EDCP 310: Peer Counseling Theory and Skills  
Spring 2010

Instructor: Helena (Mimi) Martin  
Email: hmmartin@umd.edu

Meeting Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays 2-3:15  
Classroom: Art and Sociology Building, Room 3219

Office: Office hours: By appointment  
Office: Benjamin Building 3214B (across from the mailboxes)  
Mail: 3210 Benjamin (CAPS lounge, Counseling Psychology)


(deals can be found on [www.allbookstores.com](http://www.allbookstores.com))

Required Readings: SELECTIONS from the following—Available in class or electronically. Instructor will announce availability prior to due date.


Additional readings may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Required Readings: You are responsible for bringing a functional audio recorder and audio tape to class on 4/29/10. Any type of recorder is acceptable as long as the instructor will be able to check the recording (Please check with the instructor if you are unsure). Please check your equipment before class on 4/29/10. ENSURE THAT VOICES ARE AUDIBLE AND PLAY BACK AT NORMAL SPEED. If the instructor determines a tape to be inaudible, the assignment will have to be repeated outside of class. Please keep tapes in a secure location to safeguard confidentiality.

Course Description and Objectives
This course explores various counseling theories and skills of peer helping relationships. Theories and skills will be taught at a level appropriate for students seeking basic level training for use in peer counseling settings. Students should work toward the following course objectives:

- Understand multiple theoretical frameworks of counseling, including their similarities and differences
- Learn to apply specific counseling skills
- Think critically about counseling theories and skills, including the interaction of individual problems and relationships with larger context/society
- Form your own beliefs, opinions, and preferences of counseling theories and strategies

Please note that while counseling theories and strategies will be reviewed in this course, completion of this course does not qualify students to practice counseling as counselors or therapists without additional training and supervision from a qualified professional.

Course Structure and Course Participant Responsibilities

Research on cognitive development, personal experience, and feedback from students have taught me that students learn more and are better able to apply what they learn when they are actively engaged in the educational process. I believe in education as a collaborative process: that is, we all have a shared responsibility to both teach and learn in this course. I plan for classes to include small-group and large-group discussions, interactive exercises, lectures, films, and case examples from clinical practice. Your responsibilities as learners/teachers in this class will include:

- completing assigned readings before class
- turning in papers/projects on-time
- acting with integrity
- raising questions, offering comments, and responding to me and your classmates with openness, respect, and intellectual/psychological curiosity
  - You are very much encouraged to explore and express your opinions inspired by course materials.
  - In this classroom, there is no such thing as a dumb question or a wrong way to believe, think, or feel. I expect all of us to treat each other with respect and to be open to hearing viewpoints different from our own.
  - If you are uncomfortable regarding some issue between you and another classmate, I encourage you to work it out with that person; if you are still having trouble, please come speak with me. I can’t make the environment better if I don’t know what’s happening and, while I try to be aware of classroom dynamics, there are a lot of you.
- providing me with constructive feedback about the course
  - I am very committed to making this a good learning experience for each of you. I encourage you to talk with me at any point if you have questions or concerns about the course content, assignments, or your experience in this classroom.
Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University as well as to the tenure and promotion process. CourseEvalUM will be open for you to complete your evaluations for spring semester courses towards the end of the semester. Please go directly to the website (www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing online, at Testudo, the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

Course Expectations and Policies

Attendance. This course relies heavily on critical thinking and discussion and on learning through in-class exercises. It is imperative that each class member attends and participates in every class session. As such, attendance and in-class participation are ongoing requirements and are an integral part of the work of the course, and unexcused absences and excessive tardiness will negatively affect your grade. In addition to consistent attendance and participation in in-class discussions and activities, this includes having all readings completed prior to class, and coming to class with questions and/or points of interest from the readings for our discussion. If you feel unable to attend class regularly and/or feel that you cannot be on time for class, please drop the course.

