

**Psychology 4170**  
**Basic Counseling Skills**  
**Spring 2026 Syllabus**

Class meeting time: TTH, 1pm-2:15pm, via zoom, link sent via email

Professor: Dr. Saadia McLeod

Private Practice Office: 14712 Pipeline Avenue, Suite B  
Chino Hills, CA 91709

Office Hours: Fridays, 2-3:30pm

Email: [samcleod@cpp.edu](mailto:samcleod@cpp.edu)

**Website for some course materials: [www.drsaadiamcleod.com](http://www.drsaadiamcleod.com)**

**In addition, Canvas will be used to post grades, the class syllabus, and to submit coursework.**

### **Catalog Description**

Overview of basic therapy skills: Emphasis on exploration and development of basic communication skills used in counseling and psychotherapy, such as building rapport, empathy, active listening, questioning, reflecting, clarifying, probing, confronting, and interpreting. Application of counseling theories to case conceptualization.

### **Course Objectives**

At the end of this course students should be able to:

- Describe the basic stages of the helping process
- Explain the theoretical foundation of various helping models, application of models to cases
- Describe the basic skills used in helping relationships
- Compare and contrast the different helping skills
- Identify which helping responses are most appropriate in a particular situation
- Critically analyze a helping interaction
- Demonstrate a minimal level of competence in utilizing each of the basic helping skills.

NOTE: Completion of this course will not qualify students to practice as counselors or therapists without additional education, training, and supervision. However, it will be great preparation for a career as a psychotherapist.

### **Organization of the Class**

Each class session will combine lecture and application/workshop portions throughout the semester. Each session may have several lecture segments interspersed with practice sessions.

When we discuss specific helping skills, we will cover the theory and research behind that skill followed by an opportunity to practice that skill through the use of videos, role-plays, and small group activities. Students are expected to have done the reading BEFORE coming to class that day so they will be prepared for the discussion and practice.

Group work must be completed in class session in order to obtain credit. Each individual is responsible for turning in their own work into Canvas.

### **Required Texts**

**Hill, C. E. (2014). Helping skills: Facilitating Exploration, Insight, and Action (4th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.**

**Goodman, G. (1988). The Talk Book (4<sup>th</sup> Edition). Pennsylvania Rodale Press**

## **Grading**

Grades will be based on 2 Midterms, a Final, group work, verbal class participation, and a final group project presentation. Exams will cover material from course readings, class activities, and lectures. Each exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions and will be administered in Canvas. The final will not be cumulative but will cover some topics from the second midterm. You may not print out the lecture slides for the exam or have access to any course material.

At the end of the semester your points from: 3 exams (50 pts. each), in-class group assignments (25pts), verbal participation (25pts) and final project presentation (50 pts) will be totaled, with a possible 250 points in the course.

### **Grading Scale:**

232-250: A

225-231: A-

218-224: B+

207-217: B

200-206: B-

193-199: C+

182-192: C

175-181: C-

168-174: D+

157-167: D

150-156: D-

0-149: F

**In-Class Group Work:** will be graded credit/no credit. Group work credit will be tallied at the end of the semester with 90% compliance earning full 25 points. **Each student is responsible for submitting the group work individually,** even though each group will turn in the same

material. Group work is submitted after class. Making up missed in class work will not be possible and attendance is necessary for credit for in-class work. Students may waive 4 in-class assignments for any reason (reserve for emergencies). Please submit work in **word file or pdf format (not Google doc or Pages)**. Group work will only be accepted if participated in class. Work must be turned in the same week it is assigned.

**Grades on Canvas:** Do not rely on canvas' grading summary. It tends to be inaccurate when using credit/no credit assignments. Please calculate your own total summary and grade by adding up your individual scores and dividing by total possible.

### Final Group Project:

The final project will be done in a **5-10 person group**. Each group is expected to present an area of clinical focus with an emphasis on treatment/counseling process. Examples of topics are drug addiction, eating disorders, pediatric cancer, heart disease, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, anxiety disorders, sports psychology, private practice, forensic psychology, and police psychology. These are just some of the possible areas of focus. The presentation should describe the area of clinical focus, present a hypothetical case of a client that presents with the problem, conceptualize the case based on a therapy model discussed in class, and describe the counseling skills (that are covered in this class) that would be essential for this case. The presentations must have a visual component (PowerPoint, video), and an annotated bibliography with APA –style references. The group must cite at least three scholarly sources for the presentation (not including the textbook). Each group member must submit the group's annotated bibliography into Canvas the day of the presentation along with a distribution of responsibilities list. Again, this is submitted by each individual student.

