

# EVANGEL

U N I V E R S I T Y

A CHRISTIAN LEARNING-CENTERED UNIVERSITY

## Graduate Counseling Program

### COU 523: Counseling Skills – Lecture 1 Fall 2017 – 2 Credits

#### University Mission Statement:

*Evangel University is a comprehensive Christian university committed to excellence in educating and equipping students to become Spirit-empowered servants of God who impact the Church and society globally.*

#### Counseling Program Mission Statement:

*The Evangel University Counseling Program trains graduate students to become professional counselors who integrate their Christian faith while providing holistic and ethical counseling services to diverse individuals and groups across the lifespan.*

#### Bible Verse:

*The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out. Proverbs 20:5*

**Instructor Name:** Christine Arnzen, Ph.D.

**Phone Number:** 417-865-2815 ext. 8618

**Email:** arnzenc@evangel.edu

**Office:** Trask 303J

**Class Time:** Monday 6:30 to 8:00

**Location:** Trask 308

**Office Hours:** Monday-Thursday 2:00 to 4:00 pm. Please email for an appointment.

#### Teaching Philosophy and Methods

I believe students learn best from a variety of instructional strategies. I will use traditional methods such as reading assignments and class lecture, but I believe learning is contextual. My task is to present information that can be tied to the student's previous experience but then expand learning beyond "personal experience". Therefore, I may utilize prompts to facilitate discussion (in person and/or boards), personal reflection, research projects, group projects, experiential activities and clinical demonstrations.

#### Course Catalogue Description:

Counseling skills are foundational to the application of counseling theory and intervention. Students will gain knowledge about evidenced based theoretical underpinnings of basic counseling skills and factors that influence the application of skills across clinical settings and diverse client populations.

#### Course Purpose:

The purpose of this course is to meet training standards for professional mental health and school counselors set forth by state licensing and accreditation boards.

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### Required Text(s):

American Counseling Association (2014). *Code of ethics*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

\*Download a free copy of the Code at: [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org).

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

HBO Films (Producer). (2002). *Real women have curves* [DVD]. Available from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

Sbanotto, E., Gingrich, H., & Gingrich, F. (2016). *Skills for effective counseling: A faith-based integration*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic

Personal recording device with password protection capabilities.

### Recommended Text(s) and Articles:

Castillo, L. G., Lopez-Arenas, A., & Saldivar, I. M. (2010). The Influence of Acculturation and Enculturation on Mexican American High School Students' Decision to Apply to College. *Journal Of Multicultural Counseling & Development, 38*(2), 88-98.

Covarrubias, R., & Fryberg, S. A. (2015). Movin' on up (to College): First-Generation College Students' Experiences With Family Achievement Guilt. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology, 21*(3), 420-429. doi:10.1037/a0037844

Gonzales, N. A., Germán, M., Su Yeong, K., George, P., Fabrett, F. C., Millsap, R., & Dumka, L. E. (2008). Mexican American Adolescents' Cultural Orientation, Externalizing Behavior and Academic Engagement: The Role of Traditional Cultural Values. *American Journal Of Community Psychology, 41*(1/2), 151-164. doi:10.1007/s10464-007-9152-x

Ivey, A. E., Ivey, M. B., & Zalaquett, C. P. (2012). *Essentials of intentional interviewing: Counseling in a multicultural world* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Knapp, H. (2007). *Therapeutic communication: Developing professional skills*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Morrison, M., & Borgen, W. A. (2010). How Christian spiritual and religious beliefs help and hinder counselors' empathy toward clients. *Counseling & Values, 55*, 25-45.

