



Theories and Biological Basis of Substance Misuse

SOCIAL WORK 5805

Prerequisites: Prerequisites: Sophomore/junior/senior/grad or permission of instructor. Open to students of all disciplines. Satisfactory completion of introductory psychology and introductory biology course content is preferable and recommended, but not required.

Credits Hours: 3 credit hours

Course Description

This course explores traditional and contemporary theories, and their supporting evidence, related to substance misuse and substance use disorders. The course addresses the pharmacology of a wide range of psychoactive substances, including alcohol, sedative/hypnotic and central nervous system (CNS) depressants, cannabis and other hallucinogenic/dissociative drugs, stimulants (including amphetamines, methamphetamine, cocaine, tobacco/nicotine, caffeine), opioids, inhalants, steroids, commonly misused over-the-counter substances, and prescription drug misuse. Students are exposed to course content addressing the effects on individuals of substance misuse, applying a biopsychosocial perspective including: biological, psychological (cognitive and affective), and social context (family, peers, communities, and larger social/policy) dimensions, acting individually and in interaction. Psychoactive medications and their use in combination with behavioral interventions to help manage substance use disorders are introduced, as are problems that commonly co-occur with substance misuse and how prevention strategies are informed by the theories discussed. Throughout the course we practice the ethical and professional use of language related to substance misuse, as well individuals engaged in addictive behavior and experiencing substance use disorders. The course serves as freestanding introduction to understand substance misuse and a foundation for advanced courses about screening, diagnosis, and intervention.

Course Competencies and Practice Behaviors

In the context of *“Embrace Difference. Seek Justice. Be the Change.”* as stated in the College Mission Statement, students in this course are expected to master the following Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) competencies and practice behaviors.

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

- Demonstrate professional demeanor in written and electronic communication.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice.

- Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in- environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

- Apply critical thinking to interpret information about clients and constituencies.
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data [about] clients and constituencies.

Competency 8: Intervene With Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in [the analysis of] interventions with clients and constituencies.

Specific Course Objectives

To master the above competencies and practice behaviors, students in this course will:

1. Identify as member of a learning community focused on the topic of substance misuse;
2. Practice respectful, ethical, professional use of language in discussing and analyzing issues related to substance misuse and the individuals who experience substance-related problems (*Competency 1*);
3. Interpret the epidemiology, actions, and effects on individuals' experiences, behavior, physical and mental health, development, and life functioning of using or misusing common psychoactive substances (*Competencies 4, 6, 7 and 8*);
4. Identify contemporary biological, psychological, social context, and transtheoretical theories or models, evidence, and trending topics used to describe, explain, assess, prevent, and intervene around substance use, substance misuse, and substance use disorders (*Competencies 4, 6, 7 and 8*);
5. Differentiate between substance use, substance misuse, and substance use disorders, and differentiate between substance use disorders and other medical or psychological conditions (*Competencies 1, 6, 7 and 8*);
6. Identify key pharmacokinetic and psychopharmacology principles related to substance use and the use of medications to treat or manage substance use disorders (*Competencies 4, 6, 7 and 8*);
7. Explain how substance misuse intersects with commonly co-occurring problems (*Competencies 4, 6, 7 and 8*);
8. Satisfy and stimulate curiosity about the topic of substance misuse.

Policies and Expectations

Course Expectations

We are on this learning journey together, as a team! As the course instructor, my role is to guide the learning process. Each of you is learning not only from the content presented in readings, lectures, learning activities, and course assignments but also from each other, and I enjoy continuing to learn from you as well. Here is what we should expect of each other as learning mates:

From your instructor, expect:

- Timely feedback to activities and e-mail: E-mail will be responded to within 24-48 hours (72 hours on weekends) and all grading will be completed 1 week from the assignment due date.
- Good faith assurance that course components are working properly.
- A safe learning environment for exploring new ideas and taking learning risks.
- A solid knowledge base and strong enthusiasm for the course content.
- A commitment to your learning.
- Professionalism.
- Willingness to look into and correct any errors I make.

From your classmates, expect:

- To be treated with courtesy, dignity, and respect.
- A safe learning environment for exploring new ideas and taking learning risks.

From yourself as a learner, expect:

- To make mistakes: Taking risks sometimes leads to errors, but it is an important part of the learning process
- To treat your classmates and instructor with courtesy, respect, and dignity, including how you respond to each other's learning efforts
- **To invest an *average* of 6 hours per week in active coursework**
- To complete all learning activities in an engaged, responsible*, and timely manner
- To participate fully and constructively in class discussion activities

*Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are expected to be the solo work of the person turning in the assigned work. Working together on *individual* assignments is considered academic misconduct and will be treated as such. Work significantly copied from original sources (including the Internet), other students' work (past or present), or your own work (past or present) in other classes is considered plagiarism or academic misconduct (including self-plagiarism) and will be treated as such.

