

**School of Public Health
Department of Human Genetics
INTERVENTION SKILLS IN GENETIC COUNSELING
HUMAN GENETICS 2038
Tuesday 11:00-11:50AM &
Thursday 9:00-10:50AM
Location: 3121C Public Health
Credit Hours: 3.0
Spring Semester 2023**

Instructors:

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Goal of the Course

The goal of this course is to expand upon the skills learned in *Human Genetics 2035: Principles of Genetic Counseling* (Fall semester) to provide you with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in your clinical rotations.

Course Description

HUGEN 2038 focuses on the understanding of theories of intervention, skill development and application to genetic counseling. The course aims at sensitizing students to the ethical dilemmas faced by affected families and health-care providers.

Most of your course work to this point has focused on teaching you the theoretical principles of genetics. Although we will be discussing some theory in this class, the main purpose of the course is to allow you to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate effectively with your patients.

The theory portion is covered during the first part of the course and is focused on prenatal genetic counseling. Pediatrics was covered last semester and cancer will be covered later in a separate course. The prenatal counseling classes will focus on important issues to consider when working in a prenatal setting. We will also begin to work on developing your interviewing and counseling skills. A broad range of counseling skills as well as bereavement counseling, individual assessment, and intervention will be addressed. Students will practice counseling skills via role plays and discussion. Four classes at the end of the course will consist of trained actors playing the role of patients seeking your services as a genetic counselor. These patient simulation sessions will help you learn to initiate and conduct a counseling session. They will also help you identify areas of strengths and areas for improvement as you begin to enter your clinical rotations.

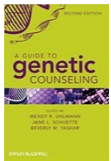
Course Learning Objectives

After completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Describe community resources available to clients and their family members.
2. Practice communicating key elements of genetic concepts based on the needs of the audience.
3. Identify and practice the skills associated with providing genetic counseling in prenatal, pediatric, and adult cases.
4. Practice the delivery of difficult news to genetic counseling patients.
5. Describe the grieving process and explain its importance to patients in genetic counseling sessions.
6. Explain counseling theories that inform genetic counseling practice.
7. Demonstrate the process of client assessment and various counseling interventions.
8. Initiate and conduct a genetic counseling session.

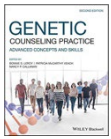
Text Books

Required Text:

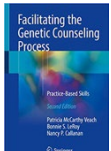


WR Uhlmann, JL Schuette, and Beverly Yashar. (2009) *A Guide to Genetic Counseling, 2nd Ed.* Wiley-Liss.

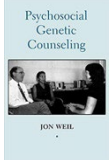
Recommended Texts:



BS LeRoy, P McCarthy Veach, NP Callanan. *Genetic Counseling Practice, Advanced Concepts and Skills, 2nd Ed.* (2021) Wiley Blackwell.



P McCarthy Veach, BS LeRoy, NP Callanan. (2018). *Facilitating the Genetic Counseling Process, 2nd Ed.* Springer.



J Weil. (2000). *Psychosocial Genetic Counseling.* Oxford University Press.

Course Format and Delivery

This class utilizes Canvas for class content and evaluation. Notifications will be sent regarding course content throughout the semester. Please make sure to set up your Canvas to receive email notifications from Canvas and please check for announcements and notifications on a regular basis. Should you need to communicate with the course instructor(s), please email them at their Pitt email addresses.

It is expected that class will take place in person. However, due to the shifting nature of the pandemic, it may be necessary to alter the delivery of the course. Any changes will be shared via announcements on Canvas. During this pandemic, it is extremely important that you abide by the public health regulations, the University of Pittsburgh's health standards and guidelines, and Pitt's Health Rules.

These rules have been developed to protect the health and safety of all of us. The University's requirements for face coverings will at a minimum be consistent with CDC guidance and masks are required indoors (campus buildings and shuttles) on campuses in which COVID-19 Community Levels are High. This means that when COVID-19 Community Levels are High, you must wear a face covering that properly covers your nose and mouth when you are in the classroom. If you do not comply, you will be asked to leave class. It is your responsibility to have the required face covering when entering a university building or classroom. Masks are optional indoors for campuses in which county levels are Medium or Low. Be aware of your Community Level as it changes each Thursday. Read answers to frequently asked questions regarding face coverings. For the most up-to-date information and guidance, please visit the Power of Pitt site and check your Pitt email for updates before each class.

If you are required to isolate or quarantine, become sick, or are unable to come to class, contact us via email as soon as possible to discuss arrangements and we will determine the most appropriate make-up plan for class.

