SOCIAL WORK PERSPECTIVES ON HIV/AIDS
RUTGER’S UNIVERSITY

Instructor:
Telephone:
E-mail:
Office Hours:

Catalog Course Description

This course is designed to examine the field of HIV/AIDS and will acquaint students with the basic and most advanced facts about HIV/AIDS. It will take different approaches of the impact of HIV infection and AIDS on the individual, family, society, and institutions that provide care and will sensitize students to the challenges that HIV/AIDS has generated in public health, social policy, and social service delivery. Social work students will have an opportunity to explore their own beliefs, values and approaches to the issues regarding HIV/AIDS, in addition to the cultural, political, social, legal, ethical, spiritual, and public health issues and the perspectives of people living with HIV infection and AIDS that are needed to inform practice and policy.

Course Overview

HIV/AIDS is a modern pandemic with far-reaching ramifications of a historical, biomedical, public health, psychosocial, cultural, legal, ethical, spiritual, political and economic nature which is likely to profoundly affect the context in which social work is practiced. The discrimination and stigma still associated with the illness is present in every systemic context. Social Workers need to be prepared to encounter clients with HIV at some point in his or her career.

This course is a response to this undeniable situation. Its' rationale is to provide students the opportunity to examine the ramifications of this pandemic from the profession's commitment to the core values of human dignity, social justice, cultural diversity and self-determination. Furthermore, there will be an increasing need for social workers, and their particular expertise in providing psychological and environmental support as well as the linkage and advocacy inherent in case management. Social workers should aim for looking at the bio-psycho-social perspective on HIV/AIDS including the cultural, organizational and community dimensions of HIV disease primarily in the United States with a class spent on HIV/AIDS in developing countries. This course will attempt to serve as an introduction to the nature and impact of this disease for students who may be considering such professional commitment. Students will learn to analyze the
differential impact that HIV disease has on various cultural and ethnic groups as well as individual, family and policy issues in order to understand the interrelatedness of personal, clinical, community and environmental concerns.

**Place of Course in Program**

This is an elective open to all M.S.W. students

**Course Objectives**

1. To provide a historical, medical, social and ethical understanding of the evolution of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

2. To help students develop greater understanding of the transmission and epidemiology of HIV infection, the differential exposure among different groups and strategies for prevention and treatment at the micro and macro levels.

3. To explore salient psychosocial dynamics, such as continuing behaviors which put one at risk; stigmatization, blaming the victim, the impact of the stages of illness on the HIV-positive person and his/her significant others; and the impact of a terminal illness.

4. To explore the impact of poverty, racism, sexism, classism, homophobia and fears of addicts on the societal response to HIV/AIDS.

5. To understand the significance of ethical, program, services, legal and spiritual issues related to HIV/AIDS.

6. To appreciate the significance of ethnic and cultural diversity in relation to HIV/AIDS.

7. To understand the needs of particular populations such as gay, transgender, and bisexual individuals, women, hemophiliacs, children, substance users, and adolescents and the different ethnic groups most affected by HIV/AIDS.

8. To teach requisite skills for social work practice and programmatic interventions with people living with HIV and their significant others.

**Academic Integrity Policy**

All work submitted in a graduate course must be your own.
It is unethical and a violation of the University’s Academic Integrity Policy to present the ideas or words of another without clearly and fully identifying the source. Inadequate citations will be construed as an attempt to misrepresent the cited material as your own. Use the citation style preferred by the discipline.

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgement is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one’s own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: “to paraphrase Plato's comment…” and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one’s general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any question about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.

Plagiarism along with any and all other violations of academic integrity by graduate and professional students will normally be penalized more severely than violations by first-year undergraduate students. Since all violations of academic integrity by a graduate or professional student are potentially separable under the Academic Integrity Policy, faculty members should not adjudicate alleged academic integrity violations by graduate and professional students, but should refer such allegations to the appropriate Academic Integrity Facilitator (AIF) or to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The AIF that you should contact is Antoinette Y. Farmer, 732.932.2621. The student shall be notified in writing, by email or hand delivery, of the alleged violation and of the fact that the matter has been referred to the AIF for adjudication. This notification shall be done within 10 days of identifying the alleged violation. Once the student has been notified of the allegation, the student may not drop the course or withdraw from the school until the adjudication process is complete. A TZ or incomplete grade shall be assigned until the case is resolved. For more information regarding the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures, see: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml

Disability Accommodation
Please Note: Any student who believes that s/he may need an accommodation in this class due to a disability should contact the designated Coordinator for the Concerns of Students with Disabilities at the School of Social Work, Gregory Moorehead, (dgreg@rci.rutgers.edu or (732) 932-2848) for a letter of accommodation. Students must have a letter of accommodation from the Coordinator in order to receive accommodations. Any student who has already received a letter of accommodation, should contact the instructor privately to discuss implementation of his/her accommodations immediately. Failure to discuss implementation of accommodations with the instructor promptly may result in denial of your accommodations.

