:
Chapters 1 and 2, pages 1-20.

Chapter 3, pages 51-74.


Class Exercise:
“What’s missing from professional care in Amour: Observations by social workers.”

Module 2: Weeks 3 and 4

Health Care in the U.S.: Evolving Structure and Services

Learning Themes
- Understanding how health care is organized
- Employer-based, government-funded care, and the uninsured
- Introducing the Affordable Care Act (aka, Obamacare)
- Health care costs
**Required reading:**
Chapters 1 and 2, pages 3-38
Chapter 4, pages 59-77

Chapters 1 and 2, pages 3-49

**Updates on the Affordable Care Act** (TBA, subject to modification)


**Class exercise:**
“Are we confused yet? The impact of a complicated health care system on our clients, our families, and ourselves.”
Module 3: Weeks 5 and 6  
Access to and Funding Health Care in the US: What Health Care Social Workers Need to Know

Learning Themes
- How we pay for health care
- Employer-provided coverage
- Access for the elderly under Medicare
- Access for the poor and low income people under Medicaid and CHIP
- Understanding the concept of health disparities
- Affordable Care Act’s impact on young people

Required reading:
Chapters 5, 6, and 7, pages 85-135  
Chapter 10, pages 178-187; Chapter 11, pages 215-218, 244-250

Maura Calsyn & Lindsay Rosenthal (2013). How the Affordable Care Act helps young adults. Center for American Progress, download at:  


Recommended reading:
National Bureau of Economic Research (2014). The Oregon health insurance experiment. [Summary of findings and published documents.] Download at:  
http://www.nber.org/oregon/index.html


Class Exercise:
“Obtaining access to care: What are society’s obligations to provide health and mental health care to its citizens?”
Module 4: Weeks 8 and 9
*Settings and Services in Health Care Social Work: Why We Care, and for Whom.*

**Learning Themes**
- Settings for care, and diverse roles
- Examples from renal, cardiac, pediatric and adult oncology, and HIV care
- Conflicts and dilemmas among the ill
- Confidentiality concerns

**Required reading:**
   Chapters 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9, pages 21-44, and 69-108

   Chapter 6, pages 129-161


**Class Exercise:**
Assigned groups to consider case studies related to renal care, cancer care, and HIV.

Module 5: Weeks 10 and 11
*Practice Settings and Interventions: What and Where*

**Learning Themes**
- Diverse settings for health care social work
- Acute, rehabilitation, long-term, and home care
- Discharge planning and care coordination

**Required reading:**
   Chapters 9, 10, and 12, pages 229-288, and 311-330

Class Exercise:
“Setting-Specific Skills Sets: Examine the different roles, responsibilities, and skills needed for effective hospital vs. long-term care practices. Describe 1 or 2 observed differences in social work practices based on the type of setting. Where might I best fit in based on my interests, and the reasons why?”

Week 12
Final Paper Due.

Module 6: Weeks 13 and 14
Dementia, End-of-Life Care, and Caregiving

Learning Themes
- Dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease
- Hospice and palliative care
- Advance care planning
- Vital roles of caregivers
- Importance of culture

Required reading:


Recommended reading:


**Class Exercise:**

“What do I want for myself and those I love near the end of our lives? Describe your perception of quality end-of-life care.”
RECOMMENDED REFERENCES
FOR FINAL PAPER

HIV/AIDS


**PALLIATIVE, HOSPICE, AND END-OF-LIFE CARE**


**ONCOLOGY**


**ELDER CARE / LONG-TERM CARE / CAREGIVING FOR QUE ELDERS**


**WOMEN’S ISSUES / DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**


**LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDERED PEOPLE**


