



## PCO 7217: PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND SKILLS/PRE-PRACTICUM

Department of Psychology  
Counseling Psychology  
Thursdays, 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.  
Class Location: Peabody 404  
Spring 2026  
3 Credits

### Instructor Information

Name: Jennifer Place, Ph.D. (Instructor of Record)

Melissa Justis, M.Ed., Ed.S.

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Office Phone: 352-392-1575

Office Hours: By appointment only

\*Class location may change to CWC Room 302 (no earlier than Feb 13)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES**

Pre-practicum is a core requirement for students in the Counseling Psychology doctoral program at the University of Florida. This is a pre-professional practice-oriented course. This course will be conducted as a seminar and will be both experiential and didactic. Classes will involve a combination of interactive discussions, skill-building exercises, and skills demonstration reviews. You will have the opportunity to learn and practice vital clinical skills that you will be able to use in a variety of settings. This course provides an overview and introduction, with the goal of helping you learn foundational skills ahead of your beginning practicum. The hope is that learning these skills will help you feel confident and prepared to begin practicum at CWC. *The course is not intended to provide all skills required for successful counseling; nor is it meant to teach specific models or theoretical orientations of counseling. Developing counseling skills is a lifelong professional and personal journey that we will begin together, and the course will focus on foundational skills and common factors in counseling.*

### Course Objectives

By the end of the pre-practicum course, students should have learned and/or be able to demonstrate the following knowledge, skills, dispositions, and attitudes below:

- **Initial development** of an identity as a counselor-in-training.
- **Working knowledge** of counseling microskills, and readiness to employ them in your counseling sessions.

- **Personal awareness and insight** into your reactions, thoughts, and feelings regarding helping others and the process of change.
- **Initial awareness** of how counselors influence case conceptualization and counselor behavior, especially when working with clients with marginalized social identities.
- **Initial awareness** of how various personal variables can impact the therapeutic alliance and process.
- **Introductory** understanding of suicide and risk assessment and trauma-informed care.
- **Basic** note writing skills for individual progress notes.
- **Basic** knowledge of expectations of clinical supervision.

### **Course Topics**

- What is counseling?
- What it means to be a counselor-in-training
- Ethical considerations in counseling
- Microskills of Counseling (Attending Skills)
- Beginning and ending a counseling session
- Termination
- Mindfulness in Counseling/Using the “here and now”
- Note writing & case management
- Basic introduction to trauma and trauma-informed care
- Basic introduction to suicide and risk assessment
- Using clinical supervision to support your growth as a counselor
- Counselor wellness and self-care

### **SEMINAR FORMAT**

This course uses an experiential and discussion-based seminar format. This seminar is intended to develop both your skills and your confidence as a counselor. You will be expected to participate fully in each seminar/class meeting. We will foster each other's understanding of the subject matter by actively participating in ongoing class discussions and activities. Everyone is expected to be an active participant.

### **REQUIRED TEXT & READINGS**

Class readings will be from the required text (below) and readings provided by the instructor. Students are expected to read the assigned chapters and/or articles **prior** to the class meeting. The instructor will also provide a list of supplemental readings that you may read along the way.

Note: Pursuant to the Board of Governors regulation 8.003, instructional materials for this course consist of only those materials specifically reviewed, selected, and assigned by the instructor(s). The instructor(s) is only responsible for these instructional materials.

Disclaimer: Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources relevant to all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse,

promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint or belief. Although the required readings were thoughtfully chosen for this course, we are aware that at times, authors may share a perspective that may not only differ from your point of view or theoretical orientation but could lead to oppressive or otherwise harmful engagement (i.e. demonstrate a cultural bias) with others. It is expected that you will critically review and reflect on these readings rather than passively accept what the author shares. We strongly encourage and will support requested discussion and engagement around your personal experience of the readings.

### **Required Textbook:**

- 1) Hill, C. E. (2019). *Helping skills: Facilitating exploration, insight, and action* (5th ed.). American Psychological Association.

### **Recommended:**

- 2) Cozolino, L. (2004) *The Making of a Therapist: A Practical Guide for The Inner Journey*. New York. Norton
- 3) Martin, D. G., & Johnson, E. A. (2024). *Counseling and therapy skills* (5th ed.). Waveland Press.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

All requirements/assignments will be listed on the Canvas course page. If relevant, an evaluation rubric will be designed based on the components of the assignment. We strongly recommend that you review the Canvas course page and make note of all deadlines. It could also be beneficial to set up notifications in Canvas. The UF Honor Code applies to all assignments.