**Groups will be assigned via email within the first few weeks of class.** Groups will then need to decide on a topic of interest for the presentation. Each group member is required to turn in the group topic by the first midterm.

Each presentation must be no more than 30 minutes. Each student must contribute equally to the development of the project. Some students may choose to contribute in the research and development of the project, while others may choose to speak

and present the material. The group will need to work together outside of class time to coordinate and work on this presentation.

## **Participation**

Students are expected to attend class, to be on time, and to actively participate in class discussions and activities. Students should come to class having done the required reading for that day and with all completed tasks and assignments. You should be prepared to discuss the readings and topic for that day, challenge the ideas presented, present your own thoughts and ideas, and integrate these with material from the readings.

Realistic helping sessions offer students the opportunity to practice helping skills, so all students will be expected to participate in practice activities. Throughout the semester, we will do small group activities where students will take turns playing the roles of helper, client, and observer. In the role of client you will need to disclose some personal information. You will not be expected to disclose more than you are comfortable disclosing. We will discuss topics that are appropriate for disclosure during class practice exercises. (These are also listed in your textbook on page 18). The rationale for disclosure is to provide helpers with real problems to work with, not to provide therapy for students. Practice sessions in class should not be used as substitutes for real therapy. Students experiencing significant personal distress should call **Cal Poly Pomona Counseling and Psychological Services at (909) 869-3220**, or visit them in **Building 66 (Bookstore), Room 110**.

It is also expected that students in the class will act in a professional manner at all times, especially when we are practicing helping. This means that you should treat everyone with respect, pay attention, and keep everything you hear confidential. **CONFIDENTIALITY** with regard to student information heard during class **IS AN ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT**. Disregard of this confidentiality policy could result in a failing grade in the course.

The cases presented in this class are actual client cases. However, note that each case has been modified significantly to protect the client's identity. I will be changing name, demographic information (age, ethnicity, gender, etc), and some aspects of the clinical presentation. The purpose of the presentation is to promote

realistic understanding of mental health and counseling issues. It is intended for educational purpose only.

### **Use of AI Technology:**

I encourage you to use ChatGPT as part of your research efforts for your presentation. However, keep in mind that you will not be allowed to read pre-written material (outline is ok). Also, note that ChatGPT has its limitations. It is great for accessing well documented information of simple issues or cases but will not be helpful in understanding novel or complex cases of mental illnesses.

### **Make up Work**

Make-up exams will be given only in cases of extreme emergency (e.g., passing of an immediate family member, a car accident, or emergency surgery). Emergency must be supported **with official documentation**. If an internet issue disrupts your ability to take an exam, you must email the professor immediately and provide documentation of the technical issue (e.g., screenshot of the error message). Arrangements must be made with the professor ahead of time. One letter grade will be taken off for every day the exam is late. Students may waive up to 4 in-class group work for any reason (please reserve for emergencies).

Extra Credit: A total of 4 points: All extra credit needs to be turned in by last week of lecture.

Students will have the opportunity to get extra credit for volunteering as a subject for psychological experiments. Two hours of Sona participation will equal the 4 extra credit points possible.

Alternative extra credit assignment – 3 Page paper presenting a hypothetical case and case conceptualization applying a theoretical perspective (Behavioral, Cognitive, Systems, Psychodynamic, etc.)

**Classroom Etiquette:** Students are expected to abide by the university standards of academic integrity (e.g., no cheating, plagiarism, drunkenness, etc.) and civility (i.e., proper conduct). Students who are caught cheating may fail that assignment or the entire course and may be reported to Judicial Affairs. Students are also expected to treat professors, staff, and fellow students with the utmost respect. Incidents of behavioral misconduct may be reported to Judicial Affairs. Given the sensitivity of the course topic, it is absolutely essential that students maintain an environment of intellectual openness, rational discussion, and mutual respect.

**Disability:** If you believe you have a physical, emotional, or medical condition that may impact your ability to succeed in this course, contact the Disabilities Resource Center (Building 9, room 103). DRC will communicate directly with your professor any appropriate accommodations that should be made on your behalf.

