



USC | School of Social Work

MILITARY CULTURE AND THE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

Instructor: Jose E. Coll, Ph.D, et al.
E-Mail: coll@usc.edu
Office: SDAC 203
Office Hours: TBA

Course Day: September 24th/25th
Course Time: 0900-1600
Course Location: MRF 340

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Recent developments in convention, asymmetric, and military operations other than war have created new problems and requirements for social workers as well as a shortfall of qualified clinicians to work with the military and a constituency in need of service. The competencies required for social workers working with the military, veterans and active duty members, families, and organizational decision-makers, represent both a distinctive niche and critical expansion of talent. Without military-specific knowledge and skill sets, otherwise well-intended social workers could be seen as outsiders, potential threats, and poorly prepared practitioners who may inhibit, rather than facilitate, the dictums of the social work profession. Therefore, it is imperative for this group of social workers to have a clear frame of reference for understanding the military context, relevant cultural dimensions and levels, and a historical framework for military social work to apply it to today's military.

This frame of reference includes a general understanding of cultural dimensions and levels and the relevance and application of culture to the military. In this regard, culture is defined by Kluckhohn (1951) as patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values. Using the core features of a culture (Laungani, 2007) the military will be examined from perspectives including its background and organization, social systems, core values and traditions (norms for personal, familial, and social conduct, patterns of socialization, and gender roles), artifacts, language, and socially acceptable practices.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understand and appreciate the background, structure, roles/missions of the armed forces, the branches of the Department of Defense (DoD), which consists of the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and state Guard and Reserves.
2. Compare and contrast the life styles and issues of services members, veterans, their families, and communities with the civilian sector and recognize the direct practice, policy, administrative activities, and advocacy implications.
3. Develop insight into the reasons for military service, the experiences of minorities, and current issues facing the military, its members, and the dependent population to develop social work services with a relationally based and culturally responsive perspective.
4. Understand the impact of military culture on identity, propensity to seek help/stigma, and epidemiology of mental health problems in the service of content mastery for specialized service delivery, organizations, targeted clinical interventions, theory, and research.

III. COURSE FORMAT / INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Three primary instructional methods will be used in class: (1) critical discussion, interaction and transaction among the instructor and students; (2) didactic presentation by the instructor; and (3) student reflection. These primary methods will be supplemented with panels and guest speakers, presentation of student experiences/exercises, and analysis of lay and media portrayals relative to actual military experiences and lifestyles.

The online teaching and learning environment provided by the University's Blackboard Academic Suite will support and facilitate student-to-student communication and interaction outside of class as well as access to instructor support. The URL for Blackboard is <https://blackboard.usc.edu>.

IV. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

Following are School of Social Work Program objectives for the foundation year and the concentration year:

Foundation Year Program Objectives

Objective #	Objectives
1	To prepare graduates to be highly competent and ethical practitioners with advanced knowledge and skills in a specialized area of professional practice.
2	Demonstrate understanding and respect for diversity and ability to effectively work with and across diverse client populations and systems.
3	Utilize critical thinking and an informed and scientific approach in all aspects and phases of social work practice and evaluation while beginning a course of lifelong learning.
4	Analyze and apply strategies of policy advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice.

Supporting Objectives

Develop social workers who recognize their values and biases, impact of these personal characteristics on services and practices, and who use self-development, supervision, and mentoring to professionally address biases and values and participate in lifelong learning.

Apply critical thinking to understand the unique role of an individual within the context of the military and veteran cultures and the subcultures that exist within and across the branches of the armed forces.

Engage diversity and differences in professional knowledge and practice by understanding the complex intersection of demographic, ideological, and organizational characteristics and associated cultural, familial, and personal experiences.

Advance human rights and quality of life in recognizing stigma, barriers, and consequences of help-seeking behavior associated with the military and veteran's experiences and the challenges associated with military duties (e.g. the spectrum of conflict) and life experience (e.g. financial hardships, domestic problems).

Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment by recognizing the relevant organizational worldviews and broad cultural issues influencing military members, veterans, families, and their communities and using such knowledge to guide assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

Concentration Year Program Objectives

Objective #	Objectives
5	Develop, deliver and evaluate services and supports within an area of advanced professional practice that responds to problems in complex, diverse, urban settings.
6	Work effectively with diverse populations, across disciplines and theoretical orientations and within multiple arenas in an area of advanced professional practice.
7	Anticipate and respond to emerging social issues within local, national and global contexts.
8	Develop leadership skills to motivate, influence and direct others in the achievement of professional goals in an area of advanced practice.

Upon completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate the learning outcome objective presented in the table below. The program objectives from which the learning outcome objectives are derived, as well as the major methods of assessing whether the learning outcome objectives have been achieved, are also presented in the table.

Learning Outcome Objectives	Derived from Program Objective #	Method of Assessment
1. Understand the nature of the military and the impact of military missions on service members, families, and others	#1, #2	Bring and takeaway self-exploration Interview project
2. Analyze the features that distinguish and unite the branches of the services	#1, #2	Anthropology study
3. Evaluate the impact that the military culture has on the socialization and norms for service members, families, and others	#3	Anthropology study Interview project
4. Apply cultural features to social issues and interaction patterns in the military	#2	Anthropology study Interview project
5. Understand how the nature of military service makes it constituents vulnerable to particular stressors and problems	#1, #2	Bring and takeaway self-exploration Interview project
6. Create a new option for training military social workers to be culturally competent	#5	Culturally competent training project

V. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS, DUE DATES & GRADING

Assignment	Due Date	% of Final Grade
Pre-Military Culture Assessment	Sept. 24 th	20%
Post-Military Culture Assessment	Dec. 5 th	20%
Culturally competent training project	Dec. 5 th	25%
Class participation	Sessions 1-2	15%

Culturally competent training project

Identify some medium that would be impactful in training social workers to be culturally competent in working in a military environment and personnel. This medium might be a piece of scholarship, an essay, a published letter, a movie, a poem, a song/music video, a picture, a passage from the US constitution. Regardless of the source used, given that you believe it would have a positive growth impact on student affect, attitude, and/or belief, describe how you would use this as a training/developmental intervention. In other words, explain and justify how your source could be used to create a training intervention for other students. In short, this project is about using something that has contributed to your development in this area to help others develop. This assignment should result in 2 page paper.

Class Participation

Students are expected to contribute to the development of a positive learning environment and to demonstrate their learning through written and oral assignments and through active, oral class participation. Class participation should consist of meaningful, thoughtful, and respectful participation based on having completed required and independent readings and assignments prior to class. When in class, students should demonstrate their understanding of the material and be prepared to offer comments or reflections about the material, or alternatively, to have a set of thoughtful questions about the material.

VI. SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Schading, B. (2007). *A Civilian's Guide to the U.S. Military: A Comprehensive Reference to the Customs, Language, and Structure of the Armed Forces*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books.

NOTE: Additional readings may be assigned by the instructor throughout the course.

VII. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend every class and to remain in class for the duration of the session. Failure to attend class or arriving late may impact your ability to achieve course objectives which could affect your course grade. Students are expected to notify the instructor by email (coll@usc.edu) of any anticipated absence or reason for tardiness.

University of Southern California policy permits students to be excused from class, without penalty, for the observance of religious holy days. This policy also covers scheduled final examinations which conflict with students' observance of a holy day. Students must make arrangements *in advance* to complete class work which will be missed, or to reschedule an examination, due to holy days observance.

Please refer to *Scampus* and to the USC School of Social Work Student Handbook for additional information on attendance policies.

VIII. STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Additionally, it should be noted that violations of academic integrity are not only violations of USC principles and policies, but also violations of the values of the social work profession.

IX. STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. *Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible.* DSP is located in STU 301 and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

X. EMERGENCY RESPONSE INFORMATION

To receive information, call main number (213)740-2711, press #2. “For recorded announcements, events, emergency communications or critical incident information.”

To leave a message, call (213) 740-8311

For additional university information, please call (213) 740-9233

Or visit university website: <http://emergency.usc.edu>

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the building, please go to the following locations carefully and using stairwells only. Never use elevators in an emergency evacuation.

UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS		ACADEMIC CENTERS	
City Center	Front of Building (12 th & Olive)	Orange County	Faculty Parking Lot
MRF	Lot B	San Diego	Building Parking Lot
SWC	Lot B	Skirball	Front of Building
VKC	McCarthy Quad		
WPH	McCarthy Quad		

Do not re-enter the building until given the “all clear” by emergency personnel.

XI. STATEMENT ABOUT INCOMPLETES

The Grade of Incomplete (IN) can be assigned only if there is work not completed because of a documented illness or some other emergency occurring after the 12th week of the semester. Students must NOT assume that the instructor will agree to the grade of IN. Removal of the grade of IN must be instituted by the student and agreed to be the instructor and reported on the official “Incomplete Completion Form.”

Tentative Course Schedule for September 24th & 25th

Day One September 24th

Speaker Dr. Harris

Guest Speak:

Dr. Harris, J. Ret. Col. U.S. Army

Dean Emeritus University of Maryland

History of Military Social Work

Day One September 24th

Speaker Dr. Hassan

Topics

- *Military culture, regulatory norms of personal and familial conduct, patterns of socialization, gender roles: Introducing social work*
- The lifestyle and experiences of military people are highlighted with a particular emphasis on masculinity and the implications for gender issues. These cultural features set the stage to better understand military families, help seeking, and treatment issues

Supplemental Readings

Hajjar, R.M. (2010). A new angle on the U.S. military's emphasis on developing cross-cultural competence: Connecting in-ranks' cultural diversity to cross-cultural competence. *Armed Forces and Society*, 36, 247-263.

Hightower, K., & Scherer, H. (2005). 25 ways to know you're a military spouse. *Navy Times*, 54, 47.

Rosen, L.N., Knudson, K.H., & Fancher, P. (2003). Cohesion and the culture of hypermasculinity in U.S. Army units. *Armed Forces and Society*, 29, 325-351.

Savitsky, L., Illingworth, M., & DuLaney, M. (2009). Civilian social work: Serving the military and veteran populations. *Social Work*, 54, 327-339.

Street, A.E., Stafford, J., Mahan, C.M., & Hendricks, A. (2008). Sexual harassment and assault Experienced by reservists during military service: Prevalence and health correlates. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*, 45, 409-420.

Clinical note: Dickstein, B.D., Vogt, D.S., Handa, S., & Litz, B.T. (2010). Targeting self stigma In returning military personnel and veterans: A review of intervention strategies. *Military Psychology*, 22, 224-236.

Grube-Farrell, B. (2002). Women, work, and occupational segregation in the uniformed services. *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, 17, 332-353.

Iskra, D. (2007). Attitudes toward expanding roles for Navy women at sea. *Armed Forces and Society*, 33, 203-223.

Moradi, B., & Miller, L. (2010). Attitudes of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans toward gay and lesbian service members. *Armed Forces and Society*, 36, 397-419.

Topics

- *Military and culture; overview of the military, role of the military in the Department of Defense, and the branches of service*
- This session provides a general orientation to the military and military culture, offering the context with a snapshot of the nature of the military in general, the profession of arms, and the branches of the services. This material can be compared and contrasted with traditional civilian work roles and paramilitary work environments, to include services provided by police, firefighters, SWAT teams, protective services in general, trauma centers, and first responders. The general concepts of culture provide a valuable framework for understanding the military, and in this regard, the impact of a past history, regulated political, legal, and social systems, and salient beliefs and activities (rites, rituals, taboos, and ceremonies) provide meaning, legitimacy, and continuity to the military. These features are evident in cultural artifacts and reveal the service's values and assumptions.

Supplemental Readings

Krueger, G. (2000). Military culture. *Encyclopedia of Psychology, Vol. 5* (pp. 252-259). American Psychological Association.

Philosophical foundations of military ethics, Chapter 3, in:
Rhodes, B. (2009). *An Introduction to Military Ethics: A Reference Handbook*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International.

