

**MHC 509 Practical Skills for Counselors  
Spring 2022**

**Day & Time:** Thursday, 5:30-8:45 pm  
**Place:** Zoom, graduate campus: TBD  
**Zoom Link:** <https://zoom.us/j/91608532769>  
**Instructor:** Lauren Summer, MA, LPC  
**Email:** [laurensummer@lclark.edu](mailto:laurensummer@lclark.edu)  
**Phone:** 503-893-9532  
**Office Hours:** by appointment

**Catalog Description:** This course serves as an introduction to the basic counseling skills and techniques utilized in professional mental health and addictions counseling. Special focus is given to basic counseling concepts and skills. The various concepts, skills, and techniques presented in the course will be satisfactorily developed through demonstration and simulated videotaped counseling experiences.

**Course Objectives:** Students will establish a foundation for their professional role as effective counselors through the practice of counseling micro skills, development of awareness and intentionality in conceptualization of clients and their issues, along with increased awareness of self as an essential component in effective therapeutic interactions.

The following program objectives are in accordance with the CACREP 2016 standards for “Counseling and Helping Relationships” and will be experientially integrated into the classroom experience.

- 5 f. Counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence the counseling process.
- 5 g. Essential interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization skills.
- 5 j. evidence-based counseling strategies and techniques for prevention and intervention.

**Required Text:** Essential Interviewing and Counseling Skills, 2nd Edition

Suggested Reading:

[Young, M.E. \(2017\). Learning the Art of Helping 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson](#)

[Yalom, I. D. \(2002\). The gift of therapy: An open letter to a new generation of therapists and their patients. New York: HarperCollins.](#)

**Course Expectations**

## **Learning in the Context of Covid-19**

We are in the midst of an ever changing global public health crisis. We are all experiencing varied responses to this new reality, and using internal and external resources to manage this added collective trauma. Yet, we are intentionally showing up in an academic and professional capacity for the purpose of learning from one another, and developing the tools to further our counseling career paths. As such, we will need to be in a continuing dialogue with ourselves and each other about how to best learn in these conditions. There will be some hybrid learning to facilitate this. There are inherent limitations of technology which might impact our experience of this class. Regardless of whether class meetings are hybrid or fully online, everyone will be required to:

- Have access to a personal computer both in person and at home
- Have a set of personal headphones with a built in microphone
- Be able to access a confidential space on weeks that we view recordings of clinical cases
- Be able to access stable, high speed internet connection
- Have access to the most current version of Zoom as a computer application
- Be able to check course materials on Moodle and check school email on a daily basis
- Commit to the time required for class, and demonstrate motivation and self discipline

## **CPSY Departmental Attendance Policy**

Class attendance is expected and required. Any missed class time will be made up by completing extra assignments designed by the instructor. Missing more than ten percent of class time may result in failure to complete the class. This would be 4.5 hours of a 45 hour class (3 credits), 3.0 hours for a 30 hour class (2 credits) or 1.5 hours for a 15 hour class (1 credit.) In case of extreme hardship and also at the discretion of the instructor, a grade of incomplete may be given for an assignment or the entire course. In such cases, the work to be submitted in order to remove the incomplete must be documented appropriately and 2 9/4/2013 stated deadlines met. Students are expected to be on time to class and tardiness may be seen as an absence that requires make-up work.

**PLEASE NOTE (Americans with Disabilities Act):** Students with specific learning needs and/or disabilities who may need accommodations, who have any medical emergency information the instructor should know of, or who need special arrangements in the event of an evacuation, should inform the instructor as soon as possible, no later than the first week of term.

## **Small Groups**

Students will work in groups of three to practice the specific skills covered in class. These groups will meet in the second half of each class and each triad will switch between roles of counselor, client, and observer. These role plays should feel as genuine as possible, thus for students in the client role, reflect on things that have happened or are currently happening in

your life, that are safe to disclose. This content is protected by the same limits of confidentiality within our profession (i.e disclosing abuse of children/elderly or plan and intent to harm self and others). For students in the role of the counselor, focus on practicing skills covered in class, while still attending to the client. Try not to “force” the process. For observers, keep an eye on time and be ready to provide constructive feedback to student in counselor role and any details related to the therapeutic process as a whole.

