



OTRP *online*
office of teaching resources in PSYCHOLOGY

Psy 364 / Introduction to Counseling Skills
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12:30-1:45pm TR, 124 Harvey
Office Hours: 9-10:00am MWF
1-2:00pm MW

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Growth means change and change involves risk, stepping from the known to the unknown.
—George Shinn

The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.—Alice Walker

The shoe that fits one person pinches another; there is no recipe for living that suits all cases.—Carl Gustav Jung

We find comfort among those who agree with us—growth among those who don't.—Frank A. Clark

Your neighbor's vision is as true for him as your own vision is true for you.—Miguel de Unamuno

This class is likely to be your most applied class in Psychology other than your internship. Rather than only talking about listening, we will practice it. Rather than only discussing a person's background (in theory), we will begin to assess it and consider why we might choose to intervene in a particular manner.

This course will be especially useful for three kinds of students: (a) those who plan to go to graduate school in one of the helping fields and want a head start relative to their classmates; (b) those who do not plan to immediately go to graduate school and want some preparation for entry level human services jobs; and (c) those who plan to work outside of the helping fields, but know that listening skills are essential for their personal and professional success.

Where are we going?

Our objectives include developing your abilities to:

1. Apply psychological theory to the interview setting;
2. Understand individual meaning, race, culture, class, and other contextual factors and the ways that paying attention to these can develop empathy and strengthen the assessment and interview process;
3. Use active verbal and nonverbal listening skills to express empathic understanding;
4. Develop and use ethical strategies for decision-making and evaluating clinical work;
5. Write clinical findings in an empathic and respectful, yet objective, manner.

As several of our objectives assume knowledge of abnormal psychology, PSY 354 is a prerequisite for this course. However, successful completion of other courses (e.g., Cross-cultural Psychology, Developmental Psychology, and Social Psychology) may also be helpful.

This course earns a W flag because of its requirements for writing and revision, as well as its emphasis on writing as a basis for learning the content of this course. It meets the Applied Coursework requirement of the Sociology/Psychology major.

How are we going to get there?

How will you learn? Murphy and Dillon (2003) emphasize that learning to listen to and work with others requires a variety of different strategies. I encourage you to think about your growth using their REVIEW model, which is the backbone for assignments made in class:

- **Read** about the skill
- **Explore** and discuss the skill in class
- **View** experienced clinicians employing the skill
- **Implement** the skill in videotaped role plays
- **Evaluate** your performance with classmates
- **Watch** your videotapes with your classmates, giving and receiving feedback (p. xiv)

Text. I am using Slattery and Park's *Empathic counseling: Meaning, context, ethics, and skill* (Brooks/Cole) and supplementing it with other readings. Articles—or links to them—are available on the Content tab in D2L.

Class time. This is a course that depends on your active involvement. The more active you are, the more you are likely to get out of this course. We will often have structured assignments where we practice writing styles used in the field. Throughout the course we will watch video clips of therapy and discuss them. Additional video segments are listed in the course schedule and available in the Psychology office.

Quizzes. We will have three quizzes to assess your understanding of listening skills and when/why they would be used. These will at times use a taped interview and transcript and will be composed of short answers questions, fill-in-the-blank questions, and essay questions.

Interviews. It is one thing to talk about interviews, something we will do a lot, and another to actually conduct them. Watching other people perform interviews, doing interviews, and talking about this experience are essential parts of our learning process. Relax! We all make mistakes, but we can learn at least as much from mistakes as from successes. Please talk to me if you are uncomfortable with this process; we will work together to make the process as smooth and comfortable as possible.

