Course Syllabus

University of Pennsylvania

School of Policy & Practice

Clinical Theory II

SWRK 813

Spring 2016

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to develop participants' capacities to deconstruct and critique theories through the understanding of underlying assumptions—particularly Western European assumptions—that underpin not only those theories but also current social work principles, practices and policies. In order to do this we will explore the political, economic, historical and cultural contexts of those assumptions. A multidisciplinary approach to examining theories and practice principles must take into account Western reliance on certain key premises, principally a historical attachment to individualism and scientism. A few anchoring frameworks, among them social constructionism and feminism, will aid us in examining ideas about the self, power and empowerment, the medicalization of human problems, the influence of contemporary therapeutic culture, and ideas about trauma and human suffering. A grounding in the principles of intersectionality will be critical for judging the comprehensiveness of social workers' understanding of diversity. Course readings will be interdisciplinary in scope, drawing from psychology, anthropology, and sociology as well as social work.

Course Objectives

Class discussions, readings, in-class exercises and written assignments will enable participants to demonstrate their ability to:

1. Contextualize theories and assumptions historically, politically, economically and socioculturally in terms of their implications for social work's justice mission;

2. Understand cultural biases implicit in theories that inform social work practice;

3. Evaluate individual pieces of research in light of their assumptions, both ideological and practical.

4. Achieve familiarity with critical social work and critical psychology perspectives;

5. Apply critical approaches to research and practical problems in the field.

Assignments

1. *__Discussion Leadership__*. Pairs of students will create three (3) discussion questions based on the required reading for the week, to be sent to all members of the class and the instructor no later than the end of the workday on the Monday before the relevant class. These students will lead class discussion of these questions. Discussion leaders may ask the class to apply ideas from the readings to larger cultural questions, to research, or to social work as a field.

2. ___Paper Proposal___. A proposal of no more than **4 pages maximum**, double-spaced, **excluding references**, on one of the two topics outlined below. The proposal should describe your topic as well as a plan for its development and a list of possible references you will consult. This proposal is ***due on session 5***.

3. ___Term paper___

Option 1

Select a research or theoretical article (or a chapter in an edited book) in social work or psychology and, using both class readings and readings from outside class, perform a critical analysis of it with respect to the questions below, as they apply [*this list is not ordered in a sequence, and is meant only to offer examples. It is not exhaustive, and some questions may not apply to your selection*].

If you select this option, you must send a pdf of your chosen article along with your paper.

1. On what theory or theories does the author depend? Is the use of theory well explained and effective in making/advancing the argument(s) presented? Are there other theories that might have been usefully employed?

1. What elements of Western ideology are prominent in the piece? Can its core ideas be applied in non-Western contexts?

1. How broadly contextual is the framing of its argument (i.e., how far toward the "macro" does it extend?)?

1. Does the author make use of an intersectional framework? If so, in what way(s)? If not, how would the research benefit from such a framework?

1. How does article address power, either implicitly or explicitly?

1. If applicable, what ideas about health, illness and/or suffering are conveyed?

1. What ideas, implicit or explicit, does it hold about difference?

1. Does the author speak to potential critiques, debates, or theoretical positions in that oppose those put forward in the piece you have selected?

1. Are the ideas presented useful to social work? If so, are they narrowly or broadly applicable? If not, why not?

Option 2

Select a topic pertaining to the field that you would like to examine critically and consider how it is currently studied and written about. Find relevant theoretical work and/or research that will help you to tackle the topic through the critical perspectives we are employing this semester.

Readings

Required texts :

Fook, J. (2012). *Social work: A critical approach to practice.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Becker, D. (2013). *One nation under stress: The trouble with stress as an idea.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Introduction: Doing Social Work Critically

Session 1

Herz, M. & Johansson, T. (2012). 'Doing' social work: Critical considerations on theory and practice in social work. *Advances in Social Work*, *13* (3), 527-540.

Fook, Chapter 1: "The critical tradition of social work."

Sloan, T. (2009). Doing theory. In D. Fox, I. Prilleltensky, & S. Austin (Eds.), *Critical psychology: An introduction* (2nd ed.), 319-335.