### **Participation (30%)**

Since this is a seminar that only meets once weekly, attendance and **active engagement** are crucial. When possible, it is expected that you will provide advance notice of any absences and consult with a classmate about materials covered during that class. Please be aware that missing class will impact your participation grade (3% deduction per class). Also note that an absence does not relieve you of your responsibility for completing all assignments by their due date or for material covered in the missed class.

Each class will focus on your development as a counselor. While attendance is a necessary component for this development to occur, it is not sufficient. Counselor development is an active process. Thus, you are expected to demonstrate active engagement in all aspects of this course. Active engagement is demonstrated by completing all required readings and assignments, raising critical questions, as well as sharing your sincere thoughts and reactions to the course material and discussions. In evaluating your class participation, we will be attending to your level of preparedness (e.g. your comments and critical questions reflect that you read the material, etc.) and your level of engagement in class discussions (e.g., frequency

of contribution, attention to self and others' reactions/comments, relevance, and thoughtfulness of participation).

Counselor development is a collective process. Therefore, you will also be tasked with playing an active role in your classmates' development as counselors. You will be expected to be respectful and attentive towards them in class and to provide critical and thoughtful feedback about their skills demonstrations.

### **Writing Assignments: Note Cards, Reflection Papers, and Case Notes (30%)**

**Notecards** are directly from the reading (include page numbers of where the information is found). Notecards must include: three key points and either a significant sentence or question. For each main point or concept, write 1-3 sentences discussing its relevance to clinical practice and/or how it might be useful in your practice as a counselor.

**Case notes** will be written for several counseling skills demonstrations. First, there will be a reading assignment and class lecture addressing guidelines and formats for writing case notes. These assignments are designed to help you reflect on the counseling process and to practice documenting your clinical work using professional language.

**Reflection papers** are expected to develop awareness and insight into your reactions, thoughts, and feelings throughout the course. Prompts will be provided in Canvas. The goal is for students to deeply reflect on the prompts and to explore and engage with your thoughts, feelings, memories and life experiences. Approximately 1-2 pages are expected. Papers are to be submitted electronically on Canvas by Sunday at 5 pm prior to the next class. A final reflection paper (2-3 pages) will demonstrate how you have integrated didactic, experiential and written material into your view of counseling.

### **Roleplays (10%)**

This course will offer the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on your use of microskills. To facilitate this, students are required to participate in role plays (in-class).

Initially, role plays will focus on specific microskills. However, as the semester progresses, you will be expected to thoughtfully integrate a variety of microskills based on the flow of the interaction and the needs of the "client." The length of the role plays will increase progressively throughout the course. The instructor will assign participants to play the role of "client" for each demonstration. You will be provided with detailed instructions on expectations for these demonstrations.

### **Midterm Counseling Skills Demonstration (10%)**

At the midpoint of the semester, we will do a "check in" with regard to progress in demonstrating clinical skills (microskills). You will complete a full-length, 20 minute counseling session with a volunteer/+"client" assigned by the instructor. You will also submit a case note for the session. The instructor will provide detailed feedback on this demonstration and the clinical documentation.

### **Final Counseling Skills Demonstration (20%)**

At the end of the semester students must demonstrate their mastery of the counseling skills

(microskills) covered over the course of the semester. To accomplish this, you will complete a full-length, 45-50 minute counseling session with a volunteer/+"client" assigned by the instructor. You will also submit a clinical note for the session. The instructor will provide detailed written feedback on this demonstration and the clinical documentation.

### Grades.

|    |   |            |
|----|---|------------|
| 1. | Participation                                 | 30 percent |
| 2. | Note Cards, Reflection Papers, and Case Notes | 30 percent |
| 3. | Counseling Skills Demonstrations              | 40 percent |

