

**PSY 450: CLINICAL PRACTICUM**

MWF 1:30-2:50; Hopkins 302

**Instructor:** Ian MacFarlane, Ph.D.  
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**Office Hours:** T 1:30-2:30; Th 3-4; W 7-8 (in library); or by appointment

**Course Description:**

This course is the capstone experience for the clinical/counseling sequence. You will be matched with a mental health provider in Texoma to deliver services based on your interventions learned in the Foundations of Clinical Practice course. You will supplement your applied experience with two very different texts providing advice about how to practice psychotherapy. One is based on the accumulated clinical experience of a recognized expert in psychotherapy while the other is based on reviews of empirical studies. We will discuss the degree to which they overlap and reasons why they may differ in their recommendations, as well as how these types of arguments affect practitioners in the field and potential clients.

The format of this course is discussion/seminar. Most class sessions will focus on discussing and critiquing assigned readings, processing your experiences at your practicum site, and talking about professional development issues. You will also be spending 3-5 hours per week at your practicum site. To compensate for this, we will not meet as a class most Fridays. The course is designed to help students reach the following learning objectives:

- Gain practical experience in the field of mental health service delivery, including supervision
- Apply the APA Code of Ethics to real-life professional situations
- Reflect on mental health as a possible career path
- Critique expert opinion and empirical research on the efficacy of controversial practices in psychotherapy
- Refine oral presentation and discussion facilitation skills
- Synthesize the literature on culturally competent practice with a specific cultural group

**Required Materials:**

Lilienfeld, S. O., Lynn, S. J., & Lohr, J. M. (Eds.). (2015). *Science and pseudoscience in clinical psychology* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Yalom, I. (2009). *The gift of therapy: An open letter to a new generation of therapists and their patients*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishing

Additional readings will be posted via Moodle.

**Assignments:**

*Yalom Discussion Leadership (35 points)*

Over the first half of the semester we will be reading Yalom's *The Gift of Therapy*, which is a series of essays, reflections, and stories of his clinical experiences. Yalom is an influential name in the psychotherapy literature, and his advice is interesting, based on years of experience, and at times controversial. We will use his text to foster discussions about principles of therapy, ethics, stylistic differences, and professional development. During the first day of class, you will sign up for a section of the Yalom text for which you will be responsible. You will lead the class

discussion over the material you are responsible for, including coming up with questions based on the chapters assigned. Questions can be based on specific points in one of the essays or themes across the section you are assigned. Sample discussion questions are listed below:

- On page 129, Yalom states that “early in the course of therapy I make a point of obtaining a history of my patients’ experiences with death.” How could this affect the therapeutic relationship? Could there be some situations where this would be inappropriate? Why or why not?
- Chapter 32 talks about self-disclosure in a different way. Yalom gives an example of a patient who refused to ask him any personal questions at all. He encouraged her to ask him personal questions because he couldn’t help her without them having a human encounter. Do you believe it is necessary for the patient to know things about their therapists for the therapist to be able to help? Why or why not?
- In Chapter 39, Yalom discusses using “parts” of the individual to discuss different behaviors in therapy. Do you agree or disagree with Yalom on this? How might this influence the therapeutic alliance and the effectiveness of the therapy session?
- In Chapter 58, Yalom gives some examples of home visits he has experienced and his belief that therapy should be creative, flexible, and individualized. Also home visits used to be common in health care and have now become less done in the field. What is your opinion of home visits and do you think that they are overstepping a boundary?

