EDCP 310: PEER COUNSELING THEORY AND SKILLS

SECTION 0401, FALL 2016

“Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right-doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there.” - Rumi

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LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

Instructor: Collin N. Vernay | cnv@umd.edu | collinvernay@gmail.com

Meeting Times: Tuesday and Thursdays, 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Location: Benjamin Building, 3233

Office Hours: Office hours available by appointment.

Required Text


Other Required Readings

A small number of articles will also be assigned to help students better understand theories in this class (see class schedule below). These readings will be made available electronically via ELMS.

Required Equipment

One of the main objectives of this course is to give students hands-on practice in developing helping skills. You will be responsible for obtaining a functional audio recorder to record helping sessions with a classmate; any type of digital or other audio recorder that allows you to transfer recordings to portable devices (such as USB, CD, cassette, etc.) is acceptable. Alternatively, you may use your laptop or phone to record, as long as the quality of the sound is adequate. If sessions are recorded on your laptop or phone, you must password protect all recording files.

You will be listening back to your recording and partially transcribing what you and your classmate discuss during the sessions, so please test your recorder before your sessions to ensure that voices are audible and play back at normal speed. If the recording is inaudible and you cannot transcribe the session, the session recording will have to be repeated outside of the designated session day. Keep recordings in a secure location to safeguard confidentiality! Audio files saved on your computers must be stored in a password-protected folder.
COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course introduces students to the core helping skills in peer counseling settings as organized in the three-stage model (Hill, 2014), and explores the basic tenets of the three predominant theoretical frameworks used in the counseling field. Students will receive basic level training on theories and skills for use in peer counseling settings. Students will work toward the following learning outcomes:

- Identify and define the specific skills of the three-stage helping model (Hill, 2014), and apply these skills to practical peer counseling settings.
- Understand the humanistic/person-centered, psychodynamic, and cognitive-behavioral theoretical frameworks of counseling.
- Evaluate the strengths and limitations of each counseling theory as applied to practical counseling settings.
- Learn to be a scientist-practitioner: collect and analyze data in your helping session, and use the results to inform your practice and self-reflection.
- Reflect on your unique identity as a helper (including your biases, beliefs, opinions, and preferences).
- Integrate the practice of helping skills into your professional field of study.
- Further develop your ability to communicate effectively through oral presentation and class discussion.

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

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

In this course, you will be expected to actively engage, collaborate and participate in both small and large-group discussions, interactive exercises, lectures, in-class videos, case examples, and clinical vignettes. Specifically, you are expected to:

- Come to class regularly, on time, and be ready to participate.
- Complete assigned readings BEFORE each class.
- Turn in all assignments by the beginning of class on the specified due date.
- Raise questions, offer comments, and respond with openness, respect, and intellectual curiosity.
- Pose all questions, concerns, and comments about the course to the instructor directly, either during office hours, scheduled appointments, or through written communication. The instructor will generally respond to emails within 24-48 hours, depending on the urgency level of the email.

Ultimately, come to class with an open mind and a willingness to take risks. This course is designed as a beginning level course in peer counseling. You are not expected to have prior counseling experience. Hopefully you will challenge your fears and push yourself to become an active and involved participant.

Please note the instructor may not respond to emails containing questions sent within 24 hours before an assignment is due.
GENERAL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

- Assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of class on the dates they are due (unless otherwise stated).
- Late assignments will be graded down by 5% per calendar day.
- When a student is absent, they are responsible for the information missed in class.

This course will be structured and student grades will be given with regard to the following:

1. GROUP PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION-LEADING OF READING MATERIALS

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.

There will be six classes throughout the course in which students are expected to deliver a topic presentation and lead the class discussion (SEE CLASS SCHEDULE BELOW). Each of these days will include a 30-minute presentation and 20-min class discussion on the topics and readings for that day. Each student will sign up in groups of three to do a topic presentation and lead the class discussion for one of these six days. The presentation should be a lecture about this day’s reading materials, plus the groups’ thoughts about them (for example, critical comments, further elaboration, related interesting topics, etc.). After the presentation, each member of the group will be responsible for coming up with at least one thoughtful question that can spur discussion in the class, and the whole group leads the class to discuss these questions. For specific details of what is expected for this assignment, refer to this assignment’s grading rubric, which will be made available online. The presentation PowerPoint together with all the discussion questions should be sent to the instructor via email or ELMS at least 24 hours prior to the start of the class. This will count as 15% toward your final grade.

