



Counseling

EAST TEXAS A&M

COUN 540: Diagnosis and Treatment Planning for Clinical Mental Health Counselors

Summer II 2026 Course Syllabus

(7/06/2026 -8/06/2026)

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:00 PM - 9:30 PM,

Room: TBD

Dallas Campus, 8750 N. Central Expressway

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Anniesha C Lyngdoh, PhD, NCC

Office Location: Remote

Office Hours: By appointment via email

University Email Address: Anniesha.Lyngdoh@etamu.edu

Preferred Method of Communication: Email

Communication Response Time: 24-48 hours during weekdays

COURSE INFORMATION

Textbook(s) Required:

American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed., text rev.). American Psychiatric Publishing.

Kress, V. E., & Paylo, M. J. (2019). *Treating those with mental disorders: A comprehensive approach to case conceptualization and treatment*. Pearson.

Course Description

COUN 540. *Diagnosis and Treatment Planning*. Three semester hours. Principles and models of biopsychosocial assessment, case conceptualization, and treatment planning for counseling applications within a managed care framework. DSM diagnosis and differential diagnosis formulations, disorder prevention and intervention, and promotion of optimal mental health within counseling settings are studied.

Course Rationale

The purpose of this course is to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel as professional counselors, with a focus on diagnosing, assessing, and treating mental health issues. Grounded in the 2016 CACREP standards, the course provides a comprehensive exploration of theoretical frameworks, evidence-based interventions, and the integration of cultural and ethical considerations in clinical practice.

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Students will develop critical competencies in understanding biopsychosocial constructs, creating treatment plans, and applying DSM-5-TR criteria to real-world case scenarios. The course emphasizes the importance of critical thinking, reflective learning, and collaborative engagement through assignments, discussion boards, and examinations. By blending theory and practice, this course prepares students to address the complexities of mental health counseling in diverse clinical settings, while fostering a deep understanding of the ethical and cultural responsibilities inherent in the profession. This course not only aligns with program objectives and accreditation standards but also aims to develop students' capacity for empathy, professionalism, and cultural sensitivity. Upon successful completion, students will be well-prepared to engage in the assessment and treatment processes essential for promoting wellness and supporting clients in achieving their mental health goals.

Student Learning Outcomes
2016 CACREP Standards Addressed in COUN 540

Masters Standard	Learning Activity	Assignment
5.C.1.b. theories and models related to clinical mental health counseling	Kress & Paylo (2019)	Discussion Posts; Case Study & Class Discussion
5.C.1.c. principles, models, and documentation formats of biopsychosocial case conceptualization and treatment planning	Kress & Paylo (2019)	Biopsychosocial History & Treatment Plan; Discussion Posts
5.C.1.d. neurobiological and medical foundation and etiology of addiction and co-occurring disorders	DSM-5-TR	Biopsychosocial History & Treatment Plan; Discussion Posts
5.C.2.a. roles and settings of clinical mental health counselors	Kress & Paylo (2019)	Discussion Posts; Case Study & Class Discussion
5.C.2.b. etiology, nomenclature, treatment, referral, and prevention of mental and emotional disorders	DSM-5-TR	Biopsychosocial History & Treatment Plan; Discussion Posts
5.C.2.c. mental health service delivery modalities within the continuum of care, such as inpatient, outpatient, partial treatment and aftercare, and the	Kress & Paylo (2019)	Discussion Posts; Case Study & Class Discussion

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Masters Standard	Learning Activity	Assignment
mental health counseling services network		
5.C.2.d. diagnostic process, including differential diagnosis and the use of current diagnostic classification systems, including the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD)	DSM-5-TR	Case Study & Class Discussion
5.C.2.e. potential for substance use disorders to mimic and/or co- occur with a variety of neurological, medical, and psychological disorders	Kress & Paylo (2019) Ch. 8	Biopsychosocial History & Treatment Plan; Discussion Posts
5.C.2.f. impact of crisis and trauma on individuals with mental health diagnoses	Kress & Paylo (2019) Ch. 7	Biopsychosocial History & Treatment Plan; Discussion Posts
5.C.2.g. impact of biological and neurological mechanisms on mental health	DSM-5-TR	Biopsychosocial History & Treatment Plan; Case Study & Class Discussion

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

In this class, you will utilize the Learning Management System (LMS) entitled To complete assignments, you will need to utilize other technologies such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, etc. If you have issues with this system, it is your responsibility to contact the help desk immediately.

