University of Northern Colorado  
School of Applied Psychology and Counselor Education  
APCE 603: Understanding Children, Adolescents, and Their Systems  
Fall 2014  
Course Syllabus

**Instructors:** Amy Williams Long, PhD, LPC, RPT-S  
amy.williams@unco.edu  
**Office:** N/A  
**Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Prerequisite:** Successful completion of APCE 607: Theories of Counseling.

**Course Description:**
This course is intended to provide a comprehensive study of therapeutic approaches and techniques for children and adolescents and is designed to develop students’ knowledge and skills in the theory and practice of working with children. The course will focus on the therapeutic involvement of significant others with children in a variety of settings and emphasize the counseling process and collaboration with the community, family and school systems. Contemporary issues and interventions addressed include: typical developmental problems, creative interventions, crisis management, exceptional children, parenting skills, multicultural considerations, and ethical concerns.

**Required Text:**

**Recommended Texts:**

**Course Objectives:**
1. Students will understand various theoretical approaches and techniques for counseling children, adolescents, and their caregivers.  
2. Students will understand prominent disorders experienced by children and adolescents (i.e. ADHD, conduct disorders, attachment disorders).  
3. Students will develop a framework from which they can assess, conceptualize, and plan counseling interventions for children, adolescents, and their families.  
4. Students will understand how and why to integrate the child’s significant others into counseling in diverse settings.  
5. Students will be able to apply empirically informed treatments for children, adolescents, and their families.
(6) Students will demonstrate an understanding of child and adolescent development and how developmental concerns impact the counseling process counseling.
(7) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the impact of trauma on children and adolescents.
(8) Students will understand the role of racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage, nationality, socioeconomic status, family structure, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and spiritual beliefs, occupation, physical and mental status, and equity issues in counseling youth.
(9) Students will demonstrate an understanding of ethical and legal issues that pertain to counseling children and adolescents.

Instructional Methods:
To achieve the objectives of this course and address the course content, the instructor will employ a variety of teaching interventions that will include small group discussions, individual projects, lectures, role plays, facilitated reflection, and simulated activities.

Course Requirements/Assignments:
Attendance & Active Participation: Graduate students are expected to be responsible for regular and punctual class attendance. Because theory may only become useful to the extent that it is put into practice, students are expected to participate fully in class discussions and in practice sessions of techniques derived from selected theories. All students will be involved in classroom role-plays and experiential exercises and should be prepared to participate in class discussions and activities. Please note that attendance is mandatory. If you expect that you will miss a class, I need to be notified in advance. Please note that your grade will be affected if a total of 4 hours of class are missed. Please see me if you feel that this may be a problem. Active participation is essential and will be evaluated in the following way:

- **Excellent** (80-100) – Proactive participation: leading, originating, informing, challenging contributions that reflect in-depth study, thought, and analysis of the topic under consideration as well as a demonstrated ability to listen to and build upon the ideas of others.
- **Satisfactory** (69-79) – Reactive participation: supportive, follow-up contributions that are relevant and of value, but rely on the leadership and study of others, or reflect opinion rather than study, thought, and contemplation.
- **Minimally Acceptable** (68-48) – Passive participation: present, awake, alert, attentive, but not actively involved.
- **Unsatisfactory** (47 or less) – Uninvolved: absent, present but not attentive, sleeping, irrelevant contributions that inhibit the progress of the discussion.

Self-Analysis and Reflection Paper: Self-analysis and personal reflection are important tools to be utilized in maximizing session time spent with clients. In order to be an effective practitioner, it is important to be continually self-reflective. This assignment is an exercise to encourage self-analysis and personal reflection in order to effectively practice with children and adolescents. Please respond to the following questions *(in 3-5 pages)*:

- What do you remember about your own developmental history? What was developmentally significant for you as a preschooer? During elementary? As an Adolescent?
- What skills do you perceive as your personal competencies for working with children and adolescents and why?
- What do you perceive as your skill deficiencies and what could you do to improve these areas?
• Which age group do you think would be the most interesting and challenging for you to work with as a school or mental health counselor and why?
• With all this in mind, what would it take for you to become an effective counselor with children and adolescents?

*Note:* The assignment will be graded according to the clarity, depth, and degree of awareness and honesty displayed. You are not asked to reveal personal information of which they are not comfortable sharing. Use your own internal gauge to determine the content of this paper that both challenges you personally and professionally (requires a degree of risk) and allows you to manage personal information in a safe and appropriate manner.

**Counseling Children & Adolescents Simulated Group Intervention:** Students will plan and demonstrate one group intervention (i.e., simulated group intervention). The entire class should be afforded the opportunity to participate in the activity. The activity will be directly related to one of several counseling theories or approaches included in course materials. Students will prepare a typed “Activity Synopsis” (2 to 3 pages), making a copy for the professor and for the other students in the class. The “Activity Synopsis” should include the following information:

- Brief description of the technique and needed materials
- History/background of the technique
- Purpose and rationale for use of the technique
- Goals and objectives related to the intervention
- Clientele of choice (i.e., target age range, presenting problem, etc.)
- Merits
- Drawbacks or cautions
- Skill or training requirements
- Variations of/on the technique
- Applicability to diverse populations
- References, 2 minimum

**Treatment Plan Paper:** The instructors will provide a case example of a child or adolescent client for students to study. The assignment is to write a complete treatment plan for this client based on the outline provided. Be as specific as possible using what one has learned in the course to fully address the person’s issues, character, and problems in a professional manner. This assignment will be graded according to the appropriateness, clarity, consistency, and range of the treatment plan, in accordance with course materials in the lectures and texts.

