

OCC1 443 CONSTRUCTING MENTAL HEALTH

Credits: 3

Prerequisite: OCC-245 & POTH-250

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Office hours: Mondays by appointment

Course Description: This course provides foundational knowledge for occupational therapy practice in mental health from a historical and critical perspective. An intersectional framework will be used in applying occupation-focused reasoning in the domain of mental illness and mental health, with a particular focus on trauma-informed care.

Expanded Course Description: This course is designed for occupational therapy students in the undergraduate program and informed by an ethics that supports the role of occupational therapists as agents of change. Students will be introduced to the historical and scientific creation of psychiatric categories, as well as controversies and debates about the potential to pathologize everyday culturally informed responses to life events. An intersectional, anti-oppressive and trauma-informed approach will be fostered in interviewing and analyzing occupational opportunities and engagement. Students will begin to propose activities that push against ableist/sanist discourses and focus on empowerment, rest(oration), community and connection. This course includes an exploration of students' own values and assumptions about what constitutes mental health and occupational choice across social positions and systems of oppression (class, race, age, gender identities, ability/sanity etc...).

****This course includes content that is part of the OT curriculum Indigenous-focused thread. Please refer to the relevant document to situate your learning.*

****For the 2020-2021 academic year the course will be offered in a remote format. Please refer to the School's "Zoom etiquette for Remote Teaching and Learning" document for further details.*

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course students will acquire the following competencies for the professional profile roles:

Expert in Enabling Occupation

- 1) Compare and contrast the difference and implications between the medical diagnosis of a mental illness and an intersectional approach to mental health
- 2) Identify signs and situations indicative of the risk of developing mental health issues
- 3) Outline the impact of complex environments, social identity and mental illness on occupational choice and engagement for a given individual
- 4) Consider the psychosocial dimensions of activity analysis and adaptation
- 5) Initiate suggestions for activity and occupation-based approaches to intervention

Scholarly Practitioner

- 6) Describe the importance of history, particular controversies, and stigmas surrounding the contested nature of mental illness
- 7) Comprehend the centrality of trauma-informed care across intersectional lines

Change Agent & Scholarly Practitioner

- 8) Actively interrogate assumptions and beliefs about mental health and illness to promote skills for reflexivity and critical approaches to practice
- 9) Explain why political and cultural perspectives are integral to this domain of OT practice
- 10) Creatively explore and practice translating knowledge to peers

Communicator, Collaborator & Expert in Enabling Occupation

- 11) Practice active listening and interviewing for the sociocultural dimensions of occupational experience and mental health
- 12) Problem-solve and share a repertoire of activities, skills and resources to foster one's own, and each other's, mental health

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Professional

- 13) Demonstrate time management and planning skills in order to integrate mental health as a priority while remaining organized and timely in relation to flexible due dates

RESPECTFUL & ENGAGED PEDAGOGY

Land Acknowledgement: McGill University stands on the unceded Indigenous lands of the Kanien'keha:ka, Keepers of the Eastern Door of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The Kanien'kehá:ka Communities are recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters of Tiohtiá:ke/Montréal, which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and Anishinaabeg Nations.

Diversity Statement: The Occupational Therapy Program recognizes our responsibility to foster a learning environment where students and instructors can engage in dialogue and exchange ideas without being made to feel unwelcome or disrespected in view of their identity or beliefs. The Program intends that the instructional design of all courses minimize any barriers to participation, particularly barriers based on age, biological sex, disability, gender identity or expression, indigenous ancestry, linguistic and cultural background, race/ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, political views/opinions/ideologies, and any other aspect integral to one's personhood. We therefore recognize our responsibility, both individual and collective, to strive to establish and maintain a safer and respectful environment that reflects on, and minimizes, discrimination.

Self-directed learning: is fostered through interactive instructional activities and the flexible/variable due dates of required assignments. Lecturing is minimized and students will engage in a collective learning process. Students will be expected to complete the required work prior to coming to class and be prepared to discuss and engage in various learning activities both in and out of classes (reflective writing and/or art, group dialogue and debate, group learning-through- doing, and use of technology for collaborative learning as appropriate etc....).

Guest Testimonials: Students will have the privilege to listen to the stories and testimonials of peoples with lived experiences of oppression, mental illness, and challenges navigating the system. During these lectures, you will attend punctually, and practice respectful and active listening.

