



University of Lynchburg

COUN 614 Counseling Techniques

College of Education, Leadership Studies, and Counseling

University of Lynchburg

Spring 2025

Sarah J. Dixon, Ph.D., My pronouns: she/her/hers https://www.mypronouns.org/ Office: Warren Counseling Center – 330H email: johnson_sl@lynchburg.edu Phone: 434-544-8068 (office)	Location: Thompson-Polloway 206 Class Time: Wednesdays 4:30-7:00 pm Student Office Hours: Tuesdays on campus from 11:30am - 4:30pm Wednesdays on campus from 11:30am - 4:30pm Available for additional virtual office hours Mondays-Fridays by appointment. <i>Please reach out and check in!</i>
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Course Description:

“An introductory counseling experience where students demonstrate counseling techniques shown to be effective when working with specific populations of clients with mental and emotional disorders. Students learn to modify interventions to make them culturally appropriate for diverse populations” ([University of Lynchburg Graduate Catalog](#), 2024-2025, p. 46).

Course Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:

The following are the course objectives and expected learning outcomes based on [2024 CACREP Standards](#) found in Appendix F.

Required Texts:

Young, M. (2013). *Learning the art of helping: Building blocks and techniques* (6th ed. or later). Pearson.

Gladding, S. T. (2009). *Becoming a counselor: The light, the bright, and the serious* (2nd ed.). American Counseling Association

Recommended Resource:

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.

*Other readings assigned by the instructor will be posted in Google Classroom.

Methods of Instruction:

Course content will be delivered utilizing a combination of faculty, student, and guest speaker

presentations; synchronous in-person exercises and discussions; and asynchronous online presentations and/or resources. Each of these activities will enhance the materials presented in our textbook and other assigned readings and content. Synchronous class time will be focused on the clarification and application of course material, including weekly triadic practice counseling sessions. You are expected to self-disclose (to your comfort level) during the practice sessions and discussions, with the understanding that everything mentioned in class or in small groups should be held in strict confidence. Experiential activities in the classroom setting are essential to simulating the counseling experience and representing the traditional counseling format. You will be placed in dyads or triads for these activities. In these activities, it is necessary to function as both the client and the counselor. To simulate accurately the client's content, verbal, and nonverbal behaviors in a counseling session, it is suggested that the scenarios used in dyads/triads be based on personal experiences. You should choose an issue or topic that is not current. The types of issues appropriate for dyads/triads will be discussed in detail in class. **You have the right and personal responsibility to share only as deeply as you want, and you may stop participating in experiential triads without penalty.** This type of experiential learning affords the opportunity to self-observe skill development, increase self-awareness, and receive feedback from both peers and me. Given the essential role of these counseling triads in the learning objectives, if you are unwilling to engage in these exercises, you may prefer to drop the course. *You will NOT be evaluated in your role as a client.*

Please note:

- Information shared during role-plays and other discussions is considered strictly confidential. You are not to discuss role-plays outside of class with members of the class or with anyone not in class. Breach of role-play confidentiality is regarded very seriously. What others share in class is not to be discussed outside of class with anyone. Breaking this confidentiality will be considered a serious violation of academic and professional integrity and may result in an administrative withdrawal from the class.
- You are required to sign a confidentiality agreement at the beginning of this course indicating your knowledge of and agreement to these terms.

Synchronous Class Meetings

This semester, we will meet in Thompson-Polloway 206 at 4:30pm on Wednesdays. Synchronous class meetings will be spent connecting, collaborating, reviewing specific course content, and engaging in experiential activities. Therefore, much of learning this semester will happen outside of synchronous class meetings, both independently and collaboratively with your COUN 614 colleagues. **Your classroom presence is a requirement for successful completion of this course.** If you miss more than one synchronous class meeting, you will be required to contact Dr. Dixon to prepare an additional assignment to indicate that you have engaged with course materials and have fully understood essential concepts. Failure to do so will negatively impact your grade for this course.

Professionalism

Professionalism is continuously monitored and used as an indicator of a student's ability to maintain professionalism in the workplace, and therefore, there is an expectation that students will conduct themselves as professionals *at all times* during class. This expectation extends to interactions with faculty, site supervisors, and fellow students outside of class, including professional communication in email and other written correspondence.

