**COUN 8800 001**

Professional Development & Internship Skills

***Fall 2025***

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**Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling**

**College of Education**

Instructor Information:

**Chenetra D. Buchannon, PhD**

**Visiting Assistant Professor**

**3112 Education Building**

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Office Hours:

**by appointment**



**SYLLABUS**

**1. Course Number: COUN 8800 001 (3 semester hours)**

**Course Title: Professional Development & Internship Skills**

**University: Auburn University**

**Prerequisites: Pending Faculty Approval to Apply to Internship**

**Instructor: Chenetra D. Buchannon, PhD**

**Contact Info: 3112 Education Bldg (mail: 3188); cdb0015@auburn.edu**

**Class Meeting: Thursdays 1:00-3:50pm; EDUC 3245**

**Office Hours: By appointment**

**2. Date Syllabus Prepared:** 8/2019, updated 8/2020, 8/2021, 8/2022, 8/2023, 8/2024, 8/2025

**3. Required Textbook:** N/A

**4. Additional Required Readings:**

Herman, M., & Sharer, N. (2013). Trying to summarize state licensure laws for psychologists: Burial by grains of salt. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology, 7*, 123-133. doi: 10.1037/a0031636

Krieshok, T. S., Lopez, S. J., Somberg, D. R., & Cantrell, P. J. (2000). Dissertation while on internship: Obstacles and predictors of progress. *Professional Psychology: Research & Practice, 31*, 327-331. doi: 10.1037//0735-7028.31.3.327

Schmer, M. (2012). Elevating your elevator talk. *CSA News.* Retrieved from <https://www.careerplacement.org/files/careers/early-career-resources/ec-elevator-speech-2012.pdf>

Silberbogen, A. K., Aosved, A. C., Cross, W. F., Cox, D. R., & Felleman, B. I. (2018). Postdoctoral training in health service psychology: Current perspectives in an evolving profession. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology, 12*(2), 66-73. doi: 10.1037/tep0000182

Silberbogen, A. K., Self, M. M., & Aosved, A. C. (2022). Advanced competency development in health service psychology postdoctoral training: Principles and defining characteristics for program design. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology, 16*(2), 158-165. https://doi.org/10.1037/tep0000391

* All documents on the APPIC website regarding the match process and policies (students are solely responsible for abiding by those policies).
* Students must be a member of the APPIC Match listserv (information on this is available on the APPIC website) and read all announcements that are posted on the listserv.
* Section 8: Evaluation-Related Policies: Pre-Doctoral Internship (pp. 64-69) of the *Student handbook: Auburn University Counseling Psychology PhD Program* (2023). On Canvas.
* In addition to the readings above, students must read any material assigned by the instructor (regarding internship and professional development).

**5. Course Description:**

This three-hour required course is designed to help students solidify their professional identity and effectively apply for their one-year pre-doctoral clinical internship.

**6. Course Objectives:**

**Upon completion of this course, students are expected to:**

1. Demonstrate ability to engage in self-evaluation necessary for life-long learning and practicing within areas of competence;
2. Articulate professional goals and personal strengths and weaknesses;
3. Identify internships to fit those goals, strengths, and qualifications and strengthen skills in growth edge areas;
4. Demonstrate ability to orally present cases that illustrate your clinical work;
5. Demonstrate ability to orally present summaries of their research to a general audience;
6. Demonstrate competence in discussing research in selected area of emphasis, including responding to questions about one’s research;
7. Have an understanding of post-degree requirements for licensure, post-doctoral training, and board certification;
8. Demonstrate ability to give effective feedback to peers;
9. Demonstrate the ability to effectively interview for a clinically-related position;
10. Demonstrate ability to complete professional paperwork and submit accurate and complete documentation.

**7. Course Schedule:**

An overview of the course content and schedule is included below. Class periods will consist of discussion of course material, peer feedback opportunities, and experiential learning activities.

The schedule may change based on the learning needs of the class or other unforeseen circumstances. Class structure is subject to change based on changing public health circumstances or other unforeseen events.