Smokowski, P. R., Rose, R., & Bacallao, M. L. (2008). Acculturation and Latino Family Processes: How Cultural Involvement, Biculturalism, and Acculturation Gaps Influence Family Dynamics. *Family Relations, 57*(3), 295-308. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3729.2008.00501.x

Sommers-Flanagan, J. & Sommers-Flanagan, R. (2014). *Clinical interviewing* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley

Torres, L., & Rollock, D. (2009). Psychological Impact of Negotiating Two Cultures: Latino Coping and Self-Esteem. *Journal Of Multicultural Counseling & Development, 37*(4), 219-228

Young, M. (2013). *Learning the Art of Helping: Building Blocks and Techniques* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education.

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<b>Course Objectives:</b>			
<b>STANDARD CACREP 2016</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>LEARNING EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
<b>2.F.5.f. (SLO)</b>	Explain and demonstrate counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes	Reading assignment, lecture, class activity class demonstration, role play	Quiz, Clinical Demonstration and transcript analysis
<b>2.F.5.g.</b>	Explain and demonstrate essential interviewing and counseling skills included but not limited to the following: attending, reflection of feelings, content, summarizing, challenging, feedback, goal setting, silence, and termination.	Reading assignment, lecture, class demonstration, video clip, role play	Quiz, Clinical Demonstration and transcript analysis
<b>2.F.5.i.</b>	Create measurable outcomes for clients in relationship to treatment goals.	Reading assignment, lecture, in-class activity	Quiz, treatment plan
<b>2.F.5.l.</b>	Critique suicide prevention models and strategies	Reading assignment, lecture, class demonstration, role play	Quiz
<b>2.F.5.m.</b>	crisis intervention, trauma-informed, and community-based strategies, such as Psychological First Aid	Class lecture, online training	Training certificate
<b>2.F.2.d. (SLO)</b> <b>2.F.2.f.</b>	Explain the impact of heritage, attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences on an individual's views of others as well as help-seeking behaviors of diverse clients	Reading assignment, lecture,	Case summary and eco map
<b>2.F.7.c.</b>	Explain procedures for assessing risk of aggression or danger to others, self-inflicted harm, or suicide	Reading assignment, lecture	Quiz
<b>5.g.3.f.</b>	Explain how helping skills are relevant to personal/social counseling within school settings.	Guest speaker, reading assignment	Quiz

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### Assessment and Grading Scale:

Grading rubrics are provided in Course Commons.

<b>A</b>	<b>94 -100%</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>80 – 82%</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>90 – 93%</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>77 – 79%</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>87 - 89%</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>73 - 76%</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>83 – 86%</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Less than 73%</b>

\*An “A” grade will only be awarded to individuals who earn 94% of total points available plus no more than a single absence.

**In order to move onto candidacy and field experiences, students must earn at least a B or better in COU 523 lecture and lab.**

### Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Assignments:

A student-learning outcome is a statement about what a student will learn as a result of a specific class and/or educational program. SLOs are used to assess a program as well as student progress. The Evangel University Counseling Program utilizes a 0-2 rating system (0 = does not meet expectation, 1 = meets expectations, 2 = exceeds expectation). The rating rubric and criteria can be found in Course Commons. A SLO rating does not determine a student’s grade.

<b>Course Assignments:</b>		
<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Percent of Grade</b>
Chapter Quiz – 10 points each	100	33%
SMART Goal Worksheet	15	5%
Case Summary and Eco Map (SLO assignment)*	35	12%
Clinical Demonstration (SLO assignment)*	100	33%
Transcript	20	7%
Psychological First Aid Training	30	10%
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>* must be submitted in order to receive a passing grade for the entire course.</b>		

### Assignment Descriptions

**Chapter Quizzes:** Students will be quizzed over the assigned chapter readings for the week. A quiz will consist of 10 multiple choice, true/false or matching questions. Eleven quizzes will be administered through Course Commons prior to the class time. Students will have 10 minutes to complete the quiz. Each quiz will open 24 hours prior to class and will close when class begins. The ten highest quiz scores will be used for the student’s final grade.