Students are expected to be fully engaged in the physical and virtual classroom, physically and intellectually *present*. Students are encouraged to be passionate and honest during class discussions while also being sensitive and respectful of others. Although frequent contributions to classroom discussions are welcome, *all* students must be afforded the opportunity to share.

Counselors must demonstrate an ability to maintain high levels of presence for extended periods of time to effectively work with clients. Presence includes giving full attention to what is happening in the physical and virtual classroom, being actively engaged in discussions and activities, and not being *distracted* by technology. **Extraneous use of a phone, tablet, smartwatch, or laptop during class without express permission by the instructor is considered unprofessional behavior**, and such devices should be kept stored throughout the entire class with the exception of class breaks. Tablets and laptops may be used for note-taking during lectures *on a case-by-case basis* but should be stored during class discussions and activities. Students who need access to their phones or other devices during class time due to extenuating circumstances should notify the instructor before the beginning of class.

Professionalism extends to expectations regarding standards of academic products. “To complete the rigors of the program successfully, students are expected to produce graduate-level scholarship as evidenced through professionalism, high levels of mastery as assessed through course examinations, and quality written work that meets the standards of academic writing and the criteria for the discipline as set forth by the [American Psychological Association](#) (APA)” (University of Lynchburg Counselor Education Student Handbook, 2023-2024, p. 8). In addition, [Requirements for Written Assignments](#) provides additional writing and formatting guidance.

Tentative Course Schedule

*This schedule is tentative and subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments / Activities
1/22	Introductions Syllabus Review		Baseline Counseling Sessions <i>Weekly Reflection</i>
1/29	Personal journey & the therapeutic relationship	Young: Chapters 1 & 2 Gladding: Section 1	<i>Weekly Reflection</i>
2/5	Reflecting skills: Invitational skills & paraphrasing	Young: Chapters 4 & 5 Gladding: Section 2	<i>Weekly Reflection</i> Quiz 1
2/12	Reflecting skills: Reflecting feelings	Young: Chapter 6 Gladding: Section 3	<i>Weekly Reflection</i>
2/19	Writing clinical notes		<i>Weekly Reflection</i> Quiz 2
2/26	Advanced reflecting skills	Read the four articles in "Writing Clinical Notes" in Google Classroom Young: Chapter 7 Gladding: Section 4	<i>Weekly Reflection:</i> SOAP Note
3/5	Challenging skills	Young: Chapter 8 Gladding: Section 5	<i>Recorded Session 1</i> Quiz 3
3/12	NO Class - Spring Break		
3/19	Recorded Session 1: Supervision Meetings	Gladding: Section 6	<i>Weekly Reflection</i>
3/26	Assessment & goal setting Change Techniques (recorded lecture posted to Google Classroom)	Young: Chapter 9 Gladding: Sections 7 & 8 <i>Recorded Lecture:</i> Young: Chapter 10 & 11 Gladding: Sections 9 & 10	Quiz 4
4/2	Evaluation, reflection, & termination	Young: Chapter 12 Gladding: Section 11	<i>Weekly Reflection</i> Termination Sessions
4/9	NO Class - Dr. D out of town		
4/16	Helping & culture Special topics	Young: Chapter 3 Gladding: Sections 12, 13, & 14	<i>Weekly Reflection</i> Quiz 5
4/23	Gladding book discussion Wrapping up Termination session		<i>Final Reflection</i> <i>Recorded Session 2</i>
4/30	Recorded Session 2 Supervision Meetings		

Course Components

Weekly Reflections 20pts

For 10 different weeks, you will respond to prompts presented in Classroom for that week by writing a short reflection (no fewer than 75 words and no more than 200 words). You will submit your weekly reflections in Classroom as a Google doc. No other submission form will be accepted, and writing more or less than required will result in a reduction in points for that week's submission. The final weekly reflection will be longer, between 100 and 250 words and will be worth 8 points.

**Do not include any information about your classmates in your weekly reflections.*

Due in Classroom by Sunday 11:59 pm on its respective week assigned.

Counseling Sessions, Skills Demonstration, & Professional Performance 65pts

Students will have multiple opportunities to practice and demonstrate skills throughout the course and will be provided with ongoing feedback.