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| DATE | CLASS TOPIC | READINGS/REMINDERS | ASSIGNMENTS DUE ON CANVAS |
| Aug 21 | Introductions; Overview of internship purpose & goals  Brief overview of application requirements  Review APPIC Website  Exploring career & internship goals  Review syllabus |  |  |
| Aug 28 | Review of Self-care and Blueprint Activity  Recognizing strengths & weaknesses  Developing the CV & Autobiographical Essay | Student Handbook (pp.64-69)  Sign-up for Match News Listserv  ([www.appic.org](http://www.appic.org)) | Statement of Goals for Career and Internship due |
| Sept 4 | Reflection of self-care blueprint  Professional Self-care  Developing the Research Essay  Requesting References: Testing the waters | *Email draft of CV to peer* | Statement of Strengths & Weaknesses Due  Draft of CV due |
| Sept 11 | Professional Self-care Plan  Developing Diversity & Theoretical Orientation Essays  Reviewing Initial Sites | * *Order all transcripts* * *Request reference letters* * *Provide peer with CV feedback* | Professional Self-care Plan due  Autobiographical Essay due  Peer CV Feedback due |
| Sept 18 | Calculating Hours  Developing Cover Letters | * *Email draft of Research or Autobiographical Essay to peer* * *Register with APPIC and complete application (except essays)* * *Ask 2-3 people to serve as outside reviewers of your essays* | Research Essay due  List of Potential Internship Sites due |
| Sept 25 | Reviewing Peer Feedback & Updating Materials | * *Provide feedback to Peer from Essay 1 (research or autobio)* * *Provide Diversity or Theoretical Orientation Essay to feedback peer* | Diversity Essay due  Theoretical Orientation Essay due  Peer Essay Feedback 1 due  Draft Cover Letter due |
| Oct 2 | Reviewing Feedback & Updating Materials (cont.) | * *Provide feedback to Peer from Essay 2 (diversity or theory)* * *Bring multiple copies of all essays, cover letter, CV to work group* * *Enter hours in T2T* | Peer Essay Feedback 2 due  Hours due (Current & Expected) |
| Oct 9 | **NO CLASS -FALL BREAK** |  | Self-Care!! |
| Oct 16 | Reflection of Professional Self-care Plan  Begin Finalizing Application Materials  Discussion of Interview Process  *Practice Sample Interview Questions* | * *Enter hours in AAPI* * *Finalize materials, incorporating feedback* * *Remind references of upcoming deadlines* | Final List of Sites due |
| Oct 23 | Conveying Your Research to Various Audiences  Use of Case Material in Internship & Job Interviews  *Practice in-class presentations* | Schmer (2012)   * *Make any other needed corrections to application* * *Enter hours in T2T & AAPI* * ***Submit applications (goal is one week prior to your first deadline)*** | Revised Hours due (Current & Expected) |
| Oct 30 | Do Case Presentations in class  *Practice Sample Interview Questions* | * *Register for the Match* | Case Presentation due (in class) |
| Nov 6 | Dissertation while on internship  Do Research Presentations in class  *Practice Sample Interview Questions* | Krieshok et al. (2000) | Research Presentation due (in class) |
| Nov 13 | Post-Doctoral Training  *Practice Sample Interview Questions* | Silberbogen et al (2018)  Silberbogen et al (2022) |  |
| Nov 20 | Mock Interviews! |  | Mock Interviews via Zoom |
| Nov 27 | **NO CLASS** – THANKSGIVING BREAK | -- | **--** |
| Dec 4 | EPPP, EPPP-2, and Licensure  Reflection of Professional Self-care Plan  Reflection of the Internship Application Process | Herman & Sharer (2013) | Copy of Submitted AAPI due |
| Dec 11 | **NO CLASS** – FINAL EXAM WEEK | -- | -- |

**8. Course Requirements/Evaluation:**

This is a three-credit course designed to advance your professional development as a future psychologist and facilitate your successful application to pre-doctoral internship. You are asked to enroll in this course only if they intend to apply to pre-doctoral internship in that semester because you will receive multiple reviews of your application materials, interview skills training, and internship/postdoctoral information. It is important to note that enrolling in this course does not guarantee your approval to apply to internship. In addition, failure to apply to internship in the semester this course is taken will not exempt you from any course requirements; it will also mean that when you do apply to internship in a future year, you will need to facilitate most of the application components on your own (i.e., faculty will not conduct mock interviews, may not be available to read essay revisions, etc.) Prior to engaging in this course, I encourage all students to have an honest discussion with their doctoral advisor regarding their progress toward requirements for internship (i.e., psychotherapy project by Sept 15th; oral examination and dissertation proposal by Oct 1st). Per Program policy, any student who enrolls in the course but later does not meet program deadlines to apply to internship will be asked to withdraw from the course.

**Course Requirements**:

Due dates for each course requirement are listed in the Course Schedule. All written assignments are submitted on Canvas and are due by the start of class (1:00pm) on the dates listed. All interactive assignments are due in class during the date listed.

*A. Statement of Goals (5 points):* Write a short paragraph stating your goals for internship, including responses to the following questions: Where do you hope to work immediately after graduation? What are your more long-term goals? Who don’t you want to work with? What have your training opportunities specifically equipped you for (already)? What skills/abilities do you want to emphasize/expand/enhance on internship?

*B. Statement of Strengths and Weaknesses (10 points):* APA’s CoA values lifelong learning. As you near the end of your doctoral training, you should be able to reflect on your experiences and skills to identify your strengths and weaknesses (this will also be important in interviews). This assignment is designed to have you engage in self-reflection that can facilitate learning in the next phase of your development and set groundwork for lifelong learning.