**SMART Goals Worksheet:** Review four cases provided in Course Commons. Choose two cases and set one long-term goal and three associated short-term goals using the SMART formula. Provide a rationale as to why you chose the long and short-term goals based on at least one academic or scholarly resource (journal article or academic text). APA formatting is expected. Submit to Course Commons via assignment link.

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**Case Summary and Eco Map:** Watch 45 minutes of the movie, *Real Women Have Curves*. Imagine Ana comes to you for counseling. Develop a brief case summary based on the information provided in the movie.

1. Basic client information (name, age range, career category, ethnicity, marital status, education, number of session, medications, referral source);
2. Description of the client's presenting problem;
3. Description of the client's symptoms;
4. Description of affective, behavioral, and cognitive patterns;
5. Description of relevant client history (family, cultural, educational, work, trauma, spiritual, physical);
6. Construct an Eco map (see course text - p. 285)
7. Summary of client's strengths and resources via an Eco Map.
8. Diagnostic formulation;
9. Treatment plan (at least two long-term goals, corresponding SMART short-term objectives and description of intervention). Provide a rationale for your treatment plan based on multicultural research on Mexican American families, adolescents, and college students (see recommended articles in syllabi).

Construct the case summary a single spaced document, using 12 point Times New Roman font and headings. Provide a reference page formatted according to APA standards.

**Clinical Demonstration:** This assignment serves as the capstone or summative project, in which students conduct a 35 to 40 minute helping session with a volunteer who serves in the role of counselee. Students will have all the skills needed to complete this assignment after learning "using the here and now" in chapter twelve and can conduct their session any time after that class is completed. The volunteer counselee *cannot* be a classmate or a student within the same degree program. Additionally, it cannot be someone with whom the student/counselor already has a social or personal relationship (the volunteer *cannot* be a friend, roommate, family member, coworker, Bible study member, etc.). One option for finding a counselee is for students to "trade" friends/family/acquaintances with one another (e.g., Sarah's roommate volunteers for Kyle, and Kyle's roommate volunteers for Emily).

**Instructions for submission:** Students will record sessions on digitally secured iPads provided by the Counseling Program. Students must reserve an iPad through the Counseling Department. At this time, the department will issue you a password required for recording and storage. In addition, student must bring their own audio digital recorders to complete transcripts. Students will conduct their mock counseling sessions in the counseling training suite. Specific recording instructions will be provided in Course Commons.

**Instructions for completing the assignment:** Video-record a 25 to 30 minute counseling session with someone outside the class as the counselee. The situation presented by the counselee should be a current, real one rather than a role-play. You will need to get signed consent from the counselee in order to use the interview for this course requirement. Following is a step-by-step guideline for how to proceed with this requirement.

### **The Interview Part**

1. Contact the volunteer counselee and provide them with a brief explanation of what is being asked of him/her—namely, approximately one to one-and-a-half hours of their time

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in which they share about a current or ongoing situation in their life about which they would like to talk with someone. Inform the prospective counselee that this is for a class assignment and therefore cannot be considered an actual counseling session, although you will be utilizing counseling skills during the conversation. Inform them that this will be video recorded for the purposes of assessing the counselor's skills. Schedule a time to meet—it is recommended

that you, as the counselor, plan on an hour and a half for setup, recording and packing up.

2. Upon the counselee's arrival, have the counselee read and sign the interview consent form found in Course Commons. Keep the signed form—it will be submitted with your final assignment. Mention that confidentiality *does* apply, and verbally go over the relevant exceptions to confidentiality.

3. Conduct the counseling session! Remember to conclude by thanking the counselee for their time, openness and willingness to volunteer.

4. Your grade will depend upon the degree to which you appropriately use a variety of counseling skills (attending behaviors, nonverbal, minimal encouragers, reflection of content, reflection of feeling, open ended questions, closed questions, gentle commands, silence, focusing skills, summarizing, goal setting, confrontation/challenge. Points will be deducted for overuse of questions (closed or open) and double barrel questions. See rubric in Course Commons.

