

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Syllabus: SW-540 - Seminar in Clinical Social Work: Social Work in
Health Care Settings
Spring 2005**

Code of Conduct:

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct code that is in the College of Social Work MSSW Handbook (<http://www.csw.utk.edu/mssw/>).

The Honor Statement:

An essential feature of The University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. (*Hilltopics*, 2004).

Disability:

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the University of Tennessee Office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library (865-974-6087). This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

Course Description:

This advanced general elective course focuses on the continuum of professional social work in health care from inpatient through outpatient and community-based service and program delivery settings within the context of the multiple societal, economic and population changes that influence health care delivery and social work practice in health care. The course builds upon the strengths and ecological perspectives of the MSSW curriculum. Course content encompasses four specific themes evident in contemporary health care. These themes are: (1) the impact of the managed care and restricted resources environment of health care on service delivery and social work practice; (2) the influence of dramatic medical/technological advances on service delivery, clients and social work practice; (3) the shift in focus from acute to chronic health conditions and from inpatient to outpatient health care (4) and the increasingly multi-ethnic/racial composition of health care consumers.. Specific topics include, but are not limited to: the history of social work in health care, the impact of acute/chronic health conditions on individuals and families across the lifespan; genetic disorders/genetic counseling/the Human Genome Project; the cultural context and influence of health care beliefs particularly on vulnerable and high risk clients and on practitioners; the use of the Internet in health care practice; ethical and legal issues/conflicts in health care settings and strategies for their resolution; HIV+/AIDS; organ transplant; and prevention in community-based settings.

Course Rationale

Social work in health care settings is one of the oldest settings for practice in the profession. However, over the most recent decade, the health care environment has rapidly and recurrently changed due to shifts in fiscal/reimbursement systems (i.e., managed care and the Prospective Payment System), the locus of health care delivery (i.e., from inpatient to outpatient care), disease and consumer population demographics, as well as, advances in medical technology and the resultant prolongation of life in formerly terminal illnesses. As a result, social workers in health care settings in the 21st century must have a broad scope of knowledge inclusive of these changes and their impact on health care consumers. Professional social workers must also be multiply skilled for practice in the increasingly interdisciplinary environment of health care and in various types of health care settings. Further, constraints on health care resources coupled with the emphasis in health care organizations on fiscal priorities require that social workers be skilled in strategies for resolving complex ethical dilemmas and as advocates to insure humane and equitable service delivery in health care.

Course Objectives

By the completion of the course, students are expected, through class discussions, class activities, assignments and/or exams, to be able to:

1. Describe the influences on social work and on clients in health care settings of the major contextual changes in health care (e.g., managed care, the Prospective Payment system, advances in medical technology, the shift from inpatient to outpatient/community-based settings and from a focus on acuity to chronicity of illnesses, changing client population demographics, etc.);
2. Assess the influences that demographic characteristics (e.g., race, gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, culture and spirituality) have on clients'/their families' and providers' perceptions of illness, health and health care;
3. Assess the impact of various illnesses on clients, their family/care-giving systems from a life span perspective;
4. Describe the roles of social workers across health care settings (e.g., inpatient, outpatient, community-based) and across the continuum from primary through preventive health care;
5. Explicate the role of social work in and the various professional perspectives influencing interdisciplinary teams and collaboration in health care settings;
6. Distinguish the professional use of self from her/his personal values in social work in health care settings;
7. Apply the NASW Code of Ethics to analyze and develop resolution strategies regarding ethical dilemmas common to social work in health care settings;

8. Identify disparities/inequities in health care resources and services for the poor, HIV+ persons, gay men, lesbians, the elderly, the differently abled and persons of immigrant status;
9. Describe strategies to advocate for socially and economically just distributions of health care resources and services within health care organizations and systems;
10. Identify objectives and outcomes of interventions and strategies in social work in health care settings such that practice evaluation can be accomplished.