The Interdisciplinary Team:
Improving the Care of Our Elders

**Introduction:** The needs of elders, especially the frail, will change the way we deliver healthcare in the next decade. There are two reasons for this. The first is found in the demographics of aging in America. Because of the “age wave” of 70 million Baby Boomers, in the not-so-distant future geriatrics will perforce become a major part of what all healthcare professionals do. The second reason is equally, if not more compelling: The interdisciplinary team approach can provide good, comprehensive care that is cost effective. It holds the promise of offering truly “holistic” care in the biopsychosocial-spiritual model, something no longer possible to provide (if ever it were) by one health-care practitioner, or even by a team working in separation.

One problem with the interdisciplinary team approach concerns the logistics of bringing such a team (which may consist of a nurse, physician, social worker, nutritionist, optometrist, dentist, pharmacist, physical and occupational therapists, chaplain, and others) together for the benefit of a patient. This is daunting, but not impossible. Programs of All inclusive Care for the Elderly provide such interdisciplinary care in cost-effective ways. And, nursing homes across the country all have functioning teams of this sort; they are necessary for good care, especially of the elder with multiple medical and psychosocial problems.

Despite the need and benefit of interdisciplinary healthcare teams in geriatrics and beyond, there is little education provided in healthcare professional training about how to work as a member of a team, much less an understanding of the work style and contributions of other team members. This course is an attempt to offer such training.

**Course goals:**

1. To provide an overview of the role of the interdisciplinary team in geriatric healthcare
2. To provide exposure to the primary disciplines in geriatric interdisciplinary team practice through field experiences
3. To provide a framework for understanding the dynamics of interdisciplinary team practice
4. To provide students with basic skills for participating in an interdisciplinary team

**Course objectives:**

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Examine the purpose and function of the interdisciplinary team in geriatric healthcare
2. Compare and contrast the unique perspectives, values, and contributions that healthcare professions bring to geriatric interdisciplinary teams
3. Analyze the dynamics of interdisciplinary team practice, including its structure, maintenance, and management
4. Articulate how to apply gained knowledge of interdisciplinary teams to their own professional practice
Course Information

The Interdisciplinary Team: Improving the Care of Our Elders
UCB course #: HMS 215; Samuel Merritt University Course #'s: OT/PT700
Two units, Grade or Pass/Not Pass. (Please note: NO incompletes will be granted)
Room: 24 Wheeler
Dates: February 3 thru April 28, 2010
Wednesdays 6:00 – 8:00 PM
Office hours: following each class from 8:00-8:30 PM and by arrangement

Students

Students from all professional disciplines may be involved in this course, including students in the UCB School of Social Welfare; the UCB – UCSF Joint Medical Program; the UCB School of Optometry; the UCSF Schools of Pharmacy and Nursing (Gerontology Nurse Practitioner Program); Samuel Merritt University’s Departments of Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Nursing; and the Graduate Theological Union.

Course Requirements

Class attendance and participation are required; assigned readings are to be completed prior to each class. Students are required to post a one-page reflection piece on the bspace course site that relates to the assigned readings for the week; this is to be posted prior to each class and will be considered part of class participation. Examples of areas of “reflection” can be any questions that came to mind; interesting findings; what you learned; critique of perspective(s) presented; and/or how one might use some of the concepts noted in their field of practice. (Note: this is not an exhaustive list, just some areas to consider.) In addition, each student will be required to co-facilitate a class, and will be responsible for contacting and coordinating with the lead faculty instructor for that particular week. (The first class, led by Barrie Robinson, will not require a student’s co-facilitation.)

If a student misses a class, a 3-4 page paper on that week’s readings must be turned in the following week to the lead faculty person. (Faculty leads are noted for each class – see page 5.)

Students will be expected to complete structured field observation worksheets of two interdisciplinary team meetings, and “shadow” two team members from a discipline other than their own. (See Assignment section below.) Following field observations, students will give class presentations about their observations, and lead a discussion. Finally, a five-page reflective paper based on observations of two interdisciplinary team meetings and the shadowing assignments will be expected of each student.