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INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Student Responsibilities and Tips for Success in the Course

As a student in this course, you are responsible for being active in your learning process.

Expectations of this course include the following:

1. You are expected to always display professionalism. Be respectful of your professor and peers. Be open to feedback, as you will receive this throughout the program.
2. Complete all assignments by the deadline.
3. Adhere to the university's Student Code of Conduct.
4. All writing assignments must be done according to APA 7th edition.
5. Regularly check your university email.
6. Begin your reading ASAP. Sometimes it may take more than one attempt to digest the material.
7. Deadlines are the last possible moment something is due—not the first moment to start. Work ahead. I realize this may not always be possible; however, when you can, do so.
8. Be open to the process. This degree takes time, work, effort, and growth.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS/ASSESSMENTS

Attendance, Participation, and Preparation (10 points)

Active engagement is an essential component of professional development in this course. You are expected to attend each week's class, arrive on time, read all assigned materials in advance, and contribute meaningfully to discussions by drawing on both professional and personal experiences. Participation includes interacting respectfully and professionally with peers and the instructor, both online and in class, and demonstrating thoughtful engagement with the course content. If you must miss a discussion post or assignment due date, notify me in advance by email; late assignments will receive a lower grade. Consistent lateness without justification may be counted as an absence.

Class Participation & Attendance Rubric

Criteria	3 - Exceeds Expectations (9-10 points)	2 - Meets Expectations (5-8 points)	1 - Does Not Meet Expectations (0-4 points)
Class Participation & Attendance	Proactive participation: leading, originating, informing, or challenging	Reactive participation: supportive, follow-up contributions that are relevant and of value,	Passive participation: present but not actively involved or invested. More than two absences or a

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	contributions that reflect in-depth study, thought, and analysis of the topic. No more than one absence and no pattern of lateness.	but relies on others to initiate discussion. May have one or two absences or occasional lateness.	consistent pattern of lateness without justification.
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Discussion Posts (5x6; 30 points)

The discussion board assignments are designed to enhance your engagement with course material, foster collaborative learning, and develop critical thinking skills. Throughout the term, you are required to participate in five (5) discussion posts throughout the course, one each week. Each discussion will begin with a prompt provided by the professor, which will align with the weekly course content.

For each discussion, you must submit an **initial post** by **Friday by 11:59 PM**. This post should reflect a thoughtful and well-supported response to the prompt, demonstrating your understanding of the topic and incorporating material from the course, such as readings, lectures, or external resources. The initial post must be a minimum of one page (approximately 250-300 words) and include at least one cited reference to course material or a peer-reviewed source.

Additionally, you must provide **two substantive responses** to your classmates' initial posts by **Monday by 11:59 PM**. Substantive responses should go beyond simple agreement or disagreement, offering thoughtful feedback, posing questions, or expanding on the discussion topic. These interactions are meant to foster a dynamic and respectful exchange of ideas. The discussion board is not only a space to demonstrate your understanding of course concepts but also a forum to engage critically with your peers and the instructor. Effective posts should stimulate dialogue, reflect critical analysis, and avoid unsupported opinions. Profane, offensive, or disrespectful language is prohibited.

Violations will result in a warning and repeat offenses will lead to a zero for participation. Your grade for each discussion will be based on the quality and timeliness of your posts. Consistent engagement and thoughtful contributions throughout the term are necessary for maximum points.

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations (3)	Meets Expectations (2)	Below Expectations (1)
Initial Post (3 points)	Submitted on time; demonstrates deep critical thinking;	Submitted on time; addresses the prompt adequately;	Late, lacks depth or relevance, does not adequately address

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	integrates course material effectively with appropriate citations.	incorporates course material but may lack depth or clarity.	the prompt, or does not integrate course material.
Responses to Peers (3 points)	Provides at least two substantive, thoughtful responses that engage critically with peers, extend the discussion, and are respectful and well-written.	Provides at least two responses that engage with peers but lack depth or critical thinking; writing is generally clear with minor issues.	Provides one or no responses, or responses are superficial, disrespectful, or contain frequent writing errors.

