



University of Lynchburg

COUN 605: Counseling Theories

College of Health Sciences

University of Lynchburg

Fall 2025

Dr. Heather Summers My pronouns: she/her/hers https://www.mypronouns.org/ Office: Warren Counseling Center – 330J email: summers_h@lynchburg.edu	Location: Thompson-Polloway Hall, 202 Class Time: Tuesday 7-9:30 pm Student Office Hours: . Available for office hours Tuesdays-Fridays by appointment. <i>Please reach out and check in!</i>
---	--

Course Description:

Intensive study of counseling theories that provides you with models to conceptualize client presentation and that helps you select appropriate counseling interventions. This course covers counseling models consistent with current professional research and practice in the field. This course follows guidelines for the University, state, and CACREP (Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs).

Course Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:

The following are the course objectives and expected learning outcomes based on [2024 CACREP Standards](#):

Objective	CACREP Standard	Assessment
Understand theories and models of multicultural counseling, social justice, and advocacy	3.B.1	Weekly Interaction Assignments
Practice self-care, self-awareness, and self-evaluation strategies for ethical and effective practice	3.A.11	Wellness wheel
Awareness of the influence of heritage, cultural identities, attitudes, values, beliefs, understandings, within-group differences, and acculturative experiences on individuals' worldviews	3.B.2	Exams, Weekly Interaction Assignments, Presentation, Papers

Understand the effects of various socio-cultural influences, including public policies, social movements, and cultural values, on mental and physical health and wellness	3.B.6	Exams, Weekly Interaction Assignments
Application of principles of independence, inclusion, choice and self-empowerment, and access to services within and outside the counseling relationship	3.B.8	Exams, Weekly Interaction Assignments, Presentation, Papers
Articulate the role of religion and spirituality in clients' and counselors' psychological functioning	3.B.11	Exams, Weekly Interaction Assignments
Understand theories and models of counseling, including relevance to clients from diverse cultural backgrounds	3.E.1	Exams, Weekly Interaction Assignments Presentation, Papers
Demonstrate critical thinking and reasoning strategies for clinical judgment in the counseling process	3.E.2	Exams, Weekly Interaction Assignments, Presentation, Papers
Develop case conceptualization skills using a variety of models and approaches	3.E.3	Exams, Weekly Interaction Assignments, Presentation, Papers
Articulate counselor characteristics, behaviors, and strategies that facilitate effective counseling relationships	3.E.8	Exams, Weekly Interaction Assignments, Presentation, Papers
Understand strategies for adapting and accommodating the counseling process to client culture, context, abilities, and preferences	3.E.11	Weekly Interaction Assignments, Paper
Articulate evidence-based counseling strategies and techniques for prevention and intervention	3.E.15	Exams, Weekly Interaction Assignments, Paper
Demonstrate processes for developing a personal model of counseling grounded in theory and research	3.E.21	Exams, Weekly Interaction Assignments, Paper

Required Text(s) and/or Reading(s):

Murdock, N. L. (2025). *Theories of counseling and psychotherapy: A case approach* (5th ed.). Pearson.

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

Recommended resource:

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

Syllabus Statements:

The University of Lynchburg Honor Code; Student Conduct Code; Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources Statement; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Respect Syllabus Statement; Knight-Capron Library Syllabus Statement; Wilmer Writing Center Syllabus Statement; Religious Holiday Observance Syllabi Statement, the Mandatory Reporting and Faculty Responsibility Statement and other resources including the new AI Syllabus Statement can all be found [here](#). Please reach out with any questions.

Inclement Weather:

If classes are canceled due to inclement weather or other circumstances, announcements will be made on the University of Lynchburg Weather Hotline, (434) 544-SNOW, and University website.

Course Policies**Methods of Instruction:**

The instructor will utilize methods such as, but not limited to, online recorded lectures, online discussions, small group online activities, observational and participatory experiences, podcasts, and video clips. It is expected that students have a working knowledge of technology including software used for accessing email, the internet, word processing, and presentation development. Because this is an online course, please be sure to establish “back-up” options should your internet access be compromised (e.g., storms, changing residences). You will have adequate notice for all submitted assignments, so please include “buffer time” in case of technological glitches.

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* in classroom activities. This expectation extends to interactions with faculty, site supervisors, and fellow students outside of class, including professional communication in email and other written correspondence.

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. Failure to integrate feedback into future work will result in points deducted from such future work.

Assignment submissions:

All assignments for COUN 605, unless otherwise specified, are due by 11:59pm on the day the assignment is due. The “due by” time represents the moment at which the submission portal closes.

Late assignments will not be accepted without express permission from the instructor.