1. (3 pts): Identify three or more strengths that you believe you can highlight during the internship application/interview process. Provide examples of those strengths.
   1. (1 pt): Discuss what your strengths might bring to an internship site.
2. (3 pts): Identify three or more weaknesses (or growth edges) that you believe you can discuss during the internship application/interview process. These might be things for which you are working to improve your skills or areas where you have had limited opportunities (weaknesses are not simply lack of experience). They should be relevant to the internship process.
   1. (1 pt): Also discuss what experiences might help you address these or how you are currently working to address these. Note, these should be discussed as weaknesses that you want to build on during internship. Do not explain how weaknesses are also strengths. Everyone has ways they can improve, and this is about your ability to identify some of those areas where you can improve (it is not about denying any true areas for improvement).
   2. (2 pts): Using a strengths-based model, reframe your growth edges and discuss the resources you possess to address them on internship (this should be different from your strengths).

*C. List of Internship Sites (5 points):* You are required to submit a list of 15 or more potential internship sites, followed by your final selection of internship sites (see Course Schedule). Use a Table (ideally in Excel) to list each internship in a separate row. Use the columns to list out criteria. Columns should include name of the internship site, the location, the pay, the accreditation status, application deadline, specific criteria such as minimum number of hours or reports or other experience, number of positions, interview rate, match rate, and other factors that are pertinent to your interest in the site(s). You may also want to list start and end dates, noting that an end date that falls after the Auburn University summer graduation date will require you to defer graduation until the end of the Fall term (December). Also refer to the Program policy on internship sites that are not accredited by APA. Additional documentation on these sites must be provided and faculty approval must be secured to apply to any specific sites not accredited by APA.

*D. Application Materials (30 points total):* You will prepare a CV (5 points), cover letter (5 points), and four essays (5 points each) in accordance with requirements outlined in the AAPI and discussed in class. The four essays are Autobiographical, Theoretical Orientation, Diversity, and Research.

*E. Peer CV Feedback (5 points):* You will provide feedback on the CV of one of your peers. You will complete all feedback in electronic track changes and comment boxes in Word. Your feedback should include attention to wording and grammar issues on the CV (1 point), organization of information (1 point), clarity of information (1 point), and the addition of experiences that may be missing (1 point). Finally, you will provide a brief feedback statement (1 paragraph) to your peer in a comments box at the top to give them a general direction on how to improve their CV (1 point).

*F. Peer Essay Feedback (10 points total):* You will provide feedback on **2 peer essays** (5 points each). You will complete all feedback in electronic track changes and comment boxes in Word. Your feedback should include attention to wording and grammar issues (1 point), essay content and that the essay prompt is appropriately answered (1 point), and clarity (1 point). You will also complete the essay rubric located on Canvas for your peer (1 point). Finally, you will write a feedback statement (1 paragraph) to your peer in a comments box at the top to give them a general direction on how to improve their essay (1 point).

*G.* *Mock Interviews (20 points):* You will be required to participate in several individual mock internship interviews during the class period listed. Volunteer interviewers (faculty, staff, current interns, and/or alumni connected to our program) will evaluate your interview using the rubric (see Canvas). Your interview scores will be averaged to determine your final points.

*H. Research Presentation (10 points):* In class, you will give an overview of your research (this may simply be your dissertation or may be several projects on which you are working) in 1 minute. You should also be able to describe your dissertation (including where you are at in the process) in 1 additional minute. Finally, you will need to be able to respond to questions about your research. You may write this out to prepare, but this should be a discussion (not a rehearsed description). When you are not presenting, you should be able to ask questions of peers.

*I. Case Presentation (10 points):* Select the best client case to use that you can discuss in a brief period (an initial response of no more than 2 minutes) and illustrate your theoretical orientation and skills as a therapist. In class, you will give a brief description in response to a prompt given at the time of your presentation. The prompt can differ, but examples include *Tell me about a difficult clinical experience, Discuss a clinical experience in which you worked from a strengths-based approach, or* *Tell me about a case that illustrates how you work with clients,* etc. You will also be asked to respond to questions after your present your case. You should prepare 2-3 cases that may be used to respond to various inquires. You can type out your case(s) if you want, but you should not memorize them (this would seem forced and unnatural). The idea is that you get practice talking about your clinical work, not that you demonstrate you can memorize how one particular case went. Note it would not be unusual for a site to ask for a second case, just to see how well you can talk about your work. Also, be aware that internship sites may be looking for students to include awareness of cultural issues in these brief case descriptions.

