Social Work 460/533 Working with Trauma

THIS IS A SAMPLE OUTLINE. ACTUAL COURSE OUTLINE MAY VARY IN STRUCTURE, REQUIRED READINGS, TEXTS AND ASSIGNMENTS.

Calendar Description:
This course examines current theories and practices regarding the neurobiological, psychophysical and socio-cultural components of trauma. Four dimensions of experience will be explored: shock, developmental, accumulated stress, and socially and culturally-produced traumatic stress. Emphasis will be placed on concrete skills and strategies that have applicability to a wide variety of contexts. As well, students will learn to reduce the prevalence of secondary traumatization on themselves, colleagues, agencies and communities.

Course Objectives:
The purpose of this course is to prepare the student for trauma-informed practice with individuals, groups and communities. During this course, you will:

- Gain a beginning understanding of neurobiology and its relationship to shock, relational, accumulated stress and socially and culturally-produced trauma
- Increase awareness of your own process of nervous system activation, affect regulation and interpersonal neurobiology
- Explore key tenets that govern a trauma-informed approach to practice
- Consider the social, political, economic, and cultural context wherein socially and culturally-produced trauma occurs and is perpetuated
- Deconstruct ideas about resilience using narrative frameworks
- Develop an understanding of various practice approaches to assessment and intervention with people and communities living with symptoms of trauma, considering personal and cultural appropriateness
- Gain a beginning sense of competence with various somatic and narrative practice approaches
- Understand some areas of congruence, tensions and dilemmas between the different approaches to working with trauma
- Recognize the importance of family, social networks, and community systems in facilitating change and supporting the healing process
- Articulate the ethical issues that present when working with trauma, including the ethical requirement for self care

Weekly Topics with readings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Sept 9, 08</th>
<th>Intro to Course, to Each Other and to Course</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requirements</td>
<td>Themes: Dimensions of Trauma</td>
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<td>Week 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>Sept 16 and 23</td>
<td>Paradigm Shift from Cognition to Unconscious Affect</td>
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<td>Themes: Nervous system activation and regulation, traumatic stress, PTSD, dissociated parts of experience, top down vs bottom up processing, neuroplasticity, trauma-informed</td>
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practice

- Rothchild. The Body Remembers. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4

**Week 4**

- Sept 30: Trauma Informed Practice: Creating Safety
  Themes: Neuroception, basic ‘tools’ for safely: braking, relationship, body as resource, dual awareness, evaluation and assessment
- Rothchild. The Body Remembers. Chapters 5 & 6

**Week 5 and 6**

- October 14 and 21: Neurobiology of relationship
  Themes: the social brain, attachment, attunement, healing though relationship
- Gerhardt. Building a Brain
- Dobbs. A Revealing Reflection
- Siegel. An Interpersonal Neurobiology
- [www.attachmentacrosscultures.org/](http://www.attachmentacrosscultures.org/)
  Trauma, Attachment and Stress Disorders: Rethinking and Reworking Developmental Issues
- [www.healingresources.info/trauma_attachment_stress_disorders.htm](http://www.healingresources.info/trauma_attachment_stress_disorders.htm)

**Week 7**

- Oct 28: Narrative Conversations
  Themes: stories that create and sustain resilience, alternative territories of identity
- Unger. Thicker Description of Resilience
- White. Children, Trauma, Subordinate Storyline Development

**Week 8**

- Nov 4: Trauma First Aid; Vicarious Trauma
  Themes: societal denial of trauma, emotional first aid
- Levine and Kline. It won’t Hurt Forever
- Eckberg. Societal Trauma

**Week 9**

- Nov 18: Grief, Truth telling and healing of collective wounds
  Themes: Examination of relational/ social / cultural histories of what is held precious; outsider witness practices
- Volkas. Healing the Wounds of History
- Schroeder-Sheker. Totally Disarmed: The Choir of Witnessing
- Hooks. Seeking After Truth
- Audergon. Collective Trauma Nightmare of History

**Week 10**

- Nov 25: Working with Groups and Community
  Themes: assessing community strengths, skills and abilities, honouring cultural identities and avoiding psychological colonization
- Leitch. A Post-Tsunami Diary
- Arulampalam et al. Stories from Sri Lanka – responding to the tsunami
- Breslau. Cultures of Trauma
- Capacitar website. [www.capacitar.org](http://www.capacitar.org)

**Week 11**

- Dec 2: Directions for Trauma work
  Themes: therapeutic intent, relationships to the sacred
- Hooks. Touching the Earth
- Schwarz. Therapeutic Intent

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**Assignments/Learning Activities & Due Dates:**

**Assignment #1**

- 50%
Reflective Journal: You are required to complete a journal entry for each month of the trauma course. You will submit this journal twice throughout the course. Each entry should be 3 to 4 pages in length.

- What is the most compelling theme for me this month? Why?
- How does this issue relate to my lived experience (e.g. in my family, community, workplace)?
- How is this theme impacting my thoughts about working with trauma?

Criteria for evaluation:

1) Assessment of your ability to demonstrate understanding of somatic and narrative trauma work concepts, based on your readings and classroom discussions (30%)

2) Assessment of your ability to make links between theories/practices of working with trauma and your own lived experiences. (25%)

3) Assessment of your ability to link theory to praxis (25%)

4) Assessment of your ability to write in a clear, concise and comprehensive manner, utilizing APA referencing standards. (20%)

Due date: You are required to submit two journal entries. Date dates are: September 30, 2008, October 28, 2008
Assignment #2  50%

Philosophy of Practice Assignment: Reflect on an area of practice that interests you (e.g. mental health, addictions, working with youth, education, community development). Outline your own framework in working with the trauma in this context. Consider ways that your beliefs, values and assumptions guide how you will work with individuals, groups and/or communities in this context. You may chose to do a piece of art, write a piece of poetry, compose a song or find another way to express your learnings about the particular theme you have chosen. You also need to submit a synopsis of how your expressive piece corresponds with your learnings. It is necessary to include a list of selected course references.

Synthesize concepts from the course readings, discussions and presentations, making explicit the ways in which this engagement informs your practice.

Criteria for evaluation:

1) Understanding of theory: Assessment of your ability to demonstrate comprehension of course concepts. This includes use of examples and references to course and other readings (25%)

2) Self reflection: Assessment of your ability to examine your own values, beliefs and assumptions critically and to show a high level of personal engagement with course materials (25%)

3) Application to Practice: Assessment of your ability to consider practice applications (25%)

4) Writing ability and creativity: an assessment of your ability to write in a clear, concise and comprehensive manner, utilizing APA referencing standards. Demonstration of creativity and innovation (25%)

Length: 6 to 8 pages
Due Date: December 2, 2008