

# FLEXIBLE SYLLABUS

**Texas A&M-Commerce**  
**College of Education and Human Services**  
**Department of Psychology, Counseling & Special education**

**Course:** COUN 315; Philosophy of Helping Relationships

**Class Meeting:** Monday & Wednesday 11:00-12:15, Henderson 206

**Instructor:** Felicia Ward, MA, LPC-Intern

**Email:** [fward2@leomail.tamuc.edu](mailto:fward2@leomail.tamuc.edu)

(Be sure to include "COUN 315" in the subject line; ecollege will do this automatically)

**Office Hours:** Monday & Wednesday by appointment  
Virtual Office (ecollege) by appointment as needed

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## **Required Text:**

Brammer, L. M. & MacDonald G. (2003). The helping relationship: Process and skills (8th ed.)  
Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

## **Recommended Text:**

American Psychological Association Publication Manual, (6<sup>th</sup> ed). Washington, D.C.: American  
Psychological Association.  
ACA Code of Ethics

## **Course Description:**

COUN 315 is designed to create an understanding of helping relationships including basic communication skills (such as active listening, responding and interviewing skills) for building a helping relationship.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

The student will:

- Examine their motivations for wanting to become a helper
- Identify characteristics of an effective helper
- Explore their attitudes and beliefs about helping
- Identify and apply the seven helping skills
- Describe strategies for coping with stress and crisis
- Recognize the steps in problem solving and decision making models
- Examine the ACA Code of Ethics
- Explore theories of helping

## EXPECTATIONS:

- This course will utilize lecture, class discussions, video, role plays, homework and experiential activities to achieve the learning objectives.
- Students are expected to read all assigned materials and come to class prepared to participate.
- Students are expected to demonstrate their grasp and understanding of the class materials through **discussion and participation**.
- Students are expected to be respectful to one another during class meetings and class discussions/activities. **I WILL NOT TOLERATE DISRESPECT FOR OR TOWARD FELLOW STUDENTS.** Misbehavior or mistreating of other students may result in an attendance and participation grade of 0, dismissal from the classroom and/or other disciplinary action.
- Students are expected to read all assigned materials and come to class prepared to participate in class discussion/activities. Pop quizzes may be on the agenda if there is not sufficient **class discussion or participation. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!!!**
- *Electronic Devices:* It is disrespectful to myself and fellow students to text, check email, or go online during class time, unless I ask you to look up something specific online. If there is an issue with electronic devices, you may be asked to leave the class room and receive an attendance and/or participate grade of 0.

## Participation

This class depends heavily on discussion, exercise, activities, role-playing to ensure students reach the course objectives. It is essential that students be willing to participate in a free, open, and mutually supportive manner to help one another develop the competencies that are a part of the goals of the course. Students can learn more from each other and from their own thinking/processing than they do strictly from a textbook or the instructor in a course like this. This can only happen if the students are active participants in the course. Participation entails conscientious preparation for class meetings by completing readings and other assignments on schedule. Participation is further demonstrated through comments and expressed opinions that convey your perspective on a topic under discussion. Participation involves a willingness to ask questions in class to make sure you obtain clarification for material that you do not completely understand. You will be appreciated by almost everyone else in the class if you speak up and get clarification for material that is in the least bit confusing to you. All professionals must be committed to their work and to expanding the constantly changing knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are part of a career area. A student's level of involvement in a course like this is a better gauge of his/her level of interest and commitment to a future profession than are traditional exams and term papers. In short, an instructor can tell as much about you, how well you are learning this type of material by involvement in class as by reading the scores on your exams and term papers. Finally, it is impossible to participate if you don't attend class. Attendance is particularly important when practice exercises are taking place with assigned partners. Any absence will affect how you are evaluated in terms of class participation. Make up work will be assigned at the discretion of the Instructor.

## **Course Assignments & Grades**

**1. Attendance:** Active attendance is defined as arriving to class on time, prepared for the day's lesson, participating in in-class activities, and remaining for the entire class period is required. Absences will be excused for those specific reasons stated in the Student's Guidebook (pg. 36-37) with written documentation. Students will be permitted to make up missed activities, tests, etc. within a week for un-foreseen excused absences. For any predetermined absences or unexcused absences (oversleeping, work conflicts, taking care of a sick child, etc.) students must submit assignments on or before the assigned due date to avoid penalty. Every 3 classes in which the student misses part of the class, but less than 10 minutes of the class, will equate to one absence. Every 3 unexcused absences may result in the drop of a letter grade (10 points) from the student's final grade. Excessive absences prior to midterm, may result in an administrative drop from the course by the instructor.