A Personal Note

Some of you and your classmates have (challenging) personal experiences with portions of the content covered in this course. This leads to three important guidelines to participating in this course.

Minimize self-disclosure. What you or anyone else shares within the structure of this course *SHOULD* be kept between us, but there is no way to ensure this. Also, when you share information about yourself, you also are sharing information about others: your family, friends, and others in your community. You probably do not have their permission to share *their* very personal information with the larger world. Learning how to respect confidentiality, a critical professional skill, begins here. We are going to work to minimize the amount we tell others about ourselves and those whose lives intersect with ours, and to respect their confidentiality.

Know yourself, part 1. Anyone in recovery has developed tools, resources, and strategies that work for them. Recognize that what we explore in this course may or may not apply to what works for you or someone that you know. People in recovery *SHOULD STICK WITH WHAT WORKS FOR THEM*. What you are learning in this course is about what works for a lot of people but is not guaranteed to be the best choice for particular individuals. People in recovery should explore ideas with their support system before making changes.

Know yourself, part 2. The instructional team has made concerted efforts to minimize the relapse cues and triggers that might be present in our course content. Unfortunately, triggers are not universal and what is “safe” for one person may be a personal trigger for someone else. One reason for there being multiple assignment options is to help someone avoid a particular assignment that may become *PERSONALLY* challenging rather than *ACADEMICALLY* challenging.

We all want to be supportive of the recovery process.

Graded Assignments

ASSIGNMENT TITLE	WEIGHT %
1. Introductory Course Survey (pass/fail with unlimited attempts)	1%
2. Mini-quizzes (best 4 out of 5 mini-quiz scores; 10% of course grade each)	40%
3. Participation in assigned graded discussion activities (best 8 out of 9 graded discussions, 3% of course grade each—Modules 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13)	24%
4. Pick Your Project (pick one): A. Biopsychosocial “Case Analysis” Report B. Self-Change Report C. Burning Questions Report NOTE: Options may require up front time recording real-world observations, collecting data, or completing outside reading. You should become familiar with the expectations presented in the detailed description files before committing to one option.	25%
5. Final Integrative Quiz	10%
TOTAL	100%

[UNIVERSITY & PROGRAM SPECIFIC POLICIES & EXPECTATIONS]

Required Texts and Reading Sources

There are no required texts to purchase or rent for this course. Instead, the instructional team has developed a free, online, interactive coursebook with assigned article and chapter access links located in each course module. The e-coursebook provides a great deal of course content, as well as a context for assigned readings and assignments; links to external readings (web sites or .pdf files) are provided in the “Module” section of our course site. Coursebook contents may be reviewed interactively (online) or downloaded for offline review and printing. Interactive applied reading activities require online, interactive web access, but may be downloaded for noninteractive offline review (.pdf download option). The e-coursebook can be viewed in most desktop or laptop, tablet, and smartphone formats (EPUB or MOBI options).

Course Schedule

Note: In the online environment, each week **begins at 12:01 a.m. Sunday** and **ends at 11:59 p.m. Saturday**. Unless otherwise noted, assignments are **due by 11:59 p.m. Saturday**, and new content becomes available weekly beginning at 12:01 a.m. on Sunday, remaining open and available through the remainder of the semester.

DATE TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Module 1 Course Introduction, Orientation to Theories of Substance Misuse, and Ethical/Professional Language Use

(Week 1)

Required Readings:

- Module 1 of the online coursebook
- Begun, A.L. (2016). Considering the language we use: Well worth the effort. *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions*, 16, 332-336.

Learning Assignments and Activities:

- Review the “Start Here: Welcome to the Course” section in our Carmen course site—no further content will open until this has been completed
- Review each assignment detail file located in the Module 1 “Checkpoint” area
- Review the “Meet Your Instructor” presentation
- Participate in the ungraded self-introduction class discussion “My Avatar,” posting before start of Module 1—but preferably sooner.
- Review recorded lecture content for Module 1 (handout is to facilitate notetaking)
- Complete assigned readings for Module 1

Self-Evaluation Activities:

- Complete interactive learning activities in online coursebook

- Complete ungraded sample mini-quiz (Carmen) to learn how graded miniquizzes and final integrative quiz are structured and function

Instructor Evaluated Activities (Graded):

- Complete the “Introductory Survey” (Carmen) (graded, pass/fail), due before **11:59 p.m. of Module 1**—but preferably sooner

Module 2 Key Definitions, Diagnostic Criteria, Classification of Substances, and Trending Topics

(Week 2)

Required Readings:

- Module 2 of the online coursebook.

