I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to broaden and deepen participants’ understanding of trauma theory and practice, expanding practice knowledge to include the treatment and assessment of survivors of multiple forms of trauma. We will review different types of trauma to understand the impact of trauma symptoms and disorders, providing appropriate trauma informed evidence-based and evidence-supported intervention strategies. An emphasis will be placed on the emotional/behavioral manifestations of trauma as well as the physiological effects of trauma within the body. Topics covered in this course include a global and historical overview in understanding trauma and exploration of the various types of trauma including: war trauma, natural disasters, domestic violence, sexual and physical abuse, experiences of refugees, and organizational trauma. We will explore conditions that contribute to the development of complex trauma, acute stress disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, personality disorders associated with trauma, and dissociative disorders. Students will consider issues impacting those who work with trauma survivors, such as vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burn-out, exploring approaches to self-care and promotion of wellness. This is an advanced clinical course. Through case presentations, written work, and class discussions students are encouraged to use their experiences in the field to deepen their understanding of the material covered in the course.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES
This course is intended to develop the clinical skills and theoretical knowledge of advanced social work students who work with survivors of trauma. Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to apply core social work values to case material and readings. Trauma will be viewed from the perspective of its effect on the individual, while seeking to understand the structural phenomena that perpetuate cycles of trauma in our society such as race, gender, gender identity, age, immigration status and poverty. Students will develop their critical thinking through the readings and case presentations.

Upon completion of this course students are expected to have:

- An understanding of different types of trauma and posttraumatic aftereffects
- The ability to critically comprehend trauma theory to guide assessment and intervention for treating trauma survivors
- A thorough understanding of the cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, mindfulness, and other evidence-based and evidence-supported interventions for the treatment of trauma.
- Comprehensive psychosocial assessment for trauma histories, risk, and resiliencies
- An awareness of secondary trauma and risks associated in treating survivors of trauma.
- An ability to develop strategies for preventative self-care
- An appreciation for how social work value and practice wisdom are integrated into clinical work with the survivors of trauma

**III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING POLICY**

**Expectations:**
Students are expected to be active participants in their own learning. Students are expected to attend each class, arrive on time to class, and be in attendance for the full class. If you are unable to attend class for any reason, please notify the instructor and propose how you will make up the content you have missed. **Excessive absenteeism (i.e., missing more than two classes) is a grave issue that the instructor will handle by meeting with the students and determining whether the student’s educational adviser should be notified. Excessive absenteeism could result in course failure.**

Students are expected to:
(A) Participate substantively in class discussions
(B) Read on a weekly basis and come to class prepared to discuss the reading assignments
(C) Submit assignments by the due date in accordance with the specified format.

**Grading Distribution:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance, participation and preparedness</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective essays</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IV. ASSIGNMENTS**

**A. Reflective Essays (Due Weeks 5, 8 & 11):**

Students will prepare three reflective essays, completed by the end of the day of classes 5, 8, & 11. These essays will be no longer than 1 to 2 double-spaced pages. They are to be submitted electronically to the instructor and she will reply in the same manner. The essays are confidential and will only be read by the instructor. The essays will include:

1. **Essay 1: Due February 8th, 2018** - Reaction to class discussions and/or case presentations that is relevant to stress/trauma related situations in your professional and/or personal life.

2. **Essay 2: Due March 1st, 2018** - Critical reaction to at least one of the required readings from previous classes that was useful in understanding and/or coping with the situation utilized in your first reflective paper.

3. **Essay 3: Due March 29th, 2018** - Select a preferred intervention strategy that you would feel comfortable utilizing in treating survivors of trauma. Be specific about why you have selected this approach and why this strategy resonates with you by reviewing the central constructs and assumptions of the treatment intervention you select.

Note: These essays are intended to help you become more aware of your personal preferences, values, beliefs, assumptions, and to develop critical analysis skills when reading theory & practice literature. Additionally, these essays seek to integrate class readings, lectures, and discussions into your social work practice.

**Format for Written Assignment:**

All papers must be typewritten, in 12-point font, double-spaced, page-numbered, with 1” margins at the left, right, top and bottom. The cover page (not included in the page limit) should include the title of the paper, student’s name, professor’s name and date.
submitted. **Papers must be proofread carefully** for clarity, organization, spelling, punctuation, and other potential errors before submission.

**In-text citations following APA style guidelines are required** for all written assignments, with the specific source including authors’ last names and year of publication, regardless of whether you are paraphrasing or using specific quotes. Direct quotes must have the specific source as above but with page number(s). **A list of references cited or consulted must be included at the end of each paper in proper APA bibliographic form.**

**B. CASE PRESENTATION:**

Case presentations provide students with experience in organizing their thoughts and questions about their clinical work. Additionally, students will benefit from hearing about the clinical work of fellow students, discussing it, and learning how to comment on each other’s clinical work in a thoughtful and supportive manner. Presenting and commenting on cases helps to prepare students to identify the kind of help they need in their clinical practice and how to assist colleagues when faced with clinical dilemmas.