Differences in opinion, values, and attitudes are to be expected, and the expression of these differences is encouraged. Any student who experiences difficulty in participating for any reason is encouraged to speak with the instructor immediately.

University policy excuses the absences of students for illness, religious observances, participation in university activities at the request of university authorities, and circumstances beyond the student’s control. Students must request the excuse in writing and supply appropriate documentation.

Class cancellation: Official delays and/or closures are announced on www.umd.edu and 301-405-SNOW. If a personal emergency forces the instructor to cancel class, an attempt will be made to send an email to students and to post information on the classroom door.

Participation in role plays. In order to have realistic helping sessions in which students can practice peer helping skills, all students are expected to participate as clients during practice exercises. In the client role, you have two participation options:

1. You may choose to disclose personal concerns. You are not expected to share very intimate details or problems, but rather to talk about some minor issues or problems in your life. Examples of appropriate topics are listed in the required text on page 22.
2. You may assume the role of a client (i.e., adopt a persona). In this way you are not disclosing your own personal information, but are acting as if you are a client. You should think about your character and consider the issues of the person, and how this character might react cognitively, behaviorally, and emotionally in a helping situation.

Students will never be required to disclose personal information nor will they be evaluated on this dimension, but students often choose to disclose personal concerns during participation in the practice of peer counseling skills. Moreover, students are not ever required to disclose to anyone which participation option was chosen at any given time.

Feedback exercise. Evidence suggests that peer feedback is a crucial component of acquiring and developing helping skills. Therefore, you will be asked to participate in feedback exercises throughout the semester.

Confidentiality & respect. Students are expected to respect their classmates at all times, particularly when practicing peer counseling skills. Acting professionally includes keeping everything you hear confidential, treating others with respect, and paying attention. Confidentiality with regard to client/peer material heard in class is an absolute requirement, regardless of whether or not the material is known or assumed to be personal or fictional. Disregard of this confidentiality policy will result in failure of this course.

For the sake of students’ safety, there are three circumstances in which students should inform the instructor about peers’ personal disclosures and under which the instructor must break student confidentiality:

1) Student intent to harm self or other(s)
2) Student report of victim or perpetrator of any type of abuse
3) Report of student information has been mandated by court order

Handling of personal concerns. Practice sessions in this course should not be used as a substitute for therapy. The purpose of self-disclosure is to offer learning opportunities to your peers. Students who are experiencing personal distress may consult with the instructor and/or contact the University of Maryland Counseling Center at 301-314-7651 (x47651). Another resource is the health center at UMD which can be contacted at (301) 314-8106 (x48106).

Accommodations for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities should inform the instructor within the first 3 weeks of the semester of any needed accommodations. The instructor will consult with the Department Chair and the Disability Support Service (x47682) and arrangements will be made to determine and implement appropriate academic accommodations.

Statement on religious observances: The University System of Maryland provides that students should not be penalized because of the observance of their religious beliefs; students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time, any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious
observances. Please notify me in writing within the first three weeks of the semester regarding any anticipated absences for religious observances.

Come to class with an open mind and a willingness to take risks. This course is designed as a beginning course in peer counseling. You are not expected to have counseling experience. Don’t allow yourself to become intimidated. Hopefully you will challenge your fears and push yourself to become an active and involved participant.

Requirements Regarding Course Assignments
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1. The instructor reserves the right to give very short pop reading quizzes at the beginning of class. If you arrive late, you may not take the quiz and will lose attendance and participation points.

2. Assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of class (2:00) on which date they are due. Papers will not be accepted via email.

3. Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade per business day (e.g., A to A-, B- to C+, etc.). You may place late papers in the instructors’ mailbox if you have someone in the CAPS department sign, date, and time-stamp your paper. Without this verification of the time/date, I will assume it was turned in on the day I pick it up and make deductions accordingly.

4. Absences are not a valid excuse for late or incomplete work. If you know in advance that you will not be able to attend class, it is your responsibility to turn assignments in to the instructor before the class time during which they are due.

