

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
School of Social Work
Master Syllabus

Lead Instructor: David R. Hodge

I Course Title: SWG—691, Spiritual Assessment

II Instructor: Dr. David R. Hodge

III Course Requirements:

Credit: 3 semester hours
Elective

IV Course Description:

This hands-on, experientially-oriented course prepares students to conduct spiritual assessments in an ethically and culturally sensitive manner.

V Rationale for the Course:

Spirituality and religion are increasingly being recognized as fundamental dimensions of human existence for many clients, particularly individuals from populations that have been undervalued, disenfranchised or oppressed by the dominant culture. For such individuals, spiritual assessment typically plays a critical role since assessment lays the foundation for all subsequent practice decisions. Accordingly, mental health professionals are increasingly being asked to conduct spiritual assessments. For instance, the largest health care accrediting body in the United States, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), now requires the administration of a spiritual assessment.

VI Course Objectives:

The objectives of the course fall into the following three areas:

A. **Knowledge**

1. Familiarity with the JCAHO standards regarding spiritual assessment.

2. Models that have been proposed for conducting brief and comprehensive spiritual assessments.
3. Rationales for conducting spiritual assessments.
4. Decision criteria for selecting between various comprehensive assessment models.
5. Familiarity with a) the NASW Code of Ethics as it relates to the intersection of religion and social work practice and b) the rights of people of faith under the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
6. Alternative quantitative paradigms for conducting spiritual assessments.

B. Instrumentation

1. Skills to utilize various decision criteria to select among various assessment models.
2. Beginning ability to construct spiritual interventions that are consistent with the client's understanding of reality.
3. Beginning ability to conduct spiritual assessments in a spiritually competent manner.
4. Interpersonal skills to move toward overcoming personal and cultural boundaries.
5. Developing skills to build professional credibility across faith groups.
6. Initial capability to handle ethical issues appropriately (e.g., knowing when to refer a client).

C. Experiential

1. Development of cultural vocabularies that facilitate dialogue across various faith-based cultures.
2. Awareness of common perceptions among diverse faith groups regarding their experience in the dominant culture.
3. Cognitive readiness to engage in spiritually competent practice, including acting as an agent of social action and social change on behalf of clients and client groups.

4. Awareness of the vulnerability commonly associated with relating personal spiritual narratives with others operating from different epistemological frameworks.
5. Awareness of one's personal sphere of competency and issues that may necessitate referral.
6. Initiation of personal spiritual self-assessment and lifelong learning in social work practice with diverse spiritual groups.