Course Assignments and Grading

- Class attendance and participation: 20% of grade.
- “Shadowing” of team members: 20% of grade
The Interdisciplinary Team

- Structured Field Observations of interdisciplinary team meetings: 20% of grade
- Reflective Paper: 20% of grade.
- Class presentation and discussion: 20% of grade.

Assignments: Students will complete structured field observations of interdisciplinary team meetings and shadow team members (see below). Based on these field experiences, students will submit a reflective paper, and make a class presentation about their experiences.

Attend Team Meetings (20% of grade)

From the available long term care facilities and community agencies (hereafter called “agencies”), students will elect to observe two meetings of the same interdisciplinary team in one agency OR to observe two meetings of interdisciplinary teams in two different agencies. Prior to attending meetings, students will contact the designated person at each agency they select in order to notify the team of their expected attendance, and to confirm the time and location of the meeting. Using the provided Interdisciplinary Team Observation Worksheet, students will submit their observations for each visit.

“Shadowing” Team Members (20% of grade)

(“Shadowing” is a training technique in which students directly observe individuals in their performance of their jobs in order to become familiar with individual styles of working, the role of the individuals in the organization, and how work tasks are carried out.)

Students are expected to shadow at least two members of the interdisciplinary team who are not from their own professional discipline. Students will select team members from the attached agency list, and contact them directly in order to set up dates and times for your shadowing visits. These visits should be conducted in the agency and should include opportunities to observe the members in the normal course of their work routine with clients and staff. They should last for 1-2 hours depending on the availability of the team members. Please note: In lieu of one shadowing visit, students may elect to conduct an in-person or phone interview with an interdisciplinary team member who is not from their discipline. Using the provided Worksheet for Shadowing Assignments, students will submit a brief summary of their shadowing visits.

In preparation for these shadowing visits, students may want to think of some questions they have about the role of the team members, their styles of working, how work tasks are carried out in the organization, and/or other aspects of the team members’ work. Here are a few examples of the type of questions you might want to discuss during your shadowing visit. Please be sensitive to the timing and location of your discussions:

- What training did you complete to qualify for your position?
- How would you describe your primary role in the organization?
- What kind of assessments do you perform with clients/participants/patients?
- How would you describe your role on the interdisciplinary team?
- What are the most satisfying aspects of your work?
The Interdisciplinary Team

- What are the most challenging aspects of your work?

Reflective paper (20% of grade; due April 28; five pages in length)

The paper should discuss what you learned about interdisciplinary teams from your field and classroom experiences, and address at least the following points:
- Team norms observed, including communication patterns, conflict, and decisionmaking.
- The strengths and weaknesses of the team(s) observed.
- Two or three significant ideas or concepts that you learned about interdisciplinary teams through the team meetings observed and your shadowing experiences.
- How you will apply this learning to your own practice.

Class Presentation (20% of grade)
At the end of the course, students will give a class presentation about their field experiences and facilitate a discussion about them. This should include a description of the agencies in which your field observations occurred and background information about the team(s) observed, as well as the points covered in the reflective paper. Scheduling of presentations will be done in the first weeks of class.

Readings: will be posted on the bspace course site or brought to class by instructors.
The Interdisciplinary Team

The Interdisciplinary Team: Improving the Care of Our Elders (HMS 215)
COURSE SYLLABUS

February 3: Introduction to Teams (Faculty Lead: Barrie Robinson, MSSW)
- Course overview
- Agency context of interdisciplinary teams
- Characteristics of a team
- Goals of interdisciplinary teams
- Benefits of team practice
- Types of teams

February 10: Team Dynamics (Faculty Lead: Juliet Rothman, PhD)
- Development of teams
- Team Culture & Behavior
- Team roles
- Team management

February 17: A Case-Based Look at Disciplines in Healthcare Teams (values, ethics, roles, tools)
- Medicine, Optometry, Pharmacy (Faculty Lead: Guy Micco, MD)

