

Interpersonal Skills Lab
Course Syllabus for EHS 737
Suffolk University, Spring 2007

Instructor – Tim Poynton, Ed.D.

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Office Hours – (removed)

Class meeting location and Time – (removed)

Course Description (from the course catalog)

An introduction to the fundamental techniques and methods of interpersonal relationships, self-examination, and field visits in relation to the role of professional counselor. The course will involve skill building through role playing, video and /or audio taping. An elective course for the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study in Organizational Development (CAGS).

This course meets the following DOE standards:

School Guidance Counselor (5-12)	School Adjustment Counselor (K-12)
i. Career Counseling l. Group Counseling m. Development of skills for consultation n. College counseling	a. Therapeutic relationships c. Learning/emotional disorders and treatment e. Assessment

Required Texts

Seligman, L. (2004). *Technical and conceptual skills for mental health professionals*. Pearson Education: Upper Saddle River, NJ

Objectives

The primary objectives of this course are to develop counseling skills and apply them in a laboratory-type setting. More specifically, students in this course will:

1. Develop active listening skills and apply them
2. Develop an awareness of personal strengths and challenges as a counselor
3. Understand how a therapeutic relationship is established and enhanced
4. Develop and elaborate a “personal theoretical orientation”
5. Observe counselors working in the field
6. Develop and enhance the counseling skills of other students in the class while refining their own

Class Schedule and Assignments

Date	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
1/16	Introduction to course		
1/23	Skill development foundations	1	MBTI <i>PJ 1, 2, or 6</i>
1/30	Background Assessment Skills; questioning techniques, intake interviewing	2	<i>PJ 1, 2, or 3</i>
2/6	Eliciting and Interpreting Emotions: active listening skills part one	3 (pp. 60-79)	Ref. Paper 1
2/13	Eliciting and Interpreting Emotions: active listening skills part two	3 (pp. 80-97)	<i>PJ 2, 3, or 4</i>
2/20	Exploring Thoughts and Patterns: Confrontation and Decision Making Skills	4 (pp. 98-116)	Video 1
2/27	Exploring Thoughts and Patterns: Problem Solving	4 (pp. 116-133)	<i>PJ 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6</i>
3/9	Video Reviews (Schedule time to meet with instructor by the end of this week)	Online Readings	PJ to date
3/20	Technical Skills Review	5	<i>PJ 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5</i>
3/27	Conceptual Skills in Background Assessment: understanding contexts	6	<i>PJ 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5</i>
4/3	Conceptual Skills in the use of Emotions: transference, suicide assessment, crisis intervention	7	<i>PJ 3</i> Video 2
4/10	Client Conceptualization – various clinical assessment methodologies	8	<i>PJ 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5</i>
4/17	Change processes, counseling notes, termination	9	<i>PJ 1, 2, or 5</i> Ref. Paper 2
4/24	Wrap up	10	

*****Any assignments turned in late will result in a 10% reduction in grade for that assignment*****

Assignments and Evaluation

Regular attendance and participation in class discussions and activities are required. You need to inform me of your absence if it is foreseeable; if it is not foreseeable, you need to let me know as soon as possible. Missing more than one day of class will result in a reduction of your participation grade.

