

**SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY**  
**PSYC 8383**  
**DOCTORAL CLINICAL PRACTICUM II**  
**1-3 Credit Hours**  
**Fall 2017**

**Instructor:** David V. Nelson, Ph.D., ABPP (Clinical Health Psychology)  
**Location:** Psychological Services Center (PSC)  
**Time:** Wednesdays 10:00 am – 11:50 am  
**Office:** College of Humanities and Social Sciences Building (CHSS) – Room 317  
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**Office Hours:** Mondays 3:30 – 4:30 pm; Wednesdays 3:30 – 4:30 pm; and by appointment

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**Required Texts/Readings:**

There are no assigned textbooks for this class. There is one initial required and some recommended readings listed below. Additional readings will be assigned over the course of the semester on an as-needed basis to aid in case conceptualization, assessment, treatment planning, consultation, and/or other professional development; and/or to address any other specifically agreed upon topical focus.

Persons, J. B. (2008). *The case formulation approach to cognitive-behavior therapy*. New York, NY: Guilford Press. Chapter 1 is required; chapters 2, 3, and 4 are optional/recommended. Chapter 1 should be accessible via the Newton Gresham Library (NGL) reserves, and chapters 2, 3, and 4 will be available to you at the PSC.

Also recommended:

Davidson, J., & Frank, R. I. (2014). *The transdiagnostic road map to case formulation and treatment planning: Practical guidance for clinical decision making*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications. Chapters 2, 6, and 8 are particularly relevant. Accessible via NGL as an ebook.

**Course Description:**

In this practicum, students are assigned to the Psychological Services Center (PSC) operated by the program faculty or another approved practicum site. Students attend a didactic course/group supervision that emphasizes clinical service delivery, including assessment and integrated report writing, treatment planning and delivery, and consultation. Students participate in the practicum component that allows them to develop and practice clinical skills under supervision from a licensed psychologist.

**Course Objectives:**

*Essential Goal:* Develop specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by psychologists.

- Develop competence in psychological assessment including, but not limited to, clinical interviewing, test selection, interpretation of assessment data (e.g., cognitive and personality assessment data), diagnostic and case formulation skills, integrated report writing, and construction of appropriate recommendations

- Develop competence in psychotherapy skills including, but not limited to, case formulation, treatment planning, risk assessment, selection and implementation of appropriate evidence-based interventions, and clinical documentation
- Develop skills in organizing and presenting client data in an effective manner to other mental health professionals and colleagues
- Provide students with feedback regarding their assessment and intervention skills from both supervisors and peers

**Important Goal:** Learn to apply course material (improve thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making) to the practice of psychology.

- Discuss and strategize approaches to dealing with challenging clinical situations
- Discuss ethical dilemmas which are commonly confronted by clinical psychologists, review ethical standards and guidelines, and further develop ethical reasoning skills and application of said skills, as they pertain to the practice of psychology
- Further develop students' awareness of diversity issues (e.g., cultural, gender, religion/spirituality, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation) that influence the practice of professional psychology

### **Course Requirements and Expectations:**

#### **Practice Requirements**

**Service Delivery:** Students are required to work at least eight hours per week at their assigned practicum sites (some sites require a greater time commitment). Deviations from this schedule should be arranged in advance with the on-site supervisor and course instructor.

**Supervision:** Students will, *at a minimum*, attend weekly one-hour individual supervision sessions with the instructor or their on-site supervisor. Some students may require more than one hour of supervision depending on the demands of their practicum site, client presenting problems, and student experience/skill level. Supervisor and student expectations should be discussed early in the supervisory relationship to ensure appropriate service delivery. In addition, thorough preparation for supervision is expected (e.g., all test protocols fully scored, written documentation completed, recordings cued up to relevant sections, other pertinent information in hand) and considered essential to the development of clinical skills.

**Professionalism and Compliance with the Ethics Code:** Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times while delivering psychological services. This begins with professional demeanor toward clients and extends to interactions with other professionals/staff/students, and includes manner of dress. Students will deliver all services in a manner consistent with the current Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (Ethics Code) of the American Psychological Association. All students should be familiar with all sections of the Ethics Code. Ethical dilemmas and ethical ambiguities must be discussed with the on-site supervisor and, if needed, the course instructor. Discussion and resolution of ethical dilemmas is a particularly valuable learning experience for practicum students.

