



## **Syllabus for Psychology 175**

### **Counseling Skills**

**August 20, 2012 – December 10, 2012**

**Instructor:** Sal Buffo, MA

**Office Location:** M 225 Verde Campus

**Phone:** (928) 649-5480

**Office Hours:** M 10am to 12pm, Tues. 1pm to 3pm, Thurs. 1pm to 4pm - also by appointment

**Email address:** [Salvatore.Buffo@yc.edu](mailto:Salvatore.Buffo@yc.edu)

**Classroom type, location and times:** ITV Class format

M & W 3:30-4:45

G 103 Verde Campus

Bldg. 3 Room 270 Prescott Campus

**Web site address:** <http://blackboard.yc.edu>

**Credit hours:** 3.0

**Course Description:** Counseling is a special relationship built on confidentiality, mutual respect and open communication, with the intention of helping people to clarify and identify their problems and to find their own solutions. It is about empowering the client to make their own decisions; it is not advice giving or offering sympathy. Many people may use counseling skills as part of their work,

but the counseling relationship is quite different, as it entails commitment and clear boundaries. In this course we will explore how communication between two people can be so powerful, almost magical at times, in developing not only a mutual understanding, but also a mutual respect for each other. We will also explore the basic theoretical perspectives of counseling as well as an understanding of group dynamics and its methods.

**Textbook:** On Becoming a Counselor by Eugene Kennedy and Sara C. Charles, M.D. Publisher; Crossroad Publishing, New York  
ISBN 13: 978-0-8245-1913-1

### **Course Content:**

1. The foundations of counseling
2. The helping relationship
3. Active listening and reflective feedback
4. Models of helping
5. Communication skills in helping relationships
6. Management of stress in helping and self-disclosure
7. Introduction to Group methods
8. Special topics: drugs, prejudice, abusive relationships, etc. as they pertain in the helping relationship.
9. Displaying empathy
10. Ethics in the helping relationship

### **Learning outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, the learner will be able to:

1. Examine and critically evaluate ethical standards in the helping relationship
2. Identify the stages and steps in helping and apply specific counseling principles.
3. Apply supportive and directive models in the helping relationship.
4. Have a basic knowledge of several theoretical perspectives of counseling, including:
  - a. Client-centered therapy
  - b. Cognitive behavioral therapy
  - c. Psychoanalytic therapy
  - d. Gestalt therapy

5. Have a basic understanding of group dynamics and methods



### **Course Requirements and Assignments:**

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend and participate in all class meetings and /or activities. You will have a sign in sheet at each class meeting in which you are expected to sign your name to verify your attendance. (Any forgery or dishonesty on the attendance sheet will automatically result in failing this class.) After your 4<sup>th</sup> absence, prior to the last student initiated withdrawal date: you will be dropped from the class by the instructor. If your 4<sup>th</sup> absence falls after that date (October 14, 2012), you will receive the letter grade you earn from that point on.

### **Discussion Board: GUIDELINES FOR THE DISCUSSION BOARD:**

Your response to my post should be at least 100 words and written with an example explaining your response. You will also need to respond to at least 2 other students post with appropriate responses. Although I respect everyone's right to express themselves pertaining to their religious beliefs as well as moral

beliefs, please note, this is not the forum to do so. This will not meet the requirements for a discussion forum, so please reframe from any comments that may offend others.

Cases on Blackboard. We will have cases on Blackboard that you will have to discuss with your classmates. In addition to the case material, I will post several questions to begin the discussion. You will need to make at least two posts to each case in the week allotted for each case. One of these posts must be in response to a comment made by a classmate.

Grading for the Discussion Board will be the following:

0 – 4 points: Post too short, no examples, response to question, but no responses to others students posts.

6 – 7 points: Minimal post with response to only 1 other student

7 – 10 points: Graded on content, clarity and meeting requirements of Discussion Board

Remember, the grade book will not immediately reflect your Discussion Board grade as I will put your grade in manually after reading your responses. You can look at your Discussion Forum Grades within 48 hours after they close. There will be no opportunity to post a response after the closing day of the forum.

In your Blackboard site you will see a tab titled, “**Ask Sal**” This is connected to your Discussion Board. This is to be used for any questions you may have regarding anything related to our class. I check this daily, so the response is rather quick. This could be questions about any of the assignments, grades, clarifications or just general questions. Remember, the entire class has access to this, so if you want to ask a question you would rather not share with the class, email me at [Salvatore.Buffo@yc.edu](mailto:Salvatore.Buffo@yc.edu)

**Participation:** Please note that if you do not post a response for 3 weeks, you may be dropped from the class due to lack of participation. I will attempt to contact you via email prior to withdrawing you from class.

**Case Study:** In lieu of a midterm exam, you will present a case study based on an interview you will perform. The person you interview could be a friend who could simply play themselves and after the interview you will need to propose an overview of how you plan to help your “client” using 2 different models of psychotherapy. You will present your case study to the class giving some background of your client, issues that were presented during your interview and your proposed plan and recommendation using the 2 models you select.