February 24: A Case-Based Look at Disciplines in Healthcare Teams (continued)
- Chaplaincy, Social Work (Faculty Lead: Juliet Rothman, PhD)

March 3: A Case-Based Look at Disciplines in Healthcare Teams (continued)
- Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy (Faculty Lead: Sharon Gorman, PT, DPTSc, GCS)

March 10: A Case-Based Look at Disciplines in Healthcare Teams (continued)
- Dietitian, Nursing, Speech (Faculty Lead: Karen Wolf, PhD, RN, ANP-BC, FNAP)

March 17: Elder, Family, and Agency Administrator Perspectives on Interdisciplinary Care
(Faculty Lead: Barrie Robinson, PhD)

March 24 – spring break

March 31: “Dementia” Care: Appreciative Inquiry, Action Research, and the Interdisciplinary Team
- Activities Representative, Social Work (Faculty Lead: Desi Owens, MS, MSW, LCSW)

April 7, 14, and 21: Student Presentations
Based on shadowing experiences and team meetings observed, individual students or groups of students will present and facilitate class discussions. Refer to Assignments section above for instructions. (Faculty Leads– April 7: Barrie Robinson, MSSW; April 14: Guy Micco, MD; and April 21: Claudia Landau, PhD, MD)

April 28: Final discussion and Course Evaluation (Faculty Lead: Kate Hayner, Ed.D, OTR/L)
The Interdisciplinary Team

Course Instructors:

Chaplaincy: The Rev. Peter Yuichi Clark, Ph.D., BCC, ACPE Supervisor, Associate Professor of Pastoral Care at the American Baptist Seminary of the West, and Chaplain Administrator for Alta Bates Summit Medical Center. Contact information: clarkp1@sutterhealth.org. The Rev. Virginia Chase, MAR, MDiv, Associate Director of Field Education and Director of Contextual Learning, Pacific School of Religion.

Dentistry: TBA

Medicine: Guy Micco, MD, Clinical Professor, UCB-UCSF Joint Medical Program, Director of UCB Center on Aging. Contact information: guym@berkeley.edu. Claudia Landau, PhD, MD, Associate Clinical Professor/Geriatric Curriculum Coordinator, UCB-UCSF Joint Medical Program, Chief of Geriatrics and Palliative Care, Department of Medicine, Alameda County Medical Center. Contact information: C.Landau@comcast.net; Sid Spies, MD, UCB-UCSF Joint Medical Program Preceptor. Contact information: sidneyspies@sbcglobal.net

Nursing: Karen Wolf, PhD, RN, ANP-BC, FNAP, Associate Professor, School of Nursing, Samuel Merritt University. Contact information: kawolf26@mac.com. Liz Macera, RN, PhD, NP-C, Assistant Clinical Professor, Gerontologic Advanced Practice Nursing Program, UCSF. Contact information: liz.macera@nursing.ucsf.edu

Occupational Therapy: Kate Hayner, Ed.D, OTR/L, Associate Professor, Chair Department of Occupational Therapy, Samuel Merritt University. Contact information: khayner@samuelmerritt.edu; 510-869-6511 x 4780 (office)

Optometry: Meredith Whiteside, OD, Assistant Clinical Professor, UCB School of Optometry. Contact information: mwhitesi@berkeley.edu

Pharmacy: Kirby Lee, PharmD, MA, Assistant Professor of Clinical Pharmacy, UCSF

Physical Therapy: Sharon Gorman, PT, DPTSc, GCS, Assistant Professor, Samuel Merritt University, Department of Physical Therapy. Contact information: sgorman@samuelmerritt.edu; 510-869-6511 x 4720 (office).

Social Welfare: Barrie Robinson, MSW, Field Work Consultant/Lecturer, School of Social Welfare. Contact information: bkr@berkeley.edu. Juliet Rothman, PhD, Lecturer, UCB School of Social Welfare. Contact information: rothman@berkeley.edu. Desi Owens, MS, MSW, LCSW, Campus Planner/Academic Coordinator, UCB Center on Aging, School of Public Health. Contact information: desiowens@berkeley.edu