# OFFICIAL UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OUTLINE

**Course Name/Number:** SOWK 497  
**School of Social Work & Human Services**  
**UFV Credits:** 3

## Course Descriptive Title

Social Work in Mental Health

## Calendar Description

Students will develop an understanding of mental health issues in Canada across the lifespan and the legal and policy framework in which mental health services are provided. Contributing factors in the experience of mental illness arising from systemic forms of oppression and factors affected by social class, ability, age, gender, race, and sexual orientation will be considered. Issues related to stigma, poverty, and housing will be explored. Approaches to social work assessment including risk of suicide and self-harm will be included as well as consideration of classification and diagnosis of mental health problems and psychiatric medications. Students will learn about evidence-based social work practice and approaches to assisting individuals and families experiencing mental health problems. Challenges and opportunities related to working in multidisciplinary teams will be discussed. Students will learn of a Recovery Model approach to mental health and the importance of hope and the belief that people can and do recover from severe mental illness.

## Prerequisites

Admission into the Bachelor of Social Work program, PSYC 101, and either PSYC 250 or SOWK 225. (Students in other degree programs, with a minimum of 45 credits, may be able to obtain instructor's permission at the first class. However, they should check with their program head to see whether they can apply this course to their degree).

## Corequisites

None

## Synonymous Course(s):

(a) Replaces: SSSW 497  
(b) Cross-listed with:  
(c) Cannot take: for further credit.

## Total Hours Per Term:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>30 Hrs</th>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>15 Hrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory</td>
<td>Hrs</td>
<td>Field experience</td>
<td>Hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Training Day-Based Instruction:

Length of course:  
Hours per day:  
Maximum enrolment: 30  
Expected frequency of course offerings: 1 section per year (every semester, annually, every other year, etc.)

## WILL TRANSFER CREDIT BE REQUESTED?

Yes ☒ No ☐

## Transfer Credit Exists in BCCAT Transfer Guide?

Yes ☒ No ☐

---

**Course Designer(s):** Larry Depow MSW, RSW  
**Department Head:** Dr. Elizabeth Dow  
**Supporting area consultation:**  
**Curriculum Committee chair:** Dr. Elizabeth Dow  
**Dean/Associate VP:** Dr. Rosetta Khalideen  
**Undergraduate Education Committee (UEC) approval:**  
**Date of meeting:** 
- February 25, 2011  
- February 3, 2012
LEARNING OUTCOMES:

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

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of mental health and mental illness in Canada.
2. Discuss and analyze issues related to culture, stigma, poverty and housing and develop an understanding of the importance of family, peer and other social supports in recovery from mental illness.
3. Explain the role of social work on interdisciplinary teams.
4. Provide examples of potential issues and discuss ethical guidelines for social work practice in mental health.
5. Articulate an understanding of issues related to child and youth mental illness and the Child and Youth Mental Health Service Delivery System.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the recovery model for mental health practice and relate the model to social work values.
7. Identify sources of information on evidence-based practice in mental health and apply to a case study.
8. Summarize the history and development of mental health policy in Canada.
9. Demonstrate a basic understanding of mental health law and issues related to involuntary admissions, consent to mental health treatment, duties to warn and protect and confidentiality.
10. Explain a framework for social work assessment and formulation within a cultural context and issues related to classification and diagnosis of mental health problems.
11. Demonstrate basic understanding of the impact of suicide on families and friends, risk assessment and ethical and legal issues with suicidal and self-harming clients, and evidence-based interventions.
12. Demonstrate a basic understanding of the nature and indicators of psychotic illnesses, mood disturbances, trauma responses, anxiety, substance abuse and personality disturbances and identify appropriate psychosocial interventions and application of the recovery model.
13. Articulate a basic knowledge of categories of psychiatric medications and their role in recovery.
14. Summarize and critique the continuum of care for mental illness in British Columbia such as hospitals, clinics, clubhouses, residential care, supportive housing, non-profit agencies, peer support and self-help groups.

METHODS:

Lectures, written assignments, class discussion, guest speakers, films/overheads.

METHODS OF OBTAINING PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT RECOGNITION (PLAR):

☒ Examination(s) ☒ Portfolio assessment ☒ Interview(s) ☐ Other (specify):

☐ PLAR cannot be awarded for this course for the following reason(s):

TEXTBOOKS, REFERENCES, MATERIALS: [Textbook selection varies by instructor. Examples for this course might be:]


Recommended Texts:


SUPPLIES / MATERIALS:

STUDENT EVALUATION: [An example of student evaluation for this course might be:]

Case Study 25%
Mid term 20%
Social Work Theory Paper and Application to Mental Health 30%
Final Exam 25%
COURSE CONTENT: [Course content varies by instructor. An example of course content might be:]

Week 1: Class introductions, review of course outline, expectations and assignments. Overview of the nature of mental health and mental illness in Canada.

Week 2: Social and economic determinants of health. Vulnerable populations and environmental stressors, Vulnerability and exposure to stressors perspective on mental illness. Person/Environment perspective on social conditions leading to problems in coping and mental illness leading to problems in social functioning. Issues related to medicalizing social problems.


Week 4: Social work assessment and formulation within a cultural context. Issues related to classification and diagnosis of mental health problems. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (multiaxial system and mental disorders).


Week 6: Mid-term exam

Week 7: Trauma and Traumatic grief. Continuum of distress and trauma response. Intersections of trauma and grief reactions. Evidence-based approaches to working with trauma and grief.

Week 8: Schizophrenia and related psychotic illnesses. Development of schizophrenia and neurobiological findings. Symptoms and challenges. Forms of psychotic illness. Evidence-based psychosocial interventions that promote recovery. Psychopharmacological interventions as a part of recovery.


Week 10: Child and youth mental illness. Mental issues related to other adults. Child and Youth Mental Health Delivery System. Importance of supportive families and supporting families.

Week 11: The Recovery Model for social work practice and social work values. Supporting families and collaborating with peer support and other programs such as, clubhouses and self-help groups.

Week 12: The role of social work on interdisciplinary teams. Potential issues and ethical guidelines. The continuum of care for mental illness in British Columbia.