Notice how the above questions are open-ended and create opportunities for multiple interpretations. These are the types of questions that promote discussion rather than a simple response. You must prepare a **minimum of eight questions** from the chapters you cover. These questions must be **emailed to me and your classmates at least 24 hours before class begins**. Failure to do so will reduce your score on the assignment by one full letter grade. During class, you will be responsible for facilitating the discussion. This entails more than just reading your question and waiting for responses. Active facilitation includes posing follow-up questions to responses, connecting themes across the conversation, and making sure everyone in the group is participating. Active facilitation also involves stepping back and letting the conversation evolve rather than feeling pressured to give a reply to everything said. In general, the more your classmates are discussing together and addressing each other directly, the better job you are doing. It is not critical that you get through all of your discussion questions, but do be mindful of time so we get through most of them. If you bring eight questions, we’ll have time for roughly 10 minutes per question, though some will undoubtedly generate more conversation than others and that’s fine.

### **Grading Rubric**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Points</b>
Questions include critical thinking and promote discussion	/ 8
Come to class prepared and begin on time	/ 4
Provide follow-up questions to classmates’ responses	/ 7
Highlight connections or contradictions between classmates’ responses	/ 7
Encouraging balanced participation	/ 4
Time management	/ 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>/ 35</b>

*Lilienfeld et al. Discussion Leadership (55 points)*

This assignment is largely similar to the Yalom discussion assignment. You will sign up for one of the chapters in the Lilienfeld et al. text and will be responsible for leading the class during the day we cover it. This assignment will be a bit different, however, because in addition to discussing the material in the chapter, I want you to do additional research into something related to but outside of the chapter. For example, Chapter 7 discusses New Age therapies but only has a few specific examples. You could research the literature on a type of therapy mentioned but not explained in the text. You could also read some of the studies cited by the text and present your own evaluation of the quality of the research. If you are having trouble figuring out what to bring into your lesson, please come talk with me early on in the process.

You will begin class with a presentation of your additional research. This must use PowerPoint or a similar program (e.g., Keynote, Prezi). Your presentation will take between 15-20 minutes. The remaining time will be used to discuss the material in the chapter. You will create at least five discussion questions related to the chapter. **You must email your discussion questions and a handout of your slides to me and your classmates at least 24 hours before class begins.** Failure to do so will result in a full letter grade deduction on your assignment.

**Grading Rubric**

Item	Points
<i>Come to class prepared and begin on time</i>	/ 4
<i>Presentation Portion</i>	/ 20
Uses PowerPoint effectively	/ 2
Material is connected to but extends what is presented in the text	/ 2
Includes empirical research	/ 2
Critiques as well as explains research	/ 10
Follows time guidelines (between 15-20 minutes)	/ 4
<i>Discussion Portion</i>	/ 31
Questions include critical thinking and promote discussion	/ 8
Provide follow-up questions to classmates' responses	/ 7
Highlight connections or contradictions between classmates' responses	/ 7
Encouraging balanced participation	/ 4
Time management	/ 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>/ 55</b>

*Participation in Group Supervision (60 points)*

Roughly one class period per week for much of the semester will be spent in group supervision. We will talk more about what supervision is and how to make use of it on the first day of class. Essentially this time will be used to discuss what's going on at your practicum sites, any problems arising, any success stories, and questions about professional development issues. Attendance at these meetings is mandatory and missing more than one is potential grounds for failing the course. You are required to participate in, not just attend, these sessions. Participation does not necessarily mean you ask for time to talk about an issue at your site, but also includes listening to others attentively and offering support and/or suggestions. Currently there are eight group supervision sessions scheduled, but we will add more if necessary and the other

components of class can be interrupted if someone needs to process an event at her site. A maximum of 5 points can be earned for each day of group supervision.

#### *Practicum Reflections (150 points)*

At mid-semester (50 points) and end of the semester (100 points), you will write a reflection paper discussing your experiences thus far at your practicum site. The specifics of the paper will be decided as we go through the semester, as I want to see how your experiences are unfolding before finalizing the requirements. You can expect, however, to write approximately 10-12 page APA Style papers discussing what you've done, what you want to do, how the work compares to your expectations coming into the class, how what you've experienced has affected you and your career plans, how you've been implementing self-care, and other aspects tied to your site. You will abide by the APA Code of Ethics in your writing and will not disclose identifying information about any clients at your site. **Including identifying information in your reflection will earn you a zero on the assignment and may be grounds for failing the course.** We will talk in class about appropriate ways to refer to your interactions with or about clients, and I strongly encourage you to talk with me if you have any doubts at all about what you're putting in your paper.

