

**SSA 407—SUBSTANCE USE PROBLEMS:
CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

The School of Social Service Administration
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Information regarding SSA 407 can be found at <http://chalk.uchicago.edu>

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course offers a basic overview of the history, current understanding, assessment, and treatment of problematic substance use. It provides students with knowledge and skills to conceptualize, detect, assess, and treat substance use problems. Models of addiction/intervention (including 12 step/self-help, cognitive-behavioral/skills training, motivational interviewing, and harm reduction) will be presented with particular attention to their existing evidence bases. A biopsychosocial framework and strengths perspective will be emphasized throughout. The needs of special populations (e.g., persons with mental illness, older adults, etc.) will be addressed. Throughout the quarter, the course will attend to the impact of socioeconomic and cultural factors on the development, assessment, and treatment of substance use problems. Furthermore, values of the social work profession will be integrated into classroom discussion and assignments.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will learn basic terminology and diagnostic categories that are used in the substance abuse field.
2. Students will gain knowledge about the epidemiology of substance use problems and will recognize varying patterns of substance use among population groups.
3. Students will learn about the etiology of substance use problems through the examination of multiple conceptual models.

4. Students will develop knowledge about and skills in substance use screening and assessment. They will be introduced to assessment tools that are widely used and recognized in the field.
5. Students will gain knowledge about the treatment of substance use problems. They will learn to evaluate treatment options based on existing evidence for effectiveness, and the appropriateness for different populations.
6. Students will learn to consider the impact of culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, gender, sexual orientation, and disability on the identification, conceptualization, and treatment of substance use problems.
7. Students will learn to examine assumptions of varying conceptual and treatment models through the lens of social work values.

FORMAT and ATTENDANCE:

The class will meet one time per week and will consist of lectures, discussions, and other learning activities (such as role plays). Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to class and to come prepared to actively participate in class discussion. **Attendance and participation is required**; if students are unable to attend a session, they must contact the instructor prior to class time. Class attendance and participation will count for 15% of the grade.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- I. NCADI Investigation (contributes to attendance/participation portion of grade)

Students will investigate the website for the National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Information (www.health.org), will order (or download) materials of interest, and will be prepared to discuss their investigation in class during **Session 2**. All students should order: *Brief interventions and brief therapies for substance abuse* (Treatment Improvement Protocol [TIP] Series, Number 34. DHHS Publication No. [SMA] 04-3952).

II. Critical Thinking Papers (30% of grade)

Students will hand in three short written assignments (3-4 pages each, typed, double-spaced) that are in response to a question distributed in class the week before the assignment is due. No additional readings other than those handed out during class will be required to answer the question.

Papers are due: **Session 3, Session 5, Session 7**

III. Book Report (20% of grade)

Students will read a biography/memoir/history of a person/group who has struggled with problematic substance use. They will write a brief report (approximately 3-5 double-spaced, typed pages) on the book.

The report should include a relatively short synopsis of the book including pertinent information about the central person/persons, development of substance use problems, and attempts to address the substance use problems. The student should then describe the prominent conceptual model or models of problematic substance use and treatment that are put forth by the book. Are the models appropriate given the severity and type of problem, the cultural and social factors at play, and the motivations of the affected person(s)? Are there any issues from the course content that seem especially relevant? In what ways?

Potential books include:

1. Drinking: A love story by Carolyn Knapp
2. Angela's ashes and/or 'Tis by Frank McCourt
3. Hooked by Lonny Shavelson
4. How to Stop Time: Heroin from A to Z by Ann Marlowe
5. Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America by Peter Mancall

Book Report is due: **Session 6**

IV. Research Project-**Choice** of the Following (35% of grade)

A. Annotated Bibliography

In conjunction with the instructor, students will choose a topic area to research. They will choose 5-8 scholarly pieces (journal articles, book chapters) with which to create an annotated bibliography. At least four pieces should be empirical in nature. For each piece, they will write a summary paragraph and a critique paragraph. Additionally, they will write a brief introductory page introducing their topic question, and a brief

summary page to tie together their 5-8 chosen works. Students will give an informal class report based on their findings.

B. Interview with and Report about Service Provider in the Community.

In conjunction with the instructor, students will choose a service provider (public or private, primary substance misuse treatment program or social service agency that deals with substance misuse issues) in the community. They will arrange to interview the provider and will then prepare a short written report (approximately 4-6 double-spaced, typed pages) to hand in. Additionally, they will give an informal class presentation/report on the service provider that they investigated.

