

**COUN 501**  
**INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNSELING PROFESSION**

**FALL 2012**

3 semester hours

Angie Wilson, Ph.D., LPC-S, LSOTP

Office: Binnion Hall, Room 211A  
email: Angie.Wilson@tamu-commerce.edu

Office Phone: (903) 886-5773

**OFFICE HOURS**

Monday	11:00am to 3:00pm (Binnion)
Tuesday	11:00am to 3:00pm (Binnion)
Wednesday	3:00pm to 4:30pm (CHEC)
Thursday	3:00pm to 4:30pm (CHEC)
Friday	(by appointment only)

**COURSE MEETINGS**

Wednesday, 4:30pm to 7:10pm – CHEC/Mckinney

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION OF COURSE**

*501. Introduction to the Counseling Profession.* Three semester hours.

Recommended as initial course in a student's program to serve as an introduction to the counseling profession. Roles of counselors and related professionals in various settings are presented. Professional goals and objectives; trends; professional associations; ethical and legal issues; history; credentialing; preparation standards for counselors; and essential interviewing and counseling skills, characteristics, and behaviors that influence helping processes are explored. [NOTE: This includes the revision that was submitted for the next catalog.]

**GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION**

This course should be taken early in the student's preparation program. This course serves primarily as an orientation to the counseling profession and as a course where students develop basic interviewing and counseling skills and self-awareness that promotes appropriate counselor/client relationships. A grade of "B" or higher must be earned in COUN 501, 510, 528, and 516 for admission to candidacy status (or its equivalent for those seeking school counselor certification only), which is required before practicum (COUN 551).

**COURSE OBJECTIVES include, but are not limited to, the following:**

Students will demonstrate understanding of:

1. Essential interviewing and counseling skills so that the student is able to develop a therapeutic relationship;

2. Counselor and consultant characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes including verbal and nonverbal behaviors and personal characteristics, orientations, and skills;
3. Self-awareness so that the counselor-client relationship is therapeutic and the counselor maintains appropriate professional boundaries;
4. History and philosophy of the counseling profession, including significant factors and events;
5. Requirements for entry into, progress through, and completion of the Texas A&M University–Commerce counselor preparation program;
6. Professional roles, functions, and relationships with other human service providers;
7. Integration of technological strategies and applications within counseling and consultation processes;
8. Professional organizations, primarily ACA, its divisions, branches, and affiliates, including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current emphases;
9. Professional credentialing, including certification, licensure, and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues;
10. Public and private policy processes, including the role of the professional counselor in advocating on behalf of the profession;
11. Advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients;
12. A general framework for understanding and practicing consultation, including an examination of the historical development of consultation;
13. Ethical standards of ACA and related entities, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling.

**CONTENT AREAS include, but are not limited to, the following:**

- I. Introduction to helping skills (a primary emphasis of this course)
  - A. Essential interviewing and helping skills
  - B. Counselor and consultant characteristics and behaviors that influence the helping process
  - C. Importance of self-awareness in maintaining a therapeutic relationship and appropriate professional boundaries.
- II. History and philosophy of the counseling profession
- III. Master's-level programs at A&M-Commerce
- IV. Professional roles
  - A. Introduction to counselor roles common across settings including, but not limited to
    1. Counseling
    2. Assessment
    3. Consultation and its history
    4. Deferral
    5. Program evaluation
  - B. Educational settings
  - C. Non-educational settings
- V. Relationships with other human service providers
- VI. Technology and the counseling profession

- VII. Professional organizations for counselors
- VIII. Professional credentialing
  - A. Certification (School Counselor Certification and NCC)
  - B. Licensure
  - C. Accreditation
- IX. Public and private policy processes and advocacy on behalf of the profession
- X. Ethical standards and legal considerations in the counseling profession

### **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION**

Lecture, discussion, and experiential.

