AUBURN UNIVERSITY

SYLLABUS

SPECIAL EDUCATION, REHABILITATION, AND COUNSELING

**Fall Semester 2025**

**Course Number:** RSED 4100 section D01

**Course Title:** Professional Communication in Rehabilitation

**Credit hours**: 3

**Prerequisites:** Enrolled in Rehabilitation major or Counseling minor

**Classroom:** *online via Canvas*

Instructor: Dr. Nicholas C. Derzis, Jr., CRC

3166 Education

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

**I. Course Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with an opportunity to develop a portfolio that will exemplify the particular abilities and attributes of each person who has completed the Rehabilitation and Disability Studies major or counseling minor. You will build an online portfolio in WIX. The portfolio may be used in seeking employment, admission to graduate school, and to provide record of your undergraduate experience. The course will allow each student to emphasize the unique competencies that he or she has gained during the baccalaureate education.

The portfolio is a form of written communication. The process used in the creation of a portfolio requires introspection, analysis, and synthesis of the student’s educational, clinical, advocacy, volunteer, and leadership experiences. The course is structured to assist the student in the creation of the portfolio through the achievement of the following objectives:

1. Complete a SWOT Analysis
2. Develop of a professional mission statement
3. Create a professional resumes
4. Obtain job interviewing skills towards employment or graduate programs
5. Develop an e-portfolio that emphasizes the unique attributes of the student’s education, relevant experiences, and accomplishments.
6. Gain an understanding of working with diverse populations and communicating effectively as a human services practitioner.

**II. Texts and Required Instructional Material**

Suggested but not required

Neukrug, E., & Kalkbrenner, M. (2021). *Skills and techniques for human service professionals: Counseling environment, helping skills, treatment issues*. Cognella.

Additional materials will be provided in CANVAS to complete assignments.

**III. Instructional Method**

Instructional methodologies employed in this course will be recordings via Zoom and posted to CANVAS, reading assignments and completing assignments independently.

**IV. Course Requirements**

***Class Assignments***

* **SWOT Analysis, Core Values, Core Beliefs**

Handouts describing this activity and worksheets to complete the assignment will be provided and are posted to CANVAS . **The SWOT is worth 8 points, Core Values is worth 8 points, Core Beliefs is worth 8 points. The materials to supplement instruction are posted on CANVAS.**

* **Professional/Personal Mission Statement (Strategic Plan)**

This assignment will convey to the reader and you, your vision of what you want to become. This statement crystallizes your view or perspective regarding career direction and provides you with a purpose and identity that is self-reinforcing or motivating. The mission statement rests upon a foundation of core beliefs and values that give meaning and further define and amplify the condition that services are the be provided to stakeholders. **This assignment is worth 10 points.**

* **Cover Letter and Resume**

This assignment requires that each student develop a resume tailored to his or her personal future goals. We will cover the area of cover letters and resume’s extensively. Materials used for this assignment will come from Auburn University Career Development Services office.

**The cover letter and resume will be worth 5 points each (10 total).**

* **Portfolio Development and Presentation**

Each student will be required to develop an electronic portfolio that contains: the mission statement, cover letter, resume, a product or presentation from a rehabilitation course, a product from one other class taken at the college level (paper, powerpoint, something that is an outcome for an assignment), practicum and internship information, and other materials such as letters of recommendation, plans of study, evidence of leadership activities. Please include other information such as your work experiences, volunteerism, college level clubs or organizations, and hobbies and interests, etc. BE CREATIVE ☺ **This portfolio will be worth 30 points. Details will be provided after Labor Day regarding the production of this artifact.**

* **Exam**

There will be one exam on CANVAS that will be open note that will come from your assignments you complete this semester and the powerpoint slides from the book. It will test for a very basic understanding of the content. This will open around Thanksgiving and close December 6. **26 points**

**V. Evaluation**

This course is calculated out of the total points possible (**100 points)**

90 - 100 = A

80 - 89 = B

70 - 79 = C

60 - 69 = D

Below 60 =F

SWOT Analysis/Core Values/Beliefs: 24 points (3 @ 8 points each)

Mission Statement: 10 points

Cover Letter (5)/Resume (5): 10 total points

Portfolio on Wix: 30

Exam: 26 points

**Total points possible: 100**

**VI. Academic Integrity**

It is each student’s responsibility to become familiar with the provisions contained in Auburn University’s policy regarding academic integrity or honesty.