You will be working with two other students. In some cases you will have an assignment for the week; at other times you will be encouraged to practice the ideas we have been discussing in class. This process will be assessed in a number of ways:

- (1) **Description of “client” for role plays** (i.e., demographics, family structure, issues, symptoms, and supports). This informal description will support your work throughout the semester and get you to begin thinking about context; (10 pts.)
- (2) **Tape review.** Seeing yourself on tape is rarely fun, yet my previous students agreed that this assignment was a very important part of this course. Although I will be available throughout the semester to discuss role plays and interviews with you, you must schedule an appointment midsemester to review your tapes with me; (10 pts. extra credit)
- (3) **Self-evaluation (mid-semester and at end).** Thoughtfully and concretely (i.e., give examples) evaluate your skills and work up to this point in the semester. Your grade will be influenced by your writing and insights, as well as group feedback and my observations of your work with your group. (10 and 20 pts.)

Discussion Board. Effective listeners spend time thinking about what does and does not work in their and others' listening styles. I'd like to engage in this "conversation" with you throughout this semester. I will post several questions to begin each of eight discussions on D2L. You must make at least two posts to each Discussion Board (at least 150 words each, 2 pts per post, 4 pts. total). One of these posts should be in response

to a classmate. Students who go above and beyond on the cases, who engage with the material in a meaningful way with fellow students, can earn additional points extra credit (one per case). Discussions will be available until 11:59pm on the posted date.

There is also a Discussion Board to post your summaries of your interview with someone in the field (10 pts.). What are their educational backgrounds? What do they like/not like about their job? What skills do they see as particularly important? What are they looking for in new hires?

These are short examples of what weaker and stronger entries might look like:

Weaker entries	Stronger entries
<p>You know, I just don't get this whole listening thing. My friends tell me I'm a good listener even though I tend to doodle while talking to them. It just seems so subjective.</p>	<p>You know, I'm having a hard time understanding the listening skills. My friends tell me I'm a good listener even though I tend to doodle while talking to them. It just seems so subjective.</p> <p>Ok, so what do I do that helps them see me as a good listener even when I doodle? Well, I do a pretty good job maintaining eye contact with them and everyone says that I really understand them well. Last night, for example, I...</p>
<p>I've been watching the videotapes and some people like one therapist, but don't like another. I think the ones who are best are those who listen and let the client say or do whatever they need to.</p>	<p>I've been watching the videotapes and some people like one therapist, but don't like another. I think the ones who are best are those who listen and let the client say or do whatever they need to. However, I've noticed in our role plays that Jamal doesn't seem to care whether people listen to him; he wants someone who challenges him when he's off. Mercedes wants an authority to take charge.</p> <p>I know there are a lot of things involved here, but I wonder to what extent culture plays a role. Jamal, for example, seems to appreciate it when the person working with him recognizes the real oppression associated with being an African American. And Mercedes, as a traditional Latina, ...</p>
<p>I've been watching Chantal, who is a good listener. What I noticed is that she makes good eye contact with me and makes me feel good.</p>	<p>I've been watching Chantal, who is a strong listener. What I noticed is that she makes good eye contact with me and I really feel understood when she listens to me. Most of my other friends look away from me or do something else when I talk about something embarrassing. Instead, she makes time for me, notices the little things that I do (like when I hesitate or try to change the subject), and really seems to understand not just what I say, but what I <i>mean</i>.</p> <p>Yesterday, for example, I Told Tabitha and Chantal that I was excited about the new semester. Tabitha nodded and went on talking about her courses. Chantal heard the excitement, but also noticed the way that I hesitated when I said this. She said, <i>It sounds like you're also feeling nervous about what you're taking</i>. I really felt heard! I wonder what stops people from doing this more frequently...</p>

Other writing projects. If you enter one of the helping professions, you will spend a significant amount of your time writing reports, intake reports, SOAP notes and letters. The faster and better you can write these documents, the more effective you will be on your job – and the stronger your supervisor's evaluations of you will be! Although your job may use a somewhat different style than we will use here, the general ideas are the same across settings. Specifically, you will be expected to write carefully and respectfully about what you observe. When you draw inferences, you will be expected to document the sources of your inferences carefully.