Students are highly encouraged to conduct the interview at the provider agency so as to observe and get a “feel” for the place. They should plan to spend about one hour conducting the interview. They should collect the following kinds of information during the interview:

1. History of the agency
2. Organization of the agency
3. Funding sources
4. Referral sources
5. Interactions with other agencies
6. Philosophy or model of addiction
7. Kinds of services and interventions offered
8. Modalities of the interventions
9. Model of intervention
10. Obstacles to doing effective work
11. Preparation and training of staff

Potential service providers include:

1. Center for Addictive Problems—primarily methadone maintenance
2. Chicago Recovery Alliance—harm reduction advocates
3. City of Chicago Office of Substance Abuse Policy
4. Resurrection Health Care/ProCare Centers Recovery Programs
5. Better Existence with HIV
6. DCFS—Office of the Inspector General
7. University of Chicago Counseling Center
8. PRIDE Institute—services for gay/lesbian/bi/trans people
9. Heartland Alliance/Chicago Health Outreach—dual diagnosis program
10. High school-based Health Clinic—Roosevelt High School

By **Session 2** students will give the instructor a written information sheet stating their choice of completing an annotated bibliography or a community service provider report. At that same time they will indicate 2 or 3 possible topics or agencies that they are interested in researching. By **Session 3** students and the instructor will have agreed upon a defined topic or specific community agency to research.

The final product is due: **Session 10 at the beginning of class**

IV. Class Attendance and Participation (15% of grade)

*******All written assignments should be typed in a 12 point font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins. To document references cited in a paper, please use the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (see Publication Manual of the APA, 5th edition). *******

TEXTS and READINGS:

The following text is required and is available for purchase at the Seminary Coop Bookstore:

Van Wormer, K., & Davis, D.R. (2003). *Addiction treatment: A strengths perspective*. Pacific Grove, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

Additional assigned readings will be distributed in class. Many of the readings will be from the following texts:

Abbott, A.A. (Ed.). (2000). *Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs: Challenging myths, assessing theories, individualizing interventions*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

DiClemente, C.C. (2003). *Addiction and change: How addictions develop and addicted people recover*. New York: Guilford Press.

Hester, R.K., & Miller, W.R. (Eds.). (1995). *Handbook of alcoholism treatment approaches: Effective alternatives* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

McCrary, B.S., & Epstein, E.E. (Eds.). (1999). *Addictions: A comprehensive guidebook*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Miller, W.R., & Rollnick, S. (2002). *Motivational interviewing: preparing people for change* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

SCHEDULE:

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| Session #1 | <p>Topics: Introduction and Overview of Course Clarification of Basic and Common Terms Diagnostic Categories Resources</p> |
| Session #2 | <p>Topics: Historical Perspectives Policy Issues Strengths Perspective and Social Work Values Biopsychosocial Framework and Informed Eclecticism</p> <p>Readings: Van Wormer: Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 13</p> <p>Brocato, J. Wagner, E.F. (2003). Harm reduction: A social work practice model and social justice agenda. <i>Health and Social Work, 28</i>, 117-125.</p> <p>Miller, W.R., & Hester, R.K. (1995). Treatment for alcohol problems: Toward an informed eclecticism. In R.K Hester & W.R. Miller (Eds.), <i>Handbook of alcoholism treatment approaches: Effective alternatives</i> (2nd ed.), pp. 1-11. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.</p> |
| Session #3 | <p>Topics: Substances Commonly Used Biological Mechanisms and Consequences Epidemiology Introduction to Screening and Assessment</p> <p>Readings: Van Wormer: Chapters 4, 5</p> <p>McCrary and Epstein (1999), Assigned chapters on specific substances</p> <p>Leshner, A.I. (1997). Addiction is a brain disease and it matter. <i>Science, 278</i>, 45-47.</p> <p>Donovan, D.M. (1999). Assessment strategies and measures in addictive behaviors. In B.S McCrary & E.E. Epstein (Eds.), <i>Addictions: A comprehensive guidebook</i>. New York: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>***Critical Thinking Paper #1 Due***</p> |

