

PSY 627: ISSUES IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Summer 2022

THURSDAY 6:15-9:15pm; Kennedy 203

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Office: Kennedy 134

Office Hours: By Appointment

REQUIRED TEXTS

Bennett-Levy, J. Thwaites, R., Haarhoff, B., & Perry H. (2015). *Experiencing CBT from the inside out: A self-practice/self-reflection workbook for therapists*. Guilford.

Pope, K. S., Sonne, J. L., & Greene, B. (2006). *What therapists don't talk about and why: Understanding taboos that hurt us and our clients (2nd ed.)*. American Psychological Association.

Volungis, A. M. (2022). *Becoming a Mental Health Counselor: A Guide to Career Development and Professional Identity*. Rowman & Littlefield.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Norcross, J. C., & VandenBos, G. R. (2018). *Leaving it at the office: A guide to psychotherapist self-care (2nd ed.)*. New York: Guilford Press.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce the counseling psychology student to the varied facets of professional practice and development. It begins with an in-depth study of the Massachusetts' law on the Requirements for Licensure as a Mental Health Counselor covering topics from educational to pre- and post- masters supervised practice requirements. Other topics covered include the history and reasons behind professional regulation in the mental health professions, the licensing exam, job searching, specialization of practice, continued education and training, private practice considerations, and licensing laws in other states. A major emphasis is on helping the student explore professional identity issues by asking such questions as "What does it mean to be a mental health counselor?" "What skills do I have and what role do I play as a member of a multidisciplinary treatment team?" "What professional organizations should I belong to?" "Why?" "What is the difference between a profession and a job?"

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Understand the history of counseling and the mental health profession
- Learn MA requirements for licensure
- Review licensing exam content
- Develop professional identity and awareness of professional organizations
- Practice searching for jobs and create a professional CV and cover letter
- Review legal, ethical, technological, and multicultural considerations
- Self-exploration of CBT and develop a CBT therapist identity

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Brightspace, Dr. V's Website, & Email: Course announcements (i.e., emails) will be made through Brightspace. All other information (e.g., lectures, lecture recordings, blog discussions, assignments) will be provided on my personal website: <http://dradamvolungis.com/>. It is expected that you check your email and my website frequently to ensure that you are up to date with all class material and information. Feel free to email me with any questions or concerns. On most summer weeks, I check my email on the following (“business”) days: Monday; Wednesday-Friday. Although I typically reply to emails promptly (i.e., less than 24 hours), please give me 1-2 “business” days to reply. Due to the unique circumstances of COVID-19 there may be an occasional “business” day that I am not readily available.

Attendance: Due to the topic of this course being primarily class discussion, it is crucial that you attend class. Much of the value of this course lies in your presence and participation in the classroom. Therefore, your presence is important for the “community within the class.” If you are absent from class, you are still responsible for all information and material covered that day. Also, class will always start and end on time, thus, the expectation is for students to be present for the full duration of class. If you must come late or leave early, please notify me before class.

- Coming late to class is an important issue. A pattern of tardiness (even 10 or 15 minutes) is unacceptable.
- Even in circumstances where you have an acceptable reason for missing class, you will not receive credit for this class if you are absent for more than 2 classes during the semester. If you do miss more than 2 classes because of personal emergency or similar extenuating circumstances, you may petition the Dean of the Graduate School for an exception to this rule.

Course Readings: Please refer to the “Projected Course Outline” for the due date and topic of each reading. You are expected to have completed the required readings by the indicated class date. In addition to the readings provided on the course outline, you may be required to read supplemental materials to enhance existing readings.

Submission Policy, Late Assignments, & Technological Malfunctions: All assignments should be submitted no later than the due date. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments must be completed by 11:59 pm of the published due dates. Late work (i.e., work that is submitted after the due date) will only be accepted within a 24-hour grace period and will be reduced by one full letter grade. After the 24-hour grace period, late work will not be accepted and a ‘0’ will be given for the assignment. Please contact Information Technology for any technology problems (unless it is my personal website). If you experience recurrent technical problems that prohibit you from completing multiple assignments, you may be asked to re-enroll into the course at a future date.

IMPORTANT NOTES

Academic Honesty: Representing the work of another as your own is a violation of fundamental principles of truthfulness and an offense against the academic community. Academic dishonesty may result in the student failing the course, at the discretion of the instructor. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on examinations, as well as *plagiarism* (i.e., failure to credit properly the ideas, organization of material or phrasing of another, including the use of term paper or reference paper services). Submitting one’s own work, in part or in whole, to more than one instructor without proper notification is also academically dishonest and subject to appropriate disciplinary action. *I reserve the right to utilize turnitin.com if there are concerns of*

academic dishonesty. For more information, please consult Assumption College's Academic Honesty Police: <https://www.assumption.edu/sites/default/files/Graduate%20Student%20Handbook,%202220-2021,%20final.pdf> (p. 13).

