# AUBURN UNIVERSITY SYLLABUS

1. **Course Number:** COUN 7410

**Course Title:** Clinical Mental Health Counseling - Orientation

**Credit Hours:** 3 Semester hours

**Prerequisites:** None

**Course Instructor:** Sarah Flint, PhD, LPC-S, BC-TMH, NCC

[Sam0058@auburn.edu](mailto:Sam0058@auburn.edu)

**Delivery Method:** Virtual Asynchronous

**Semester/Year:** Fall 2025

1. **Text**(s): Watson, J.C., & Schmit, M.K. (2019). *Introduction to Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Contemporary Issues*. Sage Publications. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc.

# Required Downloads (available on Canvas):

American Counseling Association. (2014). *ACA code of ethics.* Alexandria, VA: Author.

Alabama Board of Examiners. Code of Ethics.

**Major Resources:**

*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association,* Seventh Edition (2020). American Psychological Association.

1. **Course Description:** Orientation to clinical mental health counseling to include roles, responsibilities, systems, theories, professional issues, and history.

# Student Learning Outcomes (CACREP 2024 Standards)

1. Etiology, nomenclature, diagnosis, treatment, referral, and prevention of mental, behavioral, and neurodevelopmental disorders (CACREP 5.C.1.).
2. Mental health service delivery modalities and networks within the continuum of care, such as primary care, outpatient, partial treatment, inpatient, integrated behavioral healthcare, and aftercare (CACREP 5.C.2.)
3. Legislation, government policy, and regulatory processes relevant to clinical mental health counseling (CACREP 5.C.3.)
4. Intake interview, mental status evaluation, biopsychosocial history, mental health history, and psychological assessment for treatment planning and caseload management 5. techniques and interventions for prevention and treatment of a broad range of mental health issues (CACREP 5.C.4).
5. Techniques and interventions for prevention and treatment of a broad range of mental health issues (CACREP 5.C.5.)
6. Strategies for interfacing with the legal system regarding court-referred clients (CACREP 5.C.6.)
7. Strategies for interfacing with integrated behavioral healthcare professionals (CACREP 5.C.7.).
8. Strategies to advocate for people with mental, behavioral, and neurodevelopmental conditions (CACREP 5.C.8.)
9. Third-party reimbursement and other practice and management issues in clinical mental health counseling (CACREP 5.C.9.)
10. **Assignments/Projects:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course Assignment** | **Due Date** | **Points Available** | **CACREP Standards** |
| Intervention Activity | 11/20 or 12/4 by 11:59pm | 50 | *CACREP (5.C.2) (5.C.3.) (5.C.4) (5.C.5.) (5.C.7.)* |
| Clinical Settings Presentation | On-going | 100 | *CACREP (5.C.3) (5.C.5) (5.C.6.) (5.C.7.) (5.C.8.) (5.C.9.)* |
| Human Services Organization Review | 9/28 by 11:59pm | 50 | *CACREP (5.C.2.) (5.C.3.) (5.C.6.) (5.C.7.) (5.C.8) (5.C.9.)* |
| Responses to Weekly Discussion Posts | On-going | 120 | *CACREP (5.C.1) (5.C.2.) (5.C.3) (5.C.4) (5.C.5) (5.C.6) (5.C.7). (5.C.8) (5.C.9)* |
| Ethics Case Study | 10/5 by 11:59pm | 50 | *CACREP (5.C.2.) (5.C.3.) (5.C.6.) (5.C.7.) (5.C.8) (5.C.9.)* |
| Final Course Reflection | 12/3 | 50 | *CACREP (5.C.1) (5.C.2.) (5.C.3) (5.C.4) (5.C.5) (5.C.6) (5.C.7). (5.C.8) (5.C.9)* |

**Total: 420 points**

**A. Response to weekly discussion posts** **(12 pts each = 120 pts)**

Each week that has a Discussion Board Post prompt, Clinical Settings Presentation, and/or Intervention Activity, you will be required to answer the discussion questions posed by me or your classmates in the initial posts. Initial discussion posts will be uploaded by the Wednesday of each week by 11:59pm. You must provide your peer response by the Sunday of each week at 11:59pm. Peer responses should add new content to the discussion and should not just be an evaluation of a colleague's post.