### **Transcript**

Students will transcribe the session and identify skill used during the dialogue. Transcription involves word for word dialogue between mock client and student counselor. See transcript template in Course Commons. **20 points**

### **The Written Prep-Work Part**

1. Watch your entire session, noting when you felt your skills were particularly strong or when they were particularly weak.

2. Choose a six- to eight-minute consecutive segment of recording you wish to critique. You need to have an absolute minimum of six counselor responses, and preferably ten or more (not including "uh huh" and "hmmm," etc.). If you need to add a couple of minutes to your transcribed section of the recording in order to make this possible, please do so. *Type out a transcript* of the recording segment you have chosen.

3. At the top of your paper, prior to the commencement of the transcript, include a statement indicating how long the total interview was, how long the transcribed section is and how many minutes into the interview the transcribed section begins. For example: "The interview was a total of 27 minutes, and the transcribed section begins 20 minutes into the interview and lasts for 7 minutes." Additionally, give a brief summary of your prior relationship to the counselee as well as what has happened up to this point in the interview. For example: "I met the counselee the day of the interview, having been connected through a mutual friend. We arranged the interview via email. Prior to where the transcript begins, she has been talking about the difficulty she is having with her mother-in-law, who is very controlling. Just before the transcript begins she has told me that her husband thinks his mother has a right to be this way because she is helping them out financially."

### **The Written Analysis Part**

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Similar to your small group exercises, you are going to go into your transcript and write assessments of each counselor response, but given that this is a *final* transcript your assessments are going to be far more involved than they were in your exercises. Use the pdf template provided in Course Commons. Each assessment needs to include the following:

Why did you respond the way you did? Explain what was going on in your head at this moment and where were you hoping to go with your response. For example: “The counselee was talking on and on and I knew I had to say something in order to be graded for this assignment, but I didn’t know how to stop her from talking! I was feeling panicky. I finally just jumped in, but I realize that what I said wasn’t helpful. My response lacked empathy and wasn’t even on topic. I should have intervened earlier on and done some empathic responding after she said . . .” Or: “I wanted to get more information about his relationship with his father, but in asking the closed question, I realize that I actually got less information! I needed to either ask an open question such as ‘Can you tell me more about your relationship with your family?’ or just keep reflecting content and feelings as he began to talk about family members.”

*Describe* your attending posture at the time of the given response—pretend your instructor is unable to see your video and verbally describe for him or her what your nonverbals are communicating (remember S.O.L.E.R.as well as your facial expressions and hand/body movements).

*Identify* the skill you used (or attempted to use) in this particular response.

*Evaluate* the quality of this response using the scales and standards provided in the text. *Every* response should be rated on each dimension, even if the rating is “N/A.” If you use a clarifying skill, discuss the appropriateness of its use in this response, such as was it open or closed, would an empathic reflection have been better, etc.

*Provide* an alternate response and *explain* your rationale for the use of the alternate response. An alternate response is required for each exchange. *Evaluate* the alternate response in the same way (on empathy, confrontation, immediacy/relational immediacy, etc.) you evaluated your actual response.

1. After giving a “play-by-play,” response-by-response critique, *narratively* give an *evaluation of your overall work with this counselee*, both in the segment you have transcribed and the session as a whole. Include responses to:

- What would you do differently?
- What would you do the same?
- How would you evaluate your ability to develop rapport with the counselee?
- What direction would you go if you had the opportunity to have another session or sessions with the counselee? Your response should indicate that you either understand what is happening with the counselee or have an idea of how you would attempt to find out.
- How did the informed consent segment of the interview go? How did you feel doing this part of the interview versus the rest of the interview?

2. Attach the signed informed consent to your final document.

3. Reread the instructions above and compare it to what you have written.

Did you get it all?

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4. Breathe and submit your assignment (including the completed informed consent and a digital recording of your session).
5. Do a happy dance and celebrate—you made it! You are one step closer to becoming a counselor!

