



**SYLLABUS**  
**COUN 5680**  
**Basic Counseling Skills**  
**3 Credit Hours**

**Department of Counseling**  
**Division of Education and Human Services**

**Instructor Name:** Dr. S. Dean Aslinia  
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**Office Hours:** M-W 4-5 p.m. or by appointment  
**Virtual Office Hours:** By appointment/Email

**Classroom Location:** Building 2 Room 339  
**Class Meeting Days & Times:** 8-9:30 PM / Hybrid (~40% of Class Online)

**Course Catalog Description:** A study of selected basic techniques of counseling and of the application of ethical standards in counseling. Course should be taken concurrently with COUN 5710. 3 hours.

**Prerequisites:** N/A  
**Co-requisites:** COUN 5710. 3 hours

**Required Texts:** Young, M. (2013). *Learning the art of helping: Building blocks and techniques (5th ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

**Access to Learning Resources:** UNT Dallas Library:  
phone: 972-338-1616  
web: <https://www.untdallas.edu/library>  
e-mail: [untdlibrary@unt.edu](mailto:untdlibrary@unt.edu)  
UNT Dallas Bookstore: phone: (972) 780-3652  
web: <http://www.bkstr.com/northtexasatdallasstore/home>  
e-mail: [1012mgr@fhcg.follett.com](mailto:1012mgr@fhcg.follett.com)

## Course Goals or Overview

The goal of this course is to provide an understanding of helping relationships and the counseling process in a multicultural society, as well as facilitate personal student development.

### Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes Counseling 5680 (SLOs):

<b>CACREP (2009) Standards</b>	<b>Student Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
CACREP II.G.5.a	Students will demonstrate an orientation to wellness and prevention as desired counseling goals; including self-care strategies appropriate to the counseling role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion Board #1</li> <li>• Self-Care Assessments</li> </ul>
CACREP II.G.5.b	Students will demonstrate effective counselor characteristics and behaviors through oral, written, and nonverbal communication and expressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video Skill Assessment #2</li> <li>• PCPE</li> <li>• Personal Characteristics Checklist</li> </ul>
CACREP II.G.5.c	Students will demonstrate essential interviewing and counseling skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video Skill Assessment #3</li> <li>• PCPE</li> </ul>
CACREP II.G.5.e	Students will demonstrate and learn a general framework for understanding and practicing consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video Skill Assessment #4</li> <li>• PCPE</li> </ul>
CACREP II.G.5.f	Students will learn crisis intervention and suicide prevention models, including the use of psychological first aid strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Assessment: Psychological First Aid</li> </ul>
CACREP II.G.1.f	Students will specify the importance of maintaining professional liability insurance, professional organizations and credentialing bodies including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion Board #2</li> </ul>
<b>CACREP (2009) School Counseling Standards</b>	<b>Student Learning Outcome (SLO)</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
School Counseling M.4	Demonstrates knowledge of systems theories, models, and processes of consultation in school system settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video Skills Assessment #4</li> <li>• PCPE</li> </ul>
School Counseling M.7	Demonstrates school and community collaboration models for crisis/disaster preparedness and response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Assessment: Psychological First Aid</li> </ul>
<b>CACREP (2009) CMHC Standards</b>	<b>Student Learning Outcome (SLO)</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>

CMHC A.9	Understands the impact of crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events on people.	• Key Assessment: Psychological First Aid
CMHC C.6	Understands the principles of crisis intervention for people during crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events.	• Key Assessment: Psychological First Aid