You are encouraged to meet with other skills groups or class members to practice skills **in addition to class skills group time**. These sessions should focus on applying feedback received in class and producing possible recordings for midterm and final evaluations (see below). This class requires lots and lots of practice; it is unlike other classes where you can simply read about the material and demonstrate content mastery. You **MUST** be able to show you can successfully implement basic skills.

- **Baseline Counseling Session** (2pts) *During class on 1/22/2025*

The Baseline Counseling Session will be conducted during our first class. This assignment serves as a starting point for your counseling skills development this semester. You will conduct a 10-minute dyadic counseling session the way you believe counseling sessions should be conducted. The session will be observed in real time, and the instructor will use this session as a baseline for providing feedback throughout the course. There will be prompts to guide your reflections on these first sessions in our first weekly reflection.

- **Recorded Session #1 with Transcript** (30pts) *Due in Classroom by 11:59 pm on 3/9/2025*

In dyads, you will conduct a **30-minute counseling session** that demonstrates developing competence in counseling skills learned throughout the semester thus far. Please remember this is a developmental process, and the expectations are increased as compared to your baseline counseling session.

You will submit a **15-minute verbatim transcription** of a self-selected section of your session along with your video submission. A format example is included at the end of the syllabus. **For this transcript, students are required to transcribe every word of their 15-minute section.** In addition to identifying the skills used, students should also be able to explain *why* they utilized those skills. If the student wished they had responded differently, they may note this as an alternative response. Be sure to identify the skills and reason for use, as worded in the [Counseling Skills Criteria](#) linked here and in the rubric in Classroom (see Week 7). A template for your transcription is linked [here](#).

- You should have specific questions for instructor feedback in the form of open-ended questions. You are encouraged to ask for specific feedback at specific time points during

the session as well as more general feedback requests. For example, if you have questions about a particular moment in the session, you might write something like this:

17:35: I didn't know what to say at that moment and kind of panicked. I stayed silent, but it kind of seemed to work. Was it as awkward to watch as it was for me in that moment?

Or, if you are interested in more general feedback, you might write something like this:

Looking at the session as a whole, it seems like I move around a lot. I tried to keep my hands from flailing around, but got so nervous I would forget to pay attention. What do you recommend I try to do to keep from seeming so jittery?

- You will provide these questions for feedback at the **bottom of your transcript**. Although there is not a minimum of questions you should ask, a general guideline would be no fewer than three and no more than five questions.

Each dyad will schedule a supervision session with the instructor on or near 3/19/2025 to review the first recorded sessions. These supervisions will be triadic, last approximately 1 hour, and include supervision of both students' sessions.

- **Recorded Session #2 with Transcript (30pts) Due in Classroom by 11:59 pm on 4/27/2025**
In dyads, you will conduct a **50-minute counseling session** that demonstrates developing competence in counseling skills learned throughout the semester. Please remember this is a developmental process, and the expectations are increased as compared to your earlier video.

You will submit a **15-minute verbatim transcription** of a self-selected section of your session along with your video submission. A format example is included at the end of the syllabus. **For this transcript, students are required to transcribe every word of their 15-minute section.** In addition to identifying the skills used, students should also be able to explain *why* they utilized those skills. If the student wished they had responded differently, they may note this as an alternative response. Be sure to identify the skills and reason for use, as worded in the Counseling Skills Criteria (Appendix D).

As you did for Recorded Session #1, you should have specific questions for instructor feedback in the form of open-ended questions. You are encouraged to ask for specific feedback at specific time points during the session as well as more general feedback requests. (see examples above)

Additionally, you will submit a Case Presentation (based on the template provided in Appendix E and linked [here](#)). For CMHC students, this is the same format you will submit case presentations in your clinical experiences (i.e., practicum, internships), so this will be good practice. For our School Counseling students who may one day also engage in clinical practice outside the school setting, this will be good practice for you as well.

Each dyad will schedule a supervision session with the instructor on or near 4/30/2025 to review the second recorded sessions. These supervisions will be triadic, last approximately 1 hour, and include supervision of both students' sessions.