**Psychological First Aid Training:** Watch the free training on Psychological First Aid by logging on to the website below. You will need to complete the six hour course and submit a copy of the training certificate via the assignment link on Course Commons. In the future, remember to include this training on your future resume or CV. <https://learn.nctsn.org/>

### Late Assignments:

There will be a 10% point deduction per 24 hours for late assignments. Therefore, a late submission time stamped at 5:01 yet due at 5 pm will be marked late. Please contact the professor in the event late assignments are due to circumstances beyond the student's control.

### Course Schedule

<i>Class</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Lecture/ Activity</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Assignments Due Date</i>	<i>CACREP Standard</i>
1.	8/28	Syllabus Review, Microskills and Person as a Counselor	Chp 1 & 2		2.F.5.f.
		LABOR DAY			
2.	9/11	Perceiving and Attending Multicultural applications	3 & 4	Quiz	2.F.5.f. 2.F.5.g. 2.F.2.f
3.	9/18	Reflecting Content and Summarizing Multicultural Applications	5	Quiz	2.F.5.f. 2.F.5.g. 2.F.2.f
4.	9/25	Reflecting Feeling and Empathy Multicultural Applications	6 & 7	Quiz	2.F.5.f. 2.F.5.g. 2.F.2.f
5.	10/2	Clarifying – Open and Closed Questions Multicultural Applications	8	Quiz	2.F.5.f. 2.F.5.g. 2.F.2.f
6.	10/9	Meaning and Metaphors Multicultural applications	9 & 10	Quiz	2.F.5.f. 2.F.5.g. 2.F.2.f
		FALL BREAK			



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7.	10/23	Feedback/Confrontation; Immediacy Multicultural Applications	11 & 12	<b>Quiz</b>	<b>2.F.5.f. 2.F.5.g. 2.F.2.f</b>
8.	10/30	Stages of Change; Facilitating Change Brief Solution Focused Therapy – in clinical and school settings, Facilitating Growth through SMART Goals Multicultural Applications	13	<b>Quiz</b>	<b>2.F.5.f. 2.F.5.g. 2.F.5.i. 2.F.2.f 5.g.3.f.</b>
9.	11/6	Conceptualizing client within systems; Personal/social counseling in school systems (engaging children and adolescents) Multicultural Applications	14 STR 1	<b>Quiz SMART Goals Worksheet</b>	<b>2.F.2.f 5.g.3.f.</b>
10.	11/13	Spiritual Interventions;	15	<b>Quiz</b>	<b>2.F.5.f. 2.F.5.g. 2.F.2.f</b>
11.	11/20	Consolidating and Ending Multicultural Applications	16	<b>Quiz Movie - Case Summary and Eco Map</b>	<b>2.F.5.f. 2.F.5.g. 2.F.2.f</b>
12.	11/27	Suicide – Prevention Models, Assessment and Intervention; Assessing Aggressive/Danger to Others; Challenging Clients;	STR 2 STR 3	<b>Quiz</b>	<b>2.F.5.f. 2.F.5.g. 2.F.5.l.</b>
13.	12/4	Special Topic Crisis Intervention and Psychological First Aid		<b>Submit Clinical Demonstration Recording and Transcript, and Transcript Analysis 12/4 6:30 pm. Submit copy of training certificate by 12/9/17 5pm</b>	<b>2.F.5.f. 2.F.5.m.</b>