#### *Progress Assessments (125 points)*

You will twice be assessed by your site supervisor over the course of the semester: once at mid-semester (worth 50 points) and once at the end of the semester (worth 75 points). We will go over these assessments as we get closer to these dates, but they will focus on several areas including: punctuality and attendance, professionalism, performance of assigned tasks, ethical awareness, skill development, and critical thinking. You will discuss these evaluations with your supervisor before submitting them to me, and you have the option of submitting a narrative with the evaluation if you believe something requires further explanation. You should be receiving ongoing feedback from your supervisors, so the evaluations should not take you by surprise. You will also have one-on-one meetings with me at the mid-point and end of the practicum to discuss your experience.

#### *Cultural Competence Presentation (75 points)*

As we will discuss in class, culture (broadly defined) plays a large role in the success of therapy. There are entire courses in graduate school devoted to cross-cultural or culture-specific therapy, but the purpose of this assignment is to begin to familiarize yourself with the literature supported recommendations for therapy with certain cultural groups. You will conduct a literature review on the selected population and summarize the recommendations and rationales for the class during the final exam period. Your presentations will be centered on what the literature has to say about communication styles (e.g., verbal and non-verbal tendencies), the types of therapy (e.g., individual vs. group, orientation, style) and/or interventions (e.g., thought journal, consultation with family) which are recommended, and the research on therapy outcomes with your specific cultural group. You may not find much for some areas, in which case you should comment on why that might be and suggest what types of research need to be done.

The presentations must include references and appropriate citations. I expect you to use primarily peer-reviewed sources (i.e., journal articles), though you may also use additional materials (e.g., textbooks, credible online sources). Presentations will be 12 minutes long. You will also be expected to answer questions from the audience (this does not count toward your time requirement). The presentations must utilize PowerPoint (or a similar format like Prezi)

effectively. This means you should NOT be simply reading your slides. Use the slides to summarize important information and provide citations. Think of them as the outline or “talking points” for the information you are presenting. If you just read the slides, you might as well just distribute a paper for the audience to read. **You must send me an electronic copy of your presentation by 10 pm on Monday, 12/7**, so I can post them to Moodle for your classmates to have for reference. Failure to have the slides to me by 10 pm will result in a late penalty of one full letter-grade to your presentation.

### Grading Rubric

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>Content</b>	<b>/ 60</b>
<i>Research about communication styles</i>	/ 20
<i>Research about therapy interventions/approaches</i>	/ 20
<i>Research about therapy outcomes</i>	/ 20
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>/ 10</b>
<i>Effectively uses PowerPoint</i>	/ 2
<i>Slides include citations</i>	/ 2
<i>Includes references</i>	/ 2
<i>Follows time guidelines</i>	/ 4
<b>Answer questions from the audience effectively</b>	<b>/ 5</b>
<b>Penalties</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>/ 75</b>

**Total Points:**

Yalom Discussion Leadership	35
Lilienfeld et al. Discussion Leadership	55
Participation in Group Supervision	60
Mid-Semester Practicum Reflection	50
Mid-Semester Progress Assessment	50
End of Semester Progress Assessment	75
End of Semester Practicum Reflection	100
<u>Cultural Competence Presentation</u>	<u>75</u>
Total	500

**Grading:**

Grades will be assigned on a scale no more stringent than the following percentages:

<b>Letter</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Letter</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>A</b>	> 93%	<b>C</b>	73%
<b>A-</b>	90%	<b>C-</b>	70%
<b>B+</b>	87%	<b>D+</b>	67%
<b>B</b>	83%	<b>D</b>	63%
<b>B-</b>	80%	<b>D-</b>	60%
<b>C+</b>	77%	<b>F</b>	< 60%

