

Lewis & Clark
Graduate School of
Education and Counseling



MHC 509: Practical Skills for Counselors

Spring Semester, 2024

Instructor:	Jeffrey Christensen, Ph.D., LPC, LMHC
Class Day and Time:	Wednesday 9:00-12:15pm (3 hour weekly; 45 contact hours)
Class Location:	York 107; Other rooms will be assigned for small groups (TBD)
Office Location:	Rogers 329
Office Hours:	By appointment
Phone:	503-768-6071
Email (preferred):	jchristensen@lclark.edu
Prerequisites:	MHC 503/MHCA 502; MHC 513
Credit:	3 hours

Required Text

Young, M.E. (2021). Learning the Art of Helping 7th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
Additional articles will also be assigned throughout the course.

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 Goals and Objectives (Also Refer to Cover Sheet)

1. Students will establish a foundation for their professional role as effective counselors through the practice of counseling micro skills that include but are not limited to; paraphrasing, reflection of emotions, reflection of meaning, non-verbal communication behaviors, challenging/pointing out discrepancies, and treatment plan collaboration.
2. Students will begin to develop an awareness and intentionality in conceptualization of clients and their issues (content vs process) and how to utilize the counseling micro skills to appropriately guide the therapeutic exchange.
3. Students will begin to develop a beginning awareness of self and how it relates as an essential component in effective therapeutic interactions.

CPSY Department 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 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.

Disability Services Statement

If you have a disability that may impact your academic performance, you may request accommodations by submitting documentation to the Student Support Services Office in the Albany Quadrangle (503-768-7192). After you have submitted documentation and filled out paperwork there for the current semester requesting accommodations, staff in that office will notify me of the accommodations for which you are eligible.

Assignments & Activities Scale

Attendance

Attendance and general participation is expected. Coming to class ready to discuss topics, having read all assigned readings, finished your weekly reflection, and open to contribute to class discussions, and take part in small group practice sessions. Attendance is mandatory (see CTSP attendance policy).

Small Groups

Students will work in groups of three to practice the specific skills covered in class. It is recommended that sessions be videotaped using either student laptops or cellphones. Video recorders can be checked out if necessary. 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 is currently happening in your life, that is 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 attending to the client, while practicing skills covered in class. Try not to “force” the process. For observers, keep an eye on time and be ready to identify specific skills demonstrated by student counselor and provide constructive feedback 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 Counselor Professional Qualities Evaluation (CPQE) is the assessment used to evaluate student readiness and can be found in your student handbook. It will also be posted on Moodle. This rubric is 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.

Guided Reflections (15% 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 1-2 pages in length. Handouts will be provided with examples for student use in developing a style of reflection. I will collect these reflections several times throughout the semester and will announce this by the end of class. All reflections will be uploaded to Moodle and will be due by noon on the Saturday immediately following class. I will either provide feedback before the start of the next class, or incorporate certain quotes from the reflection into the following lecture (de-identified) for discussion. If you would like to opt out of any part of your reflection being a part of lecture, simply let me know in the email. It is recommended that you use Microsoft Word for these reflections.

Transcriptions (60% of grade)

Three interview transcripts (verbatim records of counseling interviews) are required of each student to establish a; (1) baseline against which progress can be measured; (2) a mid-term to mark student progress; and (3) a final transcription and video recording (See Final Skills Video Evaluation for more details), that covers all the skills discussed in class. This assignment will provide students an opportunity to self-assess their interviewing skills. Detailed instructions and an example template 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 with the instructor to demonstrate required skills.

For this assignment students will meet outside of class to have a 45-50 minute counseling session with someone from their group. For transcriptions #1 and #2, only 10-15 minutes of the session needs to be transcribed. Transcription #3 will also be a select 10-15 minute transcription, with a small 1-2 page reflection about the skills used and general impressions. You will also turn in the video recording of your session with transcription #3. It is also recommended that the same individual be used for each transcription. If outside individuals are used, it is strongly recommended that it not be close friends or family and that expectations are thoroughly explained to allow successful completion of this assignment.

