



**COURSE TITLE/SECTION:** SOCW7361/18717 Clinical Social Work Practice with Elders

**TIME:** Thursdays 6:00pm-8:45p

**FACULTY:** Lynn G. Lenert, LMSW

**OFFICE HOURS:** By appointment

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## **I. Course**

### **A. Catalog Description**

Cr.3 (3-0) Knowledge and skills for professional social work practice with elders.

### **B. Purpose**

This course examines cognitive and emotional conditions that represent normal and pathological functioning in elders. Using a strengths perspective, students will gain clinical practice knowledge and skills for understanding and working with elders across a range of settings.

## **II. Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Delineate the cognitive and emotional conditions that are considered to be a normal part of the aging process, including not only the experience of loss, grief, and end of life issues but also adaptability, resilience and accumulated wisdom;
2. Delineate the cognitive and emotional conditions that represent pathological conditions among elders such as depression, dementia, delirium, and anxiety;
3. Develop an understanding of the process of differential assessment and diagnosis to distinguish between different types of cognitive and emotional needs among diverse elders;
4. Identify the essential features, signs and symptoms, and risk factors associated with the development of depression, suicidal ideation, dementia, delirium, and anxiety;
5. Develop clinical practice knowledge and skill in determining appropriate

interventions with elders experiencing cognitive and emotional conditions including cognitive behavioral work, validation therapy, reminiscence, life review, alternative therapies, and pharmacological interventions;

6. Recognize the significance of sociocultural factors as they relate to relationship building, the helping process, utilization of social services, assessment, intervention, and multiple medications management with elders;
7. Demonstrate ability for culturally competent gerontological social work practice; and
8. Evaluate practice effectiveness in meeting needs of elders and their families.

### **III. Course Structure**

Class time will be a combination of lecture, in-class discussion, and group work & discussions, and guest lecturers.

### **IV. Required Textbooks**

McInnis-Ditrich. (2014). **Social Work with Older Adults. (Fourth Edition)**. Boston: Pearson Education

Additional readings will be assigned throughout the course. Students are responsible for accessing these articles or materials through Blackboard

### **V. Course Requirements**

This section should identify the course assignments, including written assignments, projects, and exams, as well as due dates. It is suggested that any stipulations regarding late submissions be included here.

#### **A. Reading Assignments**

The course outline, attached separately, contains weekly topics to be covered along with required reading assignments. Lectures will be designed to clarify, supplement and deepen the understanding of assigned readings. It is critical that students remain current with reading assignments to fully participate in class discussions and exercises.

#### **B. Group Work**

Students will be assigned into groups at the beginning of the semester and be given work to be compiled and presented as a group on assigned dates. Guidelines for preparation of presentation and paper will be distributed to students separately.

#### **C. My Sage Paper**

Students, with the assistance of Professor, will discuss elder issues for study, research, and exploration throughout the semester. Guidelines for preparation of paper will be distributed to students separately.

## VI. Evaluation and Grading

Grades will be assigned on the following basis:

Class Attendance/Participation 10%  
Group Project, Presentation and Paper 40%  
My Sage Paper 50%

The following standard grading scale has been adopted for all courses taught in the college.

A =	96-100% of the points	C+ =	76-79.9%
A- =	92-95.9%	C =	72-75.9%
B+=	88-91.9%	C- =	68-71.9%
B =	84-87.9%	D =	64-67.9%
B- =	80-83.9%	F =	Below 64%

### **Attendance and Class Participation/Group Work**

Attendance and class participation are **critical** to successful learning in this course. Both will be observed and recorded. This includes participation in impromptu group discussions and also group assignments in class. Should a student's grade be marginal, attendance and class participation records may influence the final outcome. Students are expected to notify Instructor when they must be absent.

A blanket email will go out to the class requiring those that were not present to write a journal, minimum of 2 pages, APA style regarding a specific question or topic discussed in class. A hard copy of the journal is expected at the beginning of the following class. If no journal is received, the absences will be unexcused and student will have to complete an action plan with the Director of Academic Affairs.

### **Incomplete Grades**

The grade of I (incomplete) is a conditional temporary grade given when students are passing but, for reasons beyond their control, have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. Incomplete status will be discouraged for this particular course since it is primarily a practice course with heavy emphasis on class participation. If life circumstances create a major barrier for students to have to seek incomplete status, it will be solely the responsibility of the student to request the Instructor to consider granting approval for incomplete status.

### **Late Assignments**

Late submission of assignments is unacceptable. Late assignments will only be considered for acceptance if...

- 1) The student has significant reasons for why the assignment must be late;

- 2) With the understanding that any late submission of an assignment will result in the automatic lowering of the earned grade; and
- 3) With prior notification and approval of the Instructor.

### **Cellular Telephones, Pagers and Laptops**

In order to keep interruptions to a minimum, students will be asked to turn off cellular phones, put pagers on vibrate and leave laptops off. If there are circumstances that prevent students from honoring this request, please advise the Instructor prior to the class session.

## **VII. Policy on grades of I (Incomplete):**

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are either **(a)** passing a course or **(b)** still have a reasonable chance of passing in the judgment of the instructor but, for non-academic reasons beyond their control have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements.

Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time or not taking an examination. Students must contact the instructor of the course in which they receive an "I" grade to make arrangements to complete the course requirements. Students should be instructed not to re-register for the same course in a following semester in order to complete the incomplete requirements.

