

**ARGOSY UNIVERSITY SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**PC 6104 - COUNSELING SKILLS I**

**Class Schedule:**

Mondays January 8 – April 21, 2007

Time: 9:30am – 12:30pm

**Instructor**

Portia Polner, Ph.D.

(925) 798-5323

E Mail: PortiaPolnerArgosy@Yahoo.com.

Office hours by appointment

**Required Texts**

Sommers-Flannagan, R. & Sommers-Flannagan, J. (2003). **Clinical Interviewing**. Third Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. ISBN 0-471-41547-2

Kottler, Jeffrey A ( 2000) **Nuts and Bolts of Helping**. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. ISBN 0- 205-30888-0

**Course Description**

The goal of this course is to provide an introduction to counseling skills and to gain an understanding of the relationship between the therapist and the client. Listening and attending skills will be focused on as well as surviving the 'first' session. Issues dealing with boundaries, establishing rapport, professional and ethical concerns, client ambivalence, termination, stages of therapy, theoretical orientation and how it affects the therapeutic hour. Both oral and written counseling skills are emphasized.

**Course Objectives**

Students will be able to demonstrate the following:

- 1) Ability to identify the difference between a therapeutic hour and a 'normal' conversation.
- 2) Ability to demonstrate basic interviewing, attending and listening skills
- 3) Ability to reflect on how therapy brings about change
- 4) Ability to competently assess about what goes into a therapeutic hour.
- 5) Ability to delineate about the role of the self of the therapist in the therapeutic relationship.

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**Methods of Instruction** – This course will include in class lecture and discussion, video or audio presentations, role-playing, case-studies, and written exercises, students will present summaries of the readings and case material in class and video presentations from an actual interview..

**Content Areas:** This is an introductory counseling skills course and covers basic counseling skills. Content areas include: basic attending, listening and actions skills; interviewing skills, self development of the clinician; the nature of the helping relationship; an introduction to child and adolescents, couples and family psychotherapy; a review of multicultural issues, and an introduction to the connection between psychotherapeutic orientation and clinical technique. Basic treatment planning, overview of professional and ethical conduct

### **CLASS Topics and Assignments:**

#### **Week # 1 : Introduction to the class and the foundations of counseling:**

Course requirements, assignments, grading, content , presentation and examinations.

Read *Clinical Interviewing* chapters 1 and 2 and *Nuts and Bolts of Helping* , chapters 1 and 2. Be prepared to present an oral summary of the readings.

#### **Week# 2: Basic Attending and Listening and Interview Skills:**

Read *Clinical Interviewing* chapter 3 and 4 and *Nuts and Bolts of Helping* , chapters 3, 4 . Be prepared to present an oral summary of the readings.

#### **Week #3: The Intake and Assessment Process:**

Read *Clinical Interviewing* chapter 6 and 7 and *Nuts and Bolts of Helping* , chapters 5. Be prepared to present an oral summary of the readings.

Class exercise on conducting an intake assessment:

#### **Week #4: Mental Status Examination and Diagnosis, Assessing Risk:**

Read *Clinical Interviewing* chapter 8 and 10 . Be prepared to present an oral summary of the readings.

Class exercise on conducting a mental status examination. Diagnosis assessment vignettes.

#### **Week #5: Assessing Risk:**

Read *Clinical Interviewing* chapter 9 . Be prepared to present an oral summary of the readings.

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**Week #6: Developing a Treatment Plan:**  
Clinical Interviewing see chapter 10

Class exercise in treatment planning/case studies.

**Week # 7: Engaging in the counseling process:**

Nuts and Bolts of Helping, chapters 6 and 7. Be prepared to present an oral summary of the readings. Role-play exercises.

**Assignment: Your Presentation of a 5-to10 minute video excerpt from an actual intake counseling session. Submit a five-page paper on your experience conducting this video intake session.**

**Week # 8: Counseling within different modalities:**

Individual vs. Group psychotherapy. Couples and family therapy.

Read Clinical Interviewing chapter 12 Nuts and Bolts of Helping, chapter 8  
Be prepared to present an oral summary of the readings.

**Midterm Written Examination**

**Week # 9: Counseling Different Populations**

Child counseling

Read Clinical Interviewing chapter 11. Be prepared to present an oral summary of the readings.

**Week # 10: Counseling Different Populations**

Adolescent counseling

Read Clinical Interviewing chapter 11. Be prepared to present an oral summary of the readings.

**Week # 11: Multicultural and Diversity Issues:**

Read Clinical Interviewing chapter 13. Be prepared to present an oral summary of the readings.  
Case vignettes.

**Week # 12: Professional Issues and Ethics:**

Read. Nuts and Bolts of Helping, chapter 9 Be prepared to present an oral summary of the readings.  
Case vignettes.

**Week # 13: Self-Care in the Counseling Process: Avoiding Burnout.**

Read. Nuts and Bolts of Helping, chapter 9

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Week # 14: Demonstration of attending, listening, counseling process

**Your Presentation of a 5 to 10 minute video of an actual counseling session**

Role Play vignettes.

**Week #15:**

**Dealing with Termination and Closure:**

Review of course. Your final examination is an in class final case study presentation . Submit the written case study (no more than five pages). Course evaluation.

**VIDEO ASSIGNMENT:**

You are to choose a volunteer and conduct an initial therapeutic session with an individual who has agreed to participate and signed a release to permit a video presentation in class. **DO NOT choose a classmate, anyone currently in therapy, anyone with a history of mental illness, family members, spouses or children. Preferably this is an acquaintance and not someone you know very well.**

Prior to the session you must obtain written consent from the individual explaining that the video is for training purposes. You will tell them a bit about a therapy session, if they don't know anything. Ask them to choose a benign issue from their life to discuss with you (i.e. job decision, school decision, etc.), before you sit down and begin the taping. The tape needs to be about 50 minutes long.

