Semester/Year: Summer 11-week 2021  
Course Title: Mental Health Policy and Social Justice  
Course Prefix/Number/Section: SOCW 5353 (formerly SOCW 6319)-005  
Instructor Name: Michael Bennett, MSW RSW  
Faculty Position: Assistant Professor of Practice  
Faculty Profile: https://mentis.uta.edu/explore/profile/michael-bennett  
Office Number:  
Phone Number: N/A  
Email Address: michael.bennett@uta.edu  
Office Hours: By Appointment Only  
Day and Time of Class (if applicable): Online  
Location: Online  
Equipment: A laptop computer with webcam (including a microphone) and wireless capability or equivalent is required for all SSW classes.  
Canvas: https://uta.instructure.com/  

A. Description of Course Content  
Studies programs and policies in the field of mental health. An analytical model is employed in the process of examining critical issues in the mental health arena. Prerequisite: SOCW 5303.  

B. Student Learning Outcomes  
The Council on Social Work Education requires that accredited social work programs follow the CSWE Educational Policy and Standards that comprises nine competencies as follows:  

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior  
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice  
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice  
4. Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice  
5. Engage in Policy Practice  
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities  
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities  
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities  
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities  

Specifically, while this course addresses competencies 2, 3, 4, and 8, the main focus is competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice.  

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
Advanced social workers in mental health/substance abuse can analyze, using cognitive processes, the relevant cultural, class, gender, race, age, disability, and other diversity issues that influence the prognosis and treatment of populations treated by mental health/substance abuse social workers.

**Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Advanced social workers in mental health/substance abuse use cognitive and affective processes to understand the range of physical and mental health/substance abuse disease course and recovery issues associated with social stigma and marginalization of persons with mental health/substance abuse diagnoses ad psychiatric disabilities, and incorporate them in their assessment and intervention.

Advanced social workers in mental health/substance abuse describe the distribution and determinants of mental health/substance abuse and identify health disparities.

**Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

Advanced social workers in mental health/substance abuse understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice.

**Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Advanced social workers in mental health/substance abuse understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation.

**Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Advanced social workers in mental health/substance abuse understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of interprofessional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may
require interdisciplinary, interprofessional, and inter-organizational collaboration.

C. Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials


Clinical Evidence and Best Practice e-databases: The developing evidentiary base on mental health interventions contained in the Central Library e-databases Clinical Evidence and Best Practice will serve as another set of required "texts" in this course.

D. Additional Recommended Textbooks and Other Course Materials


Mental Health Recovery Bibliography:


*Note: The Instructor may assign additional readings throughout the semester.*

E. Descriptions of Major Assignments and Examinations

*Note: Rubrics for all assignments are available on Canvas.*

1) Discussion Boards (10 points)

There will be a total of 10 discussion boards over the course of the semester. Please note:

- The Introduction Discussion Board Posting and the Final Reflection Discussion Board Posting are optional and for an extra 1 point.
- Some assignments also require a discussion post (Letter to Editor, Three Critical Issues, and Virtual Field Visit). These assignment requirements DO NOT count toward your 10 discussion board posts.
- Please respond to at least two classmates' postings.

Students will post short reflective comments on the discussion forum based on the weekly coursework. To help promote authentic and thoughtful response to the posted question, during designated weeks, you will not be able to view other student's original posts until you have posted your discussion response.

Discussion boards are intended to enhance the student’s ability to make use of their experience, as well as to glean from the experiences and understanding of others. Students are expected to explore and articulate their views and feelings regarding course material, professional experience and life experience as they relate to mental health policy and social justice. Discussion boards should be supported with course content (i.e. readings, videos, recorded lecture, or other supplemental information related to course and discussion topics). In your discussion boards, it is expected that students will go beyond just agreeing or repeating others’ posts by adding meaningful content to the conversation. Please bring together or synthesize others’ comments from the discussion. Students should also utilize professional conventions of communication (i.e. etiquette, grammar, and word usage). Discussion boards are due on Sundays by 11:59pm (see Course Schedule Below for specific due dates). Note: No late submissions will be accepted for discussion boards. Exceptions will be made in extraordinary circumstances and with proper documentation.

*Addresses competencies 1, 2, 3, 4.*
2) Letter to Legislator (5 points)

Students will write and send a letter to a Texas Senator or Representative in their district.

This will entail: a) a one-page letter regarding their position regarding an important piece of mental health legislation, b) a one-page fact sheet, and c) a page of references. Students will provide a copy of the documents, as well as a copy of the response letter sent by the politician. Students will: 1) turn in their letter, 2) post a summary/reflection in the online discussion on Canvas, and 3) respond to another classmate’s summary/reflection in the online discussion on Canvas by 11:59pm on Sunday, June 20th.