5. When a student is absent (excused or unexcused), he or she is responsible for the information missed in class, including but not limited to assignments, change in due dates, content of discussion and/or lecture, and handouts.

6. All assignments should be typed and double-spaced, with 1 inch margins and Times New Roman 12-pt. font. Cover pages are not necessary.

7. Papers should be written according to APA style, using the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed, 2001). You may also consult http://www.vanguard.edu/faculty/ddegelman/index.aspx?doc_id=796, as it has an excellent overview of APA style rules and formatting (with examples).

8. Papers will be evaluated using the following criteria: (a) how well the specific goals of the assignment are addressed, (b) citing of course material/other sources to support your ideas, (c) writing quality (i.e., grammar, spelling), and (d) attention to page length and formatting requirements.

NOTE: The grade you earn on written work will be based on the quality of the material you produce. In other words, you do not earn points just by turning something in. You will continue to be judged by your ability to communicate orally and in writing at every stage of your future educational/career life. To the degree that I can in a peer counseling course, I am invested in helping you improve these skills. I also expect you to take initiative and use the excellent and free resources you have on this campus:

The Writing Center: 0125 Taliaferro Hall
301-405-3785
www.english.umd.edu/programs/WritingCenterWebsite/
Course Assignments

Attendance and participation (20%)
Active involvement in class discussions, activities, and assignments is essential for maximizing learning and is therefore given appropriate consideration in the grading of this course. While varied opinions are expected, participation that is disruptive, disrespectful, and distracting from the class purpose will have a negative effect on your learning and the learning of your peers and will also be considered in determining your grade. More than one absence will significantly lower your participation grade, as will late arrival to or early departure from class. The ability to learn to be an effective peer counselor depends on your presence for class lecture, discussion, and experiential activities. **If you feel unable to attend class regularly and/or feel that you cannot be on time for class, please drop the course.**

In accordance with University policy, absences will be considered “excused” for the following reasons: “illness of the student, or illness of a dependent as defined by Board of Regents policy on family and medical leave; religious observance (where the nature of the observance prevents the student from being present during the class period); participation in university activities at the request of University authorities; and compelling circumstance beyond the student’s control.” Additionally, “Students claiming excused absence must apply in writing and furnish documentary support for their assertion that absence resulted from one of these causes.”

Attendance and participation will be counted as a check, a check plus, or a check minus. No check will be awarded for unexcused absences. Typical participation will earn you a check. Those who are late, leave early, or have less-than-expected participation will likely earn a check minus. Those that go above and beyond in their class participation will earn a check plus. This includes behavior such as above average participation rates, having particularly insightful comments, full and enthusiastic small group participation, etc. A check roughly aligns with a mid-ranged B. Average level class participation earns you an average (meets but does not exceed expectation) grade. Please note that just showing up to class does not automatically earn you an A in class participation. A check plus is equivalent to an A+ and a check minus is equivalent to a C-. For example, if you receive checks about half of the time and check pluses about half of the time, you will likely end with an A- in class participation. Every missed class will drag down that average. Tardiness, being unprepared for class, and/or not participating in class discussions, activities, and assignments will result in a reduction in a loss of part or all of the attendance and participation points for that class period. Your lowest score will be thrown out of the average at the end of the semester. Attendance will be taken during each class.
In addition, short, *unannounced*, in-class “writing assignments” (quizzes) may be given, which will also be graded on a check, check plus, check minus scale. These grades will be incorporated into your total class participation grade. Only students who have an excused absence, will be allowed to make up the points for these assignments.

**Case Analysis**—(60% of final grade) – 3 (20% each)

Case Analysis #1: Humanistic Theory  
Case Analysis #2: Psychoanalytic/dynamic/Interpersonal Theory  
Case Analysis #3: Cognitive Behavioral Theory  

The instructor will provide a fictional description of an individual’s background and current difficulties. For each case analysis apply the appropriate theory listed above to the case information. Your case must include the sections described below. I suggest you use these section names as headings to label each section of your analysis. (Note: When turning in your paper, please use only your student ID, NOT your name - in my experience, this is the fairest way for me to evaluate them).