### **STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES**

<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Point Value</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Attendance & Participation	15	<i>Attend all class meetings and complete all readings</i>
5 – Page APA Paper	15	<i>September 26, 2012</i>
Mid Term Exam	20	<i>October 10, 2012</i>
Taped Listening Skills Assignment	15	<i>November 7, 2012</i>
Interview with a professional	15	<i>November 14, 2012</i>
Final Exam	20	<i>November 26, 2012</i>

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:**

Attendance and active participation are a necessary and vital part of the course. Active participation includes attending each class session, completing reading assignments prior to class, and participating in class discussions. The student is expected to attend class regularly. Absence from class and/or nonparticipation will result in grade reduction. Students are expected to attend all classes and arrive on time. In order to earn full credit for attending, students must be present at both the beginning and ending of class meetings. For those weeks with online assignments, missing assignments (discussion board included) or turning in assignments late will be considered as absence for that week. With regards to the discussion board, **each student is expected to contribute to the online learning experience as if they were in class.**

To participate in the discussion, take time to think about what you write and how it relates to the topic and the specific discussion. You are expected to make a minimum of three (3) entries per discussion. Please respond to the discussion question in your first entry and feedback to the comment(s) of your classmates.

More than one absence will result in your final grade being reduced by 5 points. More than two absences (or more than 5 class hours missed) will result in your final grade being reduced one grade level. More than three absences will require you to repeat this course for credit. Being late to class or leaving class early will result in grade reduction. Participation includes the ability of the student to interact with the professor and peers in a professional and respectful manner.

### **AUDIO/VISUAL RECORDING OF CLASS CONTENT:**

Students who wish to tape record lectures or class content must request permission from the instructor prior to doing so. The nature of counseling courses is such that students may sometimes share personal information. Therefore, students must secure permission from the instructor prior to taping. If permission to tape is granted, students must cease taping when fellow students share personal or confidential information during class.

### **APA FORMATTED PAPER:**

The student will be required to develop a 5-page, APA formatted paper. In this paper, the student will describe a facet of the counseling profession. The subject may be an area that is currently well researched and practiced (i.e., working with clients dealing with substance abuse, working with grieving clients, etc.) or an area of the profession that is not as well researched or practiced (i.e., working with adult clients managing Asperger's Syndrome, working with clients dealing with traumatic brain injury, etc.).

The paper must include:

- an abstract;
- a title page;
- an introduction of the issue (a rationale for why this issue is important);
- difficulties in working with the issue;
- examples of how the issue may be managed, treated, or cured;
- a conclusion; and
- a reference page (At least 8 references must be used in completing this paper. At least 5 of those references must be refereed journal articles. The remaining references may be subject related books or book chapters.)

The paper will be graded based on content (10pts), writing (5pts), & APA format (5pts).

### **TAPED LISTENING SKILLS ASSIGNMENTS:**

The student will be required to complete a recording of a listening skills session with a fellow classmate. The length of the session will be 20 minutes. In this time, the student will listen to content and facilitate the fellow classmate continuing to share content by participating in active listening skills (i.e., reflection of feeling, paraphrase, open-ended questions, minimal encouragers, reflection of meaning, etc.). The assignment will be described in greater detail as the assignment due date approaches. The listening skills assignment will be graded based upon use of basic listening skills (5pts), skill in completion of transcript of interaction (5pts), and self-introspection (5pts).

### **MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAMS:**

The student will complete two exams. These exams will consist of both multiple choice and short answer questions. Both exams are worth 20 points.

### **INTERVIEW WITH A PROFESSIONAL:**

Students will interview in person (face-to-face) two mental health professionals about the role of professionals and changes and important issues within the field. (See attached Interview Schedule). The professionals must have received their training and education as counselors. That means they must have a degree in counseling, or if they are in student affairs, a degree similar to that of counseling or in student affairs. If you have any doubt about the training of the individuals you plan to interview, please ask them about their training PRIOR to your interview or contact me to verify that they are

appropriate for this assignment. Also, you may not interview a family member or close friend for this assignment. Any deviation from using the appropriate professional will result in a loss of 5 points for the assignment.

