

**Argosy University - Course Syllabus**  
**PC 6400**  
**Practicum I Seminar**

**Program:** M.A. - Counseling Psychology  
**Instructor:** Vince Nevins, PhD. LMFT  
**Email:** jnevins@argosy.edu  
**Telephone:** 1.510.217.4745  
**Format:** On Campus  
**Class Meets:** 09/10/10 10/08/10 11/05/10 12/03/10  
**Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Course description:** Each practicum provides a supervised one-semester therapy training experience in an approved counseling site along with an on campus learning seminar. The seminar provides an opportunity for students to monitor concerns/progress at their various sites as well as to prepare for their formal in-seminar clinical case presentations in Practicum II or III.

**Course Pre-requisites:** Students enrolled in this class must have successfully completed all first year classes earning a B- or better and with a 3.0 GPA or better. Student may either be concurrently enrolled in second-year classes or have completed second year classes. An approved Practicum Contract at an Approved Site and a completed BBS Supervisor Responsibility form must be approved by the Practicum Office by the deadline as noted in the Practicum Handbook.

**Final Date to Drop the Class:**

To receive a “W” grade a student must officially drop this class by the date listed below that corresponds to this course’s term and length (indicated by bold type). Students may not withdraw from this course after this date. If a student chooses to discontinue course work after the final drop date, the student may receive an “F” grade for the course.

**Fall Full Term (15 week course): 11/14/10**

**Required Resources:**

MA Counseling Psychology Practicum Handbook (2009-2011), Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology, Argosy University, SFBA (online)

*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision:*  
DSM-IV-TR  
Publisher: American Psychiatric Association, 2000  
ISBN: 0890420246 (hardcover) or 0890420254 (softcover)

**Recommended Resources:**

Halbur, D.A. & Vess Halbur, K. (2006). *Developing Your Theoretical Orientation in Counseling and Psychotherapy*. Pearson Education, Inc.: Boston. ISBN: 0205396771

Sweitzer, H. Frederick & King, Mary A. (2004). *The Successful Internship*, (Second Edition), Brooks/Cole - Thomson Learning, ISBN # 0534558798

**Course length:** 15 Weeks **Contact Hours:** 15 Hours **Credit Value:** 3

### **Program Outcomes/Learning Objectives**

#### **Program Outcomes: Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology:**

##### **Program Outcome One: Professional Practice**

###### **Competency 1: Assessment and Skills**

Formulate assessments of psychological functioning and apply therapeutic intervention strategies when working with individuals, couples, families, and groups, toward the development of optimal mental health.

###### **Competency 2: Theory**

Interpret and apply psychological and developmental theories to therapeutic intervention strategies.

###### **Competency 3: Writing**

Employ media and technology when presenting counseling information orally and in writing, so that the presentation is concise, organized, well supported, professional, and appropriate to the audience.

##### **Program Outcome Two: Research**

**Competency 1:** Analyze research, and translate research findings for improvement of counseling services using statistics and program evaluation methods.

##### **Program Outcome Three: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Professional Development**

**Competency 1:** Students will develop positive relationship skills that promote personal and professional development via effective communication, encouragement, empathy, respect for others, self-awareness, and other-awareness.

- a. Apply active listening communication skills in interpersonal scenarios to establish empathetic relationships.
- b. Analyze the importance of effective nonverbal communication skills in interpersonal relationships.
- c. Solicit and utilize feedback to build and maintain interpersonal relationships.

##### **Program Outcome Four: Ethics**

**Competency 1:** Using the American Counseling Association's Standards of Practice /or the American Psychological Association's Ethical Code, as well as, and local state law as it applies to the behavior of mental health professionals, identify ethical dilemmas and apply ethical decision making strategies while engaging in professional activities.

##### **Program Outcome Five: Diversity**

###### **Competency 1: Multicultural Skills**

Provide assessment, counseling, and consultation services in work with clients by applying psychological and multicultural theories and research to diverse populations, and modifying interventions as needed to work effectively with diverse clients.

###### **Competency 2: Multicultural Awareness**

Examine personal values and biases, reflect on beliefs, and understand how they impact work with clients and interpersonal relationships with other students and faculty.

