

# Sample Syllabus

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Professor:	Class Days/Time:
Office Hrs:	Room:
Phone:	Email:

## Course Description

Focus on developing counseling skills with emphasis on self-understanding. Verbal and non-verbal counseling skills are developed through lecture, demonstration, and extensive laboratory practice.

## Course Objectives

This course is primarily aimed at enhancing counseling skills and introducing students to basic issues they will face in the helping professions. Specific objectives include:

- to challenge students to examine their motivations for wanting to become a helper
- to identify the characteristics of an effective helper
- to introduce the various mental-health professions
- to develop a list of criteria for selecting a professional program
- to develop an approach for selecting a career path
- to assess attitudes and beliefs about helping
- to assist students in reflecting on their family-of-origin issues, especially as these issues are likely to impact their professional work
- to stimulate interest in discussing the value of self-exploration
- to identify beliefs associated with effective and ineffective helping
- to assist students in formulating personal beliefs about counseling
- to encourage students to challenge their assumptions about people and
- to understand how certain assumptions affect the helping process

- to reflect on the role of theory as a road map guiding practice
- to describe an overview of the stages involved in the helping relationship
- to identify common self-doubts and fears of helpers
- to demonstrate how transference and countertransference are often a part of the helping process
- to clarify effective ways of dealing with transference issues
- to clarify effective ways of dealing with countertransference issues
- to assist students in identifying the potential sources of countertransference within themselves
- to describe common forms of resistance
- to provide a context for understanding the dynamics associated with difficult clients and to discuss ways of dealing with difficult clients
- to learn how to work with resistance with understanding and respect

## Course Requirements and Grading Practices

### Requirements of Students

This course is an overview of the counseling process with a focus on the counselor as a person and as a professional. Emphasis is on the stages of counseling, basic counseling skills, attitudes and values of the counselor, and the importance of the counseling relationship. Some other topics explored include: introduction to the helping professions, getting the most from your education and training, self-exploration, an integrative approach to counseling, overview of counseling theories, working with difficult clients, values and diversity in counseling, ethical issues, boundary issues, working with groups and families, community counseling, crisis work, managing stress, and self-care. In addition to lectures, students will have opportunities to participate in class discussions and in small group activities in the classroom. As such, students are expected to complete assigned readings for each topic prior to each class session and to write several papers (based on reactions to readings and to their participation in class/group sessions). This course requires both a personal and academic involvement on the part of the student, since the course deals mainly with understanding oneself as well as learning about the counseling process and acquiring basic counseling skills. Other specific requirements are listed below:

- Active participation in class discussions
- Prompt attendance at ALL the class sessions
- Keeping up to date with all of the assigned readings
- Keeping a journal with a focus on your reactions to the readings and class discussions
- Midterm test (100 multiple-choice items)
- Take-home Papers (5 of them)
- CD ROM for Integrative Counseling (Written responses due)
- Final examination (100 multiple-choice items)

## Basis for grading

Your grade for this course will be determined by evidence of the quality of your learning as demonstrated by your performance in the following areas:

- 100 points for paper #1
- 100 points for paper #2
- 100 points for paper #3
- 100 points for paper #4
- 100 points for paper #5
- 100 points for midterm test
- 100 points for class participation (including attendance)
- 100 points for written responses to CD- ROM for Integrative Counseling
- 200 points for final examination

1,000 points maximum—the number of points will be converted into a percentage score and the grade scale below is used to assign course grade.

## Suggested Grading Scale

Grading Scale (%)	
100-98	A+
97-94	A
93-91	A-
90-88	B+
87-84	B
83-81	B-
80-78	C+
77-74	C
73-71	C-
70-68	D+
67-64	D
63-61	D-
Below 60	F

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**Note** The grading scale is only a suggestion, and instructors may want to modify the requirements, the weight of different aspects of the course, or the schedule of topics.

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## Class Participation/Attendance

You are expected to be an active learner, which includes verbally participating in the class discussions and small-group discussions. You are also expected to bring questions for discussion to the class sessions and demonstrate that you are keeping up to date with your reading assignments for each of the chapters in the textbook. **Participation** is a **MUST** in this course. This class will involve some degree of self-exploration and interpersonal learning. The instructor will talk more fully about the guidelines for self-disclosure and the expectations at the first class meeting. **Attendance** at the full duration of class is expected at each class meeting, unless you have an emergency situation or are really ill. Your absence affects the class as well the person who misses the class. I expect a commitment from students, and a minimal evidence of commitment is attendance. For me to credit you with an **EXCUSED ABSENCE**, you need to know that it is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to inform me of such cases immediately upon returning to class. Absences and tardiness will be a factor in determining your participation/attendance grade; excessive absences or tardiness might result in getting a full grade deducted (or in some cases even failing the course). [Maximum is 100 points for class participation and attendance]

## Suggestions to Students for Writing Papers

Grading and evaluating the reaction papers of students is not an easy matter. Below are some suggestions that I give to my students regarding ideas of writing their papers, along with information on the criteria I use to evaluate their papers.