**2. Participation** – Do the nature of the course, participation is crucial. Students must come to class with completed homework, complete in class activities, participate in group discussions and be an active member of the class at all times (on topic) to earn full points for participation.

**3. In Class Assignments** – In class assignments may consists of quick writes, role play, light writing assignments, class discussions or other in class activities accompanying the topic.

**4. Homework Assignments** – Student may be required to find professional research (peer reviewed journal article, professional news letter...) over topics, practice techniques, complete light writing assignments, relate course material to their own person, and/or other forms of homework that must be turned in by the due date. Failing to turn in the required Homework may also deduct from the participation grade.

**5. Writing Assignment** – *Self-Evaluation*: Students will complete a written assignment considering themselves in light of the knowledge they have learned about the helping relationships.

**6. Quizzes**: Some classes will begin or end with a short, daily quiz, over the assigned study topic. Other quizzes may take place through the ecollege portal. Quizzes may not be announced so students should be prepared for them daily.

*Student Evaluation/Grades*: Student grades will be based on the instructor's assessment in the following areas:

- *Attendance* 100 points (20%)
- *Participation* 100 points (20%)
- *Homework* 100 points (20%)
- *In Class Assignments* 100 points (20%)
- *Self-Evaluation* 50 points (10%)
- *Quizzes* 50 points (10%)

500 - 450 A

449 - 400 B

399 - 350 C

349 - 300 D

Below 300 F

NOTE: Please remember that every 3 absences may also result in a decrease of a letter grade; thus you may fail the class for lack of attendance despite other grades (ecollege should reflect your grade prior to the absences deductions, thus it is your/the student's responsibility to keep up with your grade based on absence deductions)

## **LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICIES**

***All assignments are due, on the given assignment date, at the beginning of class. NO LATE PAPERS/PROJECTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. Computer problems are not an excuse for missed/late assignments. In certain circumstances, some assignments may be emailed to me.***

## **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, Polices 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.)

## **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)**

## **University Closing Due to Weather**

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

Professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus schedule.

## THIS SYLLABUS REFLECTS A TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

<b>COUN 315 Preliminary/Flexible Schedule</b>					
<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Topic/Class focus</u>	<u>Homework</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
<b>Week 1</b>	25-Aug		Intro, Syllabus, Expectations	Ch. 1 & HW 1	
	27-Aug	Ch. 1	Helping: What Does it Mean?		<b>HW 1</b>
<b>Week 2</b>	1-Sep	<b>Labor Day - NO SCHOOL</b>			
	3-Sep	Ch. 1	Helping: What Does it Mean?	HW 2	
<b>Week 3</b>	8-Sep	Ch. 1	Helping: What Does it Mean?	Ch. 2	<b>HW 2</b>
	10-Sep	Ch. 2	Characteristics of Helpers	HW 3	
<b>Week 4</b>	15-Sep	Ch. 2	Characteristics of Helpers	Ch. 3	<b>HW 3</b>
	17-Sep	Ch. 3	The Helping Process	HW 4	
<b>Week 5</b>	22-Sep	Ch. 3	The Helping Process		<b>HW 4</b>
	24-Sep		Role Play	Ch. 4	
<b>Week 6</b>	29-Sep	Ch. 4	Helping Skills for Understanding		
	1-Oct	Ch. 4	Helping Skills for Understanding	HW 5	
<b>Week 7</b>	6-Oct	Ch. 4	Helping Skills for Understanding	Ch. 5	<b>HW 5</b>
	8-Oct	Ch. 5	Helping Skills for Loss and Crisis	HW 6	
<b>Week 8</b>	13-Oct	Ch. 5	Helping Skills for Loss and Crisis		<b>HW 6</b>
	15-Oct	Ch. 5	Helping Skills for Loss and Crisis		
<b>Week 9</b>	20-Oct		Role Play	Ch. 6	
	22-Oct	Ch. 6	Helping Skills for Positive Action & Behavior change	HW 7	
<b>Week 10</b>	27-Oct	Ch. 6	Helping Skills for Positive Action & Behavior change		<b>HW 7</b>
	29-Oct	Ch. 6	Helping Skills for Positive Action & Behavior change		
<b>Week 11</b>	3-Nov		Role Play	Ch. 7	
	5-Nov	Ch. 7	Ethical Issues in Helping Relationships	HW 8	
<b>Week 12</b>	10-Nov	Ch. 7	Ethical Issues in Helping Relationships		<b>HW 8</b>
	12-Nov	Ch. 7	Ethical Issues in Helping Relationships	HW 9	
<b>Week 12</b>	17-Nov	Ch. 7	Ethical Issues in Helping Relationships		<b>HW 9</b>
	19-Nov		Role Play	Ch. 8	
<b>Week 13</b>	24-Nov	Ch. 8	Thinking about the Helping Process	HW 10	
	26-Nov	Ch. 8	Thinking about the Helping Process		<b>HW 10</b>
<b>Week 14</b>	1-Dec		Role Play		<b>Self Evaluation</b>
	3-Dec		Course Review & Reflection		
<b>Week 15</b>	8-Dec				
	10-Dec				

