SPIRITUALITY IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE
SWK 6689
FALL 2018

Course Description
Spirituality is an important aspect of human experience and development. Spirituality reflects a holistic perspective for social work practice that addresses the interrelationship between spirituality and the biological, psychological and social dimensions of human experience. “Social work scholars usually distinguish between spirituality and religion. Spirituality relates to a universal and fundamental aspect of what it is to be human – to search for a sense of meaning, purpose, and moral framework for relating with self, others and the ultimate reality. In this sense, spirituality may express itself through religious forms, or it may be independent of them. Religion is an institutionalized pattern of beliefs, behaviors and experienced, oriented toward spiritual concerns, and shared by a community and transmitted over time in traditions” (Canda & Furman, 1999)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
At the conclusion of this course students will be able to:

1. UNDERSTAND THE MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SPIRITUALITY
2. Understand ethical principles for spiritually sensitive social work
3. Recognize spiritual diversity for social work practice
4. Create a spiritually sensitive context for practice
5. Develop spiritually sensitive practice skills
6. Experience meditation as a spiritual practice
7. Recognize the role of religion in social work practice
8. Understand a holistic perspective of social work practice that connects the biological, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions of human experience.

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; and 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 that may include expulsion.

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, or gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

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.

E-RES (Electronic Reserve)
Most of the articles mentioned in the curriculum are available on electronic reserve [E-RES]. You can access the full text articles from your home or from a university computer at no charge.

How do I Use E-RES?
1. Go to the library’s online resources page: http://www.yu.edu/libraries/online_resources.asp
2. Click on E-RES. If you are off-campus, at this point you will be prompted for your Off Campus Access Service login and password.
3. Click on “Search E-RES” or on “Course Index,” and search by instructor's name, department, course name, course number, document title, or document author. [all Foundations courses will be listed under Levy, the sequence chair]
4. Click on the link to your course.
5. Enter the password given to you by your instructor.
6. Locate and click on the item you wish to view. Titles beginning with "A", "An", or "The" are alphabetized under "A" and "T" respectively.
7. When the article text or book record appears on the screen, you can print, email, or save it to disk.

To view documents that are in pdf format, the computer you are using must have Adobe Acrobat Reader software. You can download it FREE at www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS
Learning will occur through a variety of experiences and methods such as lectures, class discussion, film, meditation practice and feedback.

GRADING CRITERIA
Classroom attendance and participation will be factored into the overall grade. Written assignments will constitute 75% of the grade. Class participation will constitute 25%.

The following criteria will be used for grading: completeness of the assignment; clarity of thought and communication; correctness of the language; ability to apply course content and readings to the assignments; appropriateness and fullness of documentation; evidence of interest in learning from the written assignments and classroom discussions.
ASSIGNMENTS
Learning Objectives: 1-4

A. WEEKLY LOG
The purpose of the log is to record weekly, your observations, reactions and experiences with:
1. Ideas from the readings on spirituality and classroom discussion.
2. Meditation Practice. Note questions you have. Identify pleasant and unpleasant experiences. Indicate what you observed/learned about yourself.
3. Experience with other spiritual practices, such as: contributing to others, making time for connectedness, being compassionate and developing a peaceful mind.
4. Writing down your goals.
   Each week select an article from the assigned readings or chapter from a text. Discuss the key concepts and ideas and what meaning they have for you.

Learning Objectives: 1-2,5-8

B. FINAL ASSIGNMENT
Choose one of the topics that deals with Spirituality in Social Work Practice. Discuss the following questions:
1. What major understandings have you acquired about the subject?
2. What impact has this knowledge had for you personally and professionally?
3. How might you apply what you have learned to your practice?
   Draw upon the required readings as well as references from the bibliography. Feel free to include other sources.

TEXTS FOR THE COURSE


UNIT I-II Understanding the Meaning and Significance of Spirituality and Religion
Covers Learning Objectives: 1,2,4,7

Learning Themes
1. Defining spirituality.
2. Compassion the heart of spirituality.
3. Ethical principles for spiritually sensitive social work.
4. An open conceptualization of spirituality.
5. Relationship between religion and mental health.
7.

Required Readings:

Canda, E.R., & Furman, L.D. (2010). *Spiritual diversity in social work practice; The heart of helping*. (Chapter 4),
UNIT III  **Spiritual Diversity For Social Work Practice**
Covers Learning Objectives: 2,3,4

**Learning Themes**
1. Spiritual diversity in the United States
2. Connections between spirituality and social work
3. Ethnic, gender and sexual orientation diversity and spirituality
4. Religious traditions and social work practice.

**Required Readings:**

Unit IV  **Creating A Spirituality Sensitive Context for Practice**
Covers Learning Objective: 2-4, 5-6, 8

**Learning Themes**
1. The helping relationship and process
2. A holistic approach to social work practice
3. Understanding and assessing spiritual development
4. Ethical guidelines for spirituality-based practice.

**Required Readings:**

Unit V  **Spiritually Sensitive Practice Skills and Techniques**
Covers Learning Objectives 5-6,8

**Learning Themes**
1. Examples of spiritually oriented helping techniques
2. The practice of mindfulness: Paying attention
3. The power of breathing
4. Being in your body: the body scan
5. Sitting meditation
6. Loving Kindness
7. Cautions and indications

**Required Readings**


**UNIT VI Mindfulness and Meditation**

Covers Learning Objectives: 1-4, 5-6, 8

### Learning Themes

1. The nature of mindfulness.
2. Benefits of mindfulness.
3. Attitudinal foundation of mindfulness practice.
5. Mindfulness and social work practice.

6. Historical roots of meditation
7. Varieties of meditation
8. Common characteristics of meditation
9. Capacities learned in meditation
10. Potential of meditation for the social work practitioner and client
11. Practice of mindfulness meditation
12. Cautions and contraindications to meditation practice

### Required Readings:


Unit VII   **Mind / Body Connections**  
Covers Learning Objectives: 1-2, 6  
**Learning Themes**  
1. Dualism between mind and body.  
2. Focusing on the whole person.  
3. Interdependence of physical and mental health.  
4. The psychology of positive emotions.  

**Required Readings:**  

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**  