Do not give a summary of textbook content and do not simply summarize the key points of a chapter. Your task is to demonstrate that you understand the central ideas of a chapter and to formulate your own thoughts about the material you read. What follows are some suggestions to consider in writing your papers.

1. Quality writing skills. Write directly and informally, yet write in standard English. I encourage you to use personal examples and to support your points with these examples when appropriate. Make sure your essays reflect university-level writing skills. Use complete sentences, develop your paragraphs, check your spelling, and put together a paper that reflects quality. You might ask someone to proofread your paper. It is essential that you keep strictly within the established page limitations.
2. Development of a theme. Look for a central theme or central message in each essay. I suggest that you make an outline, and check to see that each point in your outline pertains to your central message.
  - Create a short title for each essay that conveys your basic idea.
  - State your message clearly and concisely in your opening paragraph.
  - Have a solid and impactful concluding paragraph.
  - The theme should be clear, concise, and specific—rather than global and generalized. Do not write in a general and abstract manner, or else your essays will lose a clear focus.
  - Develop your thoughts fully, concretely, and logically -- rather than rambling or being vague and wordy.

- In terms of form and organization, your paper should flow well, and your points should relate to one another.
  - Give reasons for your views—rather than making unsupported statements. When you take a position, provide reasons for your position.
  - Cover a few issues or ideas well and in depth, rather than attempting to cover too much. For each essay, narrow down your question or topic so that you can manage to develop central paragraphs that expand on your theme.
3. Use of examples. In developing your ideas, use clear examples to illustrate your point. Tie your examples into the point you are making -- but avoid giving too many details or getting lost in the personal example.
  4. Creativity and depth of thinking. Write a paper that reflects your own uniqueness and ideas—rather than merely giving a summary of the material in the book.
    - Do not make your papers mere summaries, rather focus on a clear position that you take on a specific question or issue.
    - Approach the material in an original way.
    - Focus on a particular issue or topic that you find personally significant. Since you have choice in what aspect to focus on, select an aspect of a problem that will allow you to express your beliefs.
    - Show depth in expanding on your thoughts.

## Required Readings and CD-ROM Self-Study Program

- Corey, Marianne S., & Corey, Gerald. (2007). *Becoming a Helper* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- Corey, Gerald (2005). *CD-ROM for Integrative Counseling*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

## Supplementary Reading

- Welfel, Elizabeth R., & Patterson, Lewis, E. (2005). *The Counseling Process: A Multitheoretical Integrative Approach* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

# **Tentative Schedule of Classes**

## **Week 1: Introduction to the Course**

First meeting consists of getting acquainted with each other and an introduction to the helping professions. Lecture will be on Chapter 1 of both books and will continue during week 2.

## **Week 2: The Helping Professions and You**

Due: Reading of Corey and Corey

Chapter 1: Are the Helping Professions for You?

Due: Read Welfel and Patterson

Chapter 1: Perspectives on Effective Counseling

## **Week 3: Your Education and Professional Training**

Due: Read Corey and Corey

Chapter 2: Getting the Most from Your Education and Training

Read Welfel and Patterson

Chapter 2: Understanding Counseling as a Process

## **Week 4: Self-Exploration and Building Counseling Relationships**

Due: Read Corey and Corey

Chapter 3: Helper Know Thyself

Read Welfel and Patterson

Chapter 3: Building the Counseling Relationship and Facilitating Initial Disclosure

### **Due: Paper #1 Topic: My Philosophy of Counseling**

Address some of your basic beliefs about how you view counseling: the purpose of counseling, your role as a helper, what you would expect of your clients. Write about your why you are interested in the helping professions. What kind of work would you like to do? What would you most hope to learn from this class? Address some of your life experiences (and perhaps personality characteristics) that will assist you in becoming an effective counselor. (Length: approximately two typed, double-spaced pages)

## **Week 5: Stages of Counseling and Basic Skills**

Due: Read Corey and Corey

Chapter 6: The Helping Process

Read Welfel and Patterson

Chapter 4: In-Depth Exploration

Chapter 5: Commitment to Action and Termination

## **Week 6: Assessment and Developing Counseling Skills**

Continue with: Chapter 6 of Corey and Corey [on the Helping Process]