Students with Disabilities: Assumption College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a disability (or think you have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation participate in this class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the College's programs or services, then you should speak with me and contact Student Accessibility Services. All information regarding disabilities will be treated with confidentiality. Documentation guidelines are available at: <https://www.assumption.edu/people-and-departments/organization-listing/student-accessibility-services>. *Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me with any questions.*

METHODS of EVALUATION

1. **Class Attendance, Participation, & Discussion Blog (15%).** This course depends greatly on student preparation and participation. To facilitate preparation, students are urged to read all of the material assigned for a given class prior to the day it is to be discussed, and to come to class with notes about the readings. With the exception of the first class, presentation date, and final class each student is expected to complete a blog post in response to a question provided by the professor by the beginning of each class. At least two replies to your peers' posted responses is also required, no later than two days after the original post due date. The discussion board will be available on my personal website: <http://dradamvolungis.com/>. These reflections are required in the spirit of assuring each student keeps up with the assigned readings and is prepared to engage in class discussion.
2. **Assignment 1 – Jobs in Counseling Search (15%).** Students will be required to complete an online search of jobs that would fit with your current training here in the Counseling Psychology Program at Assumption College. More specifically, you will focus on professional jobs for which students in our program would either be qualified for or at least potentially eligible for (e.g., need to have an LMHC or be "license eligible"). A separate class handout describing this assignment in detail will be provided at least two weeks prior to the **due date of 6/9**.
3. **Assignment 2 – Curriculum Vitae & Cover Letter Development (15%).** Students will be required to develop their own Curriculum Vitae (CV) and Cover Letter. A CV represents your professional development and goes beyond a traditional resume. A cover letter is often what is first seen by a potential employer and influences first impressions (good or bad). These documents can aid you in your applications to most professional jobs in mental health. A well developed CV and cover letter can significantly improve your chances of obtaining an interview. A separate class handout describing this assignment in detail will be provided at least two weeks prior to the **due date of 6/23**.
4. **Mental Health Field Presentation (35%) & Presentation Observations (5%).** Each student will be required to present (in groups of 2) a specific topic related to the mental health field (e.g., LMHC licensing exam, private practice, working with the legal system). Your presentation is expected to cover your topic in great detail (approximately 30-45 minutes) and should be recorded and in PowerPoint format (including additional handouts and facilitating class discussion). Additionally, for all presentations, all

students will be required to complete a presentation observation form. This exercise focuses more on what each student “got out of” each presentation, rather than a peer evaluation. A separate class handout describing this assignment in detail will be provided at least three weeks prior to the **due date of 7/14**.

5. ***Assignment 3 – Professional Identity Reflection Paper (15%)***. Students will be required to complete a 5-7 page paper on their professional identity. More specifically, the goal of this paper is to integrate your own perception of “self” within the context of being a cognitive-behavioral therapist. Having some understanding of your identity and how this influences your approach as a therapist can provide a solid foundation for competent and effective therapy. A separate class handout describing this assignment in detail will be provided at least two weeks prior to the **due date of 7/28**.

GRADING SCALE

A	93.0-100	B	82.5-87.4	C	72.5-77.4	D	62.5-67.4
A-	90.0-92.9	B-	80.0-82.4	C-	70.0-72.4	D-	60.0-62.4
B+	87.5-89.9	C+	77.5-79.9	D+	67.5-69.9	F	<60

PROJECTED COURSE OUTLINE

<u>Date</u>	<u>*Topic/Reading/Assignment*</u>
<u>5/26/22</u> [1]	<p><i>Introduction & Review of Syllabus</i> <i>Becoming a Clinical Mental Health Counselor & The Mental Health Profession</i> *Sample Topics: Motivation to be a Counselor; Personal Qualities; Self-Awareness and Multicultural Awareness (a) Volungis (2022) – Chapter 1 – Is Being a Clinical Mental Health Counselor the Right Career Choice for You?</p>
<u>6/2</u> [2]	<p><i>MA Licensure Requirements & Exam</i> *Sample Topics: MA Licensing Requirements for LMHC, Certifications, Portability, Scope of Practice, NBCC NCMHC Self-Assessment Examination (a) Volungis (2022) – Chapter 3 – Education and Licensure Requirements (b) MA Requirements for Licensure as a Mental Health Counselor *See MA LMHC Prep under “Class Handouts”; & See http://www.mass.gov/ocabr/licensee/dpl-boards/mh/ (c) NCMHCE Sample Case Studies Review</p>
<u>6/9</u> [3]	<p><i>Finding a Job: The Search & Application Process</i> *Sample Topics: Searching Jobs in Counseling, Salaries, Organization of Mental Health Services, Job Interviews, Working Through Weaknesses; Developing a CV and Cover Letter (a) Volungis (2022) – Chapter 5 – Obtaining the Right Job (b) Handouts: CVs & Cover Letters *Assignment 1 – Jobs in Counseling Search Due*</p>

