

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

**Syllabus: SW-540 General Topics in Social Work: Multisystemic Therapy  
Summer 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 course presents an overview of Multisystemic Therapy (MST), a model of family-centered home-based service delivery of clinical interventions based on the ecological perspective. The course content includes treatment principles, the treatment process, theoretical underpinnings, research and randomized clinical trials, supervision protocol, ethical considerations and evidence-based practices used within MST, and highlights MST program structure and development. Issues related to MST quality control and assurance process and ethical considerations are presented, as well as current directions of MST research.

**Course Rationale:**

MST was developed to address several limitations of current mental health services for violent juvenile offenders, such as minimal effectiveness, low accountability of service providers for outcomes, and high costs. Overwhelming empirical evidence suggests that serious antisocial behavior is determined by the interplay of individual, family, peer, school, and neighborhood factors. Restrictive out-of-home placements, such as residential treatment, psychiatric hospitalizations, and incarceration fail to address the known determinants of serious antisocial behavior and fail to alter the ecological system to which the youth will eventually return. The MST model is based on the premise that providing services in the home will maximize family participation and ensure the counselors are flexible in meeting the needs of families in their own environments. MST has been found through multiple empirical research studies to be effective with families

of different cultural backgrounds and socio-economic status. Long term effectiveness with chronic violent juvenile offenders, substance-abusing delinquents, juvenile sex offenders, and abusive and neglectful families has been demonstrated in rigorous controlled clinical trials.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course students are expected to be able to:

- Describe the causal models of delinquency and drug use and their relation to MST.
- Describe related research.
- Cite outcomes of major MST research trials.
- List and explain the 9 MST principles, and apply them when conceptualizing cases and designing interventions through the use of role-plays and case examples.
- Describe the MST analytical process and apply it to case scenarios.
- Describe MST supervision and consultation protocol.
- Describe major concepts, theoretical assumptions, and clinical techniques common to evidence-based practices used within MST including behavior therapy, cognitive behavior therapy, and pragmatic family therapy.
- Describe the use of psychopharmacological interventions used within MST and identify key signs related to major psychological disorders.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the application of the NASW Code of Ethics for MST utilizing the family preservation service delivery model, as well as, key issues related to cultural responsiveness, diversity and providing services to high risk populations.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of programmatic and organizational practices *with multiple systems* necessary for MST practice and service delivery.
- Demonstrate the delineation of the various roles of therapist, supervisor, consultant, and director in MST practice.
- Demonstrate an understanding of Multisystemic case conceptualization through group presentations utilizing the MST analytical process, (i.e. do-loop, for setting goals and designing interventions).