Due: Read Welfel and Patterson

Chapter 7: Assessment and Diagnosis in Counseling

Chapter 8: Structuring, Leading, and Questioning Techniques

### **Due: Paper #2 Counseling Skills**

Discuss the basic skills you think are most important to acquire for effective counseling. How can you best acquire and refine some of these skills? Discuss some of the skills you think you would need at the beginning of a counseling relationship; skills you need to have once counseling progresses; and skills needed to effectively terminate a counseling relationship. (Length: about two typed, double-spaced pages)

## **Week 7: Theory Applied to Practice**

Due: Read Corey and Corey

Chapter 5: Theory Applied to Practice

Due: Read Welfel and Patterson

Chapter 10: Major Theories of Counseling

### **An Integrative Approach to Counseling**

Due: Complete viewing of CD-ROM for Integrative Counseling  
[and complete all written responses in the program]

Bring to class your written material that is a part of the CD program.

Discuss in class CD-ROM for Integrative Counseling

**The CD-ROM program** consists 13 sessions in the counseling process. Each session begins with a brief lecture given by Gerald Corey, followed by a brief counseling session with a client named Ruth, and concludes with a process commentary. This is a demonstration of the application of specific techniques based on multiple theoretical approaches. The demonstrations of various interventions can give students a clear idea of practical applications and can bring theory to life.

## **Week 8: Integrative Approach to Counseling (continued)**

During the first half of the class meeting, time can be allocated for discussion of the CD-ROM program, Integrative Counseling.

**Midterm Exam this week** [for last half of the class period]

(100 multiple choice items on all of the chapters in both books for the first 8 weeks.)

**What does the midterm examination cover?** The midterm can cover 100 multiple-choice items drawn from Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 of Corey and Corey

### **Week 9: Understanding and Working with Difficult Clients**

Due: Read Corey and Corey

Chapter 4: Common Concerns of Beginning Helpers

Read Welfel and Patterson

Chapter 9: Working with Ambivalent, Indifferent, and Oppositional Clients

### **Week 10: Understanding Human Diversity**

Due: Read Corey and Corey

Chapter 7: Understanding Diversity

Read Welfel and Patterson

Chapter 12: Issues of Human Diversity in Counseling

### **Week 11: Working with Values in the Helping Relationship**

Due: Read Corey and Corey

Chapter 8: Knowing Your Values

**Due: Paper #3 --- Working with Values in Counseling.** Write a value statement paper. Identify a few of your most important values that you think will have a direct bearing on being able to work with clients. Discuss how you can avoid imposing your values on clients. Identify one specific value that you are likely to promote, or an area where you expect to struggle because of a value conflict with a given client. Or -- identify one of your core values and show how this value could either enhance or inhibit the effectiveness of counseling. Discuss how you might proceed to lessen the chances that you would impose your values on this client.  
(Length: approximately two typed, double-spaced pages)

### **Week 12: Introduction to Ethical Issues in Counseling**

Due: Read Corey and Corey

Chapter 9: Ethical and Legal Issues Facing Helpers

Read Welfel and Patterson

Chapter 6: Ethics in Counseling

**Due: Paper #4 Your position on an ethical issue.** Select an ethical issue of interest to you and write to how you might address this issue if you encounter it in your practice. If you prefer, you can write your essay on some aspect of cultural diversity and how this might impact your work as a counselor. If you do address some topic pertaining to cultural diversity, narrow down your subject to a specific issue that you can address adequately in about two typed pages.

### **Week 13: Boundary Issues in Counseling**

Due: Read Corey and Corey

Chapter 10: Managing Boundary Issues



## **Week 14: Working in the Community and with Groups**

Due: Read Corey and Corey

Chapter 11: Working in the Community

Chapter 12: Working with Groups

Read Welfel and Patterson

Chapter 11: Working with Clients in Crisis

### **Due: Paper #5**

**Self-Evaluation Paper.** For this last paper, you are expected to write a self-evaluation. What did you learn about yourself from taking this course and reading the textbook? Write an evaluation of yourself as a learner, commenting on your participation in the class discussions. What did you learn about counseling that you found most meaningful? What did you learn about yourself that is likely to have a bearing on your work as a counselor? What are some areas that you want to continue working on? Now that this course is ending, what steps can you take to continue building on your skills that you can use in other classes? (Length: between two and three typed, double-spaced pages)

## **Week 15: Stress, Burnout, and Self-Care**

Due: Read Corey and Corey

Chapter 13: Stress, Burnout, and Self-Care

## **Week 16: Final Examination**

Final exam covers all chapters in Corey and Corey from weeks nine to 15. There will be between 200 multiple-choice and true-false items.