Criterion	Brief Description	% of Grade
Attendance/ Participation	Regular and punctual attendance in class and quality of participation. Given the experiential nature of this class, your grade will be lowered for each day you miss more than one day. Missing more than three days will result in an incomplete grade being assigned for the course, and you will need to meet with the instructor to develop a plan for completing the course. Participation will be graded on the instructor's perception of the following criteria: ability to give and receive feedback, insight in counseling skill development, professionalism during role play activities, and ability to demonstrate knowledge of assigned reading	15%
Personal Journal	The personal journal (PJ) is a place for you to address questions posed each week by the reading in a personal manner. Grading will be based solely on the completion of the activities, and the level of insight demonstrated while answering the questions. Spelling and grammar errors will only affect your grade on this assignment if they significantly affect my ability to understand your writing. The personal journal will be collected twice during the semester.	15%
Reflective Paper 1	Paper (4-5 pages, double-spaced) reflecting on your personal strengths and challenges as a counselor and helper, and will likely be a more formal presentation of what you are discussing in your personal journal. You may choose the most salient among the following to highlight in your paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Empathy and other "core" counseling skills</i> • <i>Respect for diversity</i> • <i>Crisis counseling</i> • <i>Grief counseling</i> • <i>Conflict resolution</i> • <i>Group counseling</i> • <i>Other relevant personal experience or any other perceived strengths and challenges</i> <p>This paper does not need to be in APA format, but grammar and the rules of good writing do apply.</p>	20%
Reflective Paper 2	Combine what you have learned in this class with what you learned in your counseling theories class to elaborate a "personal counseling theory." Which theory do you find most helpful? Is there a combination of theories that seems particularly useful/helpful? Elaborate this in a 4-5 page double-spaced paper.	20%
Video Tapes	Students will arrange to videotape two "mock" counseling sessions with another student. You will then meet with the instructor individually to review. Grading will be based on presence of active listening characteristics.	30%

*****Late assignments will result in a 10% reduction in grade for the assignment*****

Grades for this course will be assigned on the following scale:

A = 95+ **A-** = 90-94.99 **B+** = 85-89.99 **B** = 80-84.99 **B-** = 75-79.99

Pattern continues...

Video Tape Assignments

You are required to complete two video tapes of “mock” counseling sessions with another student. These recorded sessions will need to be at least 10 minutes in length for the first tape, and 15 minutes for the second tape.

To schedule a time to record your counseling sessions, contact University Media Services at (617) 573-8168. They will be expecting students from this class to use the video lab this semester. They are easily available during regular business hours and can be available until 7pm with enough notice. If you need to lab after 7pm, please contact them ASAP so they can make sure they have staff available to assist you. You will need to bring your own VHS tape.

RESPONSIBILITIES AS THE CLIENT

1 – *Choose a topic.* The topic for this video can be chosen from the vignettes available on our class website, or a relatively ‘innocuous’ personal experience. You are free to modify the vignettes to help you “become the character.” If you would like to role play a scenario not on the vignette list, please run it by the course instructor first.

2 – *Be a “good” client.* You can be a good client by not being mute. You can be “difficult” and still be “good”, but you should try to be realistic in the sense that you have voluntarily come to talk to the counselor about a problem.

3 – *Provide feedback to the video camera for the counselor.* After the role play has completed, ask the counselor to leave the room and provide some feedback to the counselor about the session. Did you feel listened to? Judged? Comforted? Insulted? Provide both positive feedback and “constructive criticism”, if applicable.

RESPONSIBILITIES AS THE COUNSELOR

1 – *Focus on “core” counseling skills.* This is an initial meeting with the client; therefore, your task is to establish rapport to facilitate the counseling relationship, and begin to develop an understanding of what brought the client to see you. The primary task here is to engage in problem identification and clarification; you are not expected to begin generating possible solutions, although some of that may occur naturally. You may wish to draw upon a particular theoretical orientation to help guide your problem identification efforts.

2 – *Keep track of time.* As in “real” counseling, you do have time constraints. The session should last no longer than 15 (first session) or 20 (second session) minutes. You should end the meeting with this client by providing a *summary* of your session.

3 – *Review the tape and the client’s comments.* Watch and listen to yourself in the tape to engage in a self-critique. You will then summarize your thoughts in a paper (Minimum of one page single-spaced, two pages double-spaced). To be clear, the paper should contain:

- Description of the client’s presenting problem (content and feeling)
- Description of what went well, in terms of the “core counseling skills”
- Description of what could have been improved if you had the chance to do it again
- What you would like to discuss in your next meeting with the client

4 – *Schedule meeting with instructor.* When you have finished your review of the tape, schedule a meeting with the instructor to review the tape individually.