###### **Competency 3: Multicultural Knowledge**

Identify and assess the complexity and multidimensionality of cultural/diversity theories and issues in the field of counseling psychology while working with clients and interpersonal relationships with other students and faculty

## Course Policies

**Students are required to complete a minimum of 150 hours of on-site training per semester at an approved practicum site, with 50 of those hours being direct work with clients.** Students work at approved agencies 16-24 hours/week, each week of the semester. Students are concurrently enrolled in a seminar which meets monthly for a total of 15 hours. Seminars include written, oral and (sometimes) taped case presentations, instructor consultations and demonstrations, as well as class discussions.

**Attendance.** Due to the participatory nature of this seminar, **students are not allowed to miss ANY seminar sessions** except for emergency reasons, and will be given assignments at the discretion of the instructor to make up for any one (1) missed session. Missing more than one seminar session will result in an automatic *No Credit*. (The student will then have to leave his/her practicum site and re-enroll in Practicum I the following semester.) Students are expected to be responsible and professional about being prompt for seminar.

**Reading & Discussion.** 1) The recommended textbooks were selected to assist in your understanding and managing the various processes you will experience in practicum, and to guide you in maintaining awareness of your growth and development as a counselor. They are a supplement to your on-site experience and may be referred to in class discussions. 2) When students complete their first clinical case draft during PI, they forward a copy of their write-ups to each member of the class as well as the instructor at least one (1) week before their scheduled date to present.

**\*All students are expected to have read their classmates' clinical case drafts and are to be prepared to give feedback and discuss (ask questions) the case in greater detail during seminar.**

**Reflection Journaling.** Prior to each class you should email your instructor at least 2 typed pages of reflections on your practicum experience for the previous month. While the form of the journaling is unstructured, you are expected to reflect upon on how your practicum experience is influencing your **1) growth in knowledge, 2) skills, 3) personal growth, and 4) career development.** If you do not know what to write about, the suggestions on pages 10-13 of the Sweitzer book under "Unstructured Journals" might be starting points for reflection. Journals will be shared only with the instructor. Reflections are due *by email* to instructor one week before the date the class meets according to the schedule above. Instructors and students are not required to read anything that is turned in late.

**Case Presentations.** During several seminar sessions, students will present clinical case drafts based on therapy sessions with actual clients (use pseudonyms) from their practicum sites. Students are strongly encouraged to write in the first person. Students will forward their written case presentation to the instructor and classmates *via email*, at least one (1) week prior to their oral presentations. Developing greater competency in presenting cases, especially in a written format, will assist students in preparation for their **formal** in-seminar clinical presentations **at the end of Practicum II (or Practicum III if they so choose).** At the time of their formal case presentations, students will also submit a ten (10) minute transcript from a particular session (and, if possible, an accompanying audio or video clip) that illustrates significant clinical intervention(s). Time will be spent receiving and responding to consultation feedback/questions from the class and feedback/instruction from the seminar leader.

Ψ Written reports must follow the guidelines as delineated in this practicum syllabus.

Ψ Informed Consent must be obtained and presented for tapings and given to the instructor.

## **Guidelines for the Written Report**

Your written case presentations may be used for future training and/or accreditation purposes. Consequently, **it is imperative that the client's identifying information be disguised**. Protect the client's confidentiality by using pseudonyms (first name only) and changing all dates and locations so as to ensure that the client's true identity cannot be determined from the written materials. If any student determines that s/he knows the client being presented, s/he is expected to leave the seminar while this client is being presented/discussed.

**The written report should be efficient and concise.** Please do not repeat information. **It must be double-spaced with 1 inch margins and 12 point Times New Roman font and 15 pages or fewer** (does not include the cover page, transcript, or references page). **The report must be outlined as follows:**