**Documentation:** Students are expected to complete clinical documentation in a timely manner and, without exception, in compliance with standards and rules of the practicum sites. Students are expected to discuss documentation requirements with their on-site supervisors to ensure the highest standard of care/record-keeping. For students under my direct supervision, the following applies:

- Since assessment and other clinical reports are time-sensitive work products prepared for clients as well as other clinicians, schools, social service agencies, etc., who use these reports to make

time-sensitive decisions, and since future work settings often require rapid turn-around of reports, students should complete an original draft assessment report within 24 hours after they complete interview and testing with a client. If there is an extended period of time between multiple assessment sessions, an interim report will be required. Appointments with clients should be scheduled in light of capability of student and supervisor to meet timeliness deadlines.

- Students are expected to turn in draft reports only after thorough, meticulous proofreading and editing. Assessment reports that require extensive editing for spelling, grammar, and typographical errors will likely result in a poorer grade in this course.
- Students should revise and resubmit edited drafts of reports within 24 hours of receiving edits or suggestions from me.
- Except under very unusual circumstances, students should provide feedback to clients (i.e., the complete written report and verbal feedback) within two weeks of the last date of testing.
- Exceptions to the above deadline policy should be cleared ahead of time with me. I will make every effort to follow a similarly prompt pattern of timeliness in returning edited drafts to students. However, it may not always be feasible to do so within 24-48 hours, depending on the number of students in the class and volume of cases.
- Progress notes and documentation of all other client matters (e.g., contacts or actions taken, missed appointments, phone calls, letters, etc.) should be completed on the day of service delivery, contact, or occurrence.

In addition, each student will maintain a cumulative record, free from specific identifying information, of all clients seen, number of hours spent in the clinical setting in the performance of specific clinical services, diagnoses of clients/patients, number of hours spent in individual and group supervision, names of supervisors, and any other pertinent professional development activities or issues. This record should be sent electronically to the instructor's email address prior to the weekly class meeting to update the record of the previous week's clinical activities. This information should be readily accessed from students' ongoing tracking of clinical experience consistent with that which is reported for internship applications and should not require significant extra work on the part of the student.

Please feel free to discuss any concerns or questions about the service delivery requirements of the course with the instructor and your on-site supervisor.

### **Classroom/Didactic Requirements**

*Topical Focus:* Students may negotiate with the instructor a specific, clinically/professionally relevant focus for special consideration throughout the course. The topic(s) must be mutually agreed upon, and all students must commit to follow through with any associated readings and to participate fully in the class interactions on the topic.

*Case Discussions:* Students are expected to actively participate in case discussions. Each student should present for class meetings prepared to discuss new cases as well as progress with existing clients. Discussion of ethical dilemmas and other professional development issues is also strongly encouraged. Similarly, each student should be prepared to constructively discuss other students' cases in a manner to enhance the quality of patient/client care.

*Readings:* Students should have read any announced readings or supplemental materials and be prepared to actively participate in class discussions pertaining to the readings. When readings are assigned, students should prepare two or more questions and/or points to stimulate discussion. Readings in general will be available at least one week before they are to be discussed. If readings involve clinical techniques, students should be prepared to potentially practice and/or experiment with them in class.

*Case Presentations:* Each student will be assigned a designated class meeting to conduct a formal individual clinical case presentation.