*Note:* In your treatment plan, *avoid using too much jargon.* Assume that you are writing the treatment plan not only for yourself but other counselors and supervisors who may be reading it later on. Describe an approach that will address the person, taking into account his or her affect, cognition, behavior, social skills, personal history, family background, traumatic events and other information as provided in the case example.
Grading:

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<th>Item</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Active Participation</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Reflection Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Simulated Group Intervention</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>Treatment Plan Paper</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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Grading Scale:

Final letter grades will be assigned based on the following distribution:

- **A:** 93-100
- **A-:** 90-92
- **B+:** 87-89
- **B:** 83-86
- **B-:** 80-82
- **C+:** 77-79
- **C:** 73-76
- **C-:** 70-72
- **D+:** 67-69
- **D:** 63-66
- **D-:** 60-62
- **F:** Below 60

Course Schedule:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/22/14</td>
<td>Syllabus Review &amp; Course Introduction</td>
<td>Read: Vernon: Chapter 1</td>
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<td>Child &amp; Adolescent Development</td>
<td>Kottman: Chapter 1</td>
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<td>8/23/14</td>
<td>Multicultural/Diversity Issues</td>
<td>Read: Vernon: Chapter 8</td>
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<td>Ethical Issues</td>
<td>Kottman: Chapters 4 – 8</td>
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<td>Attachment</td>
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<td>Impact of Trauma on Children &amp; Adolescents</td>
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<td>8/24/14</td>
<td>Counseling Children (Overview of Play Therapy)</td>
<td>Read: Vernon: Chapters 2, 3, &amp; 4</td>
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<td>Child &amp; Adolescent Diagnoses</td>
<td>Kottman: Chapters 9 – 11</td>
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<td>Individual Counseling Processes &amp; Techniques</td>
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<td>9/5/14</td>
<td>Working with Parents &amp; Families</td>
<td>Read: Vernon: Chapters 5, 11, &amp; 13</td>
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<td>Counseling Adolescents</td>
<td>Kottman: Chapter 14</td>
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<td>Group Counseling with Children &amp; Adolescents</td>
<td><strong>Self-Analysis Paper DUE</strong></td>
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<td>9/6/14</td>
<td>Counseling Special Populations (Exceptional Children/Adolescents,</td>
<td>Read: Vernon: Chapters 7, 9, &amp; 10</td>
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<td>Special Needs, At-Risk Populations)</td>
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<td>9/7/14</td>
<td>Course Wrap-Up</td>
<td><strong>Simulated Group Activity DUE</strong></td>
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<td>Simulated Group Activity Presentations</td>
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<td>9/13/14</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS – emailed by 6:00PM</strong></td>
<td><strong>Treatment Plan DUE</strong></td>
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**Portable Electronic Devices:** Please extend courtesy to your instructor and fellow students by turning off your portable electronic devices such as: cell phones, pagers, and IPods. Although not an audio issue, texting is a distraction to other students and prevents you from full participation in class. You should keep your portable electronic devices in your backpack or purse during class. Your personal electronic devices should not be on your desks. If you know that you may need to accept an emergency phone call during class or if you have children in childcare or school, please let the instructor know. If you need to take a phone call during class, please step out of the classroom while you complete your call. Please also remember that any unauthorized audio recordings of class will not be allowed and would be considered unprofessional and unethical. Thank you for your cooperation.

**PowerPoint Presentations:** PowerPoint presentations used in class are for instructional purposes only and will not be released to the students for personal use.

**Academic Conduct:** Cheating on examination, submitting work of other students as your own, or plagiarism in any form will result in penalties ranging from an “F” on an assignment to expulsion from the University.


**Professional Conduct:** Students are expected to adhere to the appropriate code of ethics for their particular program. Any behavior deemed unethical will be grounds for dismissal from the program.

**Disability Statement:** Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services at (970) 351-2289 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.

**Honor Code:** All members of the University of Northern Colorado community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility. These core elements foster an atmosphere, inside and outside of the classroom, which serves as a foundation and guides the UNC community’s academic, professional, and personal growth. Endorsement of these core elements by students, faculty, staff, administration, and trustees strengthens the integrity and value of our academic climate.

The instructor may make changes to the syllabus as the course proceeds. If this is necessary, these changes will be announced in class. Have a great semester!
Final Assignment:
Treatment Plan Outline

Note: Follow this outline and provide the headings in your paper

A. Case Conceptualization
   1. Identify a possible DSM diagnosis for this client (use a multiaxial diagnosis).
   2. Describe any ethical concerns you have regarding working with this client.
   3. Describe any diversity concerns you have regarding working with this client.
   4. Describe the impact of any developmental concerns.

B. Approach to be Utilized
   1. Describe which counseling theories or theory would be best suited to meet the needs of this client.
   2. Would you recommend individual, group, and/or family therapy for this child/adolescent? Which and why?

C. Goals of Treatment
   1. List at least 3 specific treatment goals for this client.
   2. State at least one goal in terms of behavior change.

D. Specific Therapeutic Techniques/Interventions
   1. Name 5 specific counseling techniques mentioned in the course lectures, presentations, or textbooks that would be particularly appropriate to help this client accomplish the above therapeutic goals.
   2. Add at least 3 sentences explaining why and how each technique will help this client.

NOTE: In the techniques section, DO NOT LIST “techniques” such as confrontation, questioning, listening, reflecting, empathy, a good relationship and so on as these are not techniques in the context of this course. They are too general and are part of any effective counseling approach. For this assignment, use techniques covered in the course. If in doubt, ask the instructor.