There are three formal writing assignments that you will perform across the course of the semester (we'll do others in class). Each of these should be based on a person other than your partner in your role plays. This could be a fictional character, someone you are close to, or yourself. If this is a real person, please disguise your "client's" identity. Additional information on assignments and grading rubrics are posted on D2L. These include:

- (1) **SOAP note**, a brief and formal way of presenting the content of an interview (20 pts.);
- (2) **Psychosocial history**, a formal summary of your "client's" functioning in a wide variety of areas (50 pts.); and

- (3) **Client handout**, an educational tool to help clients understand an issue or learn skills. It should be appropriate for your “client” from your psychosocial history, in terms of the client’s problem, age, cognitive skills, and motivation to change. It should also be consistent with the research in the field on the “problem.” Your statement should include both the handout and a short paper (2 pages) tying the handout to the client’s skills, strengths, and needs, and the applicable research. Handouts will be briefly presented to and shared with the class. (50 pts.)

As you are juniors and seniors, I expect that your papers will be well-written and thought out. I will read your paper if you bring it to my office several days before the due date to help you meet this goal. If your paper is poorly organized or has not been spell- or grammar checked, I will return it with a 10% penalty to rewrite it. *Late papers will receive a 10% penalty.* Web sites that can help you with your writing can be found at <http://psy1.clarion.edu/jms/other.html>

What about attendance and participation?

We are a learning community; everyone’s perspective is important. Meaningful learning comes from listening to diverse perspectives and contributing your unique viewpoint. Participation (attendance, quantity & quality of contributions) will count for about 10% of your final grade, with an interim grade given about Week 8 (rubric on D2L). Note that strong participation is more than personal opinion; it includes your thoughtful analysis of readings and case material and your willingness to listen carefully to others. Quality of comments is more important than their number alone, although your regular attendance and participation is highly desirable. Life happens, but being absent more than twice *for any reason*—including migraines, illnesses, sick children, car problems, funerals, and university-sanctioned events—will impact your grade.

What about classroom behavior?

Please be interested, curious, questioning and observant. If you have questions or comments about anything, talk to me. Be open, honest, and ethical: <http://www.clarion.edu/judicial/ahonesty.htm> This is our class; I want to make sure it runs as smoothly as possible and that you learn as well as possible. As a result, except for emergencies, cell phones have no place in class. If I see you texting, your phone is mine. If you need to study for another class, do so, but not during our class. Your work should, of course, be your own.

How do I get a letter of recommendation?

Psychology is a career that generally requires at least a master's to enter and "practice." If you haven't begun thinking about this process yet, you should *now!* Many of you will probably consider asking me for a letter. These are some of the things I consider as I write my letters:

- ❖ performance in class
- ❖ the nature of questions raised and answers given
- ❖ attitude and motivation, including persistence and attendance
- ❖ quality of writing or analysis in your writing
- ❖ ability to continue to perform even as you experience stressors in your life
- ❖ other relevant interactions we have had and how you have performed there, including with Psi Chi, on research with me, or on departmental and university committees

Be aware of these and present your best face. I am not asking that you be "perfect," instead that you think, learn and profit from experience, behave professionally, and collaborate with and support each other’s learning.

If you need accommodations for a documented disability

... you must be registered with the university's Office of Disability Support Services (DSS). DSS will need you to provide current documentation that identifies your disability and need for accommodation(s), meet with them to discuss requested accommodations, and provide your instructors with appropriate notification of the approved accommodation as early in the semester as possible. The Office of Disability Support Services is located in 102 Ralston Hall (x2095).

What is Clarion University’s policy on confidentiality?

Clarion University is mandated by federal and state laws to report crimes occurring on campus or in campus-related functions. In order to help Clarion University comply with these laws, I am required to report information about university-related crimes to Public Safety. If you tell me of a crime that meets university criteria (especially assaults, sexual assaults, robbery, or hate crimes), I will report it. I am not required to identify either victims or witnesses by name. I will, of course, inform you before making a report.

How are grades determined?