1. **Origins of client personality/problems/symptoms.** Describe this theory’s view of human nature. From this theoretical perspective how does one develop symptoms and problems? Ask yourself how this theoretical approach helps you to understand the client presented in the case (e.g. client’s personality, patterns of behavior). All the theories we cover in the course have their own perspective on the nature, meaning, and etiology of psychological problems and symptoms.

2. **Focus and course of counseling.** According to this theoretical perspective, what are the goals of counseling? What kinds of things would you focus on? What techniques or strategies would you use?

3. **Role of the counselor and the counseling relationship.** When working from this theoretical orientation, what would your relationship with your client look like? What is your role as the counselor? The client’s role? Your responsibilities? The client’s responsibilities?

4. **Cultural factors.** Please discuss how any cultural or social issue within the case might be relevant to the concerns that the individual in the case has presented (based on your own thoughts/opinions, and potentially readings on feminist/multicultural therapy) AND whether/how the theory under analysis might conceive these issues. (Overlap with the other sections is permissible as long as this issue is covered adequately.) Include the adequacy of the theory in dealing with social/cultural issues in your discussion of the theory’s strengths and limitations.

5. **Strengths and limitations** of the particular theoretical approach in working with this particular case. What are the benefits of using this particular approach with this specific client? Discuss several strengths and multiple limitations. Note: this section is not your critique of this theory in general but rather your critique of its utility with the specified case.

Some guidelines:
• Make your case analysis brief & succinct, approximately 3-4 double-spaced pages.
• All discussion should be rooted in the case AND the assigned theory. Show knowledge of the theory you are using. Your task is to identify concepts from the therapeutic approach and apply them to show an understanding of the case and how that therapy approach might be used beneficially.
• Remember to cite information from the case when making a claim. Each time you use a concept from a theory, you must specify what details from the case supports your drawing such a conclusion. If you simply say something from the theory is true without saying what information from the case supports your claim, then you are not writing the case properly and you will not get credit for your use of that part of the theory.
• Demonstrate quality writing skills. Write directly in standard English used in academic writing. Use complete sentences, develop your paragraphs, check your spelling, and put together a paper that reflects quality.
• Develop your thoughts fully, concretely, and logically. Don’t ramble, be vague, or wordy.
• In terms of form and organization, your paper should flow well and your points should relate to one another. The reader should not have to struggle to understand your intended meaning.
• Please include transitions between the sections of the paper and conclude with an overall summary/conclusion, not simply with the last section I described above. Paper writing offers an opportunity to work on writing skills as well as to focus on the content.

Audio taped Session and Reflection Paper (20%)
During class on 04/29/09, students will participate in two audio taped (see Required Materials, above) peer counseling sessions, once as the peer counselor and once as the peer presenting a personal concern (see Course Expectations and Policies, above). The goals are to experience counseling from both perspectives and to practice integrating the skills learned during the course of the semester. Please note that the instructor will collect the materials only to check for assignment completion and to maintain the confidentiality of the materials. **Please bring any concerns about your peer clients to the instructor as soon as your sessions are completed.**

The audio taped session and reflection paper will be due TBD. The reflection paper will be 5-7 typed pages. There are two separate components to the paper: 1) reflections on your audio taped sessions, 2) reflections on you as a peer counselor (not specific to these sessions). Paper will include discussion of the following topics:

1. Your session:
   • Your experience as the client. How did it feel? Was the session helpful? What made it helpful? What did your peer counselor do (or not do) that was not helpful?
   • Your experience of being a peer counselor. How did it feel? How did the role fit for you? What did you do that was helpful? What did you do that was not helpful?
What personal strengths did you encounter, generally or with regard to specific skills?