- **Termination Counseling Session (3pts) During class on 4/23/2025**

This session will be conducted during class. You will conduct a final counseling session with your "client" to illustrate your ability to properly incorporate termination skills. You should:

- Have your client describe their experience of the counseling process including:
 - issues addressed,
 - progress and strengths, and
 - change that occurred.
- Discuss ways that new skills can be transferred to other situations.
- Discuss plans for contact after termination.
- Use and process one creative technique to close the counseling session.

***Helpful Hints:**

- ❖ All recorded sessions should be conducted with fellow students in COUN 614, and no one outside of this course should be present. For the initial recorded session, students should practice having their "client" sign the recording agreement form located at the end of the syllabus.
- ❖ Review the *Counseling Skills Criteria* (Appendix D) prior to recording your session and then transcribing 15 minutes of the session. This will ensure that you are aware of all the skills you will be graded on. The *Counseling Skills Criteria* is also attached as the assignment rubric in Google Classroom.
- ❖ All recordings should take place in the Warren Counseling Center (WCC) utilizing the equipment in one of the 3 counseling rooms. You cannot use the WCC if the rooms are already in use. If the building is locked within or outside regular business hours (M-F 8:00am to 5:00pm), please contact security at (434) 544-8102 to unlock the building.
- **Quizzes (15% of your final grade)**
There will be 5 multiple-choice paper quizzes administered throughout the semester for you to assess and demonstrate your mastery of the content covered in recorded lectures, assigned readings, and in class. Each quiz will be administered during class. See syllabus for dates.

Evaluative Methodology:

Your final grade will be computed utilizing the following percentages for each requirement:

Weekly Reflection Posts (2 pts each x 10 weeks)	20pts
Baseline Counseling Session (in-class)	2pts
Recorded Session #1 with transcript	30pts
Recorded Session #2 with transcript	30pts
Quizzes (5 quizzes (pts vary))	30pts
<u>Termination Counseling Session (in-class)</u>	<u>3pts</u>
Total	115pts

Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93-100
A-	90-92.9
B+	87-89.9
B	83-86.9
B-	80-82.9
C+	77-79.9
C	73-76.9
F	72.9 or below

Appendix A

COUN 614 Course Participation/Confidentiality Agreement

I, _____, hereby agree that I will keep personal information shared in the COUN 614 course confidential. Out of respect for my classmates, and in an effort to practice confidentiality for my future profession, I will not disclose any information shared in my counseling dyads/triads. I understand that should I be found to violate this agreement, it will reflect poorly upon my professional and academic performance, and the counseling faculty will take appropriate disciplinary measures.

By signing this form, I also agree to the following:

1. I understand that I am not graded on my role *as a client*.
2. I will be present at every session unless I am ill or have an equally pressing need to be absent; in either case, I will notify the instructor in advance. I understand that I am allowed one absence from this course. I am aware that more than one absence may result in disciplinary action from the counseling faculty.
3. During class meetings, I will refrain from distractions including phones, smartwatches, iPads, tablets, and other electronic devices. I will be mindful of my facial expressions, body language, and other non-verbal expressions when observing others.
4. I will be responsible for what I decide to disclose about myself and understand that no one has the right to demand self-disclosure from me nor I of them.
5. I will try not to offer feedback to others unless I first obtain their permission.
6. When a fellow student consents to receiving feedback, I will provide it in a way that is clear, specific, constructive, and considerate of their well-being.
7. If I have strong reactions as a result of an experience in my dyad/triad that I feel unable to share with my fellow dyad/triad members, I will discuss the predicament with the instructor.
8. I will actively seek, accept, and incorporate instructor feedback. I recognize that feedback is crucial for developing a counselor's professional identity and skills. Although it can be challenging at times, learning to receive and integrate feedback will contribute significantly to my success.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Appendix B

COUN 614 Permission to Record

I, _____, in the role of “Client,” hereby grant my permission for _____, a student in the Counselor Education program at the University of Lynchburg in the role of “Counselor,” to record the practice counseling session/s on video as a required element of COUN 614. I understand the following:

- My participation is voluntary.
- My identity will not be revealed outside of COUN 614 classroom activities .
- The videos will be used for training purposes only.
- The professor/supervisor(s) and/or other trainee(s) who hear (or see) this are bound by ethical standards not to discuss the videos outside of the training setting.
- The student who conducts this session as “Counselor” is bound by ethical standards not to discuss the videos outside of the training/educational setting.