Required Texts


Course Requirements

The course will be taught as a seminar with active participation of the students. Small group discussion and videos will be utilized in addition to lectures.

Attendance Requirements:

It is expected that students will attend all class sessions having read assigned materials and fully prepared for discussion and assigned activities. In order for a student to be considered present for class, the student must attend all of the classes. Students who leave during the break will be marked as absent for that class. Appropriate absences (e.g., religious holidays) are allowed with prior permission from the instructor. Consistent lateness to class will also result in being marked absent.

The use of cell phones (including text messaging), blackberries, PDAs, or any similar type of electronic device is not permitted in class. Students will turn off all electronic devices prior to class. If there is an emergency and student must leave cell phone on, he/she will turn it to vibrate and attend to the call in the hallway so that the class will not be disrupted.
**Course assignments:**

All assignments are to be completed by scheduled due dates. Late assignment will **not** be accepted, unless the student has made arrangements with the professor prior to the assignment’s due date. The professor reserves the right to reduce the letter grade for any late assignment. If a due date conflicts with a religious observance, please consult with the professor prior to the assignment’s due date. All written assignments must be typed and adhere to APA format.

**ASSIGNMENT #1 - Reflection/Reaction Paper (DUE DATE: FEB. 10, 2009)**

**ASSIGNMENT #2 – Reflection/Reaction Paper (DUE DATE: MARCH 10, 2009)**

You will write 2 short papers (2-3 pages) throughout the semester, which consists of your reactions to readings, class discussion and your own personal and professional experiences both past and present. The purpose is to help you to integrate theory and knowledge about HIV/AIDS by encouraging you to articulate the connections between theories and research concerning HIV/AIDS with your own personal and practical experiences.

You may choose 2 topics from any of the 4 topics areas listed below.

1. **Critical analysis of assigned readings.** Do not summarize the readings. Instead discuss your intellectual and emotional reactions to what you have read.

2. **Critical reaction to class lectures, discussions, presentations, exercises and tapes.** Again do not summarize. Instead, discuss and react to those issues in class that interest or excite you or with which you have some disagreement.

3. **Implications you draw from readings and class discussion for social work practice and policy.** Discuss what difference you think the readings and class material make in social work practice.

4. **Examples from your field placement and life experience (yours or those of your friends or relatives).** Examples should illustrate how the reading or class discussion increases your understanding of a particular practice situation and/or connects to a life experience or raises further questions for you.
ASSIGNMENT #3 – Final Paper Outline (DUE DATE: March 3, 2009)

The final paper will be a synthesis of the literature and policy or practice recommendations with a group of interest and a topic of interest (i.e. HIV-positive mothers and disclosure).

The outline should include the following:
1. A brief description (1-2 paragraphs) of the topic that includes a short review of some of the relevant literature.
2. Submission of three (3) academic references that you have already identified in the topic area. These articles should be a juried/peer-reviewed journal.
3. A skeleton of the paper (can be bulleted)

ASSIGNMENT #4: Final Paper (Due April 28, 2009)
The final paper will be a synthesis of the literature and policy or practice recommendations with a group of interest and a topic of interest (i.e. HIV-positive mothers and disclosure. The final paper will be 8-10 pages with references from in class readings and other peer-reviewed publications. The paper will:
1. describe the problem (severity, importance, why do we care?, etc)
2. discuss the prevalence/epidemiology of HIV in the group you have chosen
3. discuss the topic of interest
4. describe how the group and topic have been studied
5. provide recommendations for practice and/or policy).

Grading

The Reflection/Reaction Papers will EACH count for 25% toward the final grade. Grading will be done based on the student's ability to plan and organize the paper around their topic. The written statement should be clear and compelling. The literature chosen should have direct value to plan for the class.