What personal difficulties did you encounter, generally or with regard to the specific skills? Any personal challenges/weaknesses related to being a peer counselor?

What feelings/reactions did you have that may have influenced your use of the skill(s)?

What role might cultural factors (gender, race/ethnicity, age, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc.) have played in the session?

We all have biases and they often surface in counseling relationships. Any biases evident in the sessions?

What did you learn about yourself?

Note: when discussing the peer counseling sessions, the focus is not on the content of the sessions but rather on the process. Instead of focusing on your client’s presenting issue, discuss what you did as a peer counselor and how you felt in the role. It is a chance for you to reflect on the experience and critique yourself as a peer counselor.

2. You as a peer counselor (not specific to session)

- Your personal definition of peer counseling. How did you develop this definition? How does it fit for you?
- Your view of human nature, your values and personality.
- What have you learned about yourself this semester?
- How do you plan to further develop your peer counseling skills after this course? What are your goals for improvement? How do you envision working on these goals?

Evaluation

1. In accordance with the undergraduate catalog, a grade of I (Incomplete) is assigned only for work which has been of passing quality through the academic term but which, for good reason and with approval of the instructor, cannot be completed within the time frame of the semester. Students for whom special circumstances may warrant an Incomplete must discuss this matter with the instructor before the last day of class.

2. Grading disputes: After the instructor returns an assignment, you have two weeks in which to review or check over your grade with the instructor. No concerns about grades will be discussed after this two week time period.

3. Academic integrity is the foundation of learning. The university has approved a Code of Academic Integrity available on the web: http://www.studenthonor council.umd.edu/code.html. The code outlines prohibitions on cheating on the exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. Students who engage in academic dishonesty on an assignment for this class will receive an F (0 points) for that assignment and may receive an F in the course. There will be no warnings. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Honor Council of the Office of Judicial Programs for further action. The standard sanction for such a
violation is an XF on your transcript, which stands for “failure due to academic dishonesty.”
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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/26/10</td>
<td>Overview of course, introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/28/10</td>
<td>Introduction to counseling &amp; 3 stage model</td>
<td>Hill chap 1-2</td>
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<td>2/2/10</td>
<td>Counselor values &amp; ethics</td>
<td>Hill chap 3</td>
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<td>2/4/10</td>
<td>Person-centered counseling</td>
<td>G&amp;F chap 9</td>
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<td>2/9/10</td>
<td>Video: Carl Rogers</td>
<td>In-Class Reading</td>
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<td>In class case-analysis</td>
<td>No Reading</td>
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<td>2/23/10</td>
<td>Video: Multicultural counseling</td>
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<td>2/25/10</td>
<td>Overview of exploration stage</td>
<td>Hill chap 4</td>
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<td>3/2/10</td>
<td>Attending &amp; listening</td>
<td>Hill chap 5</td>
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<td>Open questions &amp; probes</td>
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<td>3/11/10</td>
<td>Reflection of feelings</td>
<td>Hill chap 7</td>
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<td>3/23/10</td>
<td>Reflection of feelings (cont)</td>
<td>Yalom reading</td>
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<td>3/25/10</td>
<td>Integration of exploration stage</td>
<td>Hill chap 8</td>
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<td>3/30/10</td>
<td>Video: Clara Hill exploration</td>
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<td>Corey chap 4</td>
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<td>4/6/10</td>
<td>Overview of insight stage</td>
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<td>4/8/10</td>
<td>Video: Clara Hill insight</td>
<td>Case 2 due</td>
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<td>4/13/10</td>
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<td>G&amp;F chap 8</td>
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<td>4/15/10</td>
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<td>Hill chap 14</td>
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<td>5/4/10</td>
<td>Review</td>
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<td>5/6/10</td>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
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<td>5/10/10</td>
<td><strong>Audio-taped sessions &amp; final reflection paper due TBD</strong></td>
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Note: Instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus as needed.