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| Session #4 | <p>Topics: Models of Problematic Substance Use and Intervention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disease and 12 Step Models • Cognitive-Behavioral Models <p>Readings: Van Wormer, Chapter 12</p> <p>McCrary & Epstein, (1999), Chapters 14 and 15</p> |
| Session #5 | <p>Topics: Models of Problematic Substance Use and Intervention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stages of Change Theory and Motivational Enhancement • Harm Reduction Philosophy and Approaches <p>Readings:</p> <p>DiClemente, C.C. (2003). <i>Addiction and change: How addictions develop and addicted people recover</i>. New York: Guilford Press. Chapter 1-3.</p> <p>Miller, R.W. (n.d.) Motivational enhancement therapy with drug abusers. Retrieve from: http://motivationalinterview.org/clinical/METDrugAbuse.pdf</p> <p>Hunt, N. (2003). <i>A review of the evidence-base for harm reduction approaches to drug use</i>. Retrieve from: http://www.forward-thinking-on-drugs.org/docs/Hunt-Harm-Reduction-full.pdf</p> <p>***Critical Thinking Paper #2 Due***</p> |
| Session #6 | <p>Topics: Models of Problematic Substance Use and Intervention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Systems Approach <p>Specific Lifespan Issues: Pregnancy/fetal exposure, young children, adolescents, older adults</p> <p>Attending to culture, race, and ethnicity</p> <p>Readings: Van Wormer, Chapters 6, 9, and 10</p> <p>***Book Report Due***</p> |

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| Session #7 | <p>Topics: Evidence-Based Practice Brief Interventions</p> <p>Readings: National Institute on Drug Abuse. (1999). <i>Principles of drug addiction treatment: A research-based guide</i> (NIH Publication No. 99-4180). Retrieve from: www.drugabuse.gov/PODAT/PODATindex.html</p> <p>Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. (1999). <i>Brief interventions and brief therapies for substance abuse</i> (Treatment Improvement Protocol [TIP] Series, Number 34. DHHS Publication No. [SMA] 04-3952). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.</p> <p>Miller, W.R. (2000). Rediscovering fire: Small interventions, large effects. <i>Psychology of Addicted Behaviors, 14</i>, 6-18.</p> <p>Moos, R.H., & Moos, B.S. (2003). Long-term influence of duration and intensity of treatment on previously untreated individuals with alcohol use disorders. <i>Addiction, 98</i>, 325-337.</p> <p>***Critical Thinking Paper #3 Due***</p> |
| Session #8 | <p>Topics: Gender, Sexual Orientation, and Problematic Substance Use Linkage with other Service Providers Class exercises in assessment, treatment planning, and intervention</p> <p>Readings: Van Wormer, Chapter 11</p> <p>Marsh, J.C. et al. (2004). Gender differences in the impact of comprehensive services in substance abuse treatment. <i>Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment, 27</i>, 289-300.</p> |

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| Session #9 | <p>Topics: Mental and Physical Disability, Trauma, and Criminal Justice: Intersections with Problematic Substance Use Student Reports</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Van Wormer, Chapter 8</p> <p>Najavits, L. M. (2002). <i>Seeking safety: A treatment manual for PTSD and substance abuse</i>. New York: Guilford Press. Selected chapters.</p> |
| Session #10 | <p>Topics: Continuation of Student Reports Wrap-Up of Course Course Evaluations</p> <p>***Research Project Due***</p> |

Critical Thinking Paper #1

You have read about and discussed multiple important policy issues related to problematic substance use. Please choose one or two policy issues and examine the related current practices through the lens of social work values. Pay particular attention to the values of *Dignity and Worth of the Individual* and *Social Justice*. In what ways are policy practices consistent with social work values? In what ways are they inconsistent? What might be some ways to modify policy so that it is more in line with social work values?

Critical Thinking Paper #2

The **Transtheoretical Model (TTM)**, based on Stages of Change Theory, was originally introduced as a framework for thinking about the process by which people change or move **away from** problematic substance use. DiClemente (2003) suggests that TTM is also a way to understand how people move **toward and maintain** problematic substance use (that is, how they become “addicted”). Today’s assignment asks you to evaluate TTM as a useful way for understanding how people **move toward and maintain** problematic substance using behaviors. What are its strengths and limitations as an etiological model? How does it fit (or not fit) with evidence of addiction as a brain disease?

Critical Thinking Paper #3

Research and clinical experience tell us that duration of intervention is related to positive outcomes for individuals with substance use problems. Yet, there is a growing body of literature that also asserts that brief interventions (sometimes a single encounter) work for this population. Drawing upon readings handed out today, and information from the text, please address this paradox. What are some potential explanations for these seemingly different conclusions about the length of treatment for persons with substance use problems?