With permission from the “Counselor” and “Client” listed above, the instructor may choose to keep the videos for future training purposes.

“Client” Signature _____
(student)

Date _____

“Counselor” Signature _____
(student)

Date _____

Appendix C

COUN 614 Transcript Template Example

Every word you and the client say in the session must be transcribed. Pauses, laughter, crying and other nonverbal behavior pertinent to the session also must be transcribed. Please make sure to also include a timestamp of when your transcription begins and ends, and include three to five open-ended questions for supervision.

Timestamp: 12:30-28:10

	Transcription	Identification of Counseling Skill/Technique	Alternative Response
Counselor	It sounds like you are really struggling with, with your issue.	Reflection – Basic Empathy	
Client	(crying, long pause) Yeah, it's all I can think (blows nose) it's all I can think about. (tearing the tissue apart, reaching for a new one)		
Counselor	(leans forward) I can tell	Immediacy	I can tell it's difficult for you to think about anything else.
Client	I just don't know what to do about it. I can't even sleep at night. It's like I can't shut my brain off.		
Counselor	Mmm.	Minimal Encourager	
Client	I have this awful feeling in the pit of my stomach and I sometimes... I can't even breathe.		
Counselor	Right	Minimal Encourager	Silence could have worked well here, too

Appendix D

COUN 614 Counseling Skills Criteria

A culturally-responsive, person-centered counselor committed to ethical practice will continue to develop their skills from their first mock session in their master's program until they decide to stop being a counselor. No matter how long you have been counseling, there is always more to learn, and two of the best ways to recognize opportunities for growth are to engage in live supervision and record and analyze sessions with a colleague or supervisor.

For the purposes of assessment in COUN 614, your counseling skills will be evaluated using the following criteria. You will see that this list is translated into an assessment rubric in Classroom.

Below are the criteria along with a brief description of each.

- ☐ **Body Language & Appearance:** Maintains open, relaxed, confident posture with appropriate eye contact. Forward lean, comfortable position shows interest. Uses head nods and body gestures to encourage client talk. Maintains professional dress.
- ☐ **Acceptance:** Maintains respect for client as a person regardless of material disclosed. Counselor communication is free of judgmental or evaluative language. Consistently engages in caring manner with client, particularly by demonstrating such core conditions as genuineness and authenticity, warmth and acceptance, respect and positive regard, and empathy.
- ☐ **Eye Contact:** Maintains appropriate eye contact.
- ☐ **Vocal Tone:** Uses vocal tone that matches the sense of the session and session goals. Uses vocal tone that communicates caring and connection with the client.
- ☐ **Minimal Encouragers:** Uses verbal (e.g., uh huh, okay, right, yes) and nonverbal (e.g., nods and body gestures) to let the client know they are heard. Uses silence helpfully to encourage client to talk.
- ☐ **Evoking and Punctuating Client Strengths:** Includes questions and reflections related to assets and competencies; positively reframes client experiences.
- ☐ **Directions and Encouraging Client to Talk:** Uses statements (e.g., describe... tell me more about..., say more about...) that direct the client to talk about the specific aspects of their communication.
- ☐ **Questioning:** Asks open-ended questions that encourage the client to continue talking and to provide information. Uses when needed and when theoretically consistent. Uses closed questions judiciously. Does not overuse questions.
- ☐ **Paraphrasing:** Engages in brief, accurate, and clear rephrasing of content expressed by client.
- ☐ **Summarizing:** Makes statements at key moments in the session that capture the overall sense of what the client has been expressing (includes both content and affect discussed over time).
- ☐ **Reflection of Feeling:** Uses statements to selectively attend to expressed emotions.
- ☐ **Reflection of Feeling - Advanced:** Uses statements to identify emotion implied in client's statements, demonstrates empathy to generate reflections.
- ☐ **Reflection of Meaning and Values:** Reflects the unexpressed meaning or belief/value system that is behind the words the client is saying. (e.g., "You feel strongly about making choices based on _____ belief,;" "It's important to you to feel understood.")