**Tentative Course Schedule:**

Date	Class Topic		Readings/Assignments
<b>Week 1</b>			
<b>8/28</b>	F	Introduction & Logistics	
<b>Week 2</b>			
8/31	M	Ethics Review	
9/2	W	Engaging with Clients	Y1-13
9/4	F	Immediacy in Therapy	Y14-24
<b>Week 3</b>			
9/7	M	Group Supervision	
9/9	W	Self-Disclosure & Feedback	Y25-40
<b>Week 4</b>			
9/14	M	Group Supervision	
9/16	W	Existential Therapy	Y41-51
<b>Week 5</b>			
9/21	M	Group Supervision	
9/23	W	Logistics of Therapy	Y52-62
<b>Week 6</b>			
9/28	M	Interacting with Clients	Y63-74
9/30	W	Freud's Legacy	Y75-85
<b>Week 7</b>			
10/5	M	Group Supervision	
10/7	W	Scientific Approach to Psychotherapy	L1-2
<b>Week 8</b>			
10/12	M	Group Supervision	<b>Midterm Practicum Reflection &amp; Progress Assessment Due</b>
10/14	W	Empirically-Supported Treatment	L6
<b>Week 9</b>			
10/19	M	Dissociative Identity Disorder	L5
10/21	W	<i>No Class – NSGC Conference</i>	
<b>Week 10</b>			
10/26	M	Group Supervision	
10/28	W	Lilienfeld et al. Discussion	TBA
<b>Week 11</b>			
11/2	M	Lilienfeld et al. Discussion	TBA
11/4	W	Lilienfeld et al. Discussion	TBA
<b>Week 12</b>			
11/9	M	Group Supervision	
11/11	W	Lilienfeld et al. Discussion	TBA
<b>Week 13</b>			
11/16	M	Group Supervision	
11/18	W	Lilienfeld et al. Discussion	TBA
<b>Week 14</b>		<i>No Class – Thanksgiving Break</i>	
<b>11/24-29</b>			

Date	Class Topic	Readings/Assignments
<b>Week 15</b>		
11/30	M Lilienfeld et al. Discussion	TBA
12/2	W Lilienfeld et al. Discussion	TBA
12/4	F Processing & Reflection	
<b>Cultural Competence Presentations – Tuesday 12/8 – 9-11 am</b>		
<b>Final Practicum Reflection Papers – Friday 12/11 – 11:59 pm</b>		

### Comment on Course Content:

This course covers material related to mental illness and psychotherapy, which are sensitive topics. Some people in our class will have experience with therapy either personally or via loved ones. For this reason please remember to be sensitive to others when asking questions, making comments, etc., in class. I encourage everyone to voice their thoughts and be curious about the subject matter, but do so in a respectful manner. I would also ask those individuals who are currently dealing with mental illness to refrain from discussing your own symptomology or treatment in class. This not only protects your privacy, but also will not pressure other students to reveal aspects of themselves beyond their comfort level and will allow for the carefully constructed examples prepared for class to be used. If you want to discuss a specific situation, please make an appointment with me. It is likely I will not be able to make any definitive statements about someone else's mental health, but I will be happy to hear your concerns and make referrals to resources. If you have serious concerns about yourself or someone else, please talk to me or a mental health professional. Here is a list of several resources for mental health issues:

Austin College Counseling Services:

<http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/counseling-services/>  
903-813-2247

Suicide Crisis Line

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>  
1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

Applied Psychological Group of Texoma

<http://www.apgtexoma.com/>  
903-893-0298

Psychology Today's Therapist Finder

[http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/prof\\_search.php](http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/prof_search.php)