### **A. Assessment & Description of the Client**

1. *Identifying Information*: Include the client's age, gender, physical characteristics, SES, ethnicity, cultural identity, religious or spiritual identity, relational status, sexual orientation, occupation, education, family constellation and living situation. List any relevant legal issues. Briefly describe the client's level of functioning.
2. *Relevant Behavioral Observations*: Describe the salient aspects of the client's physical mannerisms, movements and comfort level, as well as observations of significant interactive style. Relevant observations might include the client's apparent state of health, estimate of intellectual and cognitive functioning, physical coordination, affect/mood and indications of distress.
3. *Presenting Complaint(s)*: Describe current symptoms, anxieties, moods, and difficulties in personal, educational or occupational relationships and activities at the time of the initial assessment. Present the client's (and others') complaints/reported reasons for seeking help now. Describe any referral route that may have brought the client to therapy.
4. *Precipitating Factors and History of the Problem*: Describe the events or life changes that have most likely accompanied the appearance of psychological/emotional distress. Explain the historical/contextual development of the problems. Specify previous efforts at resolution and apparent consequences of those efforts. Include cognitive, affective, and interpersonal reactions to precipitants of distress.
5. *Relevant Psychosocial History*: Discuss family history (family of origin constellation, cultural issues, immigration/emigration experiences, medical issues, major losses and/or traumas, and transitions) developmental, academic/vocational, social/relational, sexual, and substance and/or abuse histories. (It may not be necessary to cover all these areas, but it is important to report all aspects of the client's history that have important implications for current functioning.) Social, ethnic, cultural, gender, sexual, and economic factors that organize and impact psychological functioning should be well articulated.

### **B. Conceptual Formulation**

6. *Theoretical Orientation*: Describe the theoretical orientation from which you will work with your client. Describe how a client (not your client) might develop the problems identified according to your chosen theory. (For example, if your approach is psychodynamic, then

focus on major constellations of hidden wishes, fears, and defenses, as well as salient interactional manifestations in the presenting problems, etc. If cognitive-behavioral, then focus on core beliefs and possible cognitions or automatic thoughts that sustain the symptoms, etc. If family systems, then focus on the here-and-now circular interactions that characterize/limit the system, as well as the current qualities of the familial alliances, etc.) State your theoretical and technical orientation in such a way that you may later use it to assess the client and therapist responses during your actual sessions.

7. *Case Formulation*: Provide a concise summation of your client's psychological strengths and difficulties from the perspective of your chosen theoretical orientation. Explain how your client's identified issues can best be worked on through this theoretical approach. Current and past material/issues should be integrated when significant patterns are evident from your theoretical stance that relate to the client's presenting problems. Diversity and legal factors need to be explicitly addressed here---as well as how will you attend to these from your theoretical perspective. Consider adaptive and maladaptive elements in the client's current functioning. What purposes to symptoms and complaints serve? What problems do they create? How motivated is the client to change? What are the client's understandings and expectations of therapy?

### C. Diagnosis(es) & Treatment Plan

8. *Diagnosis(es)*: Include a multiaxial diagnosis on all five axes (DSM-IV-TR). Describe in detail how you arrived at the diagnosis, substantiating your hypothesis with salient data from the client's case which matches specific diagnostic criteria. Include any related diagnoses that you considered but ruled out and why.
9. *Treatment Plan*: The treatment plan should be an application of your case formulation. Discuss the specific goals of the client (in light of his/her presenting complaints or other issues you've determined to address), the techniques and interventions you will use and how you will apply them in accordance with your theoretical model. State the probability for the client to benefit from the type of treatment being offered, taking into account the internal motivations and external situations that may either aid or hinder. Designate any areas needing further clarification, the possibility of additional assessments, and collateral contact.

### D. Course of Therapy & Self-Critique

10. *Course of Therapy and Client Response*: Describe the interventions used and how they did or did not work. Describe the client's progress, including specific changes the client has made, and elements of therapy or other factors that contributed to those changes. Identify any modifications of the initial therapy plan or goals in response to the client's needs and/or new information obtained during sessions. Describe the predicted future course of work with the client, including plans for continuing therapy, referral, or termination as appropriate.
11. *Self Critique*: Evaluate your therapeutic relationship. Critically assess the quality of the relationship developed between you and your client during the course of treatment. Any interactional issues should be articulated and discussed according to your theoretical orientation (e.g., psychodynamic: transference and countertransference, cognitive-behavioral: assumptions, distortions, and faulty beliefs, or family systems: understandings of the quality of inclusion/exclusion, objectivity/subjectivity patterns that characterize the group with whom you are working and to which you, as therapist, to some degree, belong). In your analysis of the psychotherapy process, it is important to offer your rationale or personal (e.g., anxiety-driven) reasons for intervening as you did. **Your ability to critically assess your performance here is important.** Your self-reflective and self-

evaluative capacities will be evaluated. It represents a significant factor in the criteria for receiving credit. What strengths and competencies did you demonstrate? What are the skills that you still need to develop? What might you have done differently?