Students will choose a case from their field placement or past clinical experience and will present it from the perspective of trauma theory and treatment. Following the first class, students will be randomly assigned a day where they are required to present their case.

**Case Formulation for Case Presentation:**

On the Wednesday (by 12pm) prior to the presentation, presenters will post on Canvas the following information, being VERY careful to protect confidentiality:

- Agency setting – type of agency, **not the exact name of the agency**
- Identifying data, making sure to use pseudonyms
- Presenting problem including referral source and precipitant for seeking help
- Pertinent history
- A succinct case formulation and whether the presenters consider the client’s trauma to fit the DSM diagnosis of PTSD or whether the client may be suffering from complex trauma

**Oral Presentation:**

The oral case presentation will address the following four questions:

1) What has worked well in your treatment of your client?
2) What is not working well?
3) What are you learning from your client?
4) What do you need help with?

The presenter will pose these as a vehicle for constructive feedback on their case presentation.
All members of the class are required to read the written case summary prior to the oral presentation, so it will not be necessary to review that information during class time. Each presentation is limited to 25 minutes. During the first 10 minutes, the student whose case is the focus of the presentation will give a very brief summary of the background information and then address the above four questions. During the remaining 15 minutes, discussion will be open to the whole class.

Please note: If you are having difficulty coming up with a case for your case presentation please speak to the professor. A case does not necessarily have to be a client. You can write and present about an organization you have been part of or a traumatic situation you have experienced. If you are not planning to write about a client, please discuss your topic idea with the professor.

*Confidentiality Statement:* In all instances when case material is discussed, omit clients’ names and disguise all other pertinent identifying data so as to protect client confidentiality.

C. Final Exam

The final exam will be a combination of multiple choice and essay questions based on the material we cover in class throughout the semester. It will be administered on paper during the final class period on April 19th, 2018 and will be closed book.

**STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are expected to conduct themselves consistent with the University of Pennsylvania’s Code of Academic Integrity, which represents standards regarding plagiarism, multiple submissions and other actions. Students are expected to be familiar with the Code, which can be found at:

http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai_codeofacademicintegrity.html

V. Readings & Schedule of Class Topics

**Required Text**


*Please note that required readings will be found on Canvas in the designated module for the week.

**Suggested Texts:**


**Session 1: January 11th, 2018:**
**Beginning to Understand PTSD and Complex Trauma**

Required readings:

Herman, J.L. (1992). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence from domestic to political terror*. New York: Basic Books. **Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 33-74.**


**Session 2: January 18th, 2018:**
**Overview of Current Thinking About Trauma**

Required readings:


**Suggested Reading:**


**Session 3: January 25th, 2018**

**Historical Overview of the Study of Trauma: Looking at Macro Issues**

**Required Readings:**


**Suggested Reading:**


**Session 4: February 1st, 2018**

**The Neurobiology of Trauma**

**Required Readings:**


**Session 5: February 8th, 2018**

Treatment Approaches: Part I

*REFLECTIVE ESSAY # 1 DUE*

**Required Readings:**


**Suggested Reading:**


**Session 6: February 15th, 2018**

Treatment Approaches (continued)


Suggested reading:


Session 7: February 22nd, 2018
Natural Disasters, Mass Violence and Shared Trauma

Required Readings:


Session 8: March 1st, 2018
Vicarious Trauma, Therapist Self-Care

*REFLECTIVE ESSAY # 2 DUE

Required Readings:


** SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS 3/8/18 **

**Session 9: March 15th, 2018**

**Childhood Sexual Abuse, Domestic Violence, Rape**

**Required Reading:**

Listen to: This American life: Anatomy of Doubt


**Suggested reading:**


**Session 10: March 22nd, 2018**

**Trauma and Refugees**
Required Readings:


Suggested Reading:


Session 11: March 29th, 2018

The Trauma of War

*REFLECTIVE ESSAY # 3 DUE

Required Readings:


Suggested Reading:


Session 12: April 5th, 2018
Historical Trauma/Cultural Considerations

Required readings:


Suggested Reading:


Session 13: April 12th, 2018
The Politics of Trauma: Organizational Trauma and the Sanctuary Model

Required readings:


Suggested reading:


Session 14: April 19th, 2018
The Future of Trauma Research

Required Reading:


Note: This syllabus is meant as a guide. Additional readings and exercises may be assigned as learning needs arise.

Acknowledgments: Thanks to Jane Abrams, Andrea Doyle, and Jim Martin for allowing me to adapt their syllabi.