Biopsychosocial History and Treatment Plan Assignment (40 points) **due Sun 7/26 by 11:59pm**

The Biopsychosocial History and Treatment Plan assignment requires you to demonstrate an understanding of biopsychosocial constructs and develop assessment and clinical writing skills. For this assignment, you will be provided with a case scenario that includes detailed information about a fictional client. Your task is to analyze the provided information and create a biopsychosocial history that thoroughly examines the client's biological, psychological, and social factors contributing to their presenting concerns. The biopsychosocial history must include the client's demographics, presenting issues, and strengths or resources. Based on this analysis, you will develop a comprehensive treatment plan. The treatment plan must include a diagnosis using DSM-5-TR criteria, clearly justified with evidence from the case scenario. You will also create SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) goals, propose evidence-based interventions tailored to the client's needs, and identify at least one relevant community resource to support the client's wellness. Additionally, you must address any cultural, ethical, or contextual considerations that may influence the treatment process. This assignment is designed to help you integrate theoretical knowledge and practical skills, culminating in a professional and well-organized treatment plan that reflects real-world clinical practices.

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations (3)	Meets Expectations (2)	Below Expectations (1)
Biopsychosocial History (8 points)	Comprehensive and detailed, effectively integrates biological, psychological, and social factors.	Includes most relevant factors but lacks some detail or depth.	Minimal or unclear history; critical factors are missing or underdeveloped.



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Criteria	Exceeds Expectations (3)	Meets Expectations (2)	Below Expectations (1)
Diagnosis (8 points)	Diagnosis is accurate and well-justified with DSM-5-TR criteria	Diagnosis is mostly accurate, but justification lacks depth or clarity.	Diagnosis is partially accurate or insufficiently justified.
Goals and Objectives (8)	SMART goals are well-defined, measurable, and directly address the client's presenting issues.	Goals are present but lack full specificity, measurability, or relevance to the presenting issues.	Goals are vague, incomplete, or not clearly linked to the client's needs.
Interventions (8)	Interventions are evidence based, detailed, and clearly linked to goals and diagnosis.	Interventions are evidence based but lack depth or detail in one or more areas.	Interventions are vague or not clearly linked to goals or presenting issues.
Cultural and Ethical Considerations (2 points)	Thoroughly addresses cultural, ethical, and contextual factors relevant to the client's presenting issues.	Addresses cultural, ethical, and contextual factors but lacks depth or specificity.	Minimal attention to cultural, ethical, or contextual factors; lacks sufficient depth or relevance.
Resources (4 points)	Identifies a relevant and realistic community or professional resource that supports the client effectively.	Identifies a resource but lacks clear relevance or explanation of its role in supporting the client.	Identifies an irrelevant or unclear resource, or connection to the client's issue is weak.
Writing and APA Formatting (2 points)	Writing is clear, professional, well-organized, and free of errors; APA formatting is consistently followed.	Writing is clear and organized but contains minor errors in grammar or APA formatting.	Writing is somewhat unclear, disorganized, or includes frequent errors that hinder clarity.

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Individual Presentation (20 points) **due Tue 8/4 in class**

You will select a movie, TV series episode, or documentary that portrays mental health issues. Preference is given to media supported or endorsed by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Your presentation should focus on:

- The character’s background, including biological, psychological, and social factors impacting their mental health.
- Diagnosis supported by appropriate DSM-5 TR codes.
- Key assessment considerations relevant to the character’s condition.
- Evidence-based interventions and treatment strategies.
- References to relevant course materials.

Criteria	1 - Below Expectations (0-6 pts)	2 - Meets Expectations (7-8 pts)	3 - Exceeds Expectations (9-10 pts)
Content (10)	Incomplete or inaccurate. Missing key elements such as biopsychosocial background, diagnosis, assessment, interventions, or citations.	Mostly complete; addresses all required elements but lacks some clarity or depth. Some citations included.	Comprehensive, clear, and insightful coverage of all elements with appropriate citations.
Presentation (10)	Disorganized, unclear delivery	Adequate delivery; mostly clear and organized with minor issues.	Clear, well-organized presentation.

Assignment/Assessment	Point Value
Discussion Posts (5 × 6 points each)	30
Biopsychosocial History & Treatment Plan	40
Attendance and Participation	10
Individual Presentation	20
Total	100

GRADING SCALE

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%–100%

B = 80%–89%

C = 70%–79%

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D = 60%–69%

F = 59% or below

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will generally not be accepted. Late papers will have 10% deduction per day late from the final score. However, I understand that life happens, and special consideration may be given on a case-by-case basis. If you are facing extenuating circumstances, please communicate with me as soon as possible to discuss potential extensions. Open and timely communication is key.