**Hour Logs.** Written documentation of practicum hours must be maintained weekly for review at any point in the semester, and for reporting on semester evaluations (all semester hours should be on **ONE or TWO** BBS 2010 Hour Log forms).

**BBS Hour Logs and Supervisor's Evaluations are due**  
**the last day of the semester (not the last day of seminar)**  
**and are to be given to your seminar instructor for review.**

**Your instructor will then submit these documents to the Practicum Office for review.**

### **Class Participation Evaluation Criteria**

Note: Student goals include timely attendance and consistent attention to and interaction in class activities, and providing appropriate feedback to fellow students.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Distinguished Category</b>	<b>Commendable Category</b>	<b>Average Category</b>	<b>Failed Category</b>
Personal goals	Pursues goals with high energy and assertion	Pursues goals actively and with some assertion	Pursues goals with low energy and mostly with prompting from others	Fails to set goals
Member goals	Works toward shared goals in a highly cooperative manner	Works toward shared goals in a cooperative manner; at times with compliance and defiance	Works toward shared goals mostly with compliance and defiance	Not cooperative in working toward shared goals
Creating climate of trust and openness	Uses active listening and responding skills which are highly facilitative	Uses active listening and responding skills which are facilitative	Uses active listening and responding skills which are minimally facilitative	Uses active listening and responding skills which are destructive

Diversity	Displays consistent sensitivity to similarities and differences with all individuals	Displays sensitivity to similarities and differences with all individuals	Displays some degree of sensitivity to similarities and differences with others	Lacks sensitivity to similarities and differences with others
-----------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------

### Grading Criteria

This course is a *Credit/No Credit* course. Most of the evaluation for this course will be qualitative in nature. Grades are based 60% on performance at your practicum site and 40% on performance in practicum seminar. Specifically, participation in seminar, effort demonstrated on assignments, and timeliness of assignments are evaluated by Seminar university instructors based on the criteria listed above. Supervisor Evaluations and Number of Hours Completed are the primary measures for practicum site performance. A student will receive *No Credit* if any of the following apply: 1) supervisor evaluations rate a student below average or identify serious concerns regarding student performance or 2) recorded hours are below the required minimum indicated in the Practicum Handbook and 3) written and/or oral participation in seminar is deemed to be poor/inadequate (Failed Category) by the seminar instructor.

### Current Rubric for Grading Papers

Grade	Requirements
A = 90+	Paper is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• well thought out with proper grammar/writing skills</li> </ul> AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in appropriate APA format</li> </ul> AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides <b>excellent</b> coverage of material</li> </ul>
B = 80 – 89	Paper is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• well thought out with proper grammar/writing skills</li> </ul> BUT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is missing one component of APA format</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coverage of material is <b>adequate</b></li> </ul>
C = 70 – 79	Paper has <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>poor</b> grammar/writing skills present</li> </ul> OR (one or more of the following) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APA format is <b>inadequate</b></li> <li>• Insufficient number of references provided</li> <li>• <b>limited</b> coverage of material</li> </ul>
F = <70	Paper is (one or more of the following) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disorganized</li> <li>• coverage is not adequate</li> <li>• does not conform to APA format</li> <li>• there is evidence of <b>plagiarism</b></li> <li>• paper not submitted</li> </ul>

## **Library**

*All resources in Argosy University's online collection are available through the Internet. The campus librarian will provide students with links, user IDs, and passwords.*

Library Resources: Argosy University's core online collection features nearly 21,000 full-text journals and 23,000 electronic books and other content covering all academic subject areas including Business & Economics, Career & General Education, Computers, Engineering & Applied Science, Humanities, Science, Medicine & Allied Health, and Social & Behavior Sciences. Many titles are directly accessible through the Online Public Access Catalog at <http://library.argosy.edu>. Detailed descriptions of online resources are located at <http://library.argosy.edu/misc/onlinedblist.html>.