If a student wants to request permission to submit a late assignment, they must consult the instructor to discuss the reason for the late submission. If approved for late submission, students will abide by the agreed-upon late submission deadline. Assignments submitted after the original assignment date will be graded with a 20% reduction in possible points.

Assignments will be submitted in Google Classroom and should be written using current APA (2020) writing conventions and using the Requirements for Written Assignments (under “Writing Conventions” in Classroom). Students MUST submit all assignments in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

All written assignments must be submitted in Google Classroom as Google docs. Written assignments submitted in any other format will be returned ungraded. Once resubmitted (within 24 hours), the resubmission will be graded with a 20% reduction in total possible points.

Activities and Assignments

Quizzes (10%)

There will be 10 multiple-choice quizzes administered throughout the semester for students to assess and demonstrate their mastery of the content covered in class.

Exams (10%)

There will be two exams in this class at the middle and end of the semester. The exams will be multiple-choice and administered online.

Life Philosophy Statement (5%)

You will write a Life Philosophy Statement to facilitate your self-understanding and insight into how you view the world. Your statement should be no more than 10 sentences (no specific format is required) and, at a minimum, should answer the following questions:

- What is truth?
- Are people good?
- How do we gain knowledge?
- How does personality develop?
- What causes human behavior?

Counseling Theory Presentation (20%)

For this assignment, you will pull from what you learn in the readings and discussions to begin visualizing and formulating your own counseling style. Here you begin to integrate your values, likes and dislikes, skills, and how a theory(ies) resonates with you. A theoretical orientation provides helpers with a framework for therapy that sets the foundation for intentional counseling. For the counselor, being intentional is a prerequisite to ethical and effective helping. Theory is an

important factor in structuring therapy and directing interventions. Theory can provide a roadmap when counselors get lost in the therapeutic process.

This assignment will require working in pairs to present a theory and case study to the others in the class. The 25–35-minute presentation will focus on delivering enough content about the theory for anyone who does not know the theory to understand the theoretical foundations and how the theory is applied to a client. Identify a primary theory (from those discussed in the course) you would use with this client. Both partners should participate in some way in the presentation. Their efforts should be professional, collaborative and prepared. Also, identify a specific presenting issue that they are bringing to therapy. At 35 minutes the professor will end the presentation. If anything has been missed, those points will be lost to the group.

Major sections of this presentation will include, but are not limited to:

A. Theory

- a. The rationale for choosing the theory(ies) includes key points of the theory as they apply to this client. Theoretical concepts/ ideas unique to the theory make it a good fit for the client.
- b. The key theoretical concepts
- c. The relationship of the counselor and the client.
- d. Motivation for changing

B. Case Study: The case study for this presentation will discuss one client. The client can either be (a) a typical client from a population you can imagine yourself working with in the future, or (b) a character from a movie or series that you think would be a good fit.

- a. Client description: The case study should begin with a clinical description of the client that should include: (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) social status, (e) cultural background, (f) presenting issue, and (g) any family issues that may be applicable.

Make sure to include key points relevant to that theory and discuss those concerning your client and the presenting issue. This is your view of the client and the issue(s) presented in counseling.

- b. Interventions: The author connects the interventions from the chosen theory to the specific client and supports why these interventions would reduce the client's presenting issue.
- c. Applications: The presentation identifies how the chosen theory's interventions would be used with this client and briefly discusses how they would be applied in the session
- d. Treatment plan - Design a treatment strategy for a specific client problem. Describe how you would approach and treat the client. Using your counseling client, map out a specific plan for how you would work with this client from your chosen theory. This plan must include specific goals that you and your client might want to achieve in your time together and pull in key points relevant to this theory. Make sure to list interventions

In the oral presentation, the presenters should connect with the class. Often, this means looking up from prepared materials to engage the class, not reading large amounts of materials to the class, but summarizing it for them. The presentation will include (a) uploading the presentation materials to Google Classroom (b) a PowerPoint or similar presentation shared with the class in Google Classroom, and (c) a personal one-page reflection paper from each member of the group.

Good Will Hunting Paper (15%)

You will watch Good Will Hunting (1997) and write a 2-3 page paper identifying counseling theories utilized and analyzing their effectiveness.

Include the following:

- What is your initial reaction to this film?
- What theories do you identify?
- Label the theory as well as specific interventions utilized.
- What was the client's response?
 - What went well?
 - What may have made the session more effective?
- Is there a scene in which the theory is unclear? Provide your best assessment as well as discuss what information may be missing.

Please include a timestamp for sessions you are referencing and analyze 1-2 scenes.

This movie can be rented from several online sources and I also have a digital copy. You are welcome to set up a time to watch the movie in my office if you would like.