**Skills and Analysis Paper:** Your final will be a paper that you will submit, “What I Bring to Counseling”. You will submit a paper (maximum of 5 pages, typed 12 font, and double spaced) responding to each of the following questions:

- What are the qualities that you possess, which will enable you to become an effective counselor?
- What are the life experiences which have contributed to what you bring to the helping relationship?
- What is your greatest fear in terms of counseling skills? How can you overcome this fear?
- How do you think your cultural background (where you grew up, your gender/race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, family values) will influence the way you approach using your skills with people?

**Assessments:**

Discussion Board Cases: (10)	Point Value 10	Total Possible Points 100
Case Study/Presentation	Point Value 50	Total Possible Points 50
Final Analysis Paper	Point Value 100	Total Possible Points 100
		Total Points 250

**Grading criteria:** Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

90% - 100% points earned A

80% - 89% points earned B

70% - 79% points earned C

60% - 69% points earned D

Below 60% points earned F

## **Course Policies:**

**Confidentiality:** Since we discuss issues and questions that deal with theoretical concepts, you will be asked to share your personal experiences relating to these concepts. Expectations will be that all students will respect and honor fellow classmates by not sharing any information that is shared in class outside of class without the permission of your fellow classmate(s). Any violation will result you being dropped from this class.

**Responsibility:** I will be sending out emails and announcements during this course. If your email address changes or if it's unavailable, it will be your responsibility to notify me with this information as well as you updating this information on your YC portal by clicking on Personal Information on the welcome menu. Again, if you have any problems with this, contact the **YC Help Desk, 928 776-2168**.

**Cell Phone and Text Messaging:** Please refrain from making / receiving calls or texts during class. Please turn off or put your cell phone on vibrate during class. All phones should be put away for the duration of the class period. If you must leave the classroom to receive a call, please leave quietly and discreetly.

**Student Code of Conduct:** Respect for the rights of others and for the College and its property are fundamental expectations for every student. The "Student Code of Conduct" outlines behavioral expectations, and explains the process for responding to allegations of student misconduct.

**Academic Integrity:** Honesty in academic work is a central element of the learning environment. The presentation of another individual's work as one's own or the act of seeking unfair academic advantage through cheating, plagiarism or other dishonest means are violations of the College's "Student Code of Conduct." Definitions of plagiarism, cheating, and violation of copyright and penalties for

violation are available in the Yavapai College General Catalog.

**Course Withdrawal:** The last day to withdraw from a class is **October 14**. To officially withdraw from a course, the student must complete a Yavapai College Change of Class Enrollment Form and submit it to the Registration Office. Withdrawing from a course after the published deadline for withdrawal requires instructor approval and signature. When a student withdraws from a course, a “W” will appear on the student’s permanent college record. If a student does not follow official procedures for withdrawing from a course, failing grades may be posted on the student’s permanent record. If you feel the need to drop this class please talk to me first. There may be some options that I may be able to help you with. I value you as a student and what to see you be successful as a student.

**Disability Support Services:** Yavapai College is committed to providing educational support services to students with documented disabilities. Academic support services or accommodations for mobility impaired students must be arranged through the ADA Coordinator (Prescott Campus: 928.776.2079 or Verde Valley Campus: 928.634.6563). If anyone in this class has a disability, including a learning disability, please contact Disability Resources to discuss your disability with the counselor. This will be so that you can arrange your accommodations that you need for this class.

If during the course you are having problems with Blackboard and it’s something that we can’t seem to solve ourselves, contact the Yavapai College Help Desk at <http://www.yc.edu/content/tels/resforstudents/default.htm> You may also reach the YC Help Desk at [HelpDesk@yc.edu](mailto:HelpDesk@yc.edu) or by phone, 928 776-2168

**I have learned that people will forget what you said; people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.**

***Maya Angelou***

**CLASS SCHEDULE FALL 2012**  
**PSYCHOLOGY 175 – COUNSELING SKILLS**

**WEEK OF:**

**AUG 20** – Course review and expectations, Introductions, Syllabus review

**AUG 27** – What is counseling and the helping relationship? Discussion Post

**SEPT 3** – Active listening and reflective feedback practice. No class Monday, Labor Day

**SEPT 10** – Values: the role and dealing with value conflicts. Discussion Post

**SEPT 17** – Client centered therapy vs. Psychoanalysis. Discussion Post

**SEPT 24** – Moving towards optimism, Cognitive therapy...The Miracle Question

**OCT 1** – Ethics in the helping relationship. Discussion Post

**OCT 8** – Dealing with stress in counseling. Discussion Post

**OCT 15 – Case Study Presentation**

**OCT 29** – Confrontation in Counseling...Gestalt therapy. Discussion Post

**NOV 5** – Dealing with difficult clients and issues. Discussion Post

**NOV 12** – Group Therapy and Practice. Discussion Post. No Class Monday, Veterans Day

**NOV 19 – Thanksgiving Week, November 21 -23**

**NOV 26-** Family Systems Therapy.

**DEC 3** – Wrap Up Discussions... **Final Papers due December 7**