Syllabus for PSY 8310
Special Topics: Introduction to Clinical Ethics and Methods

Credit Hours: 3

Bulletin Description:
Prerequisite: Graduate standing in clinical psychology doctoral program. Interviewing skills, crisis intervention, professional and ethical issues in providing clinical services.

Course Objectives:
This course is intended to prepare students to function as effective helpers in their first clinical practicum placement at the Auburn University Psychological Services Center (AUSPC). We will cover pertinent ethical, legal, and professional issues in addition to specific helping skills such as record keeping and crisis intervention. Through readings, class discussion, role play, videos, and written assignments, students will gain a greater awareness of the complexities of professional practice in the human service arena. Students will also develop skills in applying ethical principles to specific problem areas. Finally, students will become familiar with conceptual and practical issues in conducting psychotherapy, particularly as they apply to the AUPSC.

This course will be conducted primarily as a seminar. There will be a lecture component, but mostly we will discuss the readings and assignments, participate in in-class exercises, and watch training videos. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes, complete all readings and assignments prior to the class meeting for which they are scheduled, and participate actively in discussions and exercises. Each week before class, students should generate a discussion question and email it to the instructor. They should be prepared to ask their question during the class as a component of their participation grade. A diversity paper, a case example paper, and a take home assignment evidencing record keeping skills will also be required. There will be a take home final at the conclusion of the course.

Assignments turned in after the due-date without a university sanctioned excuse (see Tiger Cub) will be subject to a 20% penalty for each day late. You are invited to turn in assignments before the due-date.

You are expected to maintain the standards of academic honesty consistent with the Student Academic Honesty Code in the Tiger Cub. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with this code. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Plagiarism (using an author’s work as your own)
- Furnishing false or misleading information to course instructors
- Copying another student’s work
- Use of unauthorized materials during exams or other assignments
- Providing information to other students for the purpose of cheating
Instances of academic dishonesty will be prosecuted according to the procedures described in the Tiger Cub.

If you need accommodations for a documented disability, please arrange a meeting with me by the second week of class, or as soon as possible if accommodation are needed immediately. To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail or stop by my office. Bring a copy of your Accommodation Memo and Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. If you do not have an Accommodation Memo but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Program for Students with Disabilities located in 1244 Haley Center (phone 844-2096).

**Justification for Graduate Credit:**
The content of this course develops critical and analytical skills of students, including their application of the relevant literature to commonly encountered clinical issues. The course also fosters the development of skills necessary for the practice of psychotherapy. The course has rigorous standards for student evaluation and the course instructor is a member of the graduate faculty.

**Grading**
Grades will be based on class participation/discussion questions, assigned papers, a videotaped role-play, and the final exam. Each class participation/discussion question grade will be worth a total of 10 points for a cumulative total of 100 points for the semester (There are 20 class meetings; students choose which 10 classes to submit questions). The record keeping project, the video recorded micro-counseling skills role play, the case study, and the diversity paper will all be worth 50 points each. The take home final exam will be worth 100 points. Final grades will be based on the following scale:

- A = 360 - 400
- B = 320 - 359
- C = 280 - 319
- D = 240 - 279
- F = less than 239 points

**Discussion Questions:**
You are expected to have read assigned material and be prepared to participate in class discussions in the form of asking questions and integrating information. Over the course of the semester, all students are required to turn in 10 discussion questions based on the readings for the upcoming class. The questions should be used to comment or inquire about some aspect of the assigned readings for the upcoming class. Discussion questions will be used in class as a tool for generating discussion. To facilitate the integration of the questions into lecture and discussion, they must be emailed to me by noon the day before class (e.g., by noon Sunday before a Monday class, by noon Tuesday before a Wednesday class).
Case example paper:
Each student is required to turn in one short paper (3-4 pages) based on a case example. The case examples will be provided to students at the beginning of the semester. Each student will apply information from assigned readings to write a case conceptualization paper. The brief paper is worth 50 points.

Diversity paper:
Each student is required to turn in one short paper (3-4 pages) based on any diversity-related issue that may influence therapeutic process. You are asked to conduct a literature search and incorporate representative research findings, or clinical guidelines, related to your topic. The brief paper is worth 50 points.

Record Keeping Project:
Each student is required to turn in one record keeping project. The project guidelines will be provided to students at the beginning of the semester. Each student will apply information from assigned readings and lecture to complete the project, which is designed to prepare you for your AUPSC vertical team experience in the fall. The record keeping project is worth 50 points.

Video Recording of a Micro-Counseling Skills Role-Play
To help orient you to the process of therapy, students will videotape a brief role-play with an undergraduate confederate. You will be given a checklist of the steps to take when meeting your first client as well as a list of the micro-counseling skills to practice during the videotaped “session.” The videotape project is worth 50 points.

Schedule of topics

Week 1
Course overview; Patient Rights; Record Keeping


Week 2
Confidentiality and HIPAA

Week 3
Assessment of suicide, homicide, and abuse; Managing clinical emergencies


Week 4
RECORD KEEPING ASSIGNMENT DUE
Therapist and Client Fears; Mistakes Beginning Therapists Make


Week 5
Maintaining appropriate boundaries; Pragmatics in Therapy


Week 6
Diversity Issues


Week 7
Intake Interviewing


Week 8
Case conceptualization


Week 9
Micro-counseling skills: Essential Therapeutic Response Types I


Micro-counseling skills: Essential Therapeutic Response Types II


Week 10
DIVERSITY PAPER DUE
Micro-counseling skills; Essential Process Interventions I


Week 11
Advanced Micro-counseling skills


Week 12
CASE STUDY PAPER DUE
Essential Orientation-Specific Techniques I


Week 13
Essential Orientation-Specific Techniques II


Week 14
VIDEOTAPE DUE
Working with Children


Week 15
Professional competency, supervision, and licensure


TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE NO LATER THAN THE FINAL EXAM TIME SET BY THE UNIVERSITY
The following list is provided as a resource for you. These readings are not required for the class but they were nominated by clinical faculty members as potentially important content areas during the development phase of this course. Enjoy!