*** Final Skills Video Evaluation ***

The Final Video assignment will be a demonstration of all the skills covered in class. An example of some of these skills are as follows: *invitational skills* (e.g., nonverbals, minimal encouragers, silence, door openers), *reflecting skills* (e.g., paraphrasing, reflecting feeling, reflecting meaning, summarizing), and *challenging skills* (e.g., giving feedback, confronting, immediacy, and goal setting). The assessment will include all skills learned in the class. This video is a “real-play” and should attempt to use advanced reflecting and challenging skills that can take counseling to a deeper level (e.g. values, meaning, and core beliefs). Only 25 minutes will be reviewed of your recorded session, so in the brief narrative please indicate the beginning and ending time of which 25-minute section you would like your instructor to review.

Self-Assessment Reflection (15% of grade)

Students will complete the CPQE on themselves immediately following the end of the first class, and again in the fourteenth class (week before final class), and will write a reflection detailing;

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

This assignment is designed to be reflective and provide a space for you to explore your own process as an emerging counselor. No APA format is necessary. Go deep! If you were to write on anxiety, try and explain some of the reasons for and source of the anxiety (process!). I will provide feedback on each reflection and will be looking for that deeper process. This reflection should include copies of both CPQEs and be 2-3 pages.

In-Class Group Presentation (10% of grade)

Your small group will present a 15-20 minute “training” of an identified skills covered in class. This demonstration is your creative effort in helping make that skill “stick” for your classmates. ***The more creative the demonstration, the better.*** Please use the content and information in your text and support

resources to guide your creative representation of the skill. Examples include; creating a game, skit, song, an interactive theater, interactive art etc. This will be done on the last day of class.

Course grading scale

95-100% = A

90-94% = A-

87-89% = B+

84-86% = B

80-83% = B-

77-79% = C+

74-76% = C

70-73% = C-

≤69% = F

Final Video Evaluation Rubric

	Does Not Meet Expectations	Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Final Video Evaluation	No demonstration of active listening. Did not respond appropriately to client statements. Excessive use of questions. Changes topic and/or employs detracting behaviors (e.g. personal opinions, advice giving).	Demonstrates some active listening. Inconsistent use of reflecting skills. Inconsistent use of challenging skills, or challenging skills may not be present at all. May be too passive and/or use excessive minimal encouragers, rather reflections.	Demonstrates consistent active listening. Consistently focuses on the counseling session. Uses a variety of reflecting and challenging skills with accuracy. May not encourage client to examine deeper levels of self understanding.	Exhibits consistently strong focus on client, and active listening skills. Demonstrates strong advanced reflecting and challenging skills. Skills are utilized with significant intentionality and consistently encourage client to examine values and meaning, and develop insight to move to deeper levels of self understanding.

Course Outline

This outline is designed to be our schedule for the Spring semester. Based off class discussion, additional readings may be assigned. If there is a change needed, there will be a discussion and vote in class.

DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENT/DUE
1/10	Introductions, Class Overview, Syllabus	Course Syllabus
1/17	Counseling foundations, therapeutic relationship, invitational skills <i>Small Group Introductions/Goals</i>	Chapters 1-2 Herman, 1993 <i>CPQE self-assessment</i> Reflection #1
1/24	Therapeutic relationship and basic attending skills <i>Invitational Skills</i>	Chapter 4 <i>Transcription #1</i>
1/31	Reflecting Skills: Paraphrasing Process vs Content Cognitive Developmental Models <i>Paraphrasing</i>	Chapter 5 Reading TBD Reflection #2
2/7	Reflecting Skills: Paraphrasing (review), Feelings <i>Reflecting Feelings</i>	Chapter 6 Reflection #3
2/14	Reflecting Skills: Feelings (review), Meaning <i>Reflecting Meaning, Summaries</i>	Chapter 7 Reflection #4
2/21	Challenging Skills <i>Identifying Discrepancies, Giving Feedback</i>	Chapter 8 <i>Transcription #2</i>
2/28	Assessment and Goal Setting <i>Initial Interview/Identifying and Collaboration</i>	Chapter 9
3/6	Outcome Evaluation Termination <i>Termination Session</i>	Chapter 12 Reflection #5
3/13	Multicultural Competence Skills <i>Broaching</i> <i>Working with Children</i>	Chapter 3 Reflection #6
3/20	Advanced Change Techniques 1 <i>TBD by Class</i>	Chapter 10
3/27	Spring Break	<i>Self-care</i>
4/3	Advanced Change Techniques 2 <i>TBD by Class</i>	Chapter 11 <i>Final Skills Video</i> <i>Evaluation; Self-Assessment</i> <i>Reflection</i>
4/10	Group Presentations, Potluck	<i>Group Presentation</i>