Please note that all members of the group will receive the same grade, with the exception of a possible 5% deduction based on individual effort and contribution, as determined by fellow group members. Group members will complete peer evaluations (provided by the instructor), grading other members’ contributions to the presentation as either “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory”, and will have the opportunity to provide additional comments. Any student who receives an evaluation of “Unsatisfactory” from two group members may be subject to a 5% decrease in their presentation grade.

All students not presenting on these days are still expected to contribute to the conversation with thoughtful questions or comments during the class discussion. Students are strongly encouraged to prepare questions ahead of time while doing the class readings.

2. ATTENDANCE AND IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION

In addition to attending class regularly, a portion of students’ grades will be assessed based on their active participation in class. This class is as much about developing your skills as a helper as it is about retaining the
material, and for this reason, remaining present and engaged in lecture and class activities is imperative. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class, beginning in the second week of classes, and will be counted toward students’ overall participation grade. Students’ participation grade will also be assessed based on their appropriate use of technology (i.e., only using technology for note-taking and staying off of Facebook), the extent to which they remain engaged and actively listen during class, and their demonstration of preparedness for each class (e.g., having completed the readings, having questions prepared, etc.). A rubric detailing how participation will be assessed will be made available online.

3. TWO HELPING SESSIONS AND TWO LAB REPORTS

In order to have realistic helping sessions in which students can integrate and practice peer helping skills they have learned, all students are expected to participate in analogue helping sessions. These sessions typically occur during Thursday class meetings. Students sign up in dyads (or triads) to practice the analogue helping sessions (the dyads or triads will be fixed throughout the semester), and they rotate to be the helper and helpee (in the case of triads, there is an observer). The whole process lasts 40-45 minutes in the format specified in the table below, and is followed by a lab report and large-group class discussion of the experiences. These sessions will be recorded with audio recorders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Size</th>
<th>Helping Session Arrangement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dyads (A and B)</td>
<td>Total: 40min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) A: helper; B: helpee (15min) &amp; Processing, feedback, and discussion (5min)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) B: helper; A: helpee (15min) &amp; Processing, feedback, and discussion (5min)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triads (A, B, and C)</td>
<td>Total: 45min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) A: helper; B: helpee; C: observer (10min) &amp; Processing, feedback, and discussion (5min)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) B: helper; C: helpee; A: observer (10min) &amp; Processing, feedback, and discussion (5min)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) C: helper; A: helpee; B: observer (10min) &amp; Processing, feedback, and discussion (5min)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Students will be asked to talk about a minor personal issue of their choice, such as (a) an interpersonal issue (examples include roommate problems, romantic relationship troubles, etc.), or (b) about their career goals and aspirations in life. Students should be prepared to disclose personal information that they feel comfortable sharing, but will never be required to disclose any personal information if they are not comfortable doing so, nor will they be evaluated on this dimension. In other words, students may choose to make up an issue. However, students often do choose to disclose personal concerns during participation in the practice of peer counseling skills.

To meet the course requirement, each student needs to attend each of the two analogue session throughout the semester and complete a 3-4 page lab report for each. A guided rubric for these lab reports will be
provided by the course instructor. This will count toward your participation grade, which will be worth 20% of your final grade, with each of the two lab reports valued at 10% of the final grade.

4. **FINAL PAPER**

Following the two analogue sessions and corresponding lab reports, students will be required to complete an integrative reflection paper assessing their unique understanding, integration, and application of peer helping skills. Students will be asked to reflect on a) their personal theory of helping, utilizing one of the three theories covered in class (or an alternative theory, with instructor approval), b) their experiences (e.g., strengths, weaknesses) utilizing helping skills this semester, and c) how they might integrate helping skills into their professional field of study. Students are expected to demonstrate a purposeful and knowledgeable understanding of course material in this paper.

A guided rubric for this final paper will be provided by the course instructor.

This paper should be 8-10 double-spaced typed pages with 12-pt font and 1-inch margins on each side (not including the cover page, reference page, and SPOM forms).

*If you have any questions or issues regarding this assignment, please email me AT LEAST 24 hours before the assignment is due. If you email within 24 hours of the due date, I may not be able to respond in time.*

5. **THREE QUIZZES**

Throughout the course, you will take three quizzes on the three main counseling theories that relate to the Helping Skills model. These quizzes will assess general knowledge of each theory, as well as your ability to apply the theory and think critically about it. The instructor will provide more specific preparation guidelines for these three quizzes via ELMS one week beforehand. These quizzes will be time-limited, online, and administered on the following topics (FOR DATES SEE CLASS SCHEDULE):

1. Quiz #1: Person-Centered Theory (5%)
2. Quiz #2: Psychoanalytic Theory (5%)
3. Quiz #3: Cognitive Behavioral Theory (5%)

These quizzes will mostly be in the multiple choice format, and will be graded on a 0-100 scale according to the correctness of students’ responses.