- Students are expected to use Microsoft PowerPoint and follow the template provided by the course instructor as a guideline. Students are encouraged to consult with the course instructor as needed. Content of the presentation should consist of a pertinent clinical assessment (presenting problem and relevant history, medical problems, stressors, family-of-origin/social/relationship history, education/occupational history, clinical diagnoses, relative strengths and weaknesses), treatment plan (to the extent intervention is relevant), and clinical progress. To facilitate an understanding of the core clinical issues, the student will also review 1-3 conceptual, research, and/or review article(s) addressing the central issue(s) (e.g., cognitive behavioral therapy for personality disorders, adapting interpersonal relationship psychotherapy, anger management, coping with chronic disease, ethical issues in consultation, culturally-appropriate interventions, etc.) and provide the corresponding references for each class member and the instructor cited in current APA style. The student making the presentation should discuss the content of the articles/references in light of the clinical case material. The student should integrate the clinical and research material and lead a discussion of other class members in the issues involved; in other words, the point is not just to present case material and have readings, rather it is to do some integration of these and facilitate the process for the rest of the class to learn something new linked to pertinent real-world clinical material.
- The formal case presentation should be accompanied by a written (one page maximum, single-spaced, typed) case formulation patterned after the example given in Persons (2008) on page 5. The written case formulation should integrate or link the following elements: all of the client's symptoms, disorders, and problems; hypotheses about the mechanisms causing the disorders and problems; likely recent precipitants of the current disorders and problems; and origins of the mechanisms. As illustrated in Persons' example, the elements of the formulation should be identified in CAPITAL LETTERS noted in (PARENTHESES). The written case formulation should be distributed to all class members at the time of the in-class presentation; however, please convey to me the written case formulation at least one day before your scheduled presentation. If the student does not have an active psychotherapy case load, he or she should use a previous psychotherapy case or adapt the case formulation format to case material available from the practicum site (e.g., assessment case). If the student has not had any experience in the supervised provision of psychotherapy, he or she should discuss a means to meet this requirement with me as soon as possible.

In addition, you are encouraged to bring an assessment/psychological testing protocol at least one time during the term for discussion (e.g., to refine MMPI-2 interpretation skills, improve proficiency in pattern analysis of WAIS-IV and WJ-IV ACH scores, etc.)

### **Grading Plan:**

Grades will be officially assigned by the faculty course instructor. However, strong consideration will be given to feedback and evaluations from the on-site supervisor. Grades also will be determined by the student's level of professional behavior, clinical skills, and class participation, including the rigor of the case presentation. Improvement will be considered one relevant factor. *Failure to meet any of the practice requirements may result in course failure.*

In addition, students will be provided with an evaluation of various competencies expected to be demonstrated by them during their development in clinical training; the current competency development form for the Clinical Psychology Doctor of Philosophy Program will be used for this purpose.

**Attendance Policy:**

Regular and punctual attendance is expected. SHSU policy is that no student will be penalized for three or fewer hours of absence. However, a student may be penalized for more than three hours of absence. Students may miss one class without penalty to their grade. *Missing two (or more) classes, however, may result in a lower grade or failing grade for the class.* The three hours of absence provided by university policy should be used carefully for serious illness and emergencies. Also, any more than three instances of being more than 10 minutes late to class may result in reduction of one full letter grade. If a student has a conflict with a scheduled class, he or she must meet with the instructor to determine an appropriate plan of action. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor regarding make-up work, and arrangements must be made with the instructor *prior to* the absence or *as soon as possible* after the absence, in the case of an emergency

**Academic Dishonesty:**

The university expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. The Clinical Psychology Doctor of Philosophy Program Handbook provides guidance and examples regarding the issue of academic dishonesty. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action.

The university and its official representatives, acting in accordance with subsection 5.32 of The Student Guidelines of Sam Houston State University, may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. Students should review the university's policy on academic dishonesty at: <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/728eec25-f780-4dcf-932c-03d68cade002.pdf>

**Classroom Rules of Conduct:**

According to University guidelines and general sense of decency, students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning.

**Religious Holidays:**

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911(a)(2) defines religious holy days as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. . . ." A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will notify the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examination are to be completed.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disability that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may adversely affect your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Office of Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. **NOTE**: no accommodation can be made until you register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities.

### **Visitors in the Classroom:**

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the instructor, although consideration will necessarily be given to ensuring client confidentiality. In general, visitors to this course should be cleared by the instructor for some specific purpose directly relevant to the educational experience. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

### **Student Syllabus Guidelines:**

Official student syllabus guidelines with detailed description of policies may be found via this link: <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>

### **Instructor Evaluation:**

You may be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

### **Schedule/Course Outline:**

Since the practicum course is inherently fluid and significantly dependent on students' experiences at their practicum sites, a schedule of presentations and discussion topics will be worked out with students as the class gets underway.