### Technology

This course will be web-enhanced through the use of Moodle. Readings, lecture slides, some handouts, and links to other resources will be provided through this system. Unless otherwise specified, you will turn your assignments in via Moodle. You can access Moodle through the following link: <https://moodle.austincollege.edu/login/index.php>. Questions concerning content/postings should be directed to the instructor, while questions regarding access/technical issues should be directed to the Austin College IT Help Desk (903-813-2063; [helpdesk@austincollege.edu](mailto:helpdesk@austincollege.edu)). A PDF viewer is required to view the content posted to the Moodle site. Free Adobe software is available for download via <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

**Policies:***Academic Integrity*

Scholastic misconduct is broadly defined as any act that violates the rights of another student in academic work or that involves misrepresentation of your own work. Scholastic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to): cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, which means misrepresenting as your own work any part of work done by another; submitting the same paper, or substantially similar papers, to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of all instructors concerned (including papers you have submitted in previous semesters); providing others with copies of your assignments; depriving another student of necessary course materials; or interfering with another student's work.

Plagiarism is a serious offense which will not be tolerated. Most of the time, however, plagiarism happens because students are rushing through assignments and do not leave themselves with sufficient time to properly attribute information taken from other sources. For this class you must cite your sources using APA style. If you plan to be a psychology major or minor, I encourage you to get used to APA style, as you will be using this throughout your coursework. Note that for either style, you need to include citations each time you use information from a source. It is incorrect to use information throughout a paragraph and only include a citation at the end. Also, if you use 5 or more consecutive words from a source, you must include quotation marks and include the page number (or paragraph number if you are using an online source) in your citation.

You will be required to submit an electronic copy of all major assignments which will be compared with the TurnItIn database. Penalties for scholastic misconduct in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be made at the discretion of the instructor and may range from point deductions on the assignment to failing the class. All academic misconduct (no matter how small) will be reported to the Academic Integrity Council, which may impose sanctions up to and including expulsion. Austin College's full academic integrity policy is available in the *Environment* (Austin College Student Handbook; the most recent edition is posted on Moodle) in the Student Conduct section. If you have any questions about whether something is plagiarism or not, please talk with me about it BEFORE you turn in an assignment.

*Accommodations*

Austin College seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all individuals with disabilities and will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines. If you have a documented disability for which you would like accommodations, please inform me by the second week of class. It is your responsibility to remind me of your accommodations at least a week before I distribute each assignment or exam. To arrange for accommodations, you will need to register as soon as possible at the Academic Skills Center with Laura Márquez, the Director of the Academic Skills Center, (903-813-2454, Suite 211 of the Wright Campus Center). For information on this process, go to <http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/academic-skills-center/>. This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request.

*Attendance*

Attendance is required and critically important to your success in this class. Topics not covered in the textbook will be discussed in class and some exam questions will come directly from classroom learning activities. Students who miss more than three classes without documentation may be dropped from the course at the instructor's discretion. If you know you are going to miss

class for a medical, religious, or Austin College sanctioned academic/athletic reason, let me know in advance and potential alternative assignments may be given at the discretion of the instructor. PowerPoint slides will be posted to the Moodle site, but will be outlines which require additional information from lectures or activities. If you miss class it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate. Full lecture slides will not be distributed. If you must arrive late or leave early, please sit near the door and do so in the least disruptive manner possible.

#### *Changes to the Syllabus*

All aspects of this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Students will be informed in writing of any changes to the syllabus.

#### *Communication*

Outside of class, I will communicate with you most frequently via your *Austin College email address*. **It is your responsibility to monitor this address and you are responsible for the information delivered to this address**. I highly recommend you check your email at least daily. I will also post messages to Moodle, so you are encouraged to check Moodle regularly. The best way to contact me is through email. I will always attempt to respond to email promptly, which means within 24 hours. **I typically do not check my email after 8pm**, so if you email me at night, do not expect a response until the next morning. I check Moodle daily and will respond to questions posted in the forum within 24 hours.