Conduct the session as if it were a first therapy hour. Please leave out the 'paper work' portion of the session. (i.e. confidentiality, informed consent etc.) The focus, on your part, is the use of techniques explored in chapters 3 and 4 in *Clinical Interviewing*.

The **5 page paper** you are to write is an evaluation of how you did in your videotape as regards basic attending, listening and action skills. **Give specific examples of these skills** and talk about your experience of yourself and your client.

You will present a **5 to 10** minute segment of your videotape to the class. You can choose a segment that you think demonstrates your skills or one that was particularly difficult.

Videotapes must be audible and brought to class on the scheduled days, cued to the segment you want to present to the class. **MAKE SURE YOUR EQUIPMENT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE MACHINES WE HAVE AVAILABLE IN CLASS!**

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**Grading for the two video presentations (20 points total)**

**10 points:** Organization of presentation. Understanding of terms used to talk about skills you see yourself using, or not using. Self-reflection, discussion of awareness of self. Do you talk in an **informed way** (i.e. do you know the difference between open and closed questions?) about what you noticed? Do you talk about nonverbal communication?

**10 points:** Set up of videotape, preparation. Did you rehearse your presentation? Clarity of speech and presentation of self. Does your video work on our equipment. Are you ready to go? Are you comfortable with your material or are you simply reading your paper?

**Grading for paper is based on video experience (20 points total)**

**10 points:** Do you give specific examples of the techniques you see yourself using, or not using? Do you use material from course readings and include references? Do you talk about yourself and your experience in an honest, aware manner? Do you meet the length requirement? **5 points:** Organization of paper. Is it well thought out? Are your thoughts presented clearly and coherently?

**5 points:** Grammar, style, spelling punctuation etc. Is yours a well-written, graduate level paper? Since this is not a research paper I am not so concerned about APA style, but do consider the framework in terms of paper clarity and organization!

Knowledge of the readings:

Grade	
A = 90+	Paper is in appropriate APA format, well thought out and provides excellent coverage of material
B = 80 89	Paper is well thought out, but is missing one component of APA format OR coverage of material is adequate
C = 70 79	Insufficient number of references provided AND limited coverage
F = <70	Paper is disorganized AND coverage is not adequate AND does not conform to APA format, or there is evidence of plagiarism, or paper not submitted

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**Class Participation and Lateness: Class** attendance at all sessions is desirable. . I certainly understand there are emergencies in life, but this is in part an experiential course that is not easily made up. If you miss more than two classes you will drop by one grade. If you miss more than three classes you will not be given credit for this course. Prompt attendance is important, chronic tardiness may result in a lowered grade. See the chart below for specific in class grading criteria for participation. **Late papers and/or assignments will be graded down. Please talk to me if you think an assignment will be late. I take class participation very seriously. Let me know if you think this will be a problem for you!**

Grade	
A = 90+	Student actively participated in discussions in >80% of class sessions; nearly all comments were thought provoking and incorporated material from the assigned readings
B = 80 89	Student actively participated in discussions in >80% of class sessions; most of the comments were thought provoking and incorporated material from the assigned readings
C = 70 79	Student participated in discussions in >70% of class sessions; comments/questions demonstrate a surface level understanding of course topics
F = <70	Student participated in <70% of class sessions; comments/question did not demonstrate an understanding of course topics, or student did not participate in class discussions.

### **GRADES**

Midterm Examination: 20%

Video Presentations: 20%

Paper about video: 20%

Class Participation: 20% - Includes presentation of readings

Final Case Study Exam: 20%

### **GRADING SCALE**

93-100 A

90-92 A-

87-89 B+

83-86 B

80-82 B-

77-79 C+

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73-76 C  
70-72 C-  
69 below F

### **Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism**

In an effort to foster a spirit of honesty and integrity during the learning process, Argosy University requires that the submission of all course assignments represent the original work produced by that student. All sources must be documented through normal scholarly references/citations and all work must be submitted using the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition* (2001). Washington DC: American Psychological Association (APA) format. Please refer to Appendix A in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition* for thesis and paper format. Students are encouraged to purchase this manual (required in some courses) and become familiar with its content as well as consult the Argosy University catalog for further information regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

Additionally, Argosy University considers resubmission of a work produced for one course in a subsequent course or the submission of work done partially or entirely by another to be academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsibility to seek clarification from the instructor regarding how much help may be received in completing an assignment, exam or project and what sources may be used.

**Scholarly writing:** The faculty at Argosy University is dedicated to providing a learning environment that supports scholarly and ethical writing free from academic dishonesty and plagiarism. This includes the proper and appropriate referencing of all sources. You are responsible for maintaining an electronic copy of any work submitted, because you may be asked to submit your course assignments through "Turnitin," ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)), an online resource established to help educators develop writing/research skills and detect potential cases of academic dishonesty. Turnitin compares submitted papers to billions of pages of content and provides a comparison report to your instructor. This comparison detects papers that share common information and duplicative language.

### **ADA Policy**

It is AU/San Francisco Bay Area Campus policy not to discriminate against qualified students with a documented disability in its educational programs, activities or services. If you have a disability-related need for accommodations in this class, contact the Campus Director of Student Services at 510-215-0277.

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Your instructor is responsible for delivering this curriculum in a format that will ensure the objectives are met and measured. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways depending upon the experience, orientation, technological acumen, emphasis and preferences of the instructor as well as the resources available. Your instructor is also required to ensure that the course Outline include details regarding assignments and method of instruction.

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