6/16 [4]

Self-Care and Professional Development

***Sample Topics:** Preventing Burnout and Enhancing Well-Being;
Developing and Maintaining Your Counseling Competency

- (a) Volungis (2022) – Chapter 6 – Self-Care: Preventing Burnout and Enjoying Life
- (b) Volungis (2022) – Chapter 7 – Developing and Expanding Your Counseling Skills
- (c) Niles, S. G., & Harris-Bowlsbey J. Career Development Interventions (5th ed.). Pearson.
 - a. Chapter 2 – Understanding and Applying Theories of Career Development [“Traditional Theories”]
 - i. Super’s Life-Span, Life-Space Theory (p. 34-48)
 - ii. Holland’s Theory of Types & Person-Environment Interactions (p. 53-63)
- (d) Niles, S. G., & Harris-Bowlsbey J. Career Development Interventions (5th ed.). Pearson.
 - a. Chapter 3 – Understanding and Applying Recent Theories of Career Development [“Modern Theories”]
 - i. Lent, Brown, and Hackett’s Social Cognitive Theory (p. 73-78)
 - ii. The Cognitive Information Processing Approach (p. 78-83)

6/23 [5]

Professional Identity and Experiencing CBT: Self-Reflection & CBT Therapist Identity

***Sample Topics:** Clinical Mental Health Counselor and CBT Identity

- (a) Volungis (2022) – Chapter 2 – Professional Identity Development and Ethics
- (b) Bennett-Levy et al. (2015) – Chapter 1 – Introducing Experiencing CBT from the Inside Out
- (c) Bennett-Levy et al. (2015) – Chapter 2 – Experiencing CBT from the Inside Out: The Conceptual Framework
- (d) Bennett-Levy et al. (2015) – Chapter 3 – Guidance for SP/SR Participants
- (e) Bennett-Levy et al. (2015) – Module 3 – Using Behavioral Activation to Change Patterns of Behavior
- (f) Bennett-Levy et al. (2015) – Module 4 – Identifying Unhelpful Thinking and Behavior
- (g) Bennett-Levy et al. (2015) – Module 5 – Using Cognitive Techniques to Modify Unhelpful Thinking and Behavior

Assignment 2 – Curriculum Vitae & Cover Letter Development Due

6/30 [6]

Ethics & Professional Expectations

***Sample Topics:** Ethical Considerations and Non-Therapy Duties

- (a) Volungis (2022) – Chapter 2 – Professional Identity Development and Ethics
- (b) Volungis (2022) – Chapter 4 – Expectations Beyond Counseling

7/7 [7]

What Therapists Don’t Talk About

***Sample Topics:** Review CVs and Cover Letters; “Stuff” You Should Know and Uncomfortable “Stuff”

- (a) Pope et al. (2006) – Chapter 1 – Questioning Myths, Taboos, and Secrets
- (b) Pope et al. (2006) – Chapter 4 – Questions We’d Rather Avoid
- (c) Pope et al. (2006) – Chapter 5 – Possible Clues to Taboo Topics (*select parts*)

- (d) Pope et al. (2006) – Chapter 6 – Passages and Scenarios for Exploration
(*select parts*)
- (e) Pope et al. (2006) – Appendix – Therapists’ Anger, Hate, Fear, and Sexual Feelings

7/14 [8] *Mental Health Field Presentations Due*

7/21 [9] *Private Practice*

***Sample Topics:** Right Choice for You; It Is a Business; Marketing

- (a) Volungis (2022) – Chapter 8 – Private Practice

Presentation Observations Due

7/28 [10] *Assignment 3 – Professional Identity Reflection Paper Due*

Right of Revision Statement: As professor of this course, I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed. It may be deemed pertinent to modify the syllabus as the class progresses through the semester. You will be informed of any changes as soon as possible, during class or via e-mail and Brightspace.