**Course Assignments & Evaluation** - Rubrics will be distributed in class for

- **Psychological First Aid Key Assessment**
  - **Video Assignment/Professional Counseling Performance Evaluation (p. 17 Masters Handbook)**
  - **Reflection Journals**
  - **Discussion Board Questions**
  - **Personal Characteristics Checklist (p. 19 of Masters Handbook)**
  - **End of Course Student Evaluation for COUN 580 (p. 16 of Masters Handbook)**
1. **Professional Liability Insurance** - (10 Points) - Students must secure student liability insurance (See TCA, ACA, etc. membership benefits).
  2. **Student Self-Disclosure/Confidentiality Agreement** - (0 points) - For this class, students are advised to complete and sign a disclaimer form relevant to maintaining the confidentiality of self-disclosures made in class by the student and the student's peers in any live, audio/video, or written formats.
  3. **Attendance & Participation** - (10 points) - See participation rubric. Students are expected to attend and fully participate (show up prepared and engaged) in all scheduled class meetings.
  4. **Self-care Assessment** – (5 points) – Students will complete the Self-Care Planning Tool and submit feedback and commentary through the Discussion Board #1.
  5. **Self-Reflection Journals** - (10 points) - Students will be encouraged to write self-reflection journal entries in response to experiences and skill practice each week of class. Journals will be collected periodically throughout the semester so that your instructor may provide you some additional feedback and reflection prompts.
  6. **Discussion Boards** (10 points): Students will respond to discussion board prompts that correspond with course topics. Students are expected to contribute a minimum of one (1) original post and two (2) critically reflective and substantive posts to those of their peers. Please see the Blackboard course for further details.
  7. **Key Assessment: Psychological First Aid** - (15 points) – Students will review Psychological First Aid (2<sup>nd</sup>. Ed.) and write two (2) case study papers in response to crisis-related case vignettes. Papers will be 2-3 page, double-spaced, with APA (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) format and style. Students will write one paper for each vignette.
  8. **Micropracticum Videos and Self-Evaluation** (4) - (40 points) - Students will be paired with peer(s) throughout the term to gain structured and supervised practice in basic counseling skills. These practice sessions will be videotaped.

**Evaluation Criteria -**

90-100 Points	A
80-89 Points	B
70-79 Points	C*
60-69 Points	D*
0-59 Points	F*

\* You must have a final grade of an “A” or “B” in this class to proceed to COUN 5660 Advanced Skills.

\* Your grade in this course is NOT calculated by an average. It is competency-based. Even if you have an "A" average throughout the course, if you do not meet the criterion of competence in your subjective evaluation, you may receive a "B" or “C” for the course.

\* This statement appears here to clarify how this course differs from others: it is a clinical course that ensures you are appropriate to the counseling profession and will first do no harm to the general public.

\*Please refer to the Master’s Handbook for the competency-based criteria used for grading in this course.

# Teaching Method and Philosophy

## Informed Consent

I have been teaching in higher education for the past 8 years. During this time, I have taught at 4 different universities, including our local Universities of Texas A&M University-Commerce, and SMU. I have taught in the departments of Psychology and Counseling at Undergraduate, Masters, and PhD levels. During this time, I have developed a student-centered teaching approach that is based on the The Standards for Effective Pedagogy and Learning that were established through the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE).

CREDE cites “The Standards represent recommendations on which the literature is in agreement, across all cultural, racial, and linguistic groups in the United States, all age levels, and all subject matters. Thus, they express the principles of effective pedagogy for all students.”

The research consensus can be expressed as five standards.

- Joint Productive Activity: Teacher and Students Producing Together (discussions, course planning, etc..)
- Language Development: Developing Language and Literacy Across the Curriculum (writings, presentations, etc...)
- Contextualization: Making Meaning: Connecting Education to Students' Lives (clinical case studies, class discussion on cases, and examples)
- Challenging Activities: Teaching Complex Thinking (discussions, critical thinking, journal article reviews)
- Instructional Conversations: Teaching Through Conversation (Open conversation/discussion forums, seating arrangement if possible)

Therefore, my teaching style utilizes a series of practices which may include, but is not limited to Lecture, PowerPoint presentations, Media (video, internet) and classroom discussions. I allow my students to take the lead in their learning, meaning, though there is a scheduled topic for the class session, we might embark on several parallel discussions on related topics which I found to be just as important for your clinical skill set and knowledge. As an experienced clinician who has owned, managed, and directed two private practice offices, and two mental health clinics; I believe in relating the classroom teaching to practical implications in our field. These topics often include, ethical dilemmas, legal statutes, board rules, best practices for treatment, and research findings.

Students, that require or prefer to have a course structured prior to the beginning of the semester and one that follows that structure rigidly are recommended to take other sections of this class taught by other faculty.