Addresses competencies 3, 5, and 8

3) Three Critical Issues Discussion Board Assignment (5 points)

Interview one person involved in the formal delivery of mental health services (phone or video calling). Elicit from them and list in rank order “the three most critical issues in mental health today.” Have them describe these issues in some detail. Students will post a summary of these three critical issues in the online discussion on Canvas and will respond to another classmate’s summary by 11:59pm on Sunday, June 27th.

Addresses competencies 2, 3, 5, and 8.

4) Mental Health Policy in the News (5 points)

Students are to look for a specific, current mental health policy issue in the news: TV, radio (NPR), newspaper, and/or the internet. Students will submit a one-page summary of their policy issue by 11:59pm on Sunday, July 4th.

- Students are encouraged to subscribe to Today’s Clips (UT Austin) by sending an email to: Hogg-Communications@austin.utexas.edu.
- Two other good resources for keeping informed about mental health policy are:
  - MHA/Mental Health America (fka National Mental Health Association): http://www1.nmha.org/newsroom/system/mhHeadline.main.cfm
  - NIMH/National Institute of Mental Health: http://www.nimh.nih.gov/tools/listserv.cfm

Addresses competencies 2, 3, 5 and 8.

5) Group Presentation on Selected Mental Health Research Report (15 points)

In groups of 3-4, submit a PowerPoint presentation with audio commentary on a major mental health study. This should include the following points:

1. Identification of the researcher’s/author’s credentials (e.g., position, education, experience).
2. Problem studied—why important?
3. Hypotheses of the study
4. Methodology
5. Findings
6. Conclusions—implications for policy and recovery-oriented practice in the mental health field
7. Critique of the study

One member of the group will upload their PowerPoint file to Canvas by 11:59pm on Sunday, July 18th.

Addresses competencies 4, 5 and 8.

6) Virtual Field Visit to Psychiatric Program or Facility (15 points)

Decide on a program or facility and make arrangements to conduct a virtual field visit (via Zoom). You may do this in pairs or small groups if the shelter/facility staff is so willing. You may need to sign a release form in
order to complete this virtual visit. Students will ask the facility staff for: 1) a summary of the mental health program/services the facility offers, 2) the main treatment modalities that are used by mental health staff, 3) the role of social work (if any) at the facility, and 4) the main social justice considerations of the job. Individually, write up a 2-page report summarizing the answers to these questions and your personal reflection on the experience, and share that experience with the class on a discussion board post by 11:59pm on Sunday, July 25th.

*Addresses competencies 2, 3, 5 and 8.*

7) Reaction Paper on Recovery-oriented Publication (10 points)

Students will write a two-page reaction paper to one of the peer-reviewed papers listed under "Mental Health Recovery Bibliography" listed under section "D. Additional Recommended Textbooks and Other Course Materials" in this syllabus. Students will submit this paper by 11:59pm on August 8th.

*Addresses competencies 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8.*

8) Final Paper on Mental Health Policy Analysis (35 points)

Select a state or federal mental health policy. Thoroughly study the policy and the issues involved with the policy, identifying its relevancy, relation with recovery-oriented perspective, and significance. Using APA guidelines, the Karger/Stoesz policy analysis model, and additional parameters provided by the professor, present and analyze the policy. The paper may be done in groups of up to four people.

Length: 8-10 pages, double-spaced. Minimum of eight references, six of which must be from professional journal articles. Due by 11:59pm on August 18th.

*Addresses competencies 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.*

F. Attendance

At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or engagement online via Canvas. This data is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

Information specific to modality and meeting times for this course are provided in the section below.

Since this is an online course it is critical that you are engaged with the material, the instructor, and your peers throughout the semester. Students are expected to log into the course at least once a week and maintain consistent and regular communication with their classmates and the instructor throughout the semester. Progress towards satisfactory completion of assignments, including participation in activities, discussion boards, and completion of readings is expected on a weekly basis.

G. Grading

Students are expected to keep track of their performance throughout the semester and seek guidance from available sources (including the instructor) if their performance drops below satisfactory levels; see “Student
Support Services,” below.

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H. Make-Up Exams

Late written assignments will be reduced by 3% each day they are late for up to three days. After the third day, the assignment will be graded a zero. If you require an extension, you must speak to me and arrange for it prior to the day the assignment is due. This request must be supported with documentation. Exceptions to these late policies will be made in extraordinary circumstances and with proper documentation.

I. Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Class Content</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mental Health Consumer Movement Meeting the Needs of Veterans Psychiatric Epidemiology</td>
<td>R&amp;R Chapters 3, 4 Mechanic Chapters 3, 4</td>
<td>Letter to Legislator (due June 20th by 11:59pm) Online Discussion Posting #2 (due June 20th by 11:59pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Approaches to Policymaking and Analysis Community Mental Health Across the Life Cycle-Children, Families and Older Adults Illness Behavior and Entrance into Treatment</td>
<td>Karger &amp; Stoesz, pp. 31-37 chapter 2: Policy Analysis Model R&amp;R Chapters 6, 7, 8 Mechanic Chapter 6</td>
<td>Three Critical Issues Discussion Board (due June 27th by 11:59pm) Online Discussion Posting #3 (due June 27th by 11:59pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mental Health &amp; Mental Health Professions Controlling Mental Illness Mental Health Interventions</td>
<td>Mechanic, Chapters 5, 9, 10</td>
<td>MH Policy In the News paper (due July 4th by 11:59pm) Online Discussion Posting #4 (due July 4th by 11:59pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Financing &amp; Delivery of Mental Health Services Development of Mental Health Policy</td>
<td>Mechanic Chapter 7</td>
<td>Online Discussion Posting #5 (due July 11th by 11:59pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading Assignment</td>
<td>Presentations/Assignments</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Manged Mental Health Care</td>
<td>Mechanic Chapter <strong>8</strong> The Provision of Mental Health Services in Managed Care Orgs. (DHHS Report)</td>
<td>Presentations on MH Policy Research Report (due July 18th by 11:59pm) Online Discussion Posting #6 (due July 18th by 11:59pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Court Diversion Programs &amp; Prosecution of People with Mental Illness</td>
<td>R&amp;R Chapter <strong>5</strong> R&amp;R Chapters <strong>9 - 12</strong></td>
<td>Field Visit to Psych Program/Facility Paper (due July 25th by 11:59pm) Online Discussion Posting #7 (due July 25th by 11:59pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Co-occurring MH and SUDs Neuropsychiatric perspectives</td>
<td>R &amp; R Chapters <strong>13 &amp; 14</strong></td>
<td>Online Discussion Posting #8 (due August 1st by 11:59pm) Online Discussion Posting #9 (due August 1st by 11:59pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Assertive Community Treatment Mental Illness and Homelessness</td>
<td>R &amp; R Chapters <strong>15 &amp; 16</strong></td>
<td>Reaction Paper on Recovery-Oriented Publications (due August 8th by 11:59pm) Online Discussion Posting #10 (due August 8th by 11:59pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Wrap up- DSM 5 &amp; The Future of Mental Health</td>
<td>No required readings. Additional lectures and resources available under Course Materials &gt; Resources</td>
<td>EC: Reflections Discussion Board Posting (due August 15th by 11:59pm) Final Paper (due August 18th by 11:59pm)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course.

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**J. Expectations for Out-of-Class Study**

Beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional three hours (for each hour of class or lecture per week) of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing for assignments and exams, and reviewing online content, etc.

**K. Librarian to Contact**
The Social Sciences/Social Work Resource Librarian is Brooke Troutman. Her office is in the campus Central Library. She may also be contacted via E-mail: brooke.troutman@uta.edu or by phone: (817)272-5352.

The following is a list of commonly used library resources:

- Library Home Page
- Library Services
- Subject Guides
- Subject Librarians
- Course Reserves
- Library Tutorials
- Connecting from Off-Campus
- Ask a Librarian

L. Grade Grievances

For more information on the grade grievance process please see the BSW Program Manual or the MSW Program Manual. Grade grievance can be submitted through the BSW Grade Grievance form or the MSW Grade Grievance form located on the Forms and Resources website.

M. Institutional Policies

UTA students are encouraged to review these institutional policies and informational sections and reach out to the specific office with any questions. The following policies can be found on the UTA Syllabus Institutional Policies page:

- Drop Policy
- Observance of Religious Holy Days
- Disability Accommodations
- Non-Discrimination Policy
- Title IX Policy
- Academic Integrity
- Electronic Communication
- Campus Carry
- Final Review Week
- Student Feedback Survey
- Active Shooter
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Student Support Services

N. Mandatory Face Covering Policy

All students and instructional staff are required to wear facial coverings while they are on campus, inside buildings, and in classrooms. Students that fail to comply with the facial covering requirement will be asked to leave the class session. If students need masks, they may obtain them at the Central Library, the E.H. Hereford University Center's front desk, or in their department. Students who refuse to wear a facial covering in class will be asked to leave the session by the instructor, and, if the student refuses to leave, they may be reported to UTA's Office of Student Conduct.