**Introduction to Counseling and Psychotherapy**  
**Fall 2025**  
**SYLLABUS**

**Course Number:** COUN 4000-001  
**Prerequisites:** COUN 2000 or COUN 2007  
**Credit Hours:** 3 Semester hours credits   
**Class Meeting Times:**  MWF 11-11:50 AM  
**Class Location:** College of Education, Room 1102  
**Instructor:** Alexis Dowdell, M.Ed., ALC  
**Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 12 PM – 1 PM | By individual appointment, Virtual  
**E-mail:** and0073@auburn.edu

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| *The course syllabus is a general plan for the course.*  *Deviations may be necessary in order to meet the needs of the class and any such deviations will be communicated to the class in a timely manner.* |

**Course Description:** This course provides an overview of the theories, research, and practices that shape the counseling profession. Key topics include the process of change, the history of psychotherapy, theoretical frameworks, ethical considerations, recent research developments, empirically supported treatments, and the practical challenges and opportunities in the profession. While this is not a practicum course, it aims to deepen your understanding of the counseling process and help you define your interests within the field.

**Course Objectives:**  
By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the foundational theories and concepts in counseling and psychotherapy.
2. Analyze the historical evolution of psychotherapy and its impact on contemporary practices.
3. Explore the process of change and the therapeutic techniques that facilitate it.
4. Identify ethical principles and issues relevant to counseling and psychotherapy.
5. Critically evaluate recent research and its application to clinical practice.
6. Recognize the characteristics of empirically supported treatments and their implementation.
7. Reflect on personal interests and values to inform future engagement with counseling and psychotherapy.

**Required Textbook**

Gladding, S.T. (2018). Counseling: A comprehensive profession, 8th edition. Columbus, OH: Pearson.

**Optional Textbook**

Luhrmann, T.M. (2000). Of two minds: The growing disorder in American Psychiatry. New York: Alfred Knopf.

I aim to create a learning environment that values and respects each student's unique perspectives. Your input is welcomed to improve the course for you and your peers.

Our classroom should be a space for open and respectful dialogue. Some topics may evoke strong emotions—please be mindful of your reactions and considerate of others. If anything said or done during the course causes discomfort, you can:

1. **Speak with me privately**: I’m here to listen and address concerns collaboratively.
2. **Bring it up with the class**: Sharing your experience may help others understand the material and foster collective growth.
3. **Seek support elsewhere**: You may discuss the issue with your advisor, a trusted faculty member, or a peer who can help address it on your behalf.

The intention is to create an inclusive and supportive space while acknowledging and addressing the impact of classroom experiences.

*Statement Adapted from Lynn Hernandez, Behavioral and Social Sciences, School of Public Health, Brown University*

**Assignments/Projects:**

**Attendance** *(20 points)*

Regular attendance and active participation are essential for your success in this course. Attendance will be recorded within the first 5 minutes of class, and late arrivals will result in point deductions. Points may also be deducted for behaviors that disrupt engagement, such as phone usage, leaving the classroom early, or demonstrating a lack of preparation or participation. Students are expected to contribute thoughtfully to discussions, actively engage in class activities, and collaborate effectively during group tasks to enhance their learning experience and create a dynamic and supportive classroom environment.

**Exams** *(40 points; 20 points each)*

Two exams will assess your understanding of the material through multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer questions. Questions will be based on required readings, class lectures, role-plays, guest lectures, documentaries, and discussions. The exams are not cumulative.

* **Preparation**: Performing well will require a thorough understanding of both in-class and assigned reading materials.
* **Make-up Exams**: Written documentation of an excused absence is required no later than one week after the absence to schedule a make-up exam. Excused absences include severe emergencies and/or serious illness with a doctor’s note (dated the day of absence).

**Journals** *(40 points; 10 points each)*

You will submit four critical reflection journals, each consisting of a minimum of **500 words**, in response to classroom discussions and course materials. These journals provide an opportunity to critically analyze, question, and connect with the material, rather than simply summarizing it. They encourage deeper engagement by reflecting on personal insights and applying theoretical concepts.