**Email Communication.** When emailing with the professor, please be sure to include your full name, and the name of the class and section number in your email. Also, allow 24-48 hours during weekdays to get my response and expect 48 to 72 hours during weekends. ***It is critical that before you contact me, you consult with the syllabus.*** I will not respond to emails when the answer is in the syllabus. Please use your cpp email account when emailing your professor.

**Tentative Class Schedule :** The following schedule may be changed at the professor's discretion. Students are responsible for all changes announced in class.

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Topic</u></b>	<b><u>Textbook: "Helping Skills"</u></b>
1/20-1/22	Review of Syllabus	
	Meditation on Helping; Becoming a Helper	Ch.1

1/27-1/29	Healer's Inner Work Begin Genogram: Healer's Values/Biases/World View	Ch. 1
2/3-2/5	The Helping Process  Goodman Reading: Ch 1 Disclosures	Ch. 2
2/10-2/12	Ethical Issues in Helping Code of Ethics: Resolving Ethical Dilemmas Students assigned to Groups for Final Project	Ch. 3
2/17-2/19	Self-Awareness The Mindful Therapist Cultural Awareness  <i>Genogram Work: Bring in completed Genogram</i>	Ch 4  Ch. 5
2/24	<b>MIDTERM # 1</b> (group topics due in canvas!)	
2/26	Exploration Stage Review of Helping Theories  Goodman Reading: Ch.4 & 10 Advise Giving	

3/3-3/5	Review of Helping Theories (cont.)	
3/10-3/12	Overview of the Exploration Stage	Ch. 6
	Goodman Reading: Ch. 5 Questions; Ch. 6 Silences	
3/17-3/19	Attending, Listening, and Observing	Ch. 7
	Goodman Reading: Ch. 2 & 8 Reflections	
3/24	<b>MIDTERM #2</b>	
3/26	Exploring Thoughts and Narratives	Ch. 8
3/31-4/2	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS	
4/7-4/9	Exploring Feelings	Ch. 9
	Goodman Reading: Ch 7 Mastering Disclosures	
	<i>Insight Stage</i>	
4/14-4/16	Overview of the Insight Stage	Ch. 11
	Challenge	Ch. 12
4/21	Interpretation	Ch. 13
	Goodman Reading Ch. 3 & 9 Interpretation	
	Immediacy, Integrating Insight	Ch. 14-17

4/23                      Group Presentations Begin (30 min each)

4/28-4/30              Group Presentations (30 min each)

5/5-5/7                      Group Presentations (30 min each)

**Final Exam: TUESDAY, 5/12/26, AT 1pm via Canvas**

**Title IX:**

Please note that there are two executive orders from the CSU's Office of the Chancellor that limit what information faculty members are able to keep confidential. These are Executive Order 1096 (which relates to reporting of campus sexual assaults) and Executive Order 1083 (which relates to mandatory reporting of child abuse). What this means is that CSU faculty members are what are called "mandatory reporters," which means that once we are apprised of such incidents, we are required to report the incident to our Title IX officer on campus, regardless of whether the student wants this information reported or not. It may very well be that you would like the information reported but you do not know whom to approach about this information, in which case our mandatory reporting requirements will be desirable to you. However, if you just wanted to emote about an incident but do not want it reported, neither you nor I have any choice in this matter, and once it is divulged, I must report it. This is just to let you know about the kinds of requirements under which we all are operating. For additional information, please visit the following Cal Poly Pomona web page:  
<http://www.cpp.edu/~title-ix/index.shtml>

**Resources:**

Student Health Center: <https://www.cpp.edu/~healthcounseling/health/index.shtml>

Counseling and Psychological Services:  
<https://www.cpp.edu/~healthcounseling/counseling/contact-counseling.shtml>

Wellness Center: <https://www.cpp.edu/~healthcounseling/wellness-services/index.shtml>

Survivor Advocacy Services:  
[https://www.cpp.edu/~healthcounseling/survivor\\_advocacy/index.shtml](https://www.cpp.edu/~healthcounseling/survivor_advocacy/index.shtml)

Financial Aid & Scholarships: <https://www.cpp.edu/~financial-aid/index.shtml>

Food Bank (Poly Pantry): <https://www.cpp.edu/~basicneeds/food-resources/poly-pantry.shtml>