## **EU ACADEMIC AND PROGRAM POLICIES**

### **Academic Integrity Policy**

Students are expected to maintain high levels of academic honesty as people of Christ. By virtue of your integrity, you signify that all work submitted is your original work completed by you. Submitting someone else's work as your own (without proper citations, identifying particular research) is dishonest and is not congruent with a Christian life. Furthermore, the use of published study guides, solution manuals, or test banks not offered by the text's publisher will be deemed cheating. If you have questions as to the legitimacy of a study resource, consult your course professor. The program faculty and coordinator will handle incidents of academic dishonesty (plagiarism and cheating). If warranted, offenses will be reported to Academic Affairs Division and Student Development Division. Consequences may include but not limited to grade adjustment, academic probation, withdrawal of candidacy, or dismissal. Please see Graduate catalog: <http://web.evangel.edu/apps/mastercatalog/view/view.asp?CatalogID=2&Section=36>

### **Attendance Policy**

Students are asked to participate in class, volunteer for demonstrations, and come to class fully prepared. As this course only meets once a week, attendance at all sessions is critical. In order to maintain in good standing, a student must attend 80% of the scheduled class time. Students missing more than 2 classes will be dropped from the class. Partial attendance (coming late or leaving early) will be factored into attendance. Students who miss class because of illness, participation in authorized co-curricular activities, or for other unavoidable reasons will be given the opportunity to complete missed assignments or the equivalent. Students who miss class for other reasons may only make up work at the discretion of the individual instructor as stated in the course syllabus

### **Students with Disabilities:**

If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must set up academic accommodations through Academic Support in the Center for Student Success. Contact Stephen Houseknecht, Director of Academic Support, 1111 N. Glenstone Ave, Springfield, MO, 65802, (417) 865-2815 ext. 8271 or email: [houseknechts@evangel.edu](mailto:houseknechts@evangel.edu). Students are required to provide documentation of disability to Academic Support prior to receiving accommodations.

Note: If you have a disability, *it is your obligation to notify me* before the end of the first week of classes. If I do not hear from you, I assume you do not need any special consideration. See the following for more information: <http://web.evangel.edu/community/?p=ASC&i=1437&t=>.

### **Use of Electronic Devices in Class**

The use of electronic devices in the classroom is intended to enhance the learning experience for you and your classmates. Any use of technology that substantially degrades the learning environment, distracts you and/or your classmates, promotes dishonesty or illegal activities is prohibited. Be sensitive to this temptation to mentally leave the class while using your device. It is recommended that mobile phones be silenced during class.

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### Statement Regarding Risks and Benefits of Counselor Education

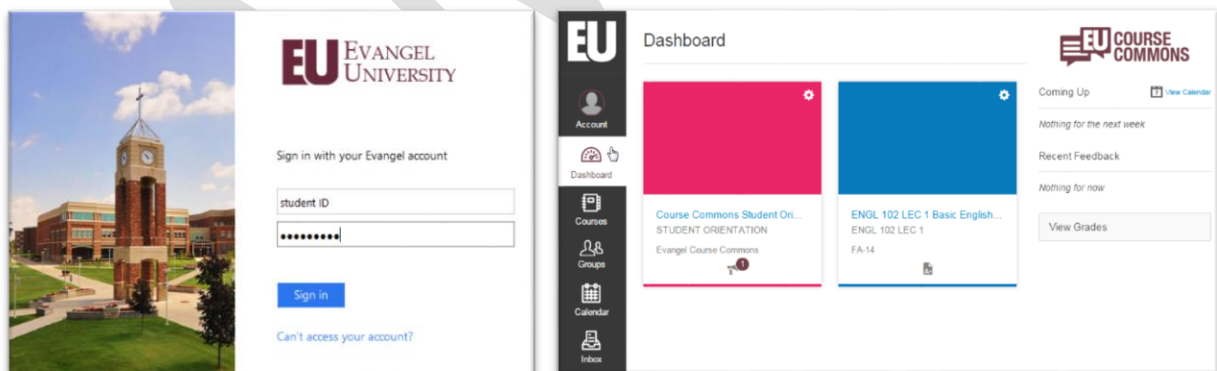
Pursuing a graduate education in counseling can facilitate meaningful professional and personal growth opportunities via insight and increased awareness. Nevertheless, material covered in any counseling course, various experiential exercises, assignments, and/or field based experiences, may facilitate intense, negative, and even emotionally overwhelming responses. Consequently, such responses may inhibit the student's functioning, academic performance, and fit for field work. Students are encouraged to be candid about the impact of such experiences and address any concerns about present functioning with their instructor. If an instructor or staff member (in conjunction with the Program Coordinator) observes evidence of problematic functioning, he/she will bring it to the student's attention. Students may be advised in one or more of the following directions:

