

Shepherd University

Psychology 306 Special Topics: Counseling Techniques (3) Credits

Fall Semester, 2006 Dr. Bob Masson E-mail address: rmasson@frontiernet.net

Wednesday evenings, 6 PM – 8:45 PM.

General Course Information: (Please keep this handout & use the margin on the left hand side to make notes of additional information we may discuss.)

Office Hours-- Before class and/or by appointment. Just email me.

Teaching Philosophy-- Learning effective counseling skills requires a commitment of time and effort on your part. I expect students to treat coming to class as you would a job you'd like to keep; be on time, be prepared, and have an open and positive attitude. In return, I'll be prepared and do my very best to make class interesting and a positive experience for you. If you are ever bored or unclear about what we are doing, please see me.

Additional Instructor Information I have taught counseling courses for many years elsewhere and have worked as a counselor for the Veterans Administration and in private practice. Please feel free to ask me any questions about my professional background.

Course Materials

Required Course Materials Text Books: Evans, D.R., Hearn, M.T., Uhlemann, M.R., and Ivey, A.E. (1998) Essential Interviewing. Brooks/Cole.

Jacobs, E. (1994) Impact Therapy. Psych. Assessment Resources.

Jacobs, E. (1992) Creative Counseling. Psych. Assess. Resources.

Also, please OWN or have REGULAR ACCESS to a tape recorder that works (Large or small tapes both okay). Also, purchase yourself at least 3 or 4 GOOD quality tapes. You will be handing in these tapes periodically and getting them back with comments. Unfortunately, you can't use a digital recorder.

Course Policies, Learning Objectives, and Agenda

Grading, Attendance, and Other Policies Class Attendance: This class meets once a week for 2 hours and 45 minutes. The classroom format is largely experiential. It is not possible to make up the experiences of demonstrations, discussions, and feedback done in class. In

order for maximum learning to occur, you must attend class regularly. If you miss one class, you will be given a make up assignment to be completed by the following class. If you miss two classes, your final grade will be lowered by an full letter grade. If you miss three classes, I'll ask you to drop the class and you will receive a permanent incomplete.

To be considered present and prepared, you must be in class from the beginning to the end on each day we meet. Please do not leave for the evening at break. If you do leave early, I'll consider that an absence. If you are ten minutes late or later, by my watch, that's an absence and will be counted.

Complete all readings prior to class. During class, questions are always welcomed and encouraged. Remember, you are becoming a professional; learning to formulate good questions and comments in a group is as much a part of being an effective professional as learning other skills.

Grading: Your final grade is based on a 100 point scale.

Tapes-50 points: You will be expected to hand in six tapes during the semester. The first is a 'warm-up' tape and will be evaluated, but not graded. The remaining five will be graded on a 1 to 10 scale. You will always have the opportunity to re-make a tape to raise your grade; if you score below a 7, you will required to re-do the tape.

Exams-10 pts. each: There will be a mid-semester and a final exam on the material (20 pts. total). The questions will include fill-ins, short answers, and choices. Make-ups won't be given except under unusual circumstances.

Papers (20 pts. total) From time to time, you will be asked to submit reaction papers in response to a reading assignment. These papers are intended to help you think through for yourself various issues in counseling. They will not be academic or information orientated, but rather require that you begin to develop your own set of ideas on your profession. More will be said in class.

Participation (10 pts.): As a professional, you will be required to interact in many settings; staff meetings, client/consumer consultations, etc. Learning to formulate your ideas and speak up appropriately is an important part of the job. Therefore, I strongly encourage that you push

yourself, even if you feel shy or intimidated. I'll never put you on the spot, but I will encourage you to express yourself.

A=85-100 pts.; B=78-84 pts.; C=66-77 pts.; D=50-64 pts.; F=below 50 pts.

Readings: Reading assignments will be made weekly. Please complete all the readings, because you won't understand the material covered in class if you don't. We won't go over the readings in class, as in actually sitting with books open. Instead, we'll use the material in our work that class.

Tapes and Role Playing: You will be making tapes both in class and outside of class on your own. The tapes made in class will be with fellow students and be used as a part of your learning process. As mentioned earlier, tapes made outside of class will be counted toward your final grade. When making tapes outside of class, I strongly recommend you make your tape with a fellow student who understands your goals. Please don't make tapes with close friends, your S/O, spouse, siblings, children under five, or animals. Also, please don't write out a script to be read. You'll hand in tapes and I'll listen to them and make comments on the tape. You'll listen to the tape and write a reaction to my comments, which you'll hand in the next class.

Please do not do counseling on "real" issues. Instead, you are to have your "client" role play, that is, come up with a made-up problem. Please choose problems that are realistic, not too complex or too simple. We'll discuss this in class.

Confidentiality: In class when making tapes, and maybe outside as well, if you play a client, you can decide if you wish to self-disclose personal issues. That's up to you. For purposes of class, we will assume every problem presented is fictional. If you are the counselor and your client says some of the information she is presenting is true, please treat that information and all self disclosures confidentially. While confidentiality is expected, it can't be guaranteed. If you have any concerns about this, please see me.

We are role playing and not doing real counseling or therapy. But if an issue gets stirred up for you, we strongly recommend you seek out a professional counselor. Remember, there is nothing wrong with being a client.

Other Important Information:

- 1. Be on time!**
- 2. Please eat or snack before class or on break, not while we're working.**
- 3. Please don't hand me a tape and say, "I hope you can hear it." I'll give it right back. Make certain the technical quality of your tapes is excellent; I've got to be able to hear and understand it to grade it and give you feedback.**
- 4. Please don't make your tapes at the last minute. I'd rather have a late tape than one that doesn't represent your best effort. However, if your tape is late or I can't understand it, I will deduct 2 points from the score on the tape.**
- 5. I'll be doing some demonstrations of counseling in class. PLEASE don't talk while I'm doing this. Even though we're role playing, it's very distracting. If you have a question or comment, write it down and bring it up when I'm done.**
- 6. Email Address: I don't use a Shepherd U. email address. Please email me at rmasson@frontiernet.net. Please email me within the next day so I have the address you are using. Don't ever hesitate to email me with a question or a concern.**

Academic Dishonesty/Cheating Policy:

All students are expected to demonstrate honesty in their academic pursuits. Please review the student handbook on the topic of plagiarism and cheating. If you ever have any questions as to what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, just ask me BEFORE you hand in your work.

Disability Accommodation:

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the university's guiding principles, academic accommodation to students with documented disabilities will be provided. If you need to request accommodation in this class due to a disability, or you suspect that your academic performance is affected by a disability, please see me soon or contact your advisor or the appropriate office on campus.