

University of Florida
College of Public Health & Health Professions Syllabus
HSC3661: Therapeutic Communication (3 credits)
Semester: Fall 2025

Delivery Format: On campus/Blended learning
UF eLearning in Canvas

Instructor Name: Lara Zwilling, LMHC, CFMHE

Classroom Number: HPNP 1404

Email Address: laralyn@phhp.ufl.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:00 – 5:00 PM

Preferred Course Communications: Canvas E-Mail

PREREQUISITES

HSA3111 and Health Science major with junior standing.

PURPOSE AND OUTCOMES

Course and Lab Overview

Through lecture, discussion, and role-playing in large and small groups, students learn appropriate verbal and nonverbal behavior to be used with patients, families, the health care team, and the greater community.

Relation to Program Outcomes

This course satisfies the Academic Learning Compact, Outcome #5 which states “Apply effective basic communication skills for health professionals.” Throughout this course, communication skills will be introduced, reinforced, and assessed.

Course Objectives and/or Goals

During this course, students will develop a basic understanding of how effective communication impacts patient-provider rapport, treatment adherence, treatment outcomes, and overall satisfaction with service.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe features of effective communication within health care settings used in healthcare and public health environments with patients, consumers, families, and the greater community.
2. Characterize communication strategies for working with diverse populations.
3. Discuss the impacts of effective communication upon patient-provider rapport, treatment adherence, treatment outcomes, and overall satisfaction with service.
4. Identify and describe their communication style, strengths and weaknesses.
5. Choose and apply verbal and nonverbal communication skills necessary for effective communication in healthcare and public health environments with patients, consumers, families, and the greater community.
6. Give examples of different strategies to help people and/or communities initiate behavior change.

Instructional Methods

A combination of prerecorded and live lecture, face-to-face and Canvas-based discussion, reflective writing, and role-playing in large and small groups characterize the instructional methods for this course.

Blended Learning

What is blended learning and why is it important?

A Blended Learning class uses a mixture of technology and face-to-face instruction to help you maximize your learning. Knowledge content that, as the instructor, I would have traditionally presented during a live class lecture is instead provided online before the live class takes place. This lets me focus my face-to-face teaching on course activities designed to help you strengthen higher order thinking skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration. Competency in these skills is critical for today's health professional.

In this course, the learning is split into 3 different phases*:

1. Approximately 1 hour of pre-work that is online in the Canvas course site, including readings, MindTap activities, and lectures.
2. Approximately 20 minutes of live lecture time during which I recap key points and highlight major themes.
3. Approximately 60 minutes of lab activity where you will practice applying what you have learned.

*There will be a flow among the 3 phases where some weeks any given component might be shorter or longer.

What is expected of you?

You are expected to actively engage in the course throughout the semester. You must come to class prepared by completing all out-of-class assignments. This preparation gives you the knowledge or practice needed to engage in higher levels of learning during the live class sessions. If you are not prepared for the face-to-face sessions, you may struggle to keep pace with the activities occurring in the live sessions, and it is unlikely that you will reach the higher learning goals of the course. Similarly, you are expected to actively participate in the live class. Your participation fosters a rich course experience for you and your peers that facilitates overall mastery of the course objectives.

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE CONTENT

Topical Outline/Course Schedule

Week	Topic(s)	Readings/ Mind Tap Unit (All MindTap Activities are due Sunday at 11:59pm BEFORE that week's content)	Assignments (All lab sheets are turned in during class)
1 8/25	Communicating Across the Lifespan	Chapter 5	Writing Prompt: Self-Reflection on Professional Skills Sun by 11:59pm
2 9/1	Verbal Communication	Chapter 1	Lab Sheet
3 9/8	Non-Verbal Communication	No Reading	Lab Sheet
4 9/15	The Helping Interview	Chapter 4	Lab Sheet
5 9/22	Multicultural Communication	Chapter 2 and 3	Lab Sheet

6 9/29	Mental Health and Adaptive Disorders	Chapter 6 and Chapter 8	Lab Sheet
7 10/6	De-escalation Strategies/Confrontation	Chapter 7	Writing Prompt: Self-Reflection on Professional Skills to be Developed Sun by 11:59pm Lab Sheet
8 10/13	First Exam *During regular class periods		
9 10/20	Substance Abuse and Addictive Disorders	Chapter 9	Lab Sheet
10 10/27	Death and Dying	Chapter 10 and Chapter 11	Lab Sheet
11 11/3	Self-Disclosure	None	Lab Sheet
12 11/10	Advisement and Defense Mechanisms	Appendix B	Lab Sheet Submit Role Play Video and Discussion Post by Sunday at 11:59pm
13 11/17	Interdisciplinary Communication Motivational Interviewing	None	Lab Sheet
14 12/1	Second Exam	None	Submit 2 Discussion Posts 11:59pm

Course Materials and Technology

Required Textbook

Tamparo, C. D., Lindh, W. Q., & Blesi, M. (2023). *Therapeutic communication for health care professionals* (5th ed.). Cengage.