Learning Assignments and Activities:

- Review recorded lecture content for Module 2 (handout is to facilitate note taking).
- Complete assigned readings for Module 2.

Self-Evaluation Activities:

- Complete interactive learning activities in online coursebook

Instructor Evaluated Activities (Graded):

- Mini-quiz #1 covering Modules 1 and 2 content, due before **11:59 p.m. on Saturday end of Module 2**

Module 3 Biological Models of Substance Misuse, Pharmacokinetics and Psychopharmacology Principles

(Weeks 3 & 4) *Note: This module is two periods long. You should not try to complete this in a short crunch and note that a graded assignment is due in the middle of this period, as well as one due at the end.*

Required Readings:

- Module 3 of the online coursebook.

Learning Assignments and Activities:

- Review feedback from Miniquiz #1 (Modules 1 and 2)
- Review recorded lecture content for Module 3
- Complete assigned readings Module 3
- Review additional media assigned for Module 3

Self-Evaluation Activities:

- Complete interactive learning activities in online coursebook

- Receive and review feedback on Miniquiz #1

Instructor Evaluated Activities (Graded):

- Participate in class discussion: “Uncle Pete’s Salad Dressing Addiction,” due before **11:59 p.m. on Saturday middle of Module 3**
- Mini-quiz #2 covering Module 3 content due by before **11:59 p.m. on Saturday end of Module 3**

Module 4 Psychological Models of Substance Misuse

(Week 5)

Required Readings:

- Module 4 of the online coursebook

Learning Assignments and Activities:

- Review feedback from Mini-quiz #2
- Complete assigned readings Module 4
- Review additional media and worksheet assigned for Module 4

Self-Evaluation Activities:

- Receive and review feedback on Mini-quiz #2
- Complete interactive learning activities in online coursebook
- Complete the Learning Theory worksheet

Instructor Evaluated Activities (Graded):

- Participate in class discussion: “Angela’s Cravings”, due before **11:59 p.m. on Saturday end of Module 4**

Module 5 Social Context and Physical Environment Models of Substance Misuse

(Week 6)

Required Readings:

- Module 5 of the online coursebook.
- Kosovski, J.R., & Smith, D.C. (2011). Everybody hurts: Addiction, drama, and the family in reality television show *Intervention*. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 46, 852-858.

Learning Assignments and Activities:

- Review recorded lecture content for Module 5
- Complete assigned readings Module 5
- Review additional media assigned for Module 5

Self-Evaluation Activities:

- Complete interactive learning activities in online coursebook
- Complete the Eco-map worksheet

Instructor Evaluated Activities (Graded):

- Participate in class discussion: “*Intervention* television show,” due before **11:59 p.m. on Saturday end of Module 5**

Module 6 Theory Integration, Transtheoretical Model, and Vulnerability, Risk, Resilience, and Protective Factors in Preventing Substance Misuse

(Week 7)

Required Readings:

- Module 6 of the online coursebook.

Learning Assignments and Activities:

- Review recorded media assigned for Module 6
- Complete assigned readings Module 6

Self-Evaluation Activities:

- Complete interactive learning activities in online coursebook

Instructor-evaluated Activities (Graded):

- Mini-quiz #3 on Modules 4, 5, and 6 content, due before **11:59 p.m. on Saturday end of Module 6**

Module 7 Focus on Alcohol

(Week 8)

Required Readings:

- Module 7 of the online coursebook.
- Cavazos-Rehg, P.A., Krauss, M.J., Sowles, S.J., & Bierut, L.J. (2015). “Hey everyone, I’m drunk.” An evaluation of drinking-related Twitter chatter. *Journal of Studies in Alcohol and Drugs*, 76, 635-643.
- Testa, M., & Cleveland, M.J. (2017). Does alcohol contribute to college men’s sexual assault perpetration? Between and within-person effects over five semesters. *Journal of Studies in Alcohol and Drugs*, 78, 5-13.

Learning Assignments and Activities:

- Review feedback on Miniquiz #3
- Complete assigned readings Module 7
- Review media assigned for Module 7
- Participate in ungraded “Drinking Songs” discussion—no due date

Self-Evaluation Activities:

- Complete interactive learning activities in online coursebook
- Receive and review feedback on Mini-quiz #3

Instructor Evaluated Activities (Graded):

- Participate in class discussion “Addicted to Love,” due before **11:59 p.m. on Saturday end of Module 7**
- Note: No additional graded assignments are due, but you should be planning for your end-of-semester Pick Your Project assignment.