Grades will be determined as a percentage of the available points earned. These will come from the following sources: (a) photos of listening skills and office (3 pts each, 6 pts); (b) Discussion Board (4 pts each, 24 pts. total); (c) Discussion Board on interview with an MH professional (10 pts.); (d) character for role plays (10 pts); (e) SOAP note (20 pts); (f) psychosocial history (50 pts.); (g) client handout and supporting statement about tie-in to client and research (50 pts.); (h) three quizzes (50 pts. each, 150 pts); (i) class participation (36 pts.), (j) review of your interview (10 pts. extra credit), and (k) your evaluation of your work over the course of the semester (10 and 20 pts, for first and second evaluations respectively).

Grade	Percentage Earned	# of points earned
A	90% and up	347 and up
B	80 - 89%	308 - 346
C	70 - 79%	270 - 307
D	60 - 69%	231 - 269
E	less than 60%	230 and down

I do not expect that a certain number of students will fail and I would be happy if the class received only As and Bs. To meet this goal I will be happy to help you when you need it. If you have test anxiety or if this course raises issues that you want to work on, but that are beyond the scope of this class, call the Counseling Center (x2255).

What's the plan for our course?

Check the calendar in D2L for a more visual presentation of due dates.

	Readings	Discussion Boards and Other Assignments
8/31	<i>What is counseling?</i>	
	❖ Slattery & Park: Chapters 1 and 2	
9/2-9/9	<i>Empathy and nonverbal listening strategies</i>	
	❖ Slattery & Park: Chapters 1, 10	DB1: Empathy, hope, acceptance (9/2-9) 9/9: Bring photo of good or bad listening to class
9/14-9/23	<i>Verbal listening strategies</i>	
	❖ Slattery & Park: Chapter 11 ❖ Edgette (2002)	9/14: Character for role plays/interviews
9/28-10/5	<i>Understanding others: The roles of context and worldview</i>	
	❖ Slattery & Park: Chapters 3 and 4 ❖ Hardy (2001) ❖ Phillips (1996)	9/28: Quiz 1 (Chapters 1, 2, 10, 11) 9/30: First self-evaluation DB2: People and their context (9/28-10/5)
10/7-10/14	<i>Making and writing good observations and inferences</i>	
	❖ Slattery & Park: Chapters 5, 7	"Client" interviews must be reviewed individually with me between 10/4 and 10/11 DB3: Why Person First Language and respectful writing? (10/7-14)
10/19-10/26	<i>Thinking about people in their larger context</i>	
	❖ Slattery & Park: Chapter 6 ❖ Associated Press (2002) – not for the	10/19: SOAP note DB4: Interview a clinician (by 10/26)

	faint of heart! ❖ Gandy (2002), p. 168 in S & P ❖ Roche (2002)	
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10/28-11/4	<i>Change: Difficulties making it and ways of maximizing it</i>	
	❖ Slattery & Park: Chapter 8 ❖ Lebow (2002) ❖ Baker, McFall, & Shoham (2009a, b)	DB5: Why research and theory guiding treatment? (10/28-11/4) 11/4: "Client" psychosocial history
11/9-11/18	<i>Listening well and helping people change</i>	
	❖ Slattery & Park: Chapters 10, 11, 12 ❖ Kaysen (2001)	11/11: "Client" handout and statement about client/research DB6: Two sides to every problem, to every strength (11/9-14) 11/18: Quiz 2 (Chapters 3-8)
11/23	<i>Good endings</i>	
	❖ Slattery & Park: Chapter 13	
11/30-12/2	<i>Working ethically</i>	
	❖ Slattery & Park: Chapters 2 and 14	DB7: Dress, piercings, tats (11/30-12/4) 11/30: Bring photo of therapist or office to class
12/7-12/9	<i>Your own supports are important too!</i>	
	❖ Slattery & Park: Chapter 15 ❖ DeAngelis (2002) ❖ Dess (2002)	12/7: Second self-evaluation: What did you learn? 12/16 (10am): Quiz 3 (Chapters 2, 13-15)

References

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