

PSY 883
DOCTORAL CLINICAL PRACTICUM
1-3 Credit Hours
Spring 2007
SHSU Psychological Services Center
Mondays 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Instructor: Heather Littleton, Ph.D., LP (TX Lic. #32807)
Office: Academic Building IV – Room 331
Phone: 936-294-4621 (Direct to Dr. Littleton)
936-294-1174 or -3552 (Psychology Department Main Office Phones)
E-mail: littleton@shsu.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00-12:00 and by appointment

Required Readings:

There is no required text for this course. However, outside readings will be assigned on an as-needed basis to aid in case conceptualization, treatment planning, and clinical development.

Course Description:

This course is intended to provide doctoral clinical psychology students an opportunity to bring theory, research, and practice together and to further develop their clinical psychological skills under appropriate guidance and supervision. It is anticipated that students will be at different stages of professional development, will be exposed to different issues inherent in diverse settings, and may experience ethical dilemmas inherent in delivering psychological services. As a result, students will have somewhat varying supervision needs. An emphasis will be placed on development of case conceptualization skills, understanding how background factors (e.g., gender, ethnicity, culture, disability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation) of the therapist and the client can influence case conceptualization and intervention, and intervention techniques. In addition, it is expected that students will continue to research appropriate science relevant to practice and apply it accordingly. Given the diverse clientele seen by students in the practicum settings, it is expected that students will further develop skills in tailoring clinical interventions accordingly.

Course Objectives:

Specific objectives and goals will depend upon the practicum and the trainee. These will be determined and pursued during individual supervision. However, it is anticipated that each supervisee will be able to identify one goal for the semester in each of the three competency areas of clinical practice: knowledge (e.g., learning about a particular psychological theory, reading the ethics code), practice (e.g., working with particular types of clients, using a particular therapeutic technique), and personal (e.g., learning about one's own family history, keeping a journal, confronting one's own emotional reactions).

General Objectives:

- To provide the student with the opportunity to render clinical psychological services under the supervision of at least one licensed clinical psychologist
- To further develop students' awareness and sensitivity to factors (gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status etc.) that may influence assessment, diagnosis, the therapeutic relationship, treatment goals, course of therapy, and effectiveness of interventions
- To discuss and further develop ethical reasoning and decision making skills in the course of clinical psychological practice
- To improve case conceptualization skills by making one formal case presentation during the term
- To provide students with feedback regarding their assessment, intervention, and consultation skills from both supervisors and peers
- To further develop students' ability to identify and integrate relevant research evidence from the existing literature and apply it to their clinical experience and to identify additional questions that need to be answered along with potential resources for answers

Course Requirements and Expectations:

- While time commitment to practicum may vary according to site and students' needs, each student should receive at least one hour of contact on a weekly basis with their on-site supervisor.
- Each student will maintain a cumulative record, free from specific identifying information, of all clients seen, number of hours spent in the clinical setting in the performance of specific clinical services, diagnoses of clients/patients, number of hours spent in individual and group supervision, names of supervisors, issues discussed, and recommendations made, and any other professional development activities.
- During the term, each student will make one formal presentation related to their current clinical placement. This could include a presentation regarding a specific treatment modality/technique you are utilizing, a particular diagnostic presentation, or a particular assessment instrument. It is expected that this presentation will involve multiple media (e.g., slides, handouts) and will be supported by empirical research and clinical materials to the extent available.
- After your schedule has been arranged with your on-site supervisor, please give me a copy. Be sure to include the hour of individual on-site supervision on your schedule. If you are unable to be at your site (e.g., illness, family emergency, etc.), contact your on-site supervisor.
- Work out with your on-site supervisor in advance how you will handle suicidal, psychotic, or any other client who is in crisis.
- Due to the nature of this class and the APA Ethics Code, we need to continually remind ourselves of our responsibility for confidentiality and other ethical standards.
- Students are expected to come prepared to each supervision session. This means that any test protocols should be scored, progress notes and reports written, tape cued up to relevant section.
- Students are expected to complete all case-file documentation in a timely manner. Maintaining accurate and up-to-date clinical files is entirely the student's responsibility, and students are expected to secure signatures from their supervisor as needed.