Module 8 Focus on Sedative-Hypnotics and CNS Depressants

(Week 9)

Required Readings:

- Module 8 of the online coursebook.
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). 2020. Club drugs. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/club-drugs>

Learning Assignments and Activities:

- Review assigned media content for Module 8
- Complete assigned readings for Module 8

Self-Evaluation Activities:

- Complete interactive learning activities in online coursebook

Instructor Evaluated Activities (Graded):

- Participate in class discussion “Why depressants?,” due before **11:59 p.m. on Saturday end of Module 8**
- No additional activities are graded for Module 8, but you should be planning for your end-of-semester Pick Your Project assignment.

Module 9 Focus on Cannabis and Other Hallucinogenic and Dissociative Substances

(Week 10)

Required Readings:

- Module 9 of the online coursebook.

Learning Assignments and Activities:

- Complete assigned readings Module 9
- Review media and videos assigned for Module 9
- Participate in ungraded class discussion, “Cannabis Legalization or Not” (no due date)

Self-Evaluation Activities:

- Complete interactive learning activities in online coursebook

Instructor Evaluated Activities (Graded):

- Mini-quiz #4 on Modules 7, 8, and 9 content, due before **11:59 p.m. on Saturday end of Module 9**

Module 10 Focus on Stimulants (amphetamines, methamphetamine, cocaine, nicotine, and caffeine)

(Week 11)

Required Readings:

- Module 10 of the online coursebook.
- Marczinski, C.A., & Fillmore, M. T. (2014). Energy drinks mixed with alcohol: What are the risks? *Nutrition Reviews*, 72(1), 98-107.

Learning Assignments and Activities:

- Complete assigned readings Module 10
- Review additional media assigned for Module 10

Self-Evaluation Activities:

- Complete interactive learning activities in online coursebook
- Receive and review feedback on Mini-quiz #4

Instructor Evaluated Activities (Graded):

- Participate in class discussion “Stimulation Nation” due before **11:59 p.m. on Saturday end of Module 10**
- Note: No graded assignments are due, but you should be moving along on your Pick Your Project assignment.

Module 11 Focus on Opioids

(Week 12)

Required Readings:

- Module 11 of the online coursebook.
- Lopez, G. (2016, December 9). It’s not just painkillers and heroin. Americans have a growing problem too. Vox. www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2016/12/9/13898956/alcohol-deaths-2015

Learning Assignments and Activities:

- Complete assigned readings Module 11
- Review media presentation assigned for Module 11

- Review documentary assigned for Module 11—*Foo Foo Dust*
- Participate in ungraded debriefing discussion about *Foo Foo Dust* (no due date).
- Read biopsychosocial case analysis about *Foo Foo Dust* (Tony, the son) presented by instructional team.

Self-Evaluation Activities:

- Complete interactive learning activities in online coursebook

Instructor Evaluated Activities (Graded):

- Participate in class discussion “The Most Dangerous Drug” due before **11:59 p.m. on Saturday end of Module 11**
- Note: No additional graded assignments are due, but you should be moving along on your Pick Your Project assignment.

Module 12 Focus on OTC and Prescription Drugs, Inhalants, Steroids, and Pharmacotherapy Agents

(Week 13)

Required Readings:

- Module 12 of the online coursebook.
- Andrews, T.M. (2017, July 11). Nelsan Ellis died of alcohol withdrawal. Family hopes his death will be a “autionary tale.” *Washington Post*.

Learning Assignments and Activities:

- Review recorded media content assigned for Module 12
- Complete assigned readings for Module 12

Self-Evaluation Activities:

- Complete interactive learning activities in online coursebook

Instructor Evaluated Activities (Graded):

- Participate in class discussion “Shaggy’s Overdose” due before **11:59 p.m. on Saturday end of Module 12**
- Complete Mini-quiz #5 covering Modules 10, 11, and 12, due before **11:59 p.m. on Saturday end of Module 12**
- Note: No additional graded assignments are due, but you should be concluding work on the Pick Your Project assignment due at the end of Module 13.

Module 13 Focus on Co-occurring Problems and Course Conclusions

(Week 14)

Required Readings:

- Module 13 of the online coursebook.

Learning Assignments and Activities:

- Review recorded lecture content for Module 13
- Complete assigned readings Module 13
- Review additional media assigned for Module 13

Self-Evaluation Activities:

- Complete interactive learning activities in online coursebook
- Receive and review feedback on Mini-quiz #5

Instructor-evaluated Activities (Graded):

- Participate in “The Best Thing I Learned...” class discussion due before **11:59 p.m. on last class day Saturday**
- Pick Your Project assignment due before **11:59 p.m. on last class day Saturday**

Final exam period: Complete integrative, cumulative final quiz anytime **between 12:01 a.m. Sunday** when it will open, and **11:59 p.m. Saturday** when it will close.