**B.** **Human Service Organization Review (50 pts)**

Students are required to research a human service organization that provides mental health counseling services. For this project, students will contact a mental health agency/setting to obtain the following information through a 1:1 interview with a counseling professional from the site. **Note: This assignment MUST include an interview. Reviewing a website or gathering information in a different format than requested will result in a failing grade.**

Interview Guide:

1. Ask the professional counselor that you are interviewing to introduce themselves including their professional licenses/certifications, contact information (email and/or phone) and number of years they have worked as a helping professional, types of settings they have been employed in.
2. Tell me about the counseling population that you currently serve.
3. Can you explain the type(s) of professionals who are employed at your site (i.e., mental health counselors, social workers, marriage and family practitioners, psychologists)?
4. What treatment/counseling model do you theoretically subscribe to? (e.g., Cognitive Behavioral, Person-Centered, etc).
5. Can you describe an ethical or legal issue that you have encountered and how you addressed the issue?
6. What role does advocacy play in your work? How have you gotten involved in advocacy within the profession of counseling?
7. How is your site funded? What rate does your site bill clients?
8. How does your site bill clients (i.e., private insurance, Medicaid)?
9. Does your site utilize a specific counseling program (i.e., 12 steps, Matrix Model), therapeutic model (i.e., reliance upon a specific theory) or does the therapist select the interventions in session?
10. What is the best piece of advice you have for a new counselor-in- training?

Upon collecting this information from a counselor, students will record the respondent’s answers in an interview format:

# Student: What Populations Does This Setting Serve?

Mr. Smith: Our setting serves clients from…

Students will submit the interview transcript through Canvas. A page limit is not identified for this assignment.

# C. Clinical Settings Presentation (100 points)

Students will prepare a presentation in individually or in pairs that ***focuses on a specific CMHC therapeutic setting*** (inpatient psychiatric unit, outpatient SMI, outpatient child/adolescent, private practice, incarcerated populations, child advocacy center, etc.) and provides the class with an in-depth overview of the type of therapeutic work utilized within that setting. Presentations will be recorded and posted to the corresponding Discussion Post specific to the Clinical Setting. Presentations should be between 15-20 minutes, should use PowerPoint (or a similar slide deck platform), and should follow the outline as follows:

1. Overview of the therapeutic setting chosen, and the types of services offered at that site.
   1. Who works there?
   2. What kinds of clients do they see?
   3. What kinds of services are offered?
   4. How are they funded?
   5. What kinds of licensure or credentialing does one need?
2. Identification of potential ethical dilemmas specific to the setting.
   1. Define the specific ethical dilemmas.
   2. Identify the specific ACA Ethical Codes and ABEC Ethical Codes that address these dilemmas.
   3. Identify other relevant resources (scholarly articles, professional organization guidelines, etc.) that provide guidance in responding to the ethical dilemma.
3. Provide future practitioners with guidelines of best practice related to the setting. This should be based on review of relevant scholarly counseling literature.
4. Provide at least one thoughtful discussion question for your classmates to respond to that are specific to your topic and presentation, and post it to the discussion board by 9/28. Students are expected to respond to two peers’ posts by Wednesday, 10/1.

You are required to use 5 scholarly sources published within the last 5 years. These sources should be cited using both in-text citations and a Reference slide as guided by APA formatting. It is advised that all references are professional references, Wikipedia, et cetera is discouraged. In addition to your initial post, it is your responsibility to continue to facilitate the discussion by responding to the peer responses provided by your classmates.

# D. Intervention Activity (50 pts)

# To help build your “toolbox” of therapeutic interventions, each student will select a counseling intervention specific to a theoretical orientation and record a presentation of their identified intervention to the class. This demonstration will be a five to ten-minute recorded demonstration that includes a review of the intervention and demonstration on how to implement it in therapy. The video should be posted to the Intervention Activity Discussion Post by the Wednesday (11:59pm) of the assigned week. In addition to the video, your post should include a citation for the intervention in APA format, a brief description of the intervention, and a thoughtful discussion question for your classmates to respond to that are specific to the implementation of the intervention. In addition to your initial post, it is your responsibility to continue to facilitate the discussion by responding to the peer responses provided by your classmates.

# E. Ethics Case Study (50 points)

# Students will be provided a case study to which they will apply both the Ethical Decision-Making Model discussed in class and the ACA Code of Ethics. Response papers should be formatted using APA format and submitted to Canvas.

# F. Final Course Reflection (50 points)

# In 2-3 pages double-spaced, students will reflect on what they learned in COUN 7410 and how it has shaped their developing professional identity as a Clinical Mental Health Counselor. Students will reflect on key learning experiences, insights from site presentations, and how this knowledge informs their practicum, internship, and long-term career goals. Prompts for this reflection can be found in Canvas.

**Rubric and Grading Scale:** All assignments must be completed to earn a final grade. Grades will be based upon total point accumulation in the course:

# Grading Scale

90 – 100% = A

80 – 89.99% = B

70 – 79.99% = C

60 – 69.99% = D

Below 60 = F

## All late assignments will receive a 10% grade reduction per day, and no late assignments will be accepted after one week.

**8. Class Policy Statements**

Make-Up Policy: Arrangement to make up a missed major assignment due to properly authorized excused absences must be initiated by the student within one week of the end of the period of the excused absence(s). Except in extraordinary circumstance, no make-up assignments will be arranged during the last three days before the final exam period begins.