### SCHEDULE

| Week | Class Date  | Topics   | Assignments   |
|------|-------------|--|---|
| 1    | January 15  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction, Orientation and Review for Syllabus</li> <li>• Counseling</li> <li>• APA Div 17</li> <li>• Microskills</li> <li>• Ethics</li> </ul>   | Canvas Module 1<br>Read Ch. 1 (Hill, 2020)<br><b>Due: Jan 13<sup>th</sup> by 5pm:</b><br>Module 1 Assignments |
| 2    | January 22  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of the Counselor</li> <li>• Beginning Counseling: Setting the Stage</li> <li>• How to Begin and End a Session</li> <li>• Skills: Informed Consent and Limits of Confidentiality</li> <li>• Ethics</li> </ul> | Canvas Module 2<br>Read Ch. 2 and 3 (Hill, 2020)<br><b>Due: Jan. 18 by 12midnight</b><br>Module 2 Assignments |
| 3    | January 29  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Rapport</li> <li>• Microskills: genuineness, positive regard, language, reflection, clarification and probing</li> </ul>   | Canvas Module 3<br>Read Ch. 4 and 5 (Hill, 2020)<br><b>Due: Jan. 25 by 12midnight</b><br>Module 3 Assignments |
| 4    | February 5  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploration Stage</li> <li>• Microskills: Paraphrasing, summarizing, empathic understanding</li> </ul>  | Canvas Module 4<br>Read Ch. 6 and 7 (Hill, 2020)<br><b>Due: Jan. 25 by 12midnight</b><br>Module 4 Assignments |
| 5    | February 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microskills: open-ended questions, objectivity, verbosity, attending, silence</li> </ul>  | Canvas Module 5<br>Read Ch. 8 (Hill, 2020)<br><b>Due: Feb. 8 by 12midnight:</b><br>Module 5 Assignments       |
| 6    | February 19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Client Form and Ti</li> <li>• Begin Midterm Skills Demonstration Reviews</li> </ul>   | Canvas Module 6<br>Read Ch. 8 (Hill, 2020)<br><b>Due: Feb. 15 by 12midnight:</b> :                            |

| Module 6 Assignments |             |   |  |
|----------------------|-------------|---|--|
| 7                    | February 26 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insight Stage</li> <li>• Microskills: Here and now observations/questions</li> <li>• Skills Demonstration Reviews</li> </ul>       | Canvas Module 7<br>Read Ch. 9 and 10 (Hill, 2020)<br><b>Due: Feb. 22 by 12midnight:</b><br>Module 7 Assignments  |
| 8                    | March 5     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis Management and Suicide</li> <li>• Skills Demonstration Reviews</li> </ul>   | Canvas Module 8<br>Read Ch. 11 and 12 (Hill, 2020)<br><b>Due: March 1 by 12midnight:</b><br>Module 8 Assignments<br>Midterm Self-Assessment              |
| 9                    | March 12    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Midterm Check-In &amp; Feedback Meetings (individual meeting times TBD)</li> </ul>   | Canvas Module 9<br>Read Ch. 13 (Hill, 2020)<br><b>Due: Mar. 8 by 12midnight:</b><br>Module 9 Assignments   |
| 10                   | March 19    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No Class</b></li> </ul>   | <b>SPRING BREAK</b>  |
| 11                   | March 26    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action/Working Stage</li> <li>• Termination</li> </ul>   | Canvas Module 11<br>Read Ch. 14 and 15 (Hill, 2020)<br><b>Due: Mar. 22 by 12midnight:</b><br>Module 11 Assignments                                       |
| 12                   | April 2     | Dr. Felicia Brown, Assistant Director of Training, presenting on the role of the Practicum Trainee at the CWC   | Canvas Module 12<br>Read Ch. 16 and 17 (Hill, 2020)<br><b>Due: March 29 by 12midnight:</b><br>Module 12 Assignments                                      |
| 13                   | April 9     | Dr. Shinlay Rivera, Associate Director Crisis and Emergency Center presenting on crisis management and the services of the Consultation and Referral Team (CART) at the CWC | Canvas Module 13<br>Read Ch. 18 (Hill, 2020)<br><b>Due: April 5 by 12 midnight.</b><br>Module 13 Assignments<br>Final Skills Demonstration and Case Note |
| 14                   | April 16    | Dr. Zully Rivera, Assistant Director of Group Counseling, presenting on the New Client Form and Titanium submissions at the CWC   | Canvas Module 13<br><b>Due: Apr. 12, 2025 by 12midnight</b><br>Module 14 Assignments   |
| 15                   | April 23    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final individual feedback meetings and final skills demos review (individual times TBD)</li> </ul>                                 |  |

**NOTE:** The syllabus, tentative semester outline, format of assignments, and readings may be adjusted over the course of the semester.

**NOTE:** The use of technology to take pictures, recordings, or videos are prohibited unless the instructor and students provide permission prior to the act.