

## *Counseling Program*

# **Counseling and Human Sexuality**

EDUC 6364

3 semester credit hours

Spring Semester 2022



**Instructor: Todd T. Russell, Ph.D.**

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### **Student Availability and Office Hours**

Available for virtual assistance via Collaborate, Zoom, TEAMS, email, text or voice

9:00 am – 12:00 pm Mondays and Wednesdays; 10:00 am – 2:00 pm Thursdays

Available other days and at other times by appointment

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**Community Counseling Clinic:** <https://www.srsu-mrg-ccc.org/>

**Clinic Email:** [srsu.mrg.counseling@gmail.com](mailto:srsu.mrg.counseling@gmail.com)

**Counseling Program Web Page:** <https://www.sulross.edu/page/4849/master-education-counseling>

**Course Purpose:** This course provides counselors with the knowledge and skills for effectively working with clients of diverse backgrounds on issues related to human sexuality. Physical, psychological and cultural aspects of sexuality will be explored with emphasis on enhancing mindful counselor self-awareness.

**Course Description:** Sexuality is the most vital element of the human experience. Human behavior cannot be understood separately from human sexuality. This course will explore the biological, psychological, and sociocultural aspects of human sexuality from anatomical sexual assignment, gender identity, and sexual orientation to the fluidity of adult sexual expressions. Compassionate and effective counselors must fully understand their own sexual attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and biases in order to bring authenticity and congruence to the therapeutic relationship. Effective counselors must identify and assess their own sexual development, experiences, beliefs, and prejudices and examine how these consciously and unconsciously impact the counseling relationship. Sexual issues are ever-present in both the content and process of the counseling relationship. Counselors must develop the knowledge and skills necessary to authentically facilitate the counseling relationship when sexual issues, concerns or problems arise explicitly or implicitly.

**Course Goals:** There are two major goals for this course: (1) **Professional** acceptance of and comfort with client content that is sexual in nature; and (2) **Personal** acceptance, comfort and confidence of one's own sexual narrative. The foundation of an emotionally healthy counselor is sexual self-awareness, self-compassion, and self-care. Consequently, effective counselors, regardless of their various work settings, must courageously lean into and embrace the sexual content shared by their clients and their own personal sexual narratives. Additionally, the development of knowledge and skills in the area of counseling and human sexuality informs and influences a counselor's own evolving integrated personal approach to counseling. Counselors must authentically accept the sexual narratives that arise in the counseling relationship, holistically conceptualize the client's therapeutic needs, and employ clinically appropriate interventions from the field of sex therapy.

**Required Readings:** There are no specific required texts for this course. However, students will be expected to read the articles, chapters and counseling resources available on Blackboard. Furthermore, students are encouraged to access and utilize professional books, guides, journal articles and practice materials available through the university library (online) and the Internet. Counselors are able to interact more effectively with their personal and professional environments; they are able to respond rather than react to client disclosure of a sexual nature; they are more effective communicators professionally and personally; and they are more creative and effective agents of client-desired change.

**Class Sessions:** This class will meet via Zoom on **Mondays from 5:00 pm to 6:45 pm.** In order to avoid scheduling conflicts among the courses in the Counseling Program, my courses are always scheduled for Mondays and Wednesdays. Therefore, I need to accommodate the scheduling of four graduate courses to two evenings of the week. All Monday class sessions will be video recorded and made available to students on our class Blackboard site. Students will be able to use the recordings for review of course content. All class sessions will be scheduled on the Zoom platform. In advance of each Monday's class meeting, students will be emailed the Zoom connectivity information. Students do not need to install any particular software in order to fully utilize the Zoom platform or the Collaborate feature of Blackboard.

### **Course Requirements and Grading:**

*attendance and participation in virtual class sessions	100 points
*sexual self-analysis	100 points
*final objective examination	100 points

**Course Grading Scale:** According to the above requirements, there are 300 total points possible on which your final course grade will be based. A final point total of 270 or greater will earn you a final grade of A, a total of 230-269 will be a final grade of B, and a total of 200-229 will be a C grade. Regardless of the excuse, late assignments will be discounted in point value at 10% of the total points possible per day of lateness.

## **Student Learning Objectives:** Upon successfully completing this course students will:

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1. Identify and assess personal attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions about human sexual behaviors.  
*Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted through Instructor Observation of Student Participation and the Sexual Self-Analysis.*
2. Evaluate personal, familial and cultural biases relative to anatomical sexual assignment, gender identification, sexual orientation and