In addition to online resources, Argosy University's onsite collections contain a wealth of subject-specific research materials searchable in the Online Public Access Catalog. Catalog searching is easily limited to individual campus collections. Alternatively, students can search combined collections of all Argosy University Libraries. Students are encouraged to seek research and reference assistance from campus librarians.

Information Literacy: Argosy University's Information Literacy Tutorial was developed to teach students fundamental and transferable research skills. The tutorial consists of five modules where students learn to select sources appropriate for academic-level research, search periodical indexes and search engines, and evaluate and cite information. In the tutorial, students study concepts and practice them through interactions. At the conclusion of each module, they can test their comprehension and receive immediate feedback. Each module takes less than 20 minutes to complete. Please view the tutorial at <http://library.argosy.edu/infolit/>

## **Academic Policies**

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism: In an effort to foster a spirit of honesty and integrity during the learning process, Argosy University requires that the submission of all course assignments represent the original work produced by that student. All sources must be documented through normal scholarly references/citations and all work must be submitted using the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (2001)*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association (APA) format. Please refer to Appendix A in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* for thesis and paper format. Students are encouraged to purchase this manual (required in some courses) and become familiar with its content as well as consult the Argosy University catalog for further information regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

Scholarly writing: The faculty at Argosy University is dedicated to providing a learning environment that supports scholarly and ethical writing, free from academic dishonesty and plagiarism. This includes the proper and appropriate referencing of all sources. You may be asked to submit your course assignments through "Turnitin," ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)), an online resource established to help educators develop writing/research skills and detect potential cases of academic dishonesty. Turnitin compares submitted papers to billions of pages of content and provides a comparison report to your instructor. This comparison detects papers that share common information and duplicative language.

**Americans with Disabilities Act Policy** It is the policy of Argosy University to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities, in accordance with the Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA). If a student with disabilities needs accommodations, the student must notify the Director of Student Services. Procedures for documenting student disability and the development of reasonable accommodations will be provided to the student upon request. Students will be notified by the Director of Student Services when each request for accommodation is approved or denied in writing via a designated form. To receive accommodation in class, it is the student's responsibility to present the form (at his or her discretion) to the instructor. In an effort to protect student privacy, the Department of Student Services will not discuss the accommodation needs of any student with instructors. Faculty may not make accommodations for individuals who have not been approved in this manner.

**The Argosy University Statement Regarding Diversity** Argosy University prepares students to serve populations with diverse social, ethnic, economic, and educational experiences. Both the academic and training curricula are designed to provide an environment in which students can develop the skills and attitudes essential to working with people from a wide range of backgrounds.

### **MACP APA Style Requirements**

Minimum required elements of APA style for written assignments in first year courses include the following:

- Cover page that meets APA style requirements of elements and formatting (i.e., title of paper, name, course number/course name, Argosy University, semester or term and year, running head in left header, and page number in right header)
- Body of paper with critical voice (e.g., synthesis of opinions/ comments) supported by paraphrasing of credible sources using the two styles of APA citing (out-of-text and in-text) with correct punctuation; avoid use of 1<sup>st</sup> person singular "I" (except personal reflection papers) and 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular "you;" use of third person plural "we" acceptable to reflect universal human experience
- Quoted passages to include author, year, and page number; emphasis on paraphrasing with minimal use of quotations to support critical voice
- Reference page that meets APA style requirements to include appropriate sources (e.g., no Wikipedia), references that match citations (e.g., no references listed that are not also cited), and correct formatting/punctuation
- APA style formatting to include 1" margins, running head in left header, page number in right header, Times New Roman 12 point font, left justification of all passages, indentation of 5 spaces for new paragraphs, 1 ½ line spacing and double sided pages (modified APA in spirit of promoting "green" for MACP program)
- Grammatical and punctuation errors edited to address incomplete sentences, run-on sentences, awkward sentences, inconsistent verb tense, inconsistent pronoun use, redundancy of ideas/words, use of extremes or superlatives (e.g., "always," "never," "very,") and conversational or idiomatic language