This textbook is available through UF All Access. A MindTap subscription is required. Purchase through the UF Bookstore will ensure appropriate access to the needed materials for this course.

Required Equipment – Computer or tablet with high-speed internet access.

For technical support for this class, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- helpdesk@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2

- <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC RESOURCES

- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- [Teaching Center](#): Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Student Complaints On-Campus: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information](#).
- On-Line Students Complaints: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING for HSC3661 Component

Assignments

Mind Tap Activities (20%, 20 points) - Each week, students will complete weekly preparation/wrap-up activities as assigned in the MindTap Platform. The MindTap Platform is linked in Canvas and corresponds to your weekly textbook readings.

Late Policy: Late assignments are not accepted unless excused per UF policies. However, the following criteria will be used for unexcused late submissions.

- 1-24 hours late: 10% grade deduction
- 24 hours – 7 days late: 20% grade deduction
- Beyond 7 days: 100 grade deduction

Writing Prompts (10%, 10 points, 5 points/writing prompt) - Writing prompts are meant to allow students to connect to outside literature and clinical practices, as well as reflect on their experience practicing therapeutic communications in lab.

- There will be two graded writing prompts.
- Students will be provided with a prompt and are required to address the entirety of the prompt thoughtfully and comprehensively.
- Prompts should be written in APA format (include in-text citations and references, if applicable) and will be submitted as a Word document in Canvas.

Exams

- **First Exam (20%, 20 points)** - Materials covered from Week 1 to Week 7.
- **Second Exam (20%, 20 points)** - Materials covered from Week 9 to Week 14.

Therapeutic Communication Roleplay (10%, 10 points) - For this assignment, you will be randomly assigned a partner in Canvas.

- Each pair will be assigned a therapeutic communication principle and role play scenario.
- The pair should meet in person to record their role-play scenario.
- The recording will be posted to the Discussion Board with a written summary (see assignment directions).
- All students must comment on at least 2 video posts from their other classmates using the provided guidelines (see assignment directions)

In-Class Lab Activities (20%, 20 points total)

These activities consist of weekly reflection and/or lab activities throughout the semester. All activities will be completed in Canvas.

- **Students must be in attendance during class to receive credit for the reflection and/or lab activity.**
- There are a total of 12 weekly activities to be completed throughout the semester.
 - The two lowest grades will be dropped, effectively allowing for **two** absences without penalty to your grade. Students are encouraged to “save” these drops for times when they may be out sick or otherwise have a legitimate conflict that prevents them from attending class.
- Additional absences result in a 1% reduction in the overall course grade. The option to make-up lab activities when absent beyond the two drops will be at the instructor’s discretion, pending evidence of extreme hardship.
- Activities are to be completed in class.

Grading

Requirement	Due date	% of final grades/points
Mindtap Activities	As posted in Canvas	20 Points
Writing Prompts	Week 1; Week 5	10 points (5 points each)
In-Class Lab Sheets	Same day as lab (must be in attendance to receive credit)	20 points (2 points each)
Exam 1	Week 8	20 Points
TC Role Play and Discussion Post	Video Post: Week 13 Discussion Posts: Week 14	10 points
Exam 2	Week 15	20 Points

POINT SYSTEM USED (i.e., how do course points translate into letter grades).

Percentage Earned	Letter Grade
93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
70-76	C
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
Below 60	E

More information on UF grading policy may be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Exam Policy

Policy Related to Make up Exams or Other Work

Consistent with College policy, students are allowed to make up work only if missed as a result of illness, other unanticipated circumstances warranting a medical excuse, or with instructor permission. You must notify the instructor in advance if you will miss a quiz/exam or project deadline. Documentation from a health care provider

is required upon your return to class. Project extensions requested for medical reasons must be negotiated at the time of illness. For more information, please review the UF Attendance Policy at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Please note: Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the UF Computing help desk (<http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>) correspondence. You MUST e-mail me within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

All assignments should be turned in by the due date and time listed in Canvas. Assignments submitted at any time after the listed due date/time are considered late. Assignments will be docked 1 point for each day late, up to 3 days. After 3 days, late assignments will not be accepted.

Policy Related to Required Class Attendance

Attendance will be taken via sign-in at the start of each class and/or by submission of the lab sheet when applicable. Students who arrive late and miss the sign in/distribution of lab sheets will be counted as absent. If a student anticipates they may arrive late due to unforeseeable circumstances or conflicts arising from excused activities, they should make every effort to contact the instructor prior to class and/or notify the instructor during class at an appropriate time. Attendance is expected at each class session in order to receive credit for the in-class lab sheet. If a student must be absent for an excused reason, they should email prior to the start of class (when possible) and include documentation of the excused absence. Students who need to leave early for class for an excused reason as defined by UF policies (medical appointment, illness, or other significant hardship) should notify the instructor prior to the start of class.