- Students are expected to turn in draft reports only after thorough, meticulous proofreading and editing. Reports that require extensive editing for spelling, grammar, and typographical errors will likely result in a poorer grade in this course.
- Assessment and other clinical reports are time-sensitive work products prepared for clients as well as other clinicians, schools, social service agencies, etc., who use these reports to make time-sensitive decisions. In addition, students are learning assessment and report-writing skills in order to prepare for future work in settings that often require rapid turn around of reports. Therefore, to promote timely report-writing and feedback, students should strive to adhere to these guidelines when providing draft reports to their supervisors:
 - Progress notes are to be completed within 24 hours of a client session.
 - All DNKAs, phone calls, letters to clients are to be documented within 24 hours.
 - Students should complete an original draft assessment report no later than 48 hours after they complete interview and testing with a client.
 - Students should revise and resubmit edited drafts of reports within 24 hours of receiving edits or suggestions from their supervisor.
 - Except under very unusual circumstances, students should provide feedback to clients (i.e., the complete written report and verbal feedback) within two weeks of the last date of testing.
 - Exceptions to the above deadline policy should be cleared ahead of time with the class instructor and/or the on-site reviewing supervisor. I will make every effort to follow a similarly prompt pattern of timeliness in returning edited drafts to students. However, it may not always be feasible to do so within 24-48 hours, depending on the number of students in the class and volume of cases.

Attendance and Participation:

Punctual attendance for both on-campus and off-campus activities is expected. Class will meet for 2 hours each of the regular weeks of the term. Students are expected to attend all scheduled class times and to have an additional minimum of one hour per week of regularly scheduled individual supervision. Please note that this is a **minimum** and students are likely to need, potentially benefit from, and schedule more supervision time to better develop their professional skills. Because group supervision is optimal when all group members are present, and because supervision requires regular contact and often time-sensitive discussion of clinical issues, class attendance is essential. Thus, a pattern of tardiness or absence for any reason will adversely affect your grade. In addition, each student will be expected to regularly present clinical cases with which they are working (in addition to the formal case presentation) for the purposes of group discussion and supervision. An important tool in this process will be audio/video recordings of actual sessions, to the extent this is feasible given the practicum setting. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that an important component of professional behavior is the ability to provide timely, relevant, and constructive feedback to colleagues during clinical discussions in class.

It is anticipated that students in clinical settings with on-site supervision by a licensed psychologist will obtain the bulk of their necessary supervision from the on-site supervisor. Those students may schedule individual meetings with me if they desire but I will defer to the

on-site supervisor for matters pertaining to the specific clinical setting and students should adhere closely to the on-site supervisor's requirements and recommendations. Students seeing clients in the SHSU Psychological Services Center will definitely need to schedule the minimum weekly additional supervision with me or with another appropriate supervisor if their needs for supervision are better met by some one else. This will be arranged at mutually convenient times. Please **do not hesitate** to request any additional time that you feel is needed for **your professional development and the welfare of your clients.**

Schedule/Course Outline:

A schedule of presentations and discussion topics will be worked out with students as the class gets underway.

Evaluation/Grading:

Grades will be determined by an evaluation of the student's level of clinical skills relevant to their individual expected level of development, professional behavior, and class participation. Grades will be officially assigned by the faculty course instructor, but strong consideration will be given to feedback and evaluation from the on-site supervisor. Improvement will be considered a significant factor. Satisfactory performance will result in a grade of B. Striving for excellence and outstanding performance will result in a grade of A.

Please note the following University policies relevant to all SHSU courses:

Academic Dishonesty:

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Classroom Rules of Conduct:

According to University guidelines and general sense of decency, students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning.

Americans with Disabilities Act:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disability that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

Religious Holidays:

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911(a)(2) defines religious holy days as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. . . .” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will notify the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examination are to be completed.

Visitors in the Classroom:

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor’s discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. In general, visitors to this course should be cleared by the instructor for some specific purpose directly relevant to the educational experience and any confidential clinical information must be handled appropriately within this context. Otherwise, only students who are officially registered and who have paid all university/course fees may attend.