By not dropping this class and remaining passed the 3<sup>rd</sup> class session, you hereby acknowledge that you were notified of the teaching style and course layout and indicate your wish to follow this methodology.

## Course Outline

This schedule is subject to change by the instructor based on developmental and other needs of students and delivery of course content.

COUN 5680 Class Schedule

Week	Topic(s)	SLO	Reading	Experiential Lab(s)	Assignments Due
2	Course Intro; Intro to the Counseling Profession; Beginning the Counseling Relationship	1,7	Young Ch. 1	Collaborative Reflection - Who are We Becoming?	Write Reflection Journal Entry after class
3	The Art of Helping	7	Young Ch. 1-3	Self-Awareness; Starting the Helping Relationship	Reflection Journal
4	Invitational Skills	2,3,4	Young Ch. 4	Attending to Nonverbal Communication; Minimal Encouraging	Video 1: Getting to Know you and Self-Evaluation
5	Paraphrasing & Reflecting Content	2,3,4	Young Ch. 5	Listening for Content Themes and Patterns	Reflection Journal
6	Reflecting Feelings	2,3,4	Young Ch. 6	Attending and Responding Therapeutically to Affective Themes and Patterns	Reflection Journal
7	Extended Micropracticum/ Group Debrief	1-7	N/A	Extended Micropracticum/ Group Debrief	Video 2: Reflecting Skills and Self-Evaluation
8	Spring Break		No Class		
9	Attending to Meaning & Summarizing	2,3,4,6	Young Ch. 7	Attending to Deeper-level emotional and self-others-world life themes	Reflection Journal
10	Mid-Point Application: Managing the Initial Interview	2,3,4	Young Ch. 9	From Start-to-Finish - For Practice!	Reflection Journal
11	Crisis Intervention & Psychological First Aid	6,7	Instructor-provided Materials	Group Role-Plays and Transcribed CI Sessions	Reflection Journal
12	Challenging Skills	2,3,4	Young Ch. 8: IPM (Teyber, 2008)	Basics of Interpersonal Process in Therapy	Personal Characteristics Checklist – from Professor
13	Goal-Setting & other Change Techniques	2,3,4	Young Ch. 10 & 11; IPM (Constructivist Use of Language/ Dialogue)	Returning Responsibility; Focusing on Choice & Self-Direction, Dialogue for Change	Video 3: Conversational Change Techniques and Self-Evaluation
14	Beyond the Basics: Client Care and Session Management	2,3,4,6	Young Ch. 12-14	Maintaining the Flow of Sessions; Facilitating Continuity of Care	Reflection Journal Psychological First Aid Key Assessment Due By
15	Beyond the Basics: Counselor Self-care	1,5	IPM	Oral self-reflections and group feedback	Video 4: Complete Interview
16	Final Reflections				Synthesis paper on Reflection Journals

## University Policies and Procedures Students

### with Disabilities (ADA Compliance):

The University of North Texas Dallas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens

As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. For more information, you may visit the Student Life Office, Suite 200, Building 2 or call 972-780-3632.

The Department of Counseling and Human Services is committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. In keeping with this commitment and in order to facilitate equality of educational access, faculty members in the department will make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with a disability, such as appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methodologies when doing so does not fundamentally alter the course.

If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to obtain verifying information from the Office of Student Life and to inform me of your need for an accommodation. Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed. Information about how to obtain academic accommodations can be found in UNTD Policy 7.004, [Disability Accommodations for Students](#), and by visiting Student Life, building 2, Suite 200.

972-780-3632, [studentlife@unt.edu](mailto:studentlife@unt.edu).

### Assignment Policy:

In order to be fair to students who submit their assignments on time, students who submit their assignments late for other than an emergency reason sanctioned by the university (immediate family member death, student hospitalization, military deployment, etc.) will receive a 10% deduction on that assignment for one to two days late, 20% deduction for more than three to four days late, etc. Please plan ahead. Assignments that are more than 3 days late will not be accepted, and the student will be assigned a 0 for the assignment (unless student has a documented and approved medical emergency or one that is official excused by UNT Dallas). All assignments should be submitted in APA format unless otherwise noted by instructor and through Blackboard's assignment portal.