6. **FINAL EXAMINATION**

The 90-minute final examination will comprise 30 multiple-choice questions. The 30 multiple-choice questions will test your knowledge about the helping skills we have learned this semester. These will resemble the multiple-choice questions from your quizzes. The instructor reserves the right to ask other questions or alter the format of this examination, but will provide more specific details before the final exam to assist students’ preparation.
SUMMARY OF REQUIRED “PRODUCTS” FOR EACH STUDENT

1. Group presentation and discussion-leading (15% of final grade).
2. Participation (e.g., in-class role-play of helping skills, active participation in discussion, etc.; 15% of final grade).
3. Participation in two analogue helping sessions and corresponding lab reports. If you have to miss a session, a make-up session is required (10% each, for a total 20% of final grade).
4. Final reflection paper (20% of final grade).
5. Response to the three quizzes on basic counseling theories (5% each, for a total 15% of final grade).
6. Response to final examination questions (15% of final grade).

OVERALL GRADE BREAKDOWN

1.

GRADING SCALE (PERCENTAGE POINTS)

- A + 100 – 98
- A 97 – 93
- A - 92 – 90
- B + 89 – 87
- B 86 – 83
- B - 82 – 80
- C + 79 – 77
- C 76 – 73
- C - 72 – 70
- D 70 – 60
- F < 60
ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES, AND MISSED DEADLINES FOR GRADED WORK

Attendance is of crucial importance for this course. Because this class involves highly interactive exercises, it’s strongly advised that you try to attend every session with the best possible effort (which will factor into your participation grade). To minimize disruption to the class, please arrive on time. Students are responsible for all material and announcements presented in class, including announcements about changes in the schedule and assignments. In the event that a class must be missed, the policy in this course is listed below.

ALL ABSENCES: It is the policy of the University to excuse student absences resulting from (a) illness of the student (or a dependent as defined by Board of Regents policy on family and medical leave); (b) religious observance (where the nature of the observance prevents the student from being present during the class period); (c) participation in university activities at the request of University authorities; and (d) compelling circumstance beyond the student's control. Students claiming excused absence must apply in writing and furnish documentary evidence that the absence resulted from one of these causes (exceptions noted below). Students are responsible for learning about any material or announcements missed and for initiating a process to make up missed work. Unless otherwise approved by the instructor, any work due on the missed day(s) must be submitted by the first class meeting after the absence.

ABSENCES DUE TO ILLNESS & INJURY: University of Maryland policy dictates that a single absence during the semester due to illness or injury will be excused with a signed medical excuse form attesting to the date of the health problem and acknowledging that the information is true and correct (http://www.health.umd.edu/sites/default/files/ClassExcuse1011.pdf). The letter must be submitted by the first class meeting after the absence, and only one such letter is allowed in the class during the semester. This policy does not apply when the absence occurs on a major graded event (i.e., exam, paper due date) or is for more than a single class. Multiple absences, and those occurring on a major scheduled grading event, require written documentation of the illness or injury from the Health Center or an outside health care provider. The signed and dated letter must verify the dates of treatment and the time period during which you were unable to meet academic responsibilities. The letter must be provided on the first class meeting after the multiple absences. Accommodations for such absences will be arranged on a case-by-case basis.

SCHEDULED ABSENCES: When the absence is due to a scheduled event (e.g., religious observances, jury duty), the student must provide written notice of the absence by the second week of the semester (or as soon as possible thereafter if the student learns about the scheduled absence after the second week) in order to have the absence excused. If an exam is given during this planned absence, this written notice must include a request for a make-up exam.
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, the instructor will make every attempt to email students ahead of time and to post information on ELMS as well.

### COURSE-EVAL-UM FOR FALL 2016

Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of the academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University. CourseEvalUM will be open for you to complete your evaluations for fall 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.

### CONFIDENTIALITY AND 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 to your classmates. **Confidentiality with regard to peer disclosures heard in class is an absolute requirement. Disregard of this confidentiality will result in failure of this 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.