We intend to record most classes to make them available on Canvas. It is possible that some guest lecturers may prefer to not be recorded and we will communicate this information during the semester. Recordings will only be available for the semester and should not be distributed for non-class purposes.

Office Hours

Office hours will take place from 10:50 to 11:20 in 3140 Pitt Public Health each Thursday until the start of the simulations. Should class need to take place remotely due to changes in the COVID pandemic, office hours will take place at the same time via Zoom. The course instructors are available to meet at other times by appointment.

Course Grading

The goal of the course is to provide you with skills and knowledge that are applicable to your future career as a genetic counselor. The assignments and activities are designed to help students achieve the course learning objectives. The course structure and grading are based on adult learning theory (andragogy) which suggests that adults learn best in a flexible, interesting, and challenging environment. The genetic counseling topics covered in the course are interesting and challenging. The course grading is flexible and allows students to pursue assignments in ways that are customized to their needs.

With the exception of the two exams, all assignments for the class are graded as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory and have a rubric that describe the requirements for satisfactory completion. The midterm and final exam are graded using a 100-point system. The table below outlines the course components that must be completed to earn a particular letter grade. Students can decide how much to do to achieve the grade they desire. The course learning objectives are addressed at each level but students who earn higher grades demonstrate greater mastery of the learning objectives. Please note that the patient simulations are not graded but feedback will be provided.

Course Component	Requirements for Letter Grade of A (A bundle)	Requirements for Letter Grade of B (B bundle)	Requirements for Letter Grade of C (C bundle)	Learning Objectives (LOs) Addressed
Absences	1 unexcused absence	2 unexcused absences	3 unexcused absences	N/A
Discussion Board - Original Post	1 satisfactory original discussion post	1 satisfactory original discussion post	1 satisfactory original discussion post	All LOs
Discussion Board - Response Post	4 satisfactory responses to discussion posts	3 satisfactory responses to discussion posts	2 satisfactory responses to discussion posts	All LOs
Genetic Concept Explanation	Satisfactory completion of the narrative component of the Genetic Concept Explanation assignment Satisfactory completion of a video recording of verbal explanation of two genetic concepts	Satisfactory completion of the narrative component of the Genetic Concept Explanation assignment Satisfactory completion of a video recording of verbal explanation of one genetic concept	Satisfactory completion of the narrative component of the Genetic Concept Explanation assignment Satisfactory completion of a video recording of verbal explanation of one genetic concept	LOs #2 & #3
Teratology Patient Letter	Satisfactory completion of the Patient Letter	Satisfactory completion of the Patient Letter	Satisfactory completion of the Patient Letter	LOs #2 & #3
Support Group Paper	Satisfactory completion of support group experience with a 1-2 page description and reflection.	Satisfactory completion of support group experience with a 1 page description.	Satisfactory completion of support group experience.	LO #1
Case Studies	Satisfactory completion of 3 cases	Satisfactory completion of 2 cases	Satisfactory completion of 1 case	LOs #1, #2, #3, & #8
Exams (midterm and final)	≥90% average	≥80% average	≥70% average	All learning objectives

Each grade bundle will be further delineated based on the combined average of the midterm and final exam. More specifically, within the A bundle, students who earn 97-100% will receive an A+, those who earn 93-96% will receive an A, and those who earn 90-92% will receive an A-. For the B bundle, students who earn 87-89% will receive a B+, those who earn 83-86% will receive a B grade, and those who earn 80-82% will receive a B-. For the C bundle, students who earn 77-79% will receive a C+,

those who earn 73-76% will receive a C grade, and those who earn 70-72% will receive a C-. Students who do not meet the requirements for a C grade will receive a F grade.

Assignments, Exams, and Simulations

Assignments

Detailed information about the assignments and corresponding rubrics are provided in Canvas. All assignments should be turned in on Canvas unless otherwise instructed by the due dates indicated in Canvas. *All file names should follow the format LASTNAME.ASSIGNMENT (i.e. Vento.CaseStudies.doc). When possible, documents should be in Word (it is harder to add comments in pdf documents).*

Midterm Exam and Final Exam

Two exams, each worth 100 points, will be administered during the semester. The midterm exam will be given approximately halfway through the semester and will cover course content addressed to that point. The final exam will be a take home exam and is cumulative covering all course content but focusing primarily on course content addressed during the second half of the semester.