1. Enter personal counseling while remaining in the program and report back to their Academic Advisor or Program Coordinator.
2. Take a leave of absence from the program, with conditions specified by the program.
3. Follow a remediation plan that may include additional coursework or supervisory experiences.
4. Withdraw from the program.

The intent of the above directives is to help students address and resolve psychological material that may impact their future work as mental health care providers. Final determinations for continued progression through the clinical mental health program will be at the sole discretion of the program personnel and will be made with the utmost care and student's best interest in mind. Students have the right to appeal any decision under the Student Handbook procedures.

### Course Commons

This course will use Course Commons, Evangel's learning management system. There are links to Course Commons in the Student Portal and the Evangel website. The login page for Course Commons is <https://courses.evangel.com/>.

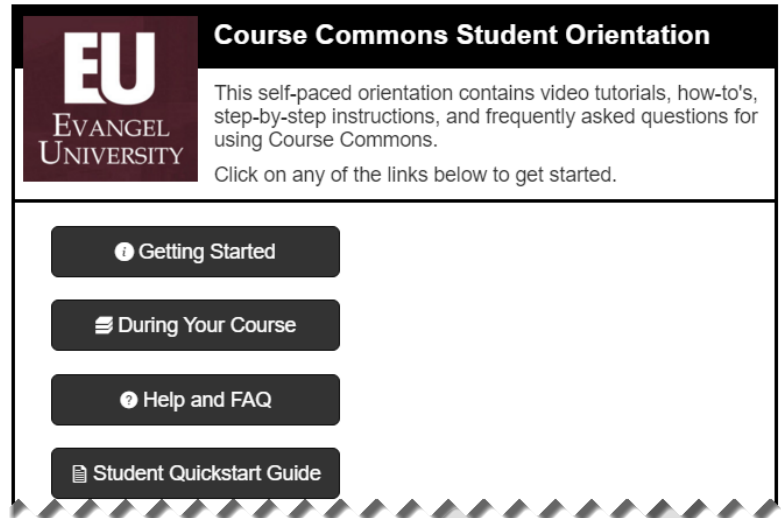


*Use your **Evangel** username and password to login.*

### Course Commons Student Orientation

All Evangel students have access to the [Course Commons Student Orientation](#). If you are new to Course Commons, you are encouraged to take advantage of this excellent resource. As part of your course preparation, this will help you make the most of the features that are available to you as a student.

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### Accessing the Course in Course Commons

Access your courses list by clicking on the Courses icon on the Global Navigation menu on the left of the screen. You can also click on the course card on the Dashboard.

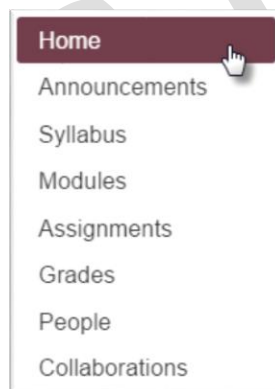
To customize your Courses list, see the following Help Guide: [How do I customize my Courses list?](#)

Students will have access to this course in Course Commons seven (7) days before the official beginning of the semester. Students have until seven (7) days after the semester begins to complete financial registration. If financial registration is not completed by the seventh day, course access will be revoked.

After the end of the semester, students will have read-only access to the course through Course Commons. Only access to already submitted work, course resources and grades will be available.

### Accessing Course Content in Course Commons

The professor controls the availability of course content and features. Some items may be unavailable until a date set by the professor.