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

- Student report of intent to harm self or other(s)
- Student report of having been abused as a child, or abuse of children, the elderly, or the disabled (past or present)

### 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 reached at 301-314-8180 (x48180) or health@umd.edu.

### ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor at the beginning of the
semester that she/he has a documented disability. It is also the student’s responsibility to provide written
documentation from DSS indicating appropriate accommodations. For more information about Disability
Support Services, please visit: http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics and Activities</th>
<th>Readings and Assignments</th>
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| T1: 8/30 | ✷ Introduction to the course.  
            ✷ Going over the syllabus. | NA |
| R1: 9/1 | ✷ Introduction to counseling and peer helping.  
            ✷ Introduction to the three-stage model. | Hill: Ch. 1, 2 |
| T2: 9/6 | ✷ Ethical and professional issues in helping professions: ethics,  
            multicultural issues, and growth.  
            ✷ Student signing up for topic presentation and discussion leading. | Hill: Ch. 3, 5 |
| R2: 9/8 | ✷ Exploration stage and humanistic/person-centered theories.  
            ✷ Assigning dyads for analogue helping sessions.  
            ✷ Arrangements about analogue helping sessions.  
            ✷ Small talk and discussion about conducting a helping session. | Rogers (1992)  
Hill: Ch. 6 |
| T3: 9/13 | ✷ Exploration skills—exploring thoughts and feelings.  
               ✷ Practicing in advance of your first helping session! | Hill: Ch. 8, 9 |
| R3: 9/15 | ✷ Helping Session #1  
               ✷ Meeting in BPS 2150! | Complete Helping Session #1 |
| T4: 9/20 | ✷ Helper personal awareness.  
               ✷ Effective attending and practice. | Hill: Ch. 4, 7  
Student Group #1 presents and leads discussion. |
| R4: 9/22 | ✷ Review of skills learned and practice. | Practice |
| T5: 9/27 | ✷ Special topics: mindfulness meditation. | Practice |
| R5: 9/29 | ✷ Analogue helping session: exploration.  
               ✷ Big-group discussion and processing. | Practice  
Lab Report #1 Due |
| T6: 10/4 | ✷ Exploration skills: integration.  
               ✷ Video: Clara Hill, exploration. | Hill: Ch. 10  
Quiz #1 Open  
Student Group #2 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session Details</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Instructor Notes</th>
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| R6: 10/6 | ✷ Insight stage: overview and theoretical basis.  
          ✷ Psychodynamic theories and insight stage. | | Hill: Ch. 11  
Student Group #3 presents and leads discussion. |
| T7: 10/11 | ✷ Skills for challenging clients and fostering awareness. | | Hill: Ch. 12 |
| R7: 10/13 | ✷ Analogue helping session: insight.  
          ✷ Big-group discussion and processing. | | Practice |
| T8: 10/18 | ✷ Insight skills: facilitating insight. | | Hill: Ch. 13  
Student Group #4 presents and leads discussion. |
| R8: 10/20 | ✷ Analogue helping session: insight.  
          ✷ Big-group discussion and processing. | | Practice |
| T9: 10/25 | ✷ Insight skills: immediacy. | | Hill: Ch. 14 |
| R9: 10/27 | ✷ Analogue helping session: insight.  
          ✷ Big-group discussion and processing. | | Practice |
| T10: 11/1 | ✷ Insight skills: integration.  
          ✷ Video: Clara Hill, insight. | | Hill: Ch. 15  
Quiz #2 Open |
| R10: 11/3 | ✷ Action stage: overview and theoretical basis.  
          ✷ Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy and action stage. | | Hill: Ch. 16  
Student Group #5 presents and leads discussion. |
| T11: 11/8 | ✷ Analogue helping session: action.  
          ✷ Big-group discussion and processing. | | Practice |
| R11: 11/10 | ✷ Steps for working with four action tasks. | | Hill: Ch., 17  
Student Group #6 presents and leads discussion. |
<p>| T12: 11/15 | ✷ Helping Session #2 | | Complete Helping Session #2 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
- Video: Clara Hill, action                                                                |
| T13: 11/22 | - TBA                                                                            |
| R13: 11/24 | - Thanksgiving Break! No class.                                                   |
| T14: 11/29 | - Integrating the three-stage model.                                              |
| R14: 12/1  | - Analogue helping session: integration, approaching termination.                 |
|          | - Big-group discussion and processing.                                            |
|          | - Termination of the counseling session.                                          |
| T15: 12/6  | - Overall review of the course.                                                  |
|          | - Termination of the course.                                                     |
|          | - Student evaluation and feedback.                                               |
| R15: 12/8  | - Final in-class examination. 2:00pm – 3:15pm                                    |

*Note: Instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed.

**STUDENT RESOURCES**

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the following excellent and free resources available on campus:

- **The Writing Center**  
  1205 Tawes Hall, 301-405-3785  
  [http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter](http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter)

- **Learning Assistance Services**  
  2202 Shoemaker Building, 301-314-7693  
  [http://www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS/](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS/)

- **Disability Support Services**  
  0106 Shoemaker Building, 301-314-7682  
  [http://www.counseling.umd.edu/edu/DSS](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/edu/DSS)