The exams will be delivered via Canvas. The midterm will take place in the classroom and you will need a laptop to take the exam (please let the course instructor(s) know if you do not have access to a laptop). For the midterm there is an opportunity to earn two points for a question that you did not earn full credit with the use of a token. To earn these two points, you need to submit a narrative explanation (approximately one paragraph) of what you missed on the question and what you learned from reexamining the question. *To earn these two points, this short narrative explanation needs to be submitted within one week of receiving your graded exam.*

The final exam will be a take home and open book exam. For the final, you will be able to access the exam during a certain period of time via Canvas.

Simulations

During the last four Thursday class sessions, you will be completing patient simulations. The first three simulations will be done in a group setting, where students are assigned an order and take turns conducting the genetic counseling session. The fourth simulation will allow you to individually counsel a patient. All sessions will be video recorded, and you will have the opportunity to review your recordings. Additional information will be discussed in the class session on preparation for simulations. Cases will be made available in Canvas. While required, there is no grade for patient simulations. You will meet with the course instructors to evaluate your work in the simulations.

Tokens

At the start of the semester, each student will have three tokens that can be used in the following ways:

- Resubmit work that is unsatisfactory. The assignment must be resubmitted within one week of receiving the assignment evaluation.
- To extend the deadline of an assignment. To use this token, the student must contact the instructor ahead of the deadline and both the student and instructor must agree upon the new date for the assignment.
- To submit a discussion board response that was missed.

- One token can be used to miss a class.
- One token can be used to earn two points on the midterm. To use this token, you need to submit a narrative explanation (approximately one paragraph) of what you missed on the question and what you learned from reexamining the question within one week of receiving your graded exam.

Late Work Policy

Each assignment has a corresponding due date. Should an assignment be turned in late, then it will receive an unsatisfactory grade. As noted in the “Tokens” section, students can use a token to extend the deadline of an assignment if the student contacts the instructor(s) prior to the deadline. Should a student encounter an emergency or extenuating circumstance, then they should contact the instructor(s) as soon as possible, prior to the deadline, when possible, to discuss a possible extension. This will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The course instructor(s) recognize that the semester can get busy at certain times and assignment deadlines may conflict with due dates for other classes. We are willing to consider an adjustment to an assignment deadline for the entire class when such concerns are brought to our attention and when they impact the majority of the class.

Absence/Participation

Each class covers critical material related to the practice of genetic counseling. Therefore, your attendance and participation are important to your professional development and to the success of the course. We expect that each student will read the assigned materials and participate in class discussion. As noted above, unexcused absences are part of the grading structure for the course. Missing class due to illness or an unanticipated emergency are considered excused absences. Please notify the course instructor(s) about a missed class and a make-up plan can be determined.

Your Wellbeing Matters

Graduate school can be an exciting and challenging time for students. Taking time to maintain your well-being and seek appropriate support can help you achieve your goals and lead a fulfilling life. It can be helpful to remember that we all benefit from assistance and guidance at times, and there are many resources available to support your well-being while you are at Pitt. You are encouraged to visit [Thrive@Pitt](#) to learn more about well-being and the many campus resources available to help you thrive.

If you or anyone you know experiences overwhelming academic stress, persistent difficult feelings and/or challenging life events, you are strongly encouraged to seek support. In addition to reaching out to friends and loved ones, consider connecting with a faculty member you trust for assistance connecting to helpful resources.

The [University Counseling Center](#) is also here for you. You can call 412-648-7930 at any time to connect with a clinician. If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal, please call the University Counseling Center at any time at 412-648-7930. You can also contact Resolve Crisis Network at 888-796-8226. If the situation is life threatening, call Pitt Police at 412-624-2121 or dial 911.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to adhere to the school's standards of academic honesty. Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. The Graduate School of Public Health's policy on academic integrity, which is based on the University policy, is available online in the Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook www.publichealth.pitt.edu/home/academics/academic-requirements. The policy includes obligations for faculty and students, procedures for adjudicating violations, and other critical information. Please take the time to read this policy.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 as early as possible in the term.

Sexual Misconduct, Required Reporting and Title IX Statement

The University is committed to combatting sexual misconduct. As a result, you should know that University faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct, including harassment and sexual violence, to the University's Title IX office so that the victim may be provided appropriate resources and support options. What this means is that as your professors, we are required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct that are directly reported to us, or of which we are somehow made aware.

There are two important exceptions to this requirement about which you should be aware:

A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here:

<https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix/make-report/report-form>

An important exception to the reporting requirement exists for academic work. Disclosures about sexual misconduct that are shared as part of an academic project, classroom discussion, or course assignment, are not required to be disclosed to the University's Title IX office.