**General Guidelines:**

* **Content:** Reflect on key ideas that resonated with you, challenges you encountered, lessons learned, and their significance to your academic, personal, or professional growth.
* **Format:**
  + Single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins.
  + Submit as a Word document or PDF via Canvas.
  + No title page required; include your name, journal number, and submission date at the top.
* **Evaluation Criteria:**
  + Depth of reflection (thoughtful, meaningful engagement with the material).
  + Clarity of writing (organized, coherent, and free of grammatical errors).
  + Connection to course content (explicit references to readings, classroom discussions, and/or case vignettes).

**Journal Prompts**

**Journal 1: Initial Reflections on Learning**

* Due: August 29
* Reflect on your learning experience in this class so far.
* What activities, discussions, or concepts have stood out to you and why?
* What are you most excited to learn about as the course progresses?
* How might the knowledge and skills from this class be useful to you in your future academic, professional, or personal life?

**Journal 2: Reflections on Case Vignettes**

* Due: September 12
* Review the case vignette provided on Canvas and reflect on it using insights from classroom discussions and assigned readings.
* What stood out to you about the cases, and why?
* How did the classroom discussion and readings shape your understanding of the cases?
* What would you do as a counselor in a similar scenario?
* What challenges might you encounter, and how could you address them?

**Journal 3: Humanistic & Cognitive/Behavioral theories in counseling**

* Due: September 26
* Choose one theory that we have studied so far and reflect on it.
* What about this theory resonated with you, and why?
* How could a counselor effectively use this theory in practice? Provide a specific example.
* When might it not be appropriate to use this theory?
* Are there aspects of the theory that you disagree with or find problematic?

**Journal 4: Diagnosis & Assessment in counseling**

* Due: October 17
* What are your initial thoughts or feelings about the role of diagnosis in counseling?
* How do you understand the purpose of assessment in the counseling process?
* What concerns or questions do you have about using diagnostic tools like the DSM-5 in practice?
* How might cultural background, identity, or lived experience affect how a client is assessed or diagnosed?
* In what ways do you think diagnosis can support or hinder a client’s growth and healing?

**Group Presentation** *(20 points)*

Working in groups of 3-4, you will research and present on a mental health-related topic. Your presentation should explore how counselors approach this issue.

* **Topics**: A list of acceptable topics will be posted on Canvas. Your topic must be approved by the instructor by Friday, October 24.
* **Expectations**: Presentations should be well-organized, research-driven, and include insights from both academic literature and practical applications.

**Formal Research Paper** *(20 points)*

You will write a research paper focused on an aspect of the counseling process discussed in Gladding (2018).

* **Sources**: Use at least four academic references (e.g., textbooks or peer-reviewed journal articles). Mental health websites are not acceptable.
* **Structure**: Your paper should follow APA formatting, including a title page, in-text citations, and a reference list. Papers should include:
  + A clear organization and focus on the selected topic.
  + A comprehensive review of Gladding’s discussion of the topic, supplemented by additional scholarly sources.
  + A critical analysis of how the topic aligns with counseling and psychotherapy practices.
  + Speculation on the implications of this issue for the future of the field.
  + Your paper will be 1,000-1,500 words, excluding the title page and references.
* **Academic Integrity**: Avoid plagiarism; any violation will result in a grade of zero. Limit direct quotations to 50 words total, and ensure they are properly cited.
* **Submission and Late Policy**: Late submissions will incur penalties as outlined in the course syllabus.

**Extra Credit Opportunities: SONA Participation**

The College of Education offers extra credit opportunities through the SONA subject pool. Students can participate in research studies, either in person or online, to earn bonus points. If you experience access issues, contact **sona@auburn.edu** for assistance.

* **1 SONA credit = 2 bonus points on an assignment.**
* You can earn up to **6 extra credit points** through SONA participation.

Take advantage of this opportunity to boost your grade while contributing to valuable research!