#### *Dropping the Class*

The drop policy has changed at Austin College. You can no longer drop a course on the last day of class. All drops must take place by the 10<sup>th</sup> week of class. If you drop the class before October 16<sup>th</sup>, no record of the course will show up on your transcript. Dropping between October 17<sup>th</sup> and November 6<sup>th</sup> will result in a “W” on your transcript. You may not drop the course after November 6<sup>th</sup>. The exception is medical withdrawals. If you have a medical situation which prevents you from completing the semester, you need to talk to Tim Millerick in Student Affairs about this process, as this is done through his office and I have no role in those decisions.

#### *Extra Credit*

Extra credit opportunities may be given at the discretion of the instructor. Possible examples of extra credit opportunities include: participation in psychological research, attendance at events, or further research into a topic of interest. The maximum amount of extra credit possible for this class is 5 points (~1% of your final grade).

- Students can earn extra credit points by participating in research authorized by the psychology department. These research opportunities are current studies being conducted by your peers and/or the psychology faculty, and are opportunities to contribute to the knowledge of the field as well as your classmates’ education. Participation is a serious commitment that requires honest and thoughtful responses. If you give false, misleading, or thoughtless (i.e., choosing “4” on every item on the scale) data, it not only compromises the work of your peers and faculty but can potentially cripple research that took months or years to set up. The researchers can see how much time it took you to complete the study (even the online surveys) and have to throw out data that is clearly carelessly entered. If you do not have enough time to complete the research appropriately (as described in the informed consent statement), do it at another time.

All students will be added to the email list to receive notifications of research opportunities for extra credit. If you do not want to receive these emails, you will be given the opportunity to opt out. For every 30 minutes of research participation, students will receive 0.5 points of extra credit. **MAKE SURE to keep a list of the studies you participate in** so you can be sure you have received all your extra credit slips. At a minimum, write down the name of the study, date of participation, and contact information for the researcher. If you write a 2 page (double-spaced, 12 pt., Times New Roman) reflection paper about your experience participating in the study, you will earn 0.5 additional points.

- Research Participation Response Paper Requirements:
  - Describe the study you participated in as well as you can. In other words, what were you asked to do?
  - Describe how you felt during the study. Was it fun? Uncomfortable? Confusing? Surprising?
  - Tie the research to something we discussed in class or is discussed in your readings. If you're not sure what the research was investigating, say so but try to guess what it was about.
  - How would you improve the study? Evaluate the research design to the extent possible (i.e., you may not know the reliability of the instruments being used but you can say you thought the questions were worded poorly).
- Additional extra credit assignments may arise during the semester as opportunities to attend campus or community events become available. The amount of points received for attending such events will vary by the time commitment (the points will be posted along with the information about the event). The length of the response paper required will also vary, but will be a minimum of 2 pages.
  - Event Attendance Response Paper Requirements:
    - Describe the event (e.g., where, when, why)
    - Who was the target audience?
    - What did you learn?
    - How does this relate to something we have discussed in class or some other aspect of psychology?
    - If you had been in charge of the event, what would you do plan next as a follow-up? How might the event coordinators continue to build momentum, conduct additional research, etc.?
- Students can also write a 4 page paper on an approved psychology topic for 1.5 points of extra credit. These papers must be proposed no later than 11/7 and turned in no later than 11/24.

### *Incompletes*

An “incomplete” only may be given as a grade for the course when a student has a **passing grade the course** and has an unforeseen and uncontrollable event occur that prevents him or her from earning a significant number of points in the course. Thus, incompletes are rarely given and each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To have an incomplete changed to a different grade all missing work must be completed by the end of the following term.

*Late Work*

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date listed in the syllabus. Assignments turned in after class but on the same day will be penalized 5%, with 10% additional penalty for every additional calendar day the assignment is late (thus if the assignment is due on Tuesday but turned in on Thursday the maximum score you could receive is 75%). No assignments will be accepted more than 7 days after the original due date. Extensions may be given at the discretion of the instructor, but **extensions will rarely be given during the 24 hours before an assignment is due.** It is your responsibility to budget your time so you are not working on assignments at the last minute. Specific arrangements must be made with the instructor as to how late work will be turned in (e.g., email vs. hard copy) or it will not be accepted.

