3MH3 -- Critical Examination of Mental Health

Course Description: An examination of mental health and illness from different social, cultural and historical perspectives. In this course, students will consider a range of mental health issues and compare how these issues are commonly understood in a critical examination of mental health research and theory.

The purpose of this course is to have the students think about a range of mental health issues that are commonly known from the media or personal experience.

Using these topics, we will:
- Explore the validity of this common knowledge and show how some of this common knowledge can stigmatize and constrain the behaviour of those who experience these problems;
- Examine how different theoretical perspectives, professions and disciplines can define mental health issues;
- Examine how economic, social and political factors can impact on the social construction of mental illness and mental wellness; and,
- Learn to critically examine mental health research and theory.

Class time will also be spent developing skills in critically appraising research literature appropriate for upper year students and developing effective communication skills. Where possible, we will use active learning strategies such as debates, class discussions, movies, concept mapping, simulation games, etc.

Tentative Schedule

We will spend the first few weeks of the course:

1. Setting boundaries and ground rules for how we want the course to work
2. Learning about our own self-care and how to reflect on our own clinical insights
3. Learning about different perspectives on mental health and mental wellness
4. Exploring what the proposed course model of mental health and mental wellness
5. Sharpening up our tools in our tool kit when finding resources to support our discussions

You will also have opportunities to set the agenda for the course.
Non-mark based feedback will happen continuously. The best feedback you can receive will be from your self-evaluations and your peers. As such, you are expected to give your peers feedback as you would want to receive feedback; honestly, well-intentioned, and in a timely manner. I will also be giving you regular, non-mark based feedback.

Course grades are based on the following elements:

1) **Participation** 15%  
   In class, evidence of preparation, group work, on-line etc. Students will be expected to attend class, complete readings for class and be prepared to participate in the classroom work. In addition, student will be expected to participate in discussions on LearnLink. Class participation with class group work is foundational for our learning.

2) **Self-Monitoring** 15%  
   Three (3) self-evaluations worth 5% each – more criteria discussed in class.

3) **Group Presentation** 30%  
   Take a diagnosis/syndrome/disease that you share a common interest with your group of 5 peers; evaluate these issues using the framework introduced in class. You are welcome to expand, revise, reject (and develop) the framework as part of your presentation provided you have a rationale for these changes. Presentations will happen in groups of 5 on November 21st and November 28th.

4) **Scholarly Paper** 40% (10% for outline and 30% for final)  
   You will present the Facilitator a one page proposal for your paper that will receive non-mark based feedback (October 4th). You will choose the topic for your paper but your topic must be different from your group presentation. On November 8th, you will hand in a 3 – 6 page outline with references showing your current thinking about your paper for 10% of your course grade (On paper in Drop Box 16). You will also receive non-mark based feedback from your
peers. On December 6th, you will hand in or submit to Dropbox 16 your final paper on paper for grading by your Facilitator.

*Any assignments that require an extension needs to be discuss with the instructor (either in person, by phone or by email). Assignments that do not have permission to be late must have accompanying paper to mitigate the lateness.*

**Readings**

For the most part, readings will be available on LearnLink or, in rare cases, distributed on paper in class.

**Students with Special Needs**

Students with disabilities or special needs are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (ext. 28652) for information regarding its services and resources. Students are also encouraged to review the Calendar for information regarding all services available on campus.

**Academic Integrity**

My assumption is that every student at the university is a learner genuinely engaged in scholarly pursuits. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty, please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at [http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity). It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

(Click [here](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/students/index.html) for more information.)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic dishonesty is to act knowingly or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can lead to serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

**Right to Amend Course Outline by Instructor/Facilitator**

The instructor, program and the university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If modifications become necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given. Students will be provided with an explanation and an opportunity to comment. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and the course website/LearnLink weekly during term. Any significant changes will be made in consultation with the BHSc Assistant Dean.