**VII.**

**CLASS POLICY STATEMENTS:**

**Attendance:** It is expected that each individual will attend class. If you must be absent, please notify the instructor (via e-mail). The Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation and Counseling's attendance policy is that attendance in class is expected and will be linked to participation grades/points. You must be present to achieve these points, unless an excused absence has been arranged. At the discretion of individual instructors, verified absences may be excused under certain circumstances (see Auburn’s policy for further information on rules and regulations). Students may miss up to one class without penalty. Additional unexcused absences will result in grade reduction, and students will be held responsible for any content covered in the event of an absence. Students are expected to be on time for class

**Excused Absences**: Students are granted excused absences from class for the following reasons: Illness of the student or serious illness of a member of the student’s immediate family, death of a member of the student’s immediate family, trips for student organizations sponsored by an academic unit, trips for University classes, trips for participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoena for a court appearance and religious holidays. Students who wish to have an excused absence from this class for any other reason must contact the instructor in advance of the absence to request permission. The instructor will weigh the merits of the request and render a decision. When feasible, the student must notify the instructor prior to the occurrence of any excused absences, but in no case shall such notification occur more than one week after the absence. Appropriate documentation for all excused absences is required.

**Make-Up Policy:** Arrangements to make up missed major examination (e.g. hour exams, mid-term exams) due to properly authorized excused absences. Except in extraordinary circumstance, no make-up exams will be arranged during the last three days before the final exam period begins. Normally, a makeup exam shall occur within one week from the time the student initiates arrangements.

**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.

**Academic Honesty:** All portions of the Auburn University Student Academic Honesty code (Title XII) found in the Student Policy eHandbook. 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.

**Classroom Behavior:** The Auburn University Classroom Behavior Policy is strictly followed in the course; please refer to the Student Policy eHandbook for details of this policy.

**Emergency Contingency statement:** If normal class and/or 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, an addendum to your syllabus and/or course assignments will replace the original materials.

**AI Policy: Not Permitted in this Course for Assignments**

In this course, it is expected that all submitted work is produced by the students themselves, whether individually or collaboratively. Students must not seek the assistance of Generative AI Tools like ChatGPT or Copilot for graded assignments. Use of a Generative AI Tool to complete an assignment constitutes academic dishonesty. Students may use Generative AI tools as a study tool, but be forewarned that AI tools are not trustworthy.

**Use of Electronics:** Cell phones must be put on silent and stored during class times, unless the instructor is notified of special circumstances (e.g., on-call professional services, family emergencies). Computers and electronic notepads are welcomed, but may be used for class purposes only and must not be a distraction.

**Mental Health:** If you or someone you know needs support, you are encouraged to contact Auburn Cares at 334-844-1305 or auburn.edu/auburncares. Auburn Cares will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

Student Counseling & Psychological Services provides confidential, no-cost mental health counseling and psychiatric services to Auburn Students. You can speak with a counselor 24/7/365 by calling 334-844-5123. Learn more about mental health information on campus at auburn.edu/scps.

**Basic Needs:** Any student experiencing food insecurity or an unexpected financial crisis is encouraged to contact Auburn Cares at 334-844-1305 or auburn.edu/auburncaresLinks to an external site. for resources and support.

**Sexual Misconduct Resources Statement:** Auburn University faculty are committed to supporting our students and upholding gender equity laws as outlined by Title IX. Please be aware that if you choose to confide in a faculty member regarding an issue of sexual misconduct, dating violence, or stalking, we are obligated to inform the Title IX Office, who can assist you with filing a formal complaint, No-Contact Directives, and obtaining supportive measures. Find more information at auburn.edu/titleix.

If you would like to speak with someone confidentially, Safe Harbor (334-844-7233) and Student Counseling & Psychological Services (334-844-5123) are both confidential resources. Safe Harbor provides support to students who have experienced sexual or relationship violence by connecting them with academic, medical, mental health, and safety resources. For additional information, visit auburn.edu/safeharbor.

**SYLLABUS DISCLAIMER:**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed due to the developmental needs of the students. In the event that changes are deemed necessary, the instructor will inform students at the earliest date possible in class or via email.

**VIII. Tentative Course Schedule**

**Week 1**

August 21 Course Overview

**Week 2**

August 28

SWOT Analysis

**Week 3**

September 4 Mission Statements, Core Values, Core Beliefs

**SWOT due September 4**

**Week 4**

September 11 Mission statements, Core Values, Core Beliefs

Cover letter and resume development (career services guide)

**Week 5**

September 18 Work on Mission statement and core values/ core beliefs

**Core Values due Sept 18**

**Week 6**

September 25 Components of portfolio, setup WIX accounts, revisit cover letters and resume

**Core Beliefs due Sept 25**

**Week 7**

October 2 Work on Mission Statement

**Week 8**

October 9 Work on cover letter and resume this week

**Mission Statement Due October 9**

**Week 9**

October 16 **Cover letter due October 16**

**Week 10**

October 23 Work on resume

**Week 11**

October 30 **Resume due October 30**

**Week 12**

November 6 Course continuation

**Week 13**

November 13 Work on portfolio

Course continuation

**Week 14**

November 20 **Portfolio Due December 4**  in CANVAS with link to your Wix page

**Week 15**

November 27 **Thanksgiving Break**

**Exam will open this week**

**Week 16**

December 4  **Course evaluation, final exam**

**WIX portfolio due ☺**