*Make-Up Exams*

If circumstances prevent you from being in class on the day of an exam, please notify me as soon as you can (BEFORE the exam) in order to arrange to complete a make-up exam. Make-up exams will be scheduled prior to the exam date if possible. Please note **I will require documentation** (e.g., a doctor's note) explaining your absence from class in nearly all cases. Make-up exams may be different than the original exam and **must be completed within 1 week of the original exam date.**

*Role of Instructor*

I will provide learning opportunities designed to provide students with information about psychology and foster critical thinking. Every effort will be made to accommodate different learning styles and students will be encouraged to provide feedback both formally and informally. I pledge to carefully consider constructive feedback about teaching methods and incorporate suggestions to the extent feasible. I am responsible for treating students in a respectful, professional manner and creating a classroom atmosphere where students treat each other as such. I will be accessible outside of class and encourages you to meet with me either during office hours or individual appointments to discuss concerns (e.g., about the class, workload, assignments, etc.), conflicts or problems that affect course performance, concepts which need further clarification, additional resources related to course material, or careers in psychology.

*Role of Student*

Students will come to class prepared to learn and open to new ideas. Assignments (including readings) will be completed before class begins and to the best of each student's ability. Classroom discussions will be conducted in a respectful manner, where all opinions are valued regardless of whether you agree or disagree with the content. Students who cannot maintain respectful communication will be asked to leave the classroom. Students will take responsibility for their own learning throughout the class. Students will consult available resources (e.g., the syllabus, Moodle, email messages) before asking administrative questions.

*Statement on Classroom Conduct*

All students have the right to a civil, productive, and stimulating learning environment. In turn, instructors have a responsibility to nurture and maintain such an environment. Lively, even heated, discussion is not disruptive behavior. Both instructors and students have a fundamental obligation to respect the rights of each other and an equally fundamental obligation to respect the instructional setting as a place for civil, courteous behavior.

*Statement on Diversity*

We will all bring unique perspectives to this course and I hope those who feel comfortable will share insights and alternative interpretations throughout the semester. Cultural perspectives will be explicitly included in many of our discussions and will likely come up in many others. I welcome feedback on ways to increase the diversity of perspectives being provided in class and methods for creating a more inclusive atmosphere through my teaching.

### **Writing Tips**

Your ability to write will greatly impact your grades in this course. I expect you to make strides in your writing in terms of mechanics, style, and ability to write concisely. Writing skills make up a substantial portion of your grade on written materials, so make sure to take this seriously.

### **Professionalism**

- You will turn in most assignments for this class electronically via Moodle. When asked to turn in a hard copy, assignments must be printed in black ink on white paper. Pages must be clean (i.e., no coffee rings, dog drool, rips, etc.).
- Your box number, the date, and the assignment title must be included on the first page.
- Pages must be numbered (if assignment is more than 1 page).
- If turning in a hard copy, all pages must be stapled together. I do not read anything that is not attached to the first page and your grade on the assignment will reflect this.
- Proof read your papers. Writing is about communicating to the reader so you need to make sure you are getting your point across. If you typically have issues with grammar and/or spelling, make sure you have your papers done early enough to have someone proof them for you. The Academic Skills Center has writing tutors available and I strongly encourage you to make use of them.

### **Use of Quotes**

- Quotes should be included very infrequently. You should not use more than 2 quotes in any paper you write for me. Most of your papers will likely not contain any quotes. This is both an APA style issue and a pedagogical issue. I want to see that you can paraphrase and explain what happened in your own words.
- If you do use quotes, you still have to explain what the authors are saying.
- Remember, if you use 5 or more consecutive words from another source, you must use quotation marks and include the page number (or paragraph number if it is an online source) in your citation.