**Exam Policy:**

Exams should be taken as scheduled. No makeup examinations will be allowed except for documented emergencies (See Student Handbook).

**Academic Integrity:**

Academic integrity is a hallmark of higher education. You are expected to abide by the University's code of conduct and Academic Dishonesty policy. Any person suspected of academic dishonesty (i.e., cheating or plagiarism) will be handled in accordance with the University's policies and procedures. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct at [http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student\\_conduct/index.html](http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student_conduct/index.html) for complete provisions of this code.

**Bad Weather Policy:**

On those days that present severe weather and driving conditions, a decision may be made to close the campus. In case of inclement weather, call UNT Dallas Campuses main voicemail number (972) 780-3600 or search postings on the campus website [www.unt.edu/dallas](http://www.unt.edu/dallas). Students are encouraged to update their Eagle Alert contact information, so they will receive this information automatically.

**Weekly Class Attendance, Timeliness, and Constructive Participation:**

Class attendance and participation is mandatory because the class is designed as a shared learning experience and because essential information (not always in the textbook(s)) will be discussed in class. The dynamic and intensive nature of this course makes it impossible for students to make-up or to receive credit for missed classes. Excused absences are of an urgent, serious medical condition; death of immediate family member; and military deployment. Excused absences that meet the specific criteria must be accompanied with written documentation. Students are also responsible to make up any work covered from unexcused absence by consulting with a classmate and not the professor.

**Diversity/Tolerance Policy:**

Students are encouraged to contribute their perspectives and insights to class discussions. However, offensive language and remarks offensive to others of particular nationalities, ethnic groups, sexual preferences, religious groups, genders, or other ascribed statuses will not be tolerated. Disruptions that violate the Code of Student Conduct will be referred to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities as the instructor deems appropriate.

**Incompletes:**

Incompletes are only given if the student is passing in the last  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the semester and there is documented reason.

**Additional Class Policies:**

- Blackboard: check Blackboard weekly for assigned readings and retrieve PowerPoint.



- Remember to turn your mobile phone on silent with vibrate off before class begins.
- Food & Drink in the Classroom: You may eat small snacks and drink non-alcoholic beverages during class, provided they are respectful of their classmates by eating food with little to no odor and placing all trash in the trash bin. If there are any complaints regarding this food privilege, the instructor reserves the right to cancel this policy.
- Use of Laptops: Students are highly encouraged to bring their laptops or I pads to take notes and access documents on Blackboard during the class period.

## **UNT Dallas**

### **Grade Appeal Guidance for Students**

The UNT Dallas Counseling and Human Services faculty are committed to each student's academic and professional success. As such, the faculty would like to guide students in professional protocol of managing concerns regarding their grades. When you have concerns regarding grades, please consider the information below and follow the protocol in sequential order.

#### **Facts**

1. Each student is responsible for the grade they earned. Professors do not give grades. Students earn grades.
2. Student's grades are based on the requirements stated in the syllabus. Students are responsible for fulfilling all course requirements including readings, writings, assignments, and exams by the deadline that is stated on the syllabus. If you have a true emergency or crisis, then notify the professor via email as soon as possible and ask if an exception can be granted. Make every effort to show the professor that you are taking responsibility for your assignment.
3. Professors are NOT required to allow students to retake exams or resubmit assignments just because the student did not earn the grade they desired.
4. Students do have the right to ask questions to understand the material they missed on exams or assignments. Students may ask questions in class, email or phone professors, or visit professors during their office hours.
5. Just because a student is not satisfied with his or her grade does not mean the student should pursue a grade appeal. Grade appeals are ONLY granted for three reasons
  - a. "Arbitrary" means a decision based on inappropriate criteria or not in conformity with established procedures or standards.
  - b. "Prejudice" means a decision motivated by ill will that is not indicative of the student's academic performance in regard to grades.
  - c. "Error" means a decision that is based on a mistake in fact.

#### **Protocol for Grade Appeal**

1. Consult your syllabus, course webpage, and course grading rubrics to identify what was required of you in the class. Ask yourself, "Did I do what was required by the deadline that was indicated on the syllabus, course webpage, and grading rubric"? Also, ask yourself, "Am I just disappointed with my grade and myself or is

there evidence that the grade was arbitrary, based on prejudice or error”? If it was the later, then proceed with the next step.