## Evaluation

Each student will be evaluated in the areas of demonstrating microskills, self-awareness, empathetic presence, integration and application of skills, ethical considerations, effectiveness of oral and written communication, and openness to feedback. Factored into the possible points earned for each assignment will be a final evaluation of skill demonstration/attainment as well as professional qualities and ethical demeanor. Judgments about what constitutes satisfactory performance will be made by the class instructor which if not satisfactory might result in failure of the class. Final decisions will be made by the class instructor about successful completion of the class as well as readiness to move forward to practicum and clinical work. If there are concerns about a student's work, a meeting with the instructor will be scheduled to discuss the dynamics and potential outcomes.

For your reference, the Professional Qualities Evaluation (PQE) and the Counselor Readiness Scale are included in the back of the syllabus. These rubrics are used by the instructor to determine the professional dispositions and skills expected of students before progressing to practicum. The professional dispositions of Social and Self-Awareness and Openness, will be a focus of this course.

### List of counseling skills to be utilized and evaluated in video recordings:

Nonverbal Skills	Includes Body Position, Eye Contact, Posture, Distance from Client, Voice Tone, Rate of Speech, etc.
Encouragers	Includes Minimal Encouragers & Door Openers such as “Tell me more about...”
Questions	Use of Appropriate Open & Closed Questioning (e.g., avoidance of double questions)
Reflecting: Paraphrasing	Basic Reflection of Content – Paraphrasing, Summarizing, etc.
Reflecting: Reflecting Feeling	Reflection of Feelings
Advanced Reflection (Depth)	Advanced Reflection of Feelings, Reflection

	of Values, Meanings, Core Beliefs (takes counseling to a deeper level)
Overall Therapeutic Environment: Empathy	Counselor expresses appropriate empathy & care. Counselor is “present” and open to client
Overall Therapeutic Environment: Unconditional Positive Regard	Counselor expresses appropriate respect & unconditional positive regard
Confrontation*	Counselor challenges client to recognize & evaluate inconsistencies
Goal Setting*	Counselor collaborates with client to establish realistic, appropriate, & attainable therapeutic goals
Focus of Counseling*	Counselor focuses (or refocuses) client on his/her therapeutic goals i.e., purposeful counseling

\*skill will only be evaluated if the individual student has mastered the previous skills

### **Boundary Development & Practice**

Boundaries are extremely important in this course. Since class members will be participating both as counselors and as “clients” in their authentic selves (i.e., “real” plays rather than role-plays), it is essential that each member of the course be aware of what they are willing to disclose as “client” and what they are not. Counselors will be following the emotional openings and providing an empathic environment that encourages disclosure, so it is up to the “clients” to be aware of when to say “stop” or “I don’t want to go there right now” or other ways of putting up a boundary. We will discuss this issue at length in class, but please contact me with specific questions and concerns if they are not answered in class.

### **Course Requirements:**

1. Attend and participate in class. Attendance is mandatory. (See Course Expectations)

2. Complete weekly readings prior to class meetings

3. Guided Reflections (10% of grade)

Students are responsible for writing weekly journal entries reflecting on their experiences of the counseling process. Journal prompts may be provided to direct reflective process and will be posted on Moodle for that week. Rather than summarizing the particulars of each class, students will focus on their internal responses to engaging in the experiential activities, demonstrating their reflection on the many issues involved in building strong helping

relationships while incorporating personal style in a professional, authentic, and caring manner. Each journal entry will be a minimum of 2 pages in length. Handouts will be provided with examples for student use in developing a style of reflection. **Reflections will be sent via e-mail to me and are due by noon on the Friday immediately following class.**

#### 4. Transcriptions (60% of grade)

Three (3) interview transcripts – i.e., verbatim records of counseling interviews – are required of each student: (1) a baseline against which progress can be measured (15 minutes); (2) a mid-term transcription (15 minutes) in which all specific skills covered to date are demonstrated; (3) a final transcription (15 minutes) in which all specific skills covered during the semester are demonstrated. This assignment will provide students with an opportunity to self-assess their interviewing skills. Detailed instructions and an example will be provided. Students who do not initially demonstrate each skill set to the satisfaction of the course instructors can be asked to engage in a session to demonstrate required skills.