### **APA Style tips**

- The *Publication Manual* has more in it than just how to cite sources!
- The goal of scientific writing is to be concise and precise. You will not get bonus points for inserting “fluff” into your papers. In fact, your grades will suffer if you are including a bunch of filler instead of substance.
- Avoid sexist language. Do not refer to people generally or groups of mixed genders as masculine. You do not have to write “his or her” every time either. You can switch between he and she as long as they are approximately balanced throughout the paper as a whole. As a side note, many people identify outside the dichotomy of male and female, so genderless pronouns such as “ze/zir” or “zhe/hir” are likely to be more common in the future. There are a number of variations of these pronouns and there is no standard as of

yet. In my classes these are acceptable and in fact encouraged, but you should check with other professors before using genderless pronouns.

- For longer papers (>3-4 pages) it is often helpful to include headings and subheadings to organize your writing.

### **Additional tips**

- Never, ever use the word “prove” in your writing. Research studies do NOT prove anything. Research can support, suggest, indicate, demonstrate, corroborate, show, etc.
- The writing assignments you do for me are considered formal writing. Therefore, there should not be any contractions (e.g., you’re, can’t, don’t) in your papers. The exception is when I ask you to write reflection papers. These are less formal and may include contractions.
- I am not impressed by your vocabulary. I am impressed by your ability to communicate clearly. Do not use big words if you do not know what they mean.
- Know your target audience. Avoid jargon unless you are sure the entire audience will know what it means. Unless specifically told otherwise you can assume the target audience is me.
- If you are critiquing a research article, you need to be able to articulate why the issue you are pointing out is important. Do not just say they needed a bigger sample. What would be gained by having a bigger sample? How does a small sample limit the ability to interpret the results?

### **Common Writing Mistakes**

- The word “that” is the most overused word in the English language, and is often included in sentences unnecessarily. When you come to a sentence which includes “that” while proofreading your paper, read the sentence again without “that.” You will often find it still makes sense. If so, remove the unnecessary “that.” Here is a non-exhaustive list of words commonly followed by “that” which typically do not need to be: state, say, mention, believe, feel, think, agree, found, indicate, conclude, imply, and realize.
- Do not start a sentence with the word “however.” Not only is it a conjunction (just like “and,” “but,” etc.) but in this context the word does not mean what you intend it to mean. At the start of a sentence, “however” means “in whatever manner,” not “nevertheless.” This is true even when there is a comma after the “however.” This can always be fixed by simply moving the “however” a few words into the sentence or using “nevertheless” to start the sentence. For example, “However, the research does not support this idea” becomes “The research, however, does not support this idea.”
- Periods and commas always belong inside quotation marks. Do not put the period after the quotation mark.
- Be aware of the verb tense you are using. Students often shift tenses back and forth throughout papers, paragraphs, and even sentences. Some tense shifts are appropriate, but many times are due to sloppy editing. Make sure you are consistent and intentional with your tenses.
- Do not use “they” when you are referring to a single person. This is usually done in an effort to avoid choosing he versus she (see above).

- The word “pique” means interesting or stimulating. The word “peak” means comes to a point or summit. The word “peek” means a brief look. Attention is “piqued” not “peaked.”
- The word “feel” should only be used if you are describing an emotion or the sensation of touch. “Feel” should NOT be used to suggest intuition, judgment, agreement, or beliefs. These are examples of thoughts or cognitions. It is incorrect to write “I feel I deserve a better grade.” This is a judgment and should be stated “I think I deserve a better grade.”
- The software used to create presentations is “PowerPoint” not “power point.”
- The word “therefor” is used to describe an exchange, such as “I traded my sandwich and received a salad therefor.” The word “therefore” refers to a statement based on the preceding information, such as “I did not like the salad, therefore I regretted the trade.”