- ☐ **Immediacy:** Recognizes here-and-now feelings, expressed verbally or nonverbally, of the client or the counselor. Can be related to the counselor-client relationship. (e.g., "As we talk about _____ problem, I sense you are feeling _____ about me. In turn, I'm feeling _____ about how you are viewing the problem right now;" "I am noticing a change in your voice as you talk about your partner.")
- ☐ **Observing Themes and Patterns:** Identifies more overarching patterns of acting, thinking, or behaving in problem situations (e.g., "Your response to your co-worker's criticism echoes your response to being punished as a kid;" "Like your relationship with your child, now you're using those same skills with your parents.")
- ☐ **Video and Transcript Completion:** Session recording and transcript were completed to the specifications outlined in the syllabus, including any specific areas identified for supervision feedback.

Appendix E

COUN 614 Case Presentation

Data:

- ☐ Presenting issue
 - ☐ Just enough detail to provide context for the presentation
- ☐ Demographic info
- ☐ Goals for counseling
- ☐ Presenting symptoms/behaviors
- ☐ Client presentation during session
 - ☐ e.g., physical appearance, hygiene, affect, tone, nonverbals
- ☐ Relevant treatment history
 - ☐ e.g., in-patient hospitalization, psychopharmacological interventions, AA meetings
- ☐ Previous diagnoses
- ☐ Relevant stressors
 - ☐ e.g., financial, familial, health
- ☐ Relevant strengths
- ☐ Relevant support systems

Assessment:

- ☐ Theoretical assessment for current disturbance
 - ☐ as related to symptoms, history, diagnoses, goals
- ☐ Current level of functioning
- ☐ Commitment to treatment/change
- ☐ Current diagnosis
- ☐ Safety assessment
 - ☐ danger to self or others?
- ☐ Formal assessment results

Plan:

- ☐ Next session
- ☐ Over the next month
- ☐ Over the next six months
- ☐ Interventions
 - ☐ as related to theory, target symptom/behavior
- ☐ Need for consultation
- ☐ External resources/referrals
 - ☐ e.g., AA meetings, psychiatrist referral, readings

Appendix F

2024 CACREP Standards

Objective	CACREP Standard	Assessment
Understands theories and models of counseling, including relevance to clients from diverse cultural backgrounds	3.E.1.	Reflections; Counseling Session Recordings & Case Presentation; Quizzes
Understands critical thinking and reasoning strategies for clinical judgment in the counseling process	3.E.2.	Counseling Session Recordings & Case Presentation
Understands case conceptualization skills using a variety of models and approaches	3.E.3.	Counseling Session Recordings & Case Presentation; Quizzes
Understands consultation models and strategies	3.E.4.	Quizzes
Understands the application of technology related to counseling	3.E.5.	Counseling Session Recordings; Quizzes
Understands ethical and legal issues relevant to establishing and maintaining counseling relationships across service delivery modalities	3.E.6.	Case Presentation; Quizzes
Understands culturally sustaining and responsive strategies for establishing and maintaining counseling relationships across service delivery modalities	3.E.7.	Case Presentation; Quizzes
Understands counselor characteristics, behaviors, and strategies that facilitate effective counseling relationships	3.E.8.	Counseling Session Recordings & Case Presentation; Quizzes
Understands interviewing, attending, and listening skills in the counseling process	3.E.9.	Counseling Session Recordings
Understands counseling strategies and techniques used to facilitate the client change process	3.E.10.	Counseling Session Recordings & Case Presentation
Understands strategies for adapting and accommodating the counseling process to client culture, context, abilities, and preferences	3.E.11.	Counseling Session Recordings & Case Presentation
Understands goal consensus and collaborative decision-making in the counseling process	3.E.12.	Counseling Session Recordings & Case Presentation
Understands developmentally relevant and culturally sustaining counseling treatment or intervention plans	3.E.13.	Counseling Session Recordings & Case Presentation; Quizzes

Understands development of measurable outcomes for clients	3.E.14.	Case Presentation; Quizzes
Understands evidence-based counseling strategies and techniques for prevention and intervention	3.E.15.	Counseling Session Recordings & Case Presentation; Quizzes
Understands self-care, self-awareness, and self-evaluation strategies for ethical and effective practice	3.A.11 .	Quizzes
Understands record-keeping and documentation skills	3.E.16.	Quizzes; Case Presentation
Understands suicide prevention and response models and strategies	3.E.19.	Quizzes; Case Presentation