2. Contact your instructor via email. In a professional and respectful manner, state
  - a. Your specific concern (i.e. “My concern is regarding the grade of “D” on my term paper in class XYZ and my subsequent class grade of D.”)
  - b. The reason you disagree (i.e. “I believe my grade does not represent the quality of my paper because I thoroughly fulfilled each item on the grading rubric.”).
  - c. Your responsibility of what you did “right” and what you did NOT do “right” (i.e. ”I followed the grading rubric. However, I turned in the paper a week late.”)
  - d. What you are requesting (i.e. “I am requesting that we meet to discuss my paper and help me understand the reason for the grade on my paper.”)
  - e. Your contact information including email and phone numbers.
3. Wait patiently for at least two business days (48 hours during a business week) for the instructor’s response to your email. Consider the instructor’s response. For example, “On page 4 of the syllabus, it says if papers are turned in late, then they will receive a lower letter grade. According to the rubric, the quality of your paper was rated as a C. Since you turned it in late, you earned a D.” Ask yourself, “Am I just disappointed with my grade and myself or is there evidence that the grade was arbitrary, based on prejudice or error”?” If it was the later, then proceed with the next step.
4. If your concern remains unresolved after the informal consultation with the faculty member, submit a written petition for appeal to the chair of the faculty member's department within three (3) days of learning the result of the informal conversation with the faculty member.
5. The chair will follow the procedures stated in the UNT Dallas Grade Appeal Policy available at [http://dallas.unt.edu/sites/default/files/page\\_level2/pdf/policy/7.007%20Grade%20Appeal.pdf](http://dallas.unt.edu/sites/default/files/page_level2/pdf/policy/7.007%20Grade%20Appeal.pdf) .

**UNT Dallas**  
**Department of Counseling and Human Services**  
**Class Attendance and Participation Rubric**

In an effort to cultivate an effective learning environment, faculty members request that each student meets expectation of the following behaviors. **The intent of this rubric is NOT to be punitive but rather to have clear and consistent expectations across the department.** Students have the freedom to choose their behavior. Faculty will enforce the following guidelines for the behaviors that students choose.

	<b>Meets Expectation -0% of grade</b>	<b>Occasionally Below Expectation -5% of final grade</b>	<b>Consistently Below Expectation -10% of final grade (-5% for each additional missed class or tardy)</b>
<b>1. Attendance</b>	Attends all class with one or less excused absence.	Misses one class with excused absence and one absence due to emergency (family member death, hospitalization, or something involving police or firefighters).	Misses two or more classes due to non-emergency (family member death, hospitalization, or something involving police or firefighters).*
<b>2. Punctual</b>	Arrives and is ready to begin on time with no more than one tardy and remains to the end of class.	Is more than 5-10 minutes tardy two times or leaves class early two times.	Is more than 10 minutes tardy more than two times or leaves class early more than two times.*

<b>3. Quality Contribution</b>	Questions and comments are on topic, indicate reflection and knowledge of readings, and contribute to a deeper understanding.	Questions and comments are occasionally (2 times) tangential, do not indicate knowledge of readings, and do not contribute to a deeper understanding.	Questions and comments are often tangential (3+ times), do not indicate knowledge of readings, and do not contribute to a deeper understanding.
<b>4. Attentive Behavior</b>	Pays attention and does not engage in side conversations or off-task technology activity (i.e. texting, surfing web, social networking) more than once a semester.	Does not pay attention but rather engages in side conversations or off-task technology (i.e. texting, surfing web, social networking) twice a semester.	Does not pay attention but rather engages in side conversations or off-task technology (i.e. texting, surfing web, social networking) more than twice a semester.
<b>5. Responsible Behavior</b>	Is consistently informed by checking Blackboard, syllabus, and emails for instructions and updates.	Is uninformed about instructions and updates twice.	Is uninformed about instructions and updates more than twice.

\* Results in drop in the final letter grade in class. If two or more, then drops another letter grade.