Chapter 1, pp. 26-45, 62-75, and 352-362.

Schading, B. (2007). *A Civilian's Guide to the U.S. Military: A Comprehensive Reference to the Customs, Language, and Structure of the Armed Forces*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books.

Clinical note: Pols, H., & Oak, S. (2007). War and military mental health: The US psychiatric response in the 20th century. *American Journal of Public Health, 97*, 2132-2142.

Schein, E.H. (1990). Organizational culture. *American Psychologist, 45*, 109-119.

Topics

- *Military culture, branches continued, composition, core values and traditions, norms of military conduct*
- This session dives more deeply and specifically into the branches of the service and offers more information about the composition of service members and why they serve. The information here completes the description of the different branches of the service and provides a macro view of its people. The specific cultural features connecting and differentiating the military branches should become evident.

Supplemental Readings

- Lutz, A. (2008). Who joins the military? A look at race, class, and immigration status. *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 36, 167-188.
- Woodruff, T., Kelty, R., & Segal, D.R. (2006). Propensity to serve and motivation to enlist among American combat soldiers. *Armed Forces and Society*, 32, 353-366.
- Clinical note: Reger, M.A., Etherage, J.R., Reger, G.M., & Gahn, G.A. (2008). Civilian psychologists in an Army culture: The ethical challenge of cultural competence. *Military Psychology*, 20, 21-35.
- Campbell, D.J., & Nobel, O.B.-Y. (2009). Occupational stressors in military service: A review And framework. *Military Psychology*, 21, 47-67.
- Schading, B. (2007). A Civilian's Guide to the U.S. Military: A Comprehensive Reference to the Customs, Language, and Structure of the Armed Forces. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books. Pp. 90-98, 111-118, 129-137, 45-56, 75-77, 98-106, 118-121

Topics

- *Patterns of socialization, language, life for service members, spouses, and families in the military*
- The nature of military assignments has tremendous impact on service members and their families, more so than civilian expatriates or corporate “road warriors.” Deployments, training, and temporary duty assignments can have an impact felt across the unit or across the base, and such assignments clearly affect personal relationships.

Supplemental Readings

Adams, G.A., Durand, D.B., Burrell, L., Teitelbaum, J.M., Pehrson, K.L., & Hawkins, J.P. (2005). Direct and indirect effects of operations tempo on outcomes for soldiers and spouses. *Military Psychology*, 17, 229-246.

Burrell, L.M., Adams, G.A., Durand, D.B., & Castro, C.A. (2006). The impact of military lifestyle demands on well-being, Army, and family outcomes. *Armed Forces and Society*, 33, 43-58.

Review pp. 215-278.

Schading, B. (2007). *A Civilian's Guide to the U.S. Military: A Comprehensive Reference to the Customs, Language, and Structure of the Armed Forces*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books.

Topics

- *The intersection of the military culture and the social work culture*
- Military assignments generate stress, strain and opportunity in home and deployed environments and contribute to problems and adaptations that span the boundaries of mental health diagnoses. Obviously PTSD and other war related problems are noteworthy in these populations and require effective services and interventions. At the other end of the spectrum are those who are quite hardy and resilient in the face of these stressors.

Supplemental Readings

Litz, B.T. (2007). Research on the impact of military trauma: Current status and future directions. *Military Psychology*, 19, 217-238.

Pietrzak, R.H., Johnson, D.C., Goldstein, M.B., Malley, J.C., & Southwick, S.M. (2009). Psychological resilience and postdeployment social support protect against traumatic stress and depressive symptoms in soldiers returning from Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. *Depression and Anxiety*, 26, 745-751.

Pittman, J.F., Kerpelman, J.L., & McFadyen, J.M. (2004). Internal and external adaptation in Army families: Lessons from Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. *Family Relations*, 53, 249-260.

Clinical note: Simmons, C.A., & Rycraft, J.R. (2010). Ethical challenges of military social workers serving in a combat zone. *Social Work*, 55, 9-18.

Daley, J.G. (2003). Military social work: A multi-country comparison. *International Social Work*, 46, 437-448.