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| **COURSE CONTENT OUTLINE** | | |
| **Topic** | | **Assignments** |
| **Week 1** | | |
| **M (8/18)** | Introductions & Review of Syllabus |  |
| **W (8/20)** | What is Counseling/Psychotherapy? |  |
| **F (8/22)** | Intro to Counseling and Mental Health |  |
| **Week 2** | | |
| **M (8/25)** | Mental Health and Stigma |  |
| **W (8/27)** | Personal and Professional Aspects of Counseling | Gladding 1 |
| **\*F (8/29)** | Personal and Professional Aspects of Counseling Cont. | **DUE:**  **Journal #1** |
| **Week 3** | | |
| **M (9/1)** | **Labor Day – NO CLASS** |  |
| **W (9/3)** | Counseling in a Multicultural Society | Gladding 3 |
| **F (9/5)** | Counseling in a Multicultural Society Cont. |  |
| **Week 4** | | |
| **M (9/8)** | Building Counseling Relationships | Gladding 5 |
| **W (9/10)** | Foundations of Effective Therapeutic Alliance | Gladding 5 |
| **\*F (9/12)** | NO CLASS | **DUE:**  **Journal #2** |
| **Week 5** | | |
| **M (9/15)** | Humanistic Theories of Counseling | Gladding 7 |
| **W (9/17)** | Psychoanalytic, Psychodynamic, Adlerian | Gladding 7 |
| **F (9/19)** | Person-Centered, Gestalt, Existential | Gladding 7 |
| **Week 6** | | |
| **M (9/22)** | Behavioral/Cognitive Therapy | Gladding 8 |
| **W (9/24)** | Behavioral/Cognitive Therapy Cont. | Gladding 8 |
| **\*F (9/26)** | Emotion-Focused Therapy | Gladding 8  **DUE:**  **Journal #3** |
| **Week 7** | | |
| **M (9/29)** | Groups in Counseling | Gladding 9 |
| **W (10/1)** | Couples and Family in Counseling | Gladding 14 |
| **F (10/3)** | Groups, Couples, & Family: Theories in Action | Gladding 14 |
| **Week 8** | | |
| **M (10/6)** | **Review for Exam 1** |  |
| **\*W (10/8)** | **EXAM 1** | **DUE:**  **EXAM 1** |
| **F (10/10)** | **FALL BREAK – NO CLASS** |  |
| **Week 9** | | |
| **M (10/13)** | Diagnosis in Counseling/Psychotherapy | Gladding 12 |
| **W (10/15)** | Testing and Assessment | Gladding 12 |
| **\*F (10/17)** | Ethical and Legal Aspects of Counseling | Gladding 2  **DUE:**  **Journal #4** |
| **Week 10** | | |
| **M (10/20)** | Abuse, Addiction, and Counseling | Gladding 17 |
| **W (10/22)** | Abuse, Addiction, and Counseling Cont. | Gladding 17 |
| **\*F (10/24)** | Disability and Counseling  Orientation to Research and Writing | Gladding 17  **DUE:**  **Group Presentation Topic**  **Research Paper Topic** |
| **Week 11** | | |
| **M (10/27)** | Creative Arts Therapies |  |
| **W (10/29)** | Creative Arts Therapies Cont. |  |
| **F (10/31)** | Creative Arts Therapies Cont. |  |
| **Week 12** | | |
| **M (11/3)** | Professional School Counseling | Gladding 15 |
| **W (11/5)** | College Counseling and Student-Life Services | Gladding 16 |
| **F (11/7)** | Clinical Mental Health and Private Practice Counseling | Gladding 18 |
| **Week 13** | | |
| **M (11/10)** | Consultation, Supervision, and Ethics | Gladding 10 |
| **W (11/12)** | Review for **EXAM 2** |  |
| **F (11/14)** | **EXAM 2** | **DUE:**  **EXAM 2** |
| **Week 14** | | |
| **M(11/17)** | Group Project Work Day |  |
| **W(11/19)** | Independent Work- NO CLASS |  |
| **\*F(11/21)** | Independent Work- NO CLASS | **DUE:**  **Research Paper** |
| **Week 15** | | |
| **M (11/24)** | **UNIVERSITY BREAK - NO CLASS** |  |
| **W (11/26)** | **UNIVERSITY BREAK - NO CLASS** |  |
| **F (11/28)** | **UNIVERSITY BREAK - NO CLASS** |  |
| **Week 16** | | |
| **M (12/1)** | **Student Presentations** |  |
| **W (12/3)** | **Student Presentations** |  |
| **F (12/5)** | **Student Presentations** |  |
| **NO FINAL EXAM** | | |

**Submission Policy:**

* Assignments are due by 11:59 PM on Fridays, as specified in the syllabus and on Canvas
* Canvas will serve as the official time stamp for all submissions
* Assignments submitted after the indicated time on Canvas will be subject to a late penalty. A 10% deduction will be applied for every day the assignment is late.