Theoretical Orientation Paper (20%)

You will develop, personalize, and critique your philosophy of counseling. Describing your theoretical position on human change is essential in your development as a professional counselor. The purpose of the Philosophy of Counseling Paper is for you to begin developing a rich understanding of your philosophy of counseling and consider whether any particular theoretical approaches connect to your philosophy.

You will write a minimum 4 page paper using the following headings to organize your thoughts. You should address each element described below and integrate information from theoretical analysis, class discussions, readings, and personal experiences. You should utilize at least five sources for the paper, two of which should be primary. A primary source for this paper is an article or book written by the theorist being referenced. For example, writing about the influence of person-centered theory on your counseling philosophy might include Carl Rogers's work. ***All references must be cited; failure to cite sources is considered plagiarism. See the American Psychological Association Publication Manual for the correct style, reference, and citation format.***

Paper Headings:

- Introduction
- Key Theoretical Concepts
 - View of human potential
 - Issue of determinism
 - Influence of the environment on behavior
 - Assumptions about personality development that are important to your key concepts.

- Description of your view of change (e.g. What do you think helps to change behavior, thoughts, emotions, and how can you help to facilitate change?)
- Your role as a counselor
 - How will you establish rapport?
 - How will your clients experience therapy?
- Therapeutic Goals
- Central Techniques and Methods
 - How will you determine, facilitate, and assess change?
- How does this approach fit you as a counselor?
- How does this theory provide a foundation for counselors' roles in eliminating biases, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination?
- How has your orientation developed from the beginning to the end of the semester?

Evaluative Methodology:

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

Life Philosophy Paper	5%
Theory Presentation	20%
Good Will Hunting Paper	15%
Theoretical Orientation Paper	20%
Weekly Interaction	10%
Quizzes	10%
Midterm Exam	10%
Final Exam	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

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

--	--

Tentative Course Schedule

*This schedule is tentative and subject to change at the discretion of the instructor (see below).

Week Dates	TOPICS/To Read/ <i>Watch</i>	Major assignments due date
1 8/26	Read Theories Counseling & Psychotherapy (Murdock, 2025) Chapter 1 Theory is a Good Thing	
2 9/2	Read Theories Counseling & Psychotherapy (Murdock, 2025) Chapter 2-3 Psychoanalysis and Neoanalytic Approaches	Quiz 1
3 9/9	Read Theories Counseling & Psychotherapy (Murdock, 2025) Chapter 4 Individual Psychology	Quiz 2
4 9/16	Read Theories Counseling & Psychotherapy (Murdock, 2025) Chapter 5 Person Centered Therapy	Life Philosophy Statement Quiz 3 Person Centered Presentation (KP, Felisha, Carly)
5 9/23	Read Theories Counseling & Psychotherapy (Murdock, 2025) Chapter 6-7 Existential Therapy & Gestalt	Quiz 4 Existential Presentation (Emily & Brianna) Gestalt Presentation (Joshua & Miranda)
6 9/30	Read Theories Counseling & Psychotherapy (Murdock, 2025) Chapter 8-9 Behavior Therapy and REBT	Quiz 5 Behavior Therapy (Kayla & Ashanti) REBT Presentation (Zahra & Carl)
7 10/7	Read Theories Counseling & Psychotherapy (Murdock, 2025) Chapter 10-11 Cognitive Therapy and Reality Therapy	Quiz 6 Cognitive Therapy Presentation (Gretchen & Kelsey) Reality Therapy Presentation (Maria & Jessica)
8 10/14	MIDTERM EXAM	MIDTERM EXAM
10/21	NO CLASS	
10/28	NO CLASS	

9 11/4	Read Theories Counseling & Psychotherapy (Murdock, 2025) Chapter 12 Feminist Therapy	Good Will Hunting Paper DUE Quiz 7 Feminist Therapy Presentation (Michael & Lis)
10 11/11	Read Theories Counseling & Psychotherapy (Murdock, 2025) Chapter 13 Family Therapy	Quiz 8 Family Therapy Presentation (Whitney, Sarah, Jess Aleigha)
11 11/18	Read Theories Counseling & Psychotherapy (Murdock, 2025) Chapter 14-15 Solution Focused and Narrative Therapy	Quiz 9 Solution Focused Presentation (Ainsley & Mackenzie) Narrative Therapy Presentation (Isaac & Janell)
11/25	NO CLASS	
12 12/2	Read Theories Counseling & Psychotherapy (Murdock, 2025) Chapter 16-17 Mindfulness	Quiz 10 Theoretical Orientation Paper DUE Mindfulness Presentation (Layla & Lauren)
13 12/9	Final Exam	Final Exam

*The Tentative Course Schedule lists the main assignments and reading schedules for COUN 605 this semester.