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Discussion as learning: For guests and students to be encouraged to share their experiences, thoughts and opinions within a respectful environment, the following professional behaviors are expected throughout the course

- Agree to disagree
- To disagree with an idea/opinion, not the whole person
- To practice openness to others' points of views
- To communicate with respect

Hiba Zafran's safety rules in all her classes:

- a. *Do not hurt yourself:* If you want to speak, please do. If you need to be quiet, please do. If you need to leave the class because you are triggered, please do without asking permission. If you need help, let me know. If you have valid reasons for extensions, just ask for one.
- b. *Do not hurt others or the classroom:* Practice phrasing your questions and opinions in inquiring rather than judgmental ways. When you do judge, reflect on why you think what you think. If you don't have something useful or kind or inquiring to say, don't say it.
- c. *Uphold rights:* We all equally have a right to space in the class. Whether you like the content or not, whether you want to study hard or not, whether you want to continue in OT or not. Grades are not the measure of engagement or the desire to learn, and we all choose to be present here in different ways and for different reasons. We each have a right to participate as we see fit: quiet listening, posting on MyCourses, discussions with peers outside of class, tutorials with the teacher, as well as talking in class.
- d. *Actively foster safety for others:* Think of how each one of you is responsible for and can make the class a safer space for each other. If your peer is quiet and has great ideas, offer to share them with the class on their behalf or encourage them to post on MyCourses anonymously. If you see a peer engaging in bullying or micro-aggressions then speak up, talk to them or the teacher. If you catch yourself saying or thinking something stigmatizing, don't just feel bad about it. Take the time to reflect on your opinion and where it might come from.
- e. *Teacher's responsibility:* It is my responsibility to model all the above with and for you. Like you, I will make mistakes, and I still need to unlearn stigmas that we have all been socialized into.

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CONTENT

This course covers four intertwined threads:

- 1) An intersectional and trauma-informed understanding of mental health
- 2) Application of the person-environment-occupation model with an understanding of systems of oppression
- 3) Integration of critical reflection and strategies for one's own mental health
- 4) Analysis and proposal of therapeutic activities that acknowledge systems of oppression and cultural understandings of health and belonging

Course Materials

Articles, handouts, web links and other material will be posted on the course website.

Copyright of course materials: *Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.*

EVALUATIONS

Refer to the Learning Evaluation Guide document for details at the start of the course.

Evaluations include 45-55% of individual work. If a student fails the total *individual* component, a remedial will be required.

Please note that final grades may be adjusted on a bell curve to distinguish between excellent, good, and average work and participation throughout the semester.

COURSE REGULATIONS

Disability: If you have a disability please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#) at 514-398-6009 before you do this.

Right to submit in English or French written work that is to be graded: In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded, except in courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives. *Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais*

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tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

Special Requirements for Course Completion and Program Continuation: In order to pass the course, a grade of at least C+ (60%) must be obtained as a total course mark. Please refer to the appropriate sections in the undergraduate calendar on University regulations regarding final and supplemental examinations. This course falls under the regulation concerning individual and group evaluation. Please refer to the section on marks in the Rules and Regulations for Student Evaluation and Promotion of the Occupational Therapy Course Guides.

Skills building attendance mark: Attendance at all classes is required. A student cannot miss more than 15% of the classes (i.e. more than 2 per term) without an acceptable written excuse. If he or she misses more than the permitted number of sessions, 10% of the total course mark will be removed.

Consequences of not completing assignments as requested: Students who do not hand in assignments on time will lose 10% of the total mark for the assignment for each day the project is overdue.

Professional Conduct: Professionalism and accountability are expected throughout the course of the semester. This includes the on-going respectful nature of teacher- student as well as student-student interactions.

Dress Code: Professionalism with respect to dressing is encouraged throughout the course of the semester. It is each student's responsibility to have appropriate attire during all class assignments and learning activities. When working with simulated patients student must be dressed professionally.

Technology in Class: Your respectful attentive presence is expected, therefore while you are permitted to use your laptop in class, it is understood that you will not be using your laptop or cell-phone for social purposes during class time (e.g. email, msn, sms). Your cell phone should be on silence during class time and phone calls should only take place during the break or after class.

Plagiarism/Academic Integrity: [Amended by Senate on January 16, 2019]: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the [Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#).

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L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le [Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires](#)

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

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