You are to write a reaction paper to the interviews, indicating issues that raised salience for you about the counseling profession, training, the role of the counselor, and current issues within the field. The paper should reflect your awareness of the profession and role as a counselor as opposed to a summary of the interview. I cannot stress enough how important it is not to offer a summary of the interview but your REACTION to it. I am looking for your “inner dialogue” of the interviews. You may discuss the interviews but mostly in context of your reaction to the responses. A running account of what was said is not important though it is important to include the items in the Interview Schedule available in this syllabus. This paper should be 3-5 pages in length, and must be submitted in APA format (an abstract is not needed for this assignment).

You must obtain informed consent of the professionals you are interviewing and submit the signed forms with your assignment. Any papers submitted without the consent forms will receive a failing grade. A contract is included in the syllabus for your use.

**REQUIRED TEXT(S) AND/OR READING(S):**

Nystul, M. S. (2011). Introduction to Counseling: An art and science perspective (4th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. ISBN-10 0-13-701610-7, ISBN-13 978-0-13-701610-5

Young, M. E. (2012). Learning the art of helping: Building blocks and techniques (5th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. ISBN-10: 0132627507, ISBN-13: 978-0132627504

\*\*Additional assigned readings are integral to your understanding of this course. These handouts will be made available during the semester.

**RECOMMENDED TEXT:**

American Psychological Association (2009). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

**TEXES COMPETENCIES THAT RELATE TO THIS COURSE (TEXES is the state examination required for school counselor certification.)**

Competency 006 (Counseling)

The school counselor understands how to provide effective counseling services to individuals and small groups.

Competency 010 (Professionalism)

The school counselor understands and complies with ethical, legal, and professional standards relevant to the profession.

**ASSIGNMENT POLICY**

Assignments are expected to be turned in on the due date designated in the syllabus. Assignments that are not turned in by the beginning of class on the day on which they are due will receive an automatic deduction of 10 points for each class the assignment is late.

All assignments will be submitted via eCollege as a Microsoft Word document. Emailed and hard copies of assignments will not be accepted unless prior permission from the instructor is received.

### **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

If you have a cell phone or any other type of electronic communication device with you, please disarm it before entering the classroom and keep it off for the duration of class.

In addition, neither texting nor phone calls are allowed in class. You will be asked to leave if you text or talk on your phone during class. Should you be asked to leave due to the above referenced reasons your attendance and participation grade will be impacted.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

#### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

**Texas A&M University-Commerce**

**Gee Library**

**Room 132**

**Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835**

**Fax (903) 468-8148**

**[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)**

### **CONDUCT AND ACADEMIC HONESTY**

"All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment." (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct) "Graduate students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work." (See Section A13.12, Academic Honesty, A&M-Commerce Procedures.)

### **UNIVERSITY CLOSING DUE TO WEATHER**

Check <http://www.tamuc.edu/> regarding class cancellations. Also, KETR radio on 88.9FM and television channels 4, 5, and 8 (channel 7 for Tyler & Longview Area).

## TENTATIVE SEMESTER SCHEDULE

**Note:** Changes may have to be made. If so, they will be announced in class. You are responsible for knowing of any changes even if they are absent when changes are announced.