If you are the victim of sexual misconduct, Pitt encourages you to reach out to these resources:

Title IX Office: 412-648-7860

SHARE @ the University Counseling Center: 412-648-7930 (8:30 A.M. TO 5 P.M. M-F) and 412-648-7856 (AFTER BUSINESS HOURS)

If you have a safety concern, please contact the University of Pittsburgh Police, 412-624-2121.

Other reporting information is available here: <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix-compliance/make-report>

Diversity Statement

The University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health considers the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff to be a strength and critical to its educational mission. Pitt Public Health is committed to

creating and fostering inclusive learning environments that value human dignity and equity and promote social justice. Every member of our community is expected to be respectful of the individual perspectives, experiences, behaviors, worldviews, and backgrounds of others. While intellectual disagreement may be constructive, no derogatory statements, or demeaning or discriminatory behavior will be permitted.

If you feel uncomfortable or would like to discuss a situation, please contact any of the following:

- the course directors or course instructors;
- the Pitt Public Health Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion;
- the University of Pittsburgh Title IX Coordinator at 412-648-7860; or
- at <https://diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix/make-report/report-form>

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See [Library of Congress Copyright Office](#) and the [University Copyright Policy](#).

Schedule of Sessions

Date	Class Topic	Lecturer(s)
T 1/10/23	Introduction to course and community resources Introduction to simulations	Jodie Vento, MGC, LCGC Robin Grubs, PhD, LCGC
Prenatal Module		
R 1/12/23	Prenatal Genetic Counseling I (Introduction and Carrier Screening)	Abby Pepper, MS, LCGC
T 1/17/23	Prenatal Genetic Counseling I, con't	Vickie Bacon, MS, MPH, LCGC
R 1/19/23	Prenatal Genetic Counseling II (Prenatal Testing)	Mary Travis, MS, LCGC
T 1/24/23	Prenatal Genetic Counseling II, con't	Mary Travis, MS, LCGC
R 1/26/23	Prenatal Genetic Counseling III (Ultrasound)	Meredith Jones, MS, LCGC
T 1/31/23	Prenatal Genetic Counseling III, con't	Meredith Jones, MS, LCGC
R 2/2/23	Prenatal Genetic Counseling IV (Clinical Application)	Liz Sheehan, MS, LCGC Vickie Bacon, MS, MPH, LCGC
T 2/7/23	Prenatal Genetic Counseling V (Teratology)	Robin Grubs, PhD, LCGC
Genetic Counseling Theory, Process & Psychosocial Considerations Module		
R 2/9/23	Contracting	Jodie Vento, MGC, LCGC
	Interviewing	Robin Grubs, PhD, LCGC
T 2/14/23	Delivering Difficult News	Robin Grubs, PhD, LCGC
R 2/16/23	Advanced Communication Skills	Jodie Vento, MGC, LCGC
	Bereavement I (Grief)	
T 2/21/23	Bereavement II (Coping)	Jodie Vento, MGC, LCGC
R 2/23/23	Bereavement Counseling III	Robin Grubs, PhD, LCGC
T 2/28/23	Empathy	Jodie Vento, MGC, LCGC
R 3/2/23	Midterm	
3/7/23 3/9/23	No Class – Spring Break	
T 3/14/23	Transference and Countertransference	Jodie Vento, MGC, LCGC Robin Grubs, PhD, LCGC

R 3/16/23	Counseling for Pediatric and Adult Cases	Sarah Williams, MS, LCGC
T 3/21/23	Theory, Assessment, and Intervention I	Robin Grubs, PhD, LCGC
R 3/23/23	Theory, Assessment, and Intervention II	Robin Grubs, PhD, LCGC
Patient Simulations Module		
T 3/28/23	Preparation for Simulations – Video demonstrations	Robin Grubs, PhD, LCGC Jodie Vento, MGC, LCGC
R 3/30/23	Role play with Second Year Students	Robin Grubs, PhD, LCGC Jodie Vento, MGC, LCGC Second Year Students
T 4/4/23	Review of Simulation Agendas	Jodie Vento, MGC, LCGC Robin Grubs, PhD, LCGC
R 4/6/23 8:30-11:15am	Simulation I (Greens)	
T 4/11/23	Simulation I Debrief	
R 4/13/23 8:30-11:15am	Simulation II (Smith Sisters)	
T 4/18/23	Simulation II Debrief	
R 4/20/23 8:30-11:15am	Simulation III (Johnson)	
T 4/25/23	Simulation III Debrief	
R 4/27/23	Simulation IV (Smith Sisters Disclosure)	

Final exam-Your final will be a take home exam and can be scheduled any time after 4/18/2023 and will need to be turned in on or prior to 4/27/23.