### **Grade Allocation**

1. **Attendance (20 points)**
   * **14%** of the total grade.
2. **Exams (40 points)**
   * **29%** of the total grade.
3. **Journals (40 points)**
   * **29%** of the total grade.
4. **Group Presentation (20 points)**
   * **14%** of the total grade.
5. **Research Paper (20 points)**
   * **14%** of the total grade.

**Grading Scale Breakdown (Out of 140 Points)**

* **A**: 126 – 140 points (90–100%)
* **B**: 112 – 125 points (80–89%)
* **C**: 98 – 111 points (70–79%)
* **D**: 84 – 97 points (60–69%)
* **F**: Below 84 points (Below 60%)

**Class Policy Statements**

**Attendance:** Attendance is expected and essential. You are responsible for all material covered during any absences. While emergencies are understandable, they should not be recurring. Cell phone use is disruptive and prohibited during class.

**Excused Absences:** Whenever possible, notify me in advance of any excused absences. In all cases, notification should **occur no later than one week after the absence**. Proper documentation is required. Refer to university policies for further details.

**Technology Use:** During class, it is expected that students remain focused on the class content and discussions. Please refrain from using electronic devices for matters unrelated to the class, unless there is an emergency. If you anticipate the need to use your device for a specific reason, please discuss it with the instructor for approval in advance. If you have accommodations related to technology use or any other aspect of the class, please communicate these with the instructor at the beginning of the semester or as soon as possible. We are committed to providing an inclusive learning environment and will work collaboratively to ensure that your needs are met.

**Email Communication:** I will communicate through Canvas Announcements and Outlook email. Please check your Canvas announcements regularly. For questions, email me using your official Auburn email. Response time to e-mails is 48-hours Monday-Friday 8 AM – 5 PM. Feel free to follow up if I do not respond within 48 hours.

**Recording Policy:** Recording class sessions—whether audio or video—is strictly prohibited unless necessary for approved accommodations through the university.

**AI Policy:** In this course, students can use Generative AI Tools such as ChatGPT for formatting (e.g., APA style, grammar, sentence structure, etc.), study assistance, and specific instances designated by the instructor. Students **are not** allowed to use Generative AI Tools for content generation. As always, students must properly use attributions, including in-text citations, quotations, and references. **To maintain academic integrity, students must disclose any use of AI-generated material.** A student should include the following statement in assignments to indicate use of a Generative AI Tool: “The author(s) would like to acknowledge the use of [Generative AI Tool Name], a language model developed by [Generative AI Tool Provider], in the preparation of this assignment. The [Generative AI Tool Name] was used in the following way(s) in this assignment: [e.g., brainstorming, grammatical correction, citation, which portion of the assignment].”

**Class Cancellation:** In the event of a class cancellation or university closure, I will post all planned class activities on Canvas. Students are responsible for completing any assigned tasks.

**Make-Up Policy:** Students must initiate arrangements to make up missed in-class activities or presentations due to properly authorized excused absences within one week of the end of the excused absence period.

**Late Work Policy:** Assignments and papers submitted late will incur an immediate 10% grade deduction per day.

**Academic Honesty**: The University Honesty Code and related policies on cheating and plagiarism apply to this course. Details are available at [Auburn University Policies](https://www.auburn.edu/academic/provost/academic-honesty/). Many instances of plagiarism result from poor note-taking, citation errors, procrastination, or panic. To avoid issues, practice careful reading, timely work, and clear communication. Always cite sources you consult or borrow from directly.

**Disability Accommodations:** Students requiring accommodations should arrange a meeting with me during office hours within the first week of classes or as soon as possible. If you haven’t yet registered with the Office of Accessibility but require accommodations, please contact them at 1228 Haley Center, (334) 844-2096.

**Student Mental Health and Well-Being:** If you or someone you know feels overwhelmed, depressed, or in need of support, help is available. Contact Student Counseling and Psychological Services (SCPS) at (334) 844-5123 or visit [SCPS](http://wp.auburn.edu/scs). Services are accessible during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through counselors located in the Medical Clinic and Haley Center. For emergencies, the East Alabama Mental Health Center offers a toll-free, 24/7 helpline at 800-815-0630.