Class/Date	Topic and Readings	Assignments
1/Aug. 29	<i>Introductions and Course Overview</i> <i>Master's Handbook</i> <i>Discussion of Paper &amp; APA Style</i> <i>An Overview of Counseling</i>	<b>Read:</b> Masters Handbook (bring to class) & Ch 1(Nystul)
2/Sept. 5	<i>Professional Preparation and Ethical &amp; Legal Issues</i> <i>The Counseling Process</i>	<b>Read:</b> Ch 2 & Ch 3 (Nystul), ACA Code of Ethics
3/Sept. 12	<i>Assessment &amp; Diagnosis</i> <i>Counseling Research &amp; Evaluation</i>	<b>Read:</b> Ch 4 & Ch 5 (Nystul)
4/Sept. 19	<i>Developing a Personal Approach &amp; Multicultural Perspective</i> <i>Marriage &amp; Family Counseling</i>	<b>Read:</b> Ch 6 & Ch 10 (Nystul)
5/Sept. 26	<b><u>Online Learning Assignment – SACES Conference</u></b>	<b>APA Paper Due</b> <b>Read:</b> Ch 11, Ch 12, & Ch 13 (Nystul)
6/Oct. 3	<i>Counseling in Various Settings</i> <i>Midterm Review</i>	<b>Read:</b> Ch 14 & Ch 15 (Nystul)
7/Oct. 10	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	
8/Oct. 17	<i>The Therapeutic Relationship</i> <i>Non Verbal Attending</i> <i>Basic Skills Definitions (Handout)</i> <i>Practice Skills</i>	<b>Read:</b> Ch 3 & Ch 4 (Young)
9/Oct. 24	<i>Reflecting Skills: Paraphrasing, Feelings, Meaning, &amp; Summarizing</i> <i>Practice Skills</i> <i>Empathy Formula (Handout)</i> <i>I Think vs. I feel (Handout)</i> <i>Practice Skills</i>	<b>Read:</b> Ch 5, Ch 6, & Ch 7 (Young)

10/Oct. 31	<i>Challenging Skills Terminating the Counseling Relationship Practice Skills</i>	<b>Read:</b> Ch 8 & Ch 12 (Young)
11/Nov. 7	<i>Final Exam Review Review Tapes – Group Supervision</i>	<b>Tapes Due</b>
12/ Nov. 14	<b><u>Online Learning Assignment – TCA Conference</u></b>	<b>Interview with Professional Due</b>
13/ Nov. 21	<b><u>No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday</u></b>	
14/ Nov. 28	<i>Final Exam</i>	
15/ Dec. 5	<i>Closing and Individual Conferences</i>	

## Contract with Professional

I am a graduate student in the Counseling Program at Texas A&M University – Commerce. As an assignment for the course COUN 501, Introduction to the Counseling Profession, in which I am enrolled, I am required to interview a professional counselor about his/her work. As such, I am requesting your permission to conduct an interview with you.

This interview will include questions about your position, the responsibilities you have, the clients you work with and the kinds of interventions you provide in your work setting. I will use this information to help me better understand the nature of the work in your agency, the roles of a professional counselor, how theory and skills are applied in a clinical/school setting and how you interact with the populations you serve.

In addition, this interview will be summarized into a written report. It will then be submitted to my instructor to fulfill the requirement of this assignment. The information you provide will not be used in any ways not stated in this contract.

Before beginning the interview, I will need you to sign this contract stating that you agree to this interview and understand how the information you provided will be used.

I agree to be interviewed.

Printed Name & Credentials: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Educational Background: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's (Student) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Starting Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Ending Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

## Interview Schedule

Please include all of these questions in your paper:

1. How long has the person been a mental health professional?
2. Does the mental health professional have a specialization or clinical focus, if so, what is it?
3. What led him or her to choose a career in the mental health field?
4. What theory(ies) guide(s) the mental health professionals' practice?
5. What is his/her personal theory of how clients change?
6. What therapeutic techniques/counseling skills does he/she use with clients?
7. In what ways does the mental health professional utilize multicultural counseling competencies in his/her work?
8. How does the mental health professional see him/herself as an advocate in the counseling profession?
9. What does he/she see as current issues that the profession is facing?
10. What s/he likes most (and least) about their work?
11. How did his/her training best and least prepare them for the realities of being a mental health professional?
12. What advice would they offer you as a beginning counselor-in-training?
13. For the mental health professional that is not a counselor, how does his/her job differ from other the other mental health professionals you interviewed? How is it alike?

Please also include a discussion of the impressions you had of the office/environment in which you interviewed the professionals. What was it like? How would it feel to be a client?

The following questions are guides for your own reflection. Please include that reflection in your paper. Your reflections are to be the majority content for this paper

- What did you learn about the counseling profession from your interview?
- What thoughts and feelings do you have about your future career as a counselor?