*J.* *Verification of Hours and AAPI Submission (5 points):* To submit your internship application, you are required to verify your clinical hours (3 points) with the Director of Training and submit to Canvas at two time points (see Course Schedule; revised hours must be submitted in the AAPI). Additionally, you are required to submit your final AAPI (2 points) to confirm internship application at the end of the semester. Should you not apply for an internship, you will still be required to submit all hours and AAPI materials to Canvas.

*K.* *Professional Self-Care Plan (10 points):* You are required to develop a professional self-care plan for the semester. Your plan should include the following: 1) what self-care means to/for you at work (consider your multiple and intersecting identities), 2) at least one area of health and wellness on which you would like to focus, 3) current effective and ineffective practices in which you already engage in the chosen health area, 4) a new practice that you want to engage in (if applicable), 5) S.M.A.R.T. goal, 6) barriers to accomplishing your goals, 7) strategies to address the barriers, and 8) frequency of reviewing and modifying your plan. Optional self-care assessment tools are available in Canvas. You will turn in your self-care plan on Canvas **(See due date above).** We will also discuss your plans in class on the due date, as well as at mid-semester and at the end of the semester addressing progress.

Course Evaluation:

Course requirements total to **120 points**. Grades will be assigned on the following percentage scale (proportions of a percentage will be rounded to the nearest whole percentage):

A 90% or greater

B 80-89.9%

C 70-79.9%

D 60-69.9%

F 59.9% or lower

**9. Class Policy Statements:**

Course Delivery Methods: This class is set in an in-person, on-campus format. If the delivery method is altered due to changing public health circumstances, please be assured that the learning goals and outcomes of the course will not change; however, some aspects of the course will change in terms of the mode of delivery and participation. Those details will be shared via email as soon as any necessary changes are determined. Please be prepared for this contingency by ensuring that you have access to a computer and reliable Internet.

Late Work Policy: It is expected that you have completed all assignments by the due date and time. I do not accept late assignments for this class. Assignments not submitted on time will receive a score of 0. *MORE IMPORTANTLY*, internship sites do not accept late applications.

It is expected that you have completed all assignments (including readings) by the start of class on the day assignments are due, that you are prepared in class, that you bring completed assignments to class for feedback, and that you allow adequate time for the Director of Training to validate your application.

Attendance and Participation: I expect you to be in class and prepared. The primary method of instruction in this course is through experiential learning and thus no assigned reading can replace a missed class experience. I expect to know in advance when you will be absent whenever possible. I encourage you to carefully review the portions of the syllabus that address my grading related to participation and the effect that missed classes may have on that grade so that you are fully informed of the effect of missing any classes.

Modifications to the above policy may be made to accommodate COVID related absences, as outlined by current university protocols. Up-to-date protocols will be available on the university’s COVID resources page: <https://auburn.edu/covid-resource-center/>

Respect: I expect that your focus will be on course content during class and thus ask that you silence all cell phones. I understand that emergencies can and do occur, but they do not occur every week. If you must answer your phone, please do so outside of the classroom. I also require that you treat your colleagues will absolute professionalism. You will be encouraged to share your questions/concerns, provide feedback to peers, and accept feedback from peers. This feedback from individuals who know you well is extremely valuable in improving your application. Your feedback should be provided in a way that communicates respect, facilitates your peers’ learning, and conveys your interest in learning from your peers. Should I determine that your feedback is provided in a way that undermines the success of a peer (or that you failed to provide peers with feedback when required), I will ask you to remediate your behavior and may refer you to the counseling psychology faculty for formal remediation.

Accommodations: Students who need accommodations are asked to electronically submit their approved accommodations through AU Access and to arrange a meeting with me during the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility, but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

Honesty Code: All portions of the Auburn University student academic honesty code (Title XII) found in the *Student Policy eHandbook*: http://www.auburn.edu/student\_info/student\_policies/ will apply to this class. 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.

Professionalism and Student Behavior: 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

As a member of the Auburn University academic community, you are required to follow all university guidelines for personal safety associated with COVID-19 or other public health concerns. Visit <https://auburn.edu/covid-resource-center/> for current university guidance and monitor university email for periodic updates that may apply.

Confidentiality/Privacy: Should I have serious concerns about your ability to pass the class or successfully compete for an internship, I may discuss these concerns with colleagues to arrive at an appropriate decision for future training requirements.

Office Hours: Rather than having an established office hour, I will meet with students by appointment. I encourage you to make an appointment with me if you have any questions or concerns about the course or your performance in it.

Course Contingency: If normal class activities are disrupted due to serious 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, an addendum to your syllabus and/or course assignments will replace the original materials.

**10. Justification for Graduate Credit:**

This course includes advanced content in graduate psychology education and supports training required for accreditation by the American Psychological Association (APA). As a course designed to teach knowledge and skills related to the practice of counseling psychology, only students enrolled in advanced stages of the counseling psychology doctoral programs are eligible to take this course.