Academic Honesty: All portions of the Auburn University student academic honesty code (Title XII) found in the *Student EPolicy Handbook* will apply to university courses. All academic honesty violations or alleged violations of the SGA Code of Laws will be reported to the Office of the Provost, which will then refer the case to the Academic Honesty Committee.

Accommodations Statement: Auburn University and the Counselor Education program are committed to ensuring student success by providing them with the appropriate supportive resources when necessary. We encourage students to exercise their right under the Americans with Disabilities Act to access academic accommodations. Students who need accommodations should submit their approved accommodations through the AIM Student Portal on AU Access and follow up with the instructor about an appointment. It is important for the student to complete these steps as soon as possible; accommodations are not retroactive. Students who have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility but need accommodations should contact the Office of Accessibility at ACCESSIBILITY@auburn.edu or (334) 844-2096 (V/TT). The Office of Accessibility is located in Haley Center 1228. Once a student has begun the process for accommodations, they are responsible for scheduling a meeting with faculty to discuss how these accommodations will be implemented in practice. Faculty are committed to working with students to support their needs in conjunction with the Office of Accessibility.

Counselor Education Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement (CACREP 2024 Standard 1.N.6): A central foundation of the mission of the Counselor Education programs is the preparation of counselors and counselor educators to work in an increasingly diverse society. The program’s understanding of diversity encompasses culture, sexual and gender identity, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability, and other aspects of individual identity. The program believes that meeting these goals requires that students and faculty engage in advocacy, equity, inclusion, and culturally sustaining practices. This includes students demonstrating these principles in their academic work, clinical practice, and professional development engagement. These principles are in alignment with our professional, ethical, and accreditation standards including: Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (2024 standards) American Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics (ACA, 2016), American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA), the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC), American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMCHA), and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). Overall, we seek to create educational and learning environments that support, sustain, and challenge students to address their development as professionals related to and representative of culturally sustaining practice.

Course Contingency: If normal class and/or lab activities are disrupted due to illness, emergency, or crisis situation, the syllabus and other course plans and assignments may be modified to allow completion of the course. If this occurs, and addendum to your syllabus and/or course assignments will replace the original materials.

Course communication: Canvas will be used as the medium to transfer educational materials and grades for this course. Students will upload completed assignments to Canvas and bring them to class only when instructed. University e-mail (**NOT** messages through Canvas) will be the primary avenue of communication with the instructor in between class sessions; feedback on assignments will be provided via Canvas.

Zoom Policy: Zoom participation requires you to keep your video on and your microphone muted when you are not speaking.

* If you have a need for technology to support your participation in this class or do not have a space conducive for participating - SERC provides private individual counseling spaces (Counseling Lab) that you can reserve and use for class sessions.
* Please know that you can blur your background if you are not comfortable sharing your space or environment during classes conducted online.
* Please limit all distractions such as your phone or attending to other work on your computer. It is often very apparent that a student is distracted and that impacts the class environment for everyone.
* Students can turn off their cameras briefly if needed (e.g., break). These pauses should be short. Having students on camera provides a higher level of engagement for all participants.
* If you have questions during class, you can raise your hand (in real time or via Zoom).
* Please know that sometimes it is challenging to be teaching and attending to students and reading messages in Chat, especially if I am also sharing content. If I don’t respond to a comment or discussion in Chat, please let me know.

Although you may be participating from your domicile, our Zoom meetings are professional interactions.

* You should dress and behave as you would in a normal F2F classroom.
* Please minimize distractions in the background as much as possible.
* Participating in spaces that are not conducive to zoom attendance (e.g., public spaces, vehicles) should be discussed with the instructor prior to the class session and should only be used when there are no other alternatives.

Recording Sessions: Due to the nature of our classes and the possibility that we may be discussing content that is confidential in nature:

* Instructors can record sessions and will notify students when the class session is being recorded (e.g., teaching demonstrations, making the session available to other students, speakers)
* Confidential content (e.g., supervision sessions) will be retained following appropriate ethical and legal practices as well as CED policies (e.g., password protected BOX folders).
* Students can request that the recording be stopped if they wish to discuss a topic that they do not want recorded. In areas such as supervision this may not be possible.
* You should participate in spaces that allow for these discussions and do not have others present in the room while you are using it for class or supervision.
* As per University policies, I reserve the right to dismiss anyone from a Zoom meeting whose environment or behavior is distracting or problematic.
* If you have any issues with sharing your video feed, adhering to this policy, or anything else related to your use of Zoom please notify me via email in the first week of class so we can discuss if accommodations are possible.

Policy Related to the Use of AI for Classroom Assignments: The Counselor Education Programs (CED) has a comprehensive policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). As the acceptable use of AI varies, please consult your instructor on how AI can be used within specific courses and/or clinical settings. Please understand that violations of this policy can be considered a form of plagiarism. Please see the CED Programs Handbook for the full AI policy.