Please note all faculty are bound by the UF policy for excused absences. For information regarding the UF Attendance Policy see the Registrar website for additional details: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS, ROLES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INPUT

Expectations Regarding Course Behavior

1. Students should arrive on time to class. If it is necessary to arrive late due to an unavoidable circumstance, students should enter the classroom in the least disruptive manner possible.
2. Students may utilize necessary technology (laptops/tablets) to facilitate engagement in the course materials. Students should not use technology to access websites or material unrelated to the course content.
3. Students may be asked to put away electronic devices if they are being used improperly, such as to complete other coursework or engage in social activities.
4. Phones should be silenced or set to vibrate during class. If students need to take an emergency call, they should excuse themselves quietly.

Communication Guidelines

Student should reach out to the instructor via email. It is important to note that the instructor teaches multiple courses and interacts with well over 300 students. For this reason, Canvas is not a reliable method of reaching out to the professor. Emails sent to the instructor will receive a reply within 48 hours.

Students are expected to utilize professional behaviors when contacting the instructor or interacting with peers.

Helpful guidelines for communication with your instructor and with peers can be found at the following website: <https://www.unr.edu/writing-speaking-center/student-resources/writing-speaking-resources/email-etiquette-for-students>

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to act in accordance with the University of Florida policy on academic integrity. As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge:

“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.”

You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

“On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For additional information regarding Academic Integrity, please see Student Conduct and Honor Code or the Graduate Student Website for additional details:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>
<http://gradschool.ufl.edu/students/introduction.html>

Please remember cheating, lying, misrepresentation, or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and inexcusable behavior.

Recording Within the Course:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Policy Related to Guests Attending Class:

Only registered students are permitted to attend class. However, we recognize that students who are caretakers may face occasional unexpected challenges creating attendance barriers. Therefore, by exception, a department chair or his or her designee (e.g., instructors) may grant a student permission to bring a guest(s) for a total of two class sessions per semester. This is two sessions total across all courses. No further extensions will be granted. Please note that guests are **not** permitted to attend either cadaver or wet labs. Students are responsible for course material regardless of attendance. For additional information, please review the Classroom Guests of Students policy in its entirety. Link to full policy:

<http://facstaff.phhp.ufl.edu/services/resourceguide/getstarted.htm>

Online Faculty Course Evaluation Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you require classroom accommodation because of a disability, it is strongly recommended you register with the Dean of Students Office <http://www.dso.ufl.edu> within the first week of class or as soon as you believe you might be eligible for accommodations. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation of accommodations to you, which you must then give to me as the instructor of the course to receive accommodations. Please do this as soon as possible after you receive the letter. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. The College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to assist students in their coursework.

Counseling and Student Health

Students sometimes experience stress from academic expectations and/or personal and interpersonal issues that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing issues that have the potential to or are already negatively affecting your coursework, you are encouraged to talk with an instructor and/or seek help through University resources available to you.

- The **Counseling and Wellness Center** 352-392-1575 offers a variety of support services such as psychological assessment and intervention and assistance for math and test anxiety. Visit their web site for more information: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu>. On line and in person assistance is available.
- **U Matter We Care** website: <http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/>. If you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, you can reach out for help through the You Matter We Care website, which is staffed by Dean of Students and Counseling Center personnel.
- The **Student Health Care Center** at Shands is a satellite clinic of the main Student Health Care Center located on Fletcher Drive on campus. Student Health at Shands offers a variety of clinical services. The clinic is located on the second floor of the Dental Tower in the Health Science Center. For more information, contact the clinic at 392-0627 or check out the web site at: <https://shcc.ufl.edu/>
- Crisis intervention is always available 24/7 from: Alachua County Crisis Center: (352) 264-6789 <http://www.alachuacounty.us/DEPTS/CSS/CRISISCENTER/Pages/CrisisCenter.aspx>
- **University Police Department:** [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

- **UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:** For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

Do not wait until you reach a crisis to come in and talk with us. We have helped many students through stressful situations impacting their academic performance. You are not alone so do not be afraid to ask for assistance.

Inclusive Learning Environment

Public health and health professions are based on the belief in human dignity and on respect for the individual. As we share our personal beliefs inside or outside of the classroom, it is always with the understanding that we value and respect diversity of background, experience, and opinion, where every individual feels valued. We believe in, and promote, openness and tolerance of differences in ethnicity and culture, and we respect differing personal, spiritual, religious and political values. We further believe that celebrating such diversity enriches the quality of the educational experiences we provide our students and enhances our own personal and professional relationships. We embrace The University of Florida's Non-Discrimination Policy, which reads, "The University shall actively promote equal opportunity policies and practices conforming to laws against discrimination. The University is committed to non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act." If you have questions or concerns about your rights and responsibilities for inclusive learning environment, please see your instructor or refer to the Office of Multicultural & Diversity Affairs website:

www.multicultural.ufl.edu