#### 5. Self-Assessment Reflection (20% of grade)

Students will fill complete a self-assessment of the PQE on themselves within the first and second to last week of class and will write a reflection detailing;

- Overall processes around self-assessment
- Areas of growth since the start of the semester
- Areas that need to be improved upon
- Plan on how to improve upon those areas.
- Strategies to get others (faculty, students, other supports) involved in your development.

This assignment is designed to be reflective and provide space for you to explore your own processing as an emerging counselor. Go deep! If you were to write on anxiety, try and explain some of the reasons for and source of anxiety. I will provide feedback on each reflection and will be looking for that deeper process. This reflection should be between 3-4 pages. You will be expected to turn-in both self-assessments with this paper.

#### **Grading:**

Reflections	10%
Transcriptions	70%
Self Assessment Reflection	20%

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Total: 100%

**Class Schedule:**

5:30-5:45 pm  
5:45-6:30 pm  
6:30-6:45 pm  
6:45-8:45 pm

Check in  
Didactic  
Break / Set up  
Role Plays/Interactive

Date	Topic/Class Activity	Assigned Reading	Assignments Due
Jan 13, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introductions, class overview, syllabus</li><li>• Activity</li></ul>	Syllabus	
Jan 20, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Counseling foundations, ethics</li><li>• <i>Small group introduction/goal setting</i></li></ul>	Prout et al., Chapters 1-2	Reflection #1  Triads Meeting Worksheet (done in class)
Jan 27, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diversity, nature of the counseling relationship</li><li>• <i>Session 1: Invitational skills</i></li></ul>	Prout et al., Chapters 4, 9  DiAngelo: White Fragility (PDF) (provided by email)	Transcription #1
Feb 3, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Initial interview</li><li>• <i>Session 2: Paraphrasing</i></li></ul>	Prout et al., Chapter 5	Reflection #2
Feb 10, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listening skills</li><li>• <i>Session 3: Reflecting Feelings</i></li></ul>	Prout et al., Chapter 6	Reflection #3
Feb 17, 2021 *Asynchronous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building the therapeutic alliance</li><li>• <i>Session 4: Reflecting Feelings</i></li></ul>	Prout et al., Chapter 7	Reflection #4
Feb 24, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conceptualization, Assessment,</li></ul>	Prout et al., Chapters 3, 8	Reflection #5

	<p>Dx, Tx Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Session 5: Initial Interview/Identifying and Collaboration</i></li> </ul>		
Mar 3, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ambivalence</li> <li>● <i>Session 6: Identifying discrepancies, giving feedback</i></li> </ul>	Prout et al., Chapter 10	Reflection #6
Mar 10, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Advanced change skills</li> <li>● <i>Session 7: Goal Setting &amp; Focus</i></li> </ul>	Prout et al., Chapter 11	Reflection #7
Mar 18, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Advanced change skills</li> <li>● <i>Session 8: Goal setting &amp; focus</i></li> </ul>	Prout et al., Chapter 11	Transcript #2
Spring Break			
Mar 31, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Variety in counseling experiences</li> <li>● <i>Session 9</i></li> </ul>	Prout et al., Chapter 13	Reflection #8
Apr 7, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Endings in therapy</li> <li>● <i>Session 10</i></li> </ul>	Prout et al., Chapter 12	Reflection #9
Apr 14, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Theoretical integration &amp; personal style</li> <li>● <i>Session 11: Closing session</i></li> </ul>	Prout et al., Chapter 14 & 15	2nd Self Assessment & Transcript #3
Apr 21, 2021 *Asynchronous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Closing reflections</li> </ul>		Self Assessment Reflection