Professionalism: As faculty, staff, and students interact in professional settings, they are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors as defined in the College’s conceptual framework. These professional commitments or dispositions are listed below:

* Engage in responsible and ethical professional practices
* Contribute to collaborative learning communities
* Demonstrate a commitment to diversity
* Model and nurture intellectual vitality

1. **Justification for Graduate Credit:**

This course includes advanced content on pedagogical methods in counselor education. This includes content as specified by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP, 2009). All academic content approved by CACREP is for advanced Masters and/or Doctoral graduate study. This includes rigorous evaluation standards of students completing the student learning outcomes specified in this syllabus.

1. **Course Content:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course Schedule** | **Topics** | | **Readings/Assignments** | | | **CACREP Standards** | |
| 8/20  Week 1 | Introduction to the Course & Orientation to the CMHC Program | | Presentation and Intervention Date Sign-up Due by Sunday, 8/24 | | | 5.C.1.; 5.C.2. | |
| 8/27  Week 2 | CMHC Professional Identity Issues  The evolution of CMHC | | **Chapters 1 & 2**  ***Weekly Discussion Board Post #1*** | | | 5.C.1.; 5.C.2. | |
| 9/3  Week 3 | Contemporary Theories & Models of CMHC | | **Chapter 3**  ***Weekly Discussion Board Post #2*** | | | 5.C.2. | |
| 9/10  Week 4 | Policies, Laws, and Regulatory Issues Relevant to the Practice of CMHC | | **Chapter 4**  ***Weekly Discussion Board Post #3*** | | | 5.C.2.; 5.C.3 | |
| 9/17  Week 5 | Ethical and legal issues in CMHC  Documentation & Record Keeping  Ethical Decision Making Model | | **Chapter 5 & 6**  ***Weekly Discussion Board Post #4***  **ACA Code of Ethics** | | | 5.C.2.; 5.C.3.;5.C.4;5.C.5.;5.C.6. | |
| 9/24  Week 6 | Human Service Organization Review – no lecture this week | | ***Human Service Organization Review due Sunday 9/28 by midnight*** | | | 5.C.2.; 5.C.3.;5.C.4.;5.C.7.;5.C.8.;5.C.9. | |
| 10/1  Week 7 | Ethical Decision Making Model  Applying Ethical Decision Making Model | | ***Ethics Case Study and Discussion #5 on it due Sunday 10/5*** | | | 5.C.2.; 5.C.3.;5.C.4.;5.C.7.;5.C.8.;5.C.9. | |
| 10/8  Week 8 | Models of Clinical Supervision  What is Supervision for and why is it Helpful? | | **Chapter 8**  ***Clinical Settings Presentation- Hospitals and Discussion Post*** | | | 5.C.2.; 5.C.3.;5.C.4.;5.C.7.;5.C.8.;5.C.9. | |
| 10/15  Week 9 | Working with Managed Care  Incorporating Evidence-Based Practices in the tx of Mental Disorders | | **Chapter 7 & 9**  ***Clinical Settings Presentation- Adult Outpatient Community Mental Health Center and Discussion Post*** | | | 5.C.1;5.C.2;.;5.C.3;5.C.9. | |
| 10/22  Week 10 | Behavioral Medicine: A Holistic Look at Health and Illness  Psychopharmacology for the Nonmedical Mental Health Professional | | **Chapter 10 & 11**  ***Clinical Settings Presentation- Outpatient Child/Adolescent Services (can be community mental health, CAC’s, etc.) and Discussion Post*** | | | 5.C.1;5.C.2;.;5.C.3; 5.C.9. | |
| 10/29  Week 11 | | Neuroscience and the Brain | | **Chapter 12**  ***Clinical Settings Presentation-*** ***Colleges and Universities and Discussion Post*** | 5.C.3. | |
| 11/5  Week 12 | | Clinically Based Assessment, Diagnosis, and Tx Planning | | **Chapter 14**  ***Clinical Settings Presentation- Private Practice and Discussion Post*** | 5.C.1;5.C.2;5.C.45.C.5.;5.C.8. | |
| 11/12  Week 13 | | Strategies for Working with Specific Populations | | **Chapter 15**  ***Intervention Demonstrations and Discussion Post*** | 5.C.1;5.C.2;5.C.45.C.5.;5.C.8. | |
| 11/19  Week 14 | | Building your Intervention Toolbox | | ***Intervention Demonstrations and Discussion Post*** | 5.C.1;5.C.2;5.C.45.C.5.;5.C.8. | |
| 11/26  Week 15 | | No Class or Lecture this Week  Thanksgiving Break | | | | |
| 12/3  Week 16 | | ***Final Course Reflection Due*** | | | | |

**\*The syllabus may be changed or adjusted by the instructor at any point in the semester**