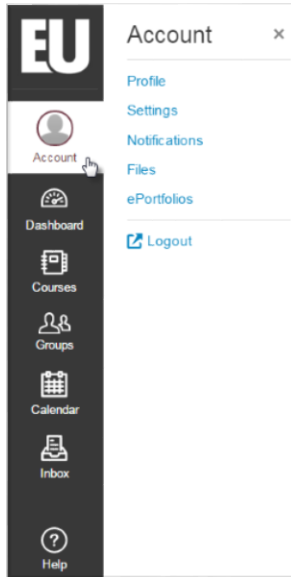
You can navigate the course content and features using the Course Navigation menu on the left. This menu can be customized by the professor, so it may differ from course to course, depending on what features the professor has chosen to make available.

You can collapse the Course Navigation menu to focus on the page content. Click on the menu icon in the upper left (which looks like 3 lines). You can expand the menu by clicking on the menu icon again.

All course content (syllabus, modules, course materials, assignments, online quizzes, online discussions, grades, etc.) can be accessed using the links in the Course Navigation menu.

### Personal Settings in Course Commons

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Students can adjust their personal settings in Course Commons. Click on the Account icon to access the Account menu.

On the **Profile** page, you can add a profile picture to your account. You can also edit your display name, which will show to your instructor and peers throughout Course Commons.

The **Settings** link allows you to add additional contact methods (personal email or cell phone number for text message alerts) to your account. You can also add external services, like Twitter, Skype or Google Drive.

The **Notifications** link allows you to customize *what* notifications you receive from Course Commons and *how* and *when* you receive them. This is a student-centered feature that allows you to optimize your notifications to help you stay connected to what is happening in all your courses.

For more information, see the following pages in the Course Commons Student Orientation: [How to Update your Profile and Settings](#) and [How to Update Your Notifications Preferences](#).

### Accessing Grades in Course Commons

All course grades will be recorded and shown through Course Commons. Simply click the “Grades” button on the lower right of the Dashboard to access your grades for all courses. You can also use the Grades link in the Course Navigation to access your grades for this course.

For more information on how to check your grades and what you can do from the Grades page, see the following page from the Course Commons Student Orientation: [How to Check My Grades](#).

### How to Get Help with Course Commons

Help is never more than a few clicks away! You can access the Help menu from any page in Course Commons.

Click on the Help icon in the lower left corner of the screen. Because the Course Commons is powered by the Canvas Learning Management System, all help guides and helpdesk tickets will reference Canvas.

From the Help menu, you can send a message to your instructor, search the Canvas Help Guides, or report a problem.

You can browse and search the Help Guides using the following link:

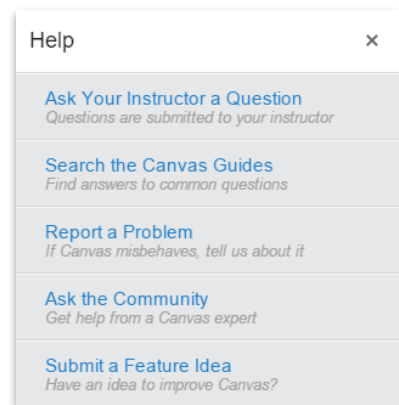
<https://community.canvaslms.com/community/answers/guides/>.

### Course Commons Troubleshooting

***Do you have a question about a quiz, an assignment, or another item in the course?*** Contact your professor.

***Are you having technical problems with Course Commons?*** Click the Help icon, click “Report a Problem” and complete the form to file a ticket for a personal response from the support team. Please be sure to include a thorough description of the problem.

***Are you having trouble with your Evangel account (username and password)?*** Contact the IT Helpdesk at 417-865-2815 ext. 8368 (phone), [helpdesk@evangel.edu](mailto:helpdesk@evangel.edu) (email), or [help.evangel.edu](http://help.evangel.edu).



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