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Communication with your professors is key to your professional growth. I am here to support and guide you along your academic journey. Please feel free to make an appointment if you have any concerns or questions. Email is the best way to reach me, and I strive to respond within 24-48 hours, Monday through Friday, though sometimes it may take up to 72 hours.

Correspondence will always be through university email (your “myLeo” mail) and announcements in myLeo online (D2L). You will not RECEIVE email through D2L, so be sure to check your ETAMU email for communication. Students are encouraged to check their university email daily.

Include the Following in Emails with Instructor:

- Course name and subject in the subject line
- Salutation (Good afternoon, Dr.)
- Proper email etiquette (no “text” emails - use proper grammar and punctuation)
- Student name and CWID after the body of the email (possibly add to student signature on email)

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS).

LMS Requirements: <https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements: <https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

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ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

System Maintenance

Please note that on the 4th Sunday of each month there will be System Maintenance which means the system will not be available 12 pm-6 am CST.

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

University-Specific Procedures

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details see: Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form at <https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.pdf>

Student Conduct

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All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

Students in this course are expected to attend class and be active participants in class activities. Students cannot miss more than 10% of the course meetings. This policy allows for two (2) absences. Any absence after two (2) absences will result in loss of credit for the course. For more information about the attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage and Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01.

Students with Disabilities – ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce, Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone: (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 | Fax: (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: <http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Student Counseling Services

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

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Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

AI use policy [Draft 2, May 25, 2023]

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

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COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Session	Topic	Readings	Assignments & Due Dates
Tue 7/7 In-Person	Introductions & Syllabus Review Introduction to the DSM Roles, Risks & Benefits of Diagnosis Intro to Effective Treatment Planning Assessments in Counseling (Biopsychosocial, MSE) Neurodevelopmental Disorders	DSM-5-TR: Section I (DSM-5-TR Basics) DSM-5-TR: Neurodevelopmental Disorders Kress & Paylo (2019) Ch. 1, 13	Discussion Post 1
Thu 7/9 Online	Differential Diagnosis Cultural Considerations Ethics & Legal Issues in Clinical Practice Psychosocial & Environmental Issues in Clinical Practice	DSM-5-TR: Section III (Assessment Measures) DSM-5-TR: Other Conditions That May Be a Focus of Clinical Attention Kress & Paylo (2019) Ch. 2	
Tue 7/14 In-Person	Depressive Disorders Bipolar and Related Disorders Feeding and Eating Disorders Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders	DSM-5-TR: Depressive Disorders DSM-5-TR: Bipolar and Related Disorders DSM-5-TR: Feeding and Eating Disorders DSM-5-TR: Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders Kress & Paylo (2019) Ch. 4, 11, 14	Discussion Post 2
Thu 7/16 Online	Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders	DSM-5-TR: Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders	

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Session	Topic	Readings	Assignments & Due Dates
	Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders	DSM-5-TR: Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders Kress & Paylo (2019) Ch. 10, 12	
Tue 7/21 In-Person	Trauma and Stressor-Related Disorders Dissociative Disorders Anxiety Disorders Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders	DSM-5-TR: Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders DSM-5-TR: Dissociative Disorders DSM-5-TR: Anxiety Disorders DSM-5-TR: OCD and Related Disorders Kress & Paylo (2019) Ch. 5, 6, 7	Discussion Post 3 Biopsychosocial History & Treatment Plan due Sun 7/26 by 11:59pm
Thu 7/23 Online	Neurocognitive Disorders	DSM-5-TR: Neurocognitive Disorders Kress & Paylo (2019) Ch. 13	
Tue 7/28 In-Person	Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders Personality Disorders	DSM-5-TR: Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders DSM-5-TR: Personality Disorders Kress & Paylo (2019) Ch. 8, 9	Discussion Post 4
Thu 7/30 Online	Sexual Dysfunctions Gender Dysphoria Paraphilic Disorders	DSM-5-TR: Sexual Dysfunctions DSM-5-TR: Gender Dysphoria DSM-5-TR: Paraphilic Disorders Kress & Paylo (2019) Ch. 15	
Tue 8/4 In-Person	Student Presentations	In-class presentations	Student Presentations due Tue 8/4
Thu 8/6	Course Wrap-Up & Reflection		Discussion Post 5

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