The grade of "I" must be changed by fulfillment of course requirements within one year of the date awarded or it will be changed automatically to an "F" (or to a "U" [Unsatisfactory] in S/U graded courses). The instructor may require a time period of less than one year to fulfill course requirements, and the grade may be changed by the instructor at any time to reflect work completed in the course. The grade of "I" may not be changed to a grade of **W**.

## **VIII. Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism**

Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you must set the quote in quotation marks or use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number(s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further

information.

Academic dishonesty includes using any other person's work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

**IX. Consultation**

Students are encouraged to consult with the Instructor, especially as it pertains to student's performance in the course. The general Adjunct Professor's office is located on the second floor of the Social Work Building where private visits may take place by appointment. Email address is [Lynn.Lenert@memorialhermann.org](mailto:Lynn.Lenert@memorialhermann.org) . Instructor is available by cell phone – **no calls after 8:00pm.**

**X. Americans with Disabilities Statement**

Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. Please call 713-743-5400 for more assistance. Instructors may not provide accommodations without supporting documentation from the UH Center for Students with Disabilities.

# **Clinical Social Work Practice with Elders**

## **January 16**    ***Introductions and Course Overview***

- Student introductions – share contact information
- Assessment of Student Expectations, Strengths and Needs
- Class discussion
  - What do you mean by “clinical”?
  - Definitions – Discuss, hand-outs
  - Assignments for next week:
    - Conversations with My Sage – Discuss, hand-out
    - Reading Assignment: Chapter 1

## **January 23**    ***Introduction to Social Work with Elders***

- Lecture and discussion: Chapter 1 – The Context of Social Work Practice with Elders
  - Assignments for next week:
    - Chapter 2
    - Conversation with My Sage

## **January 30**    ***Health related issues with Elders***

- Lecture and discussion: Chapter 2 – Biological Changes and the Physical Well Being of Elders
  - Assignments for next week:
    - Chapter 3
    - Conversation with My Sage

## **February 6**    ***Psychology of Aging***

- Lecture and discussion: Chapter 3 – Psychosocial Adjustments to Aging
  - Assignments for next week:
    - Chapter 4
    - Conversation with My Sage

## **February 13**    ***Biopsychosocial Assessment Process***

- Lecture and discussion: Chapter 4 – Conducting a Biopsychosocial Assessment
  - Assignments for next week:
    - Chapter 5
    - Conversation with My Sage

## **February 20**    ***Differential Diagnosis and Assessment***

- Lecture and discussion: Chapter 5 – Differential Assessment and Diagnosis of Cognitive and Emotional problems of Elders
  - Assignments for next week:
    - Chapter 6
    - Conversation with My Sage

- February 27**    ***The Intervention Process/Practice Approaches***
- Lecture and discussion: Chapter 6 – Social Work Interventions in the Socioemotional and Cognitive Problems of Elders
    - Assignments for next week:
      - Chapter 7
      - Conversation with My Sage
- March 6**    ***The Intervention Process/Practice Approaches***
- Lecture and discussion: Chapter 7 – Alternative Interventions in the Socioemotional Problems of Elders
    - Assignments for next week:
      - Chapter 8 and 9
      - Conversation with My Sage
- March 13**    ***Spring Break – Enjoy the break***
- March 20**    ***Addressing Problems of Elders at Risk***
- Lecture and discussion: Chapter 8 – Substance Abuse and Suicide Prevention in Elders
  - Chapter 9 – Social Work Practice with Elder Abuse and Neglect
    - Assignments for next week:
      - Chapter 11
      - Conversation with My Sage
- March 27**    ***End of Life Issues***
- Chapter 11 – Dying, Bereavement and Advance Directives
    - Assignments for next week:
      - Chapter 10 & 12
- April 3**    ***Assessments and Application of Client Strengths***
- Lecture and discussion: Chapter 10 – Spirituality and Social Work with Elders
  - Chapter 12 – Working with Elders’ Support Systems: Spouses, Partners, Families and Caregivers
  - Class Project: A Gift of Gratitude to My Sage – Journaling Exercise
    - Assignments for next week:
      - Chapter 13
      - Conversation with My Sage
- April 10**    ***Discharge Planning***
- Lecture and discussion: Chapter 13 – “Aging in Place”: Income Programs, Health Insurance, and Support Services for Older Adults
- April 17**    ***Group Presentations***
- April 24**    ***Last Class – Wrap up, pulling it all together***

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Reading assignments and Class Participation – The course outline, attached separately, contains required weekly reading assignments; others may be added as the course progresses. Lectures will be designed to clarify, supplement and deepen the understanding of assigned readings. It is critical that students remain current with reading assignments to fully participate in class discussions and exercises. – **Class participation, attendance = 10 points.**
2. Conversations with My Sage – Per separate guidelines (to be given during class), students will turn in an APA style paper that will highlight weekly conversations covering readings, class discussions and guest speakers. Students will want to show how these elements discussed in class have had an effect on the Elders life and how the interactions with the elder have influenced their life. **50 points**
3. Group Project – Per separate guidelines (to be given during class), students will divide into groups and research the various living situations of the Elderly. Each group will present a Power Point presentation. Students will also turn in a 5 page paper following the guidelines provided for this assignment. **Power Point presentation = 20 points, paper = 25 points**
4. There is the possibility of weekly quizzes and a final exam to be given on the last day of class.
5. There is the possibility of weekly journals and/or discussion questions.