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## Self-Evaluation Paper

You will complete a self-evaluation paper regarding your beliefs about yourself and the helping professions. You will use the questions below to guide your writing. Not all questions must be answered but your paper should be a thorough explanation to such types of questions. The purpose of this paper is for you to consider your personal beliefs regarding the helping professions and how the information from this course collides with you personally as a potential helper. Discussing a question by answering “I don’t” or “will not” may result in a 30 point deduction for an incomplete assignment. You may answer in such ways ONLY if you fully explain the answer in great detail as well (for example: “Prior to this class I did not plan to go in to a helping profession because... However, I find it interesting....I may consider a helping profession if...because...” would be acceptable). This is a personal reflection paper, not a research paper. Therefore your responses to the questions will be in your own words, but statements referring to the class materials should still be referenced (cite the class lecture, the student presenter(s), the text book, ACA code of ethics...). The paper MUST follow APA standards and the writing assignment grading rubric (last page of syllabus)

- How do you define, in your own words, the role/job of a professional helper?
- Before taking this class, why did you think you might be interested in a helping profession?
- Now that you know more, what would make you a good fit for a helping profession?
- What obstacles may get in your way of being the best helping professional?
- How could you work through the challenges? What checks and balances could you have in place? What resources would you have available to help you work through struggles?
- What strengths do you have in pursuing a helping profession?
- What do you see yourself doing within a helping profession? What makes you choose this?
- From this class, what have you learned that you see as most helpful in your considering and/or preparing to become a helping professional?
- How might being a helping professional effect your life? What good/bad might you be prepared to experience from being a helping professional? How could you work through the bad?
- What personality characteristics of yours do you see as strengths, and/or believe may serve as personal barriers in your role as a helping professional?
- Self-care is a particularly important task of the helping professional. How do you plan to take care of yourself and prevent professional burnout should you go into a helping profession?

## Writing Assignment Grading Rubric

<b>Grammar &amp; Spelling</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1 - 10</b>	<b>11 - 20</b>	<b>21- 30</b>
	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Needs Work</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
	Several grammatical errors. Paper is difficult to read, unclear and/or some words are undeterminable.	Grammatical mistakes decreased the quality of the paper. Spelling errors make for slow reading, but the writing is still clear.	Great, clear paper. Some grammatical mistakes that did not impact the quality of writing. Some noticeable spelling errors but paper is easy to read.	Clearly written paper. Only minor, unnoticeable mistakes.
<b>APA</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1 - 10</b>	<b>11- 20</b>	<b>21- 30</b>
	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Attempted</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
	Several formatting mistakes or major formatting mistake(s). Student did not follow APA formatting.	More than 4 mistakes, or repetitive mistakes. Student clearly attempted formatting.	3-4 minor formatting mistakes. Paper is clearly APA, but has some formatting errors.	1-2 minor mistakes. Great APA, with only minor or unnoticeable errors.
<b>Content</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1 - 10</b>	<b>11 - 25</b>	<b>26 - 40</b>
	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Attempted</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
	Paper is missing the detail of the assignment. Student does not clearly address the assignment in detail.	Paper is missing part of the assignment as detailed in the syllabus and/or in class. Or, the paper fails to clearly explain points.	Paper follows the writing assignment but does not go in to detail or fails to explain some points.	Paper clearly follows assignment. Includes detail on all information outlined in the syllabus and/or in class.

### Other Point Deductions:

**Grammar and spelling:** Issues with the basics of professional writing (such as jargon or use of slang) may result in an ***extra 20 point deduction*** (on top of receiving no points for spelling and grammar) for incompetence. This type of writing is not school appropriate and reflects the student is either unprepared for college level work or did not put forth a notable amount of effort in to the writing.

**Citations:** Failure to cite sources and/or references is considered a form of plagiarism. Due to the important of citations, incorrect citations will result in a ***5 point deduction each***.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty in which somebody claims another's work to be their own or fails to give the appropriate credit to the originating source. Plagiarism may result in an ***irreplaceable 0***.

*Disclaimer: It is not plausible to foresee all possible writing issues, for this reason ***other point deductions may occur as the instructor sees fit.****