The Class Outline will count 15% toward the final grade. Grading will be done based on the student's ability to plan and organize the paper around their topic. The written statement should be clear and compelling. The literature chosen should have direct value to plan for the class.

The Final Paper will count for 40% of your grade. Grading will be done based on: a) clarity in the statement of the problem; b) a coherent review of the literature c) a clear statement of the changes you would advocate for to ameliorate the problem.

Class participation will count for 20% toward the final grade. Class participation will be evaluated in terms of attendance, critical thinking, willingness to risk, and integration of theory and practice.
Course Evaluation

Rutgers University issues a survey that evaluates both the course and the instructor. This survey is completed by students toward the end of the semester, and all answers are confidential and anonymous. The instructor may also choose to conduct a mid-point evaluation.

Course Outline

Classes will be organized in groups, with similar themes in each group. The flow of the class will be based upon decisions made by the students and teacher. Due to the changing nature of HIV/AIDS, other assigned reading materials will be distributed in class.

Class # 1 - Introduction to the Course (January 20, 2009)

- Class Overview/Syllabus
- Introductions
- Why taking this course

Readings:

Class # 2 - Overview of HIV/AIDS (January 27, 2009)

- History of the epidemic in the U.S.
- Incidence/prevalence
- Challenges to the Social Work profession
- Provisions for HIV+ person (the Ryan White Act, ADA, Medicaid, housing)

Required Readings:


Class # 3 - HIV/AIDS in Developing Countries (February 3, 2009)

- Impact of HIV/AIDS on different regions of the world
- Differences in incidence, treatment and prevention within countries

**part of film in class – Pandemic AIDS***

*Required Readings:*


Class # 4 – Stigma (February 10, 2009)

- Fear
- Inclusion/Exclusion
- Danger
- Medications

**part of film in class – Damaged Goods***

*Required Readings:*


ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE

Class # 5 – Disclosure (February 17, 2009)

- Context of disclosure: Psychological and societal issues
- Cultural issues
- Disclosure to family/children
- Disclosure of child’s HIV status

Required Readings:


Class #6 - Issues of Culture and Cultural Competence (February 24, 2009)

- Communities of Color
- Cultural factors

Required Readings:


Class # 7: Women and HIV (March 3, 2009)

- What makes women more vulnerable?
- Partner violence
- Power inequality

Required Readings:


Class # 8: Men and HIV (March 10, 2009)

- Gay men, transsexuals
- Men issues

Required Readings:


Assignment #2 Due

Spring Break (March 17, 2009)

Class # 9 - Children, Adolescents and Families (March 24, 2009)

- Child abuse and HIV
- Adolescents
- Support Groups
- Working with families
**Required Readings:**


**ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE**

**Class #10 - Intervention Models of Prevention (March 31, 2009)**
- Risk Behavior Assessment
- Prevention with positives: group level interventions & Individual level interventions
- Intervention Models: post-exposure interventions: Medications, barrier methods, safer sex, HIV Risk reductions theoretical models)
- Prevention Case management

**Required Readings:**


Group Level, Individual level Interventions and prevention case management
Can be accesses at the CDC website:
[http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/prev_prog/AHP/resources/guidelines/Interim_Interventions.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/prev_prog/AHP/resources/guidelines/Interim_Interventions.htm)

**Class #11 - HIV Prevention (continued) (April 7, 2009)**
- HIV Prevention Models (see website for each of them)
- Video tape presentation: group level intervention (voices)- Note if you call CDC they can send you several tapes of the current intervention demonstrations
- Community Level interventions
Readings:
Compendium of HIV prevention intervention with evidence of effectiveness Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/projects/rep/compend.htm

Descriptions of interventions currently used by CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) available at: http://effectiveinterventions.org/


Class #12 - Death & Dying, Grief and Bereavement, spirituality, Life and Living (April 14, 2009)
- Issues in death and dying
- AIDS as a terminal illness
- Bereavement support groups
- Spirituality issues with people with HIV

Required Readings:


Class #13 - Ethical, legal, and practice issues (April 21, 2009)

Required Readings:


Class #14 - The Experience of being a professional caregiver (April 28, 2009)
- Challenges
- Practice issues
- Survivors
Required Readings:

FINAL PAPER DUE
Class #15 – Presentations and Wrap up (To be decided by instructor) (May 5, 2009)