Gentle-Genitty, C. S. et al. (2007). A critical review of theory in social work journals: A replication study. *Advances in Social Work*, 8 (1), 62-80.

Adams, P. J., & Buetow, S. (2014). The place of theory in assembling the central argument for a thesis or dissertation. *Theory & Psychology*, *24* (1), 93–110.

Optional:

Houston, S. (2001). Beyond social constructionism: Critical realism and social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, *31* (6), 845-861.

Session 2

Fook, Chapter 2: "Current contexts of practice.

        Chapter 3: "New ways of knowing."

Mattson, T. (2014). Intersectionality as a useful tool: Anti-oppressive social work and critical reflection. *Affilia*, *29* (1) 8-17.

Illich, I. (1978/2005). Disabling professions. In I. Illich, *Disabling professions* (pp. 11-39). New York: Marion Boyers.

Optional:

Parton, N. (2003). Rethinking "professional" practice: The contributions of social constructionism and the feminist 'ethics of care.' *British Journal of Social Work* (1), 1-16.

Individualism and the Problem of the Self

Session 3

Becker, D. (2005). In the self's country. In D. Becker, *The myth of empowerment: Women and the therapeutic culture in America* (pp. 17-35). New York: NYU Press.

Rose, N. (1998). How should one do the history of the self? In N. Rose, *Inventing ourselves: Psychology, power, and personhood* (pp. 22-40).

Furedi, F. (2004). The self at risk. In F. Furedi, *Therapy Culture: Cultivating vulnerability in an uncertain age* (pp.106-126). New York: Routledge.

    Exercise for in-class discussion:

    Becker, D., & Marecek, J. (2008). Positive psychology: History in the remaking. *Theory &*

        Psychology, 18(5), 591-604. [*As you read this article, consider how content and*

        methods are used to achieve a critique of theory.]

Optional:

        Baumeister, R. F. (1987). How the self became a problem: A psychological review of historical

        research. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *52* (1), 163-176.

Session 4

Kleinman, A., & Fitz-Henry, E. (2007). The experiential basis of subjectivity: How individuals change in the context of societal transformation. In J. Biehl, B. Good, & A. Kleinman (Eds.), *Subjectivity: Ethnographic investigations* (pp. 52-65). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rose, N. (2013). Personhood in a neurobiological age. In N. Rose, & J. M. Abi-Rached, *Neuro: The new brain sciences and the management of the* mind (pp. 199-224). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Becker, *One nation under stress*, Chapter 2: Getting and spending: The wear and tear of modern life.

Exercise for in-class discussion:

Scarborough, M. K., Lewis, C. M. (2010). Enhancing adolescent brain development through goal-setting activities. *Social Work, 53* (3), 275-278. [*Use the questions given for option 1 of the term paper as a guide for critically analyzing this short article*.]

Scientism, Healthism, and Medicalization

Session 5

Rosenberg, C. (2007). Contested boundaries: Psychiatry, disease, and diagnosis. In C. Rosenberg, *Our present complaint: American medicine, then and now* (38-59). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Conrad, P. (2007). Medicalization. In P. Conrad, *The medicalization of society* (pp. 3-19). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press.

Greenhaigh, T., & Wessely, S. (2004). 'Health for me': A sociocultural analysis of healthism in the middle classes. *British Medical Bulletin*, *69*, 197-213.

Becker, *One nation under stress*, Chapter 3: Stress and the biopolitics of American society.

Optional:

Sweet, P. L. (2015). Chronic victims, risky women: Domestic violence advocacy and the medicalization of abuse. *Signs, 41* (1), 81-106.

Hitchens, K., & Becker, D. (2014). Social work and the DSM: A qualitative examination of opinions. *Social Work in Mental Health*, *12* (4), 303-329.

Ussher, J. M. (2013). Diagnosing difficult women and pathologising femininity: Gender bias in psychiatric nosology, Feminism & Psychology, 23 (1), 63-69.

Anastas, J. W. (2012). From scientism to science: How contemporary epistemology can inform practice research. *Clinical Social Work, 40*, 157-165.

Doing Difference, Doing Power

Session 6

Cole, E. (2009). Intersectionality and research in psychology. *American Psychologist*, 64 (3), 170-180.

Hines, S. (2010). Sexing gender; gendering sex: Towards an intersectional analysis of transgender. In Y. Taylor, S. Hines, & M. E. Casey (Eds.), *Theorizing intersectionality and sexuality* (pp. 140-162). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Davis, K. (2008). Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful. *Feminist Theory, 9* (1), 67-85.

Badwall, H. (2014). Colonial encounters: Racialized social workers negotiating professional scripts of whiteness. *Intersectionalities, 3*, 1-23.

Optional:

Viruell-Fuentes, E. A., Miranda, P. Y., & Abdulrahim, S. (2012). More than culture: Structural racism, intersectionality theory, and immigrant health. *Social Science & Medicine, 75*, 2009-2106.

Carastathis, A. (2014). The concept of intersectionality in feminist theory. *Philosophy Compass*, *9* (5), 304–314.

Session 7

Fook, Chapter 4:   "Power."

Cameron, D. (2007). In D. Cameron, *The myth of Mars and Venus* (pp. 100-121). New York: Oxford University Press.

Salter, P., & Adams, G. 2013). Toward a critical race psychology. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *7* (11), 781–793.

Christopher, J. C., Wendt, D. C., Marecek, J., & Goodman, D. M. (2014). Critical cultural awareness: Contributions to a globalizing psychology. *American Psychologist, 69* (7), 645-655.

Exercise for in-class discussion:

Shafter, K., & Pace, G. T. (2015). Gender differences in depression across parental roles. *Social Work*, *60* (2), 115-125. [*Critically analyze this article, focusing mainly on how the authors conceptualize difference and the purposes that they believe their conclusions will serve*.]

Session 8

Fook, Chapter 5:   "Discourse, language, and Narrative."

Fook, Chapter 6:   "Identity and difference."

Guilfoyle, M. (2008). CBT's integration into societal networks of power. *European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling, 10* (3), 197-205.

Shields, S. (2013). Gender and emotion: what we think we know, what we need to know, and why it matters. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 37(4), 423-435.

Murdach, A. D. (2011). Commentary: What happened to self-determination? *Social Work*, *56* (4), 371-373.

Trauma, Suffering, and Therapeutic Culture

Session 9

Furedi, F. (2004). The culture of emotionalism. In F. Furedi, *Therapy Culture: Cultivating vulnerability in an uncertain age* (pp. 24-43). New York: Routledge.

Aubry, T., & Travis, T. (2015). Rethinking therapeutic culture. In T. Aubry, & T. Travis (Eds.), *Rethinking therapeutic culture* (pp. 2-23). Chicago, ILL: University of Chicago Press.

Becker, *One nation under stress* , Chapter 6: Posttraumatic stress disorder and the war for mental health.

Nicolas, G., Wheatley, A., & Guillaume, C. (2015). Does one trauma fit all? Exploring the relevance of PTSD across cultures. *International Journal of Culture and Mental Health*, *8* (1), 34-45.

Optional:

Horwitz, A. V., & Wakefield, J. The anatomy of normal sadness. In A.V. Horwitz & J. Wakefield, *The loss of sadness: How psychiatry transformed normal sorrow into depressive disorder* **(pp. 27-52).**

Session 10

Cushman, P. (2015). Practice. In T. Aubry, & T. Travis (Eds.), *Rethinking therapeutic culture* (pp. 199-210). Chicago, ILL: University of Chicago Press.

Kleinman, A. (1988). The personal and social meanings of illness. In A. Kleinman, *The illness narratives: Suffering, healing and the human condition* **(pp. 31-55).**

Prilleltensky, I., & Prilleltensky, O. (2005). Beyond resilience: Blending wellness and liberation in the helping professions. In M. Ungar (Ed.), *Handbook for working with children and youth: Pathways to resilience*

***across cultures and contexts* (1st ed.) (pp. 89-103).**

Optional:

Dybicz, P. (2012). The ethic of care: Recapturing social work's first voice. *Social Work*, 57 (3), 271-280.

Smith, L., Chambers, D., & Bratini, L. (2009). When oppression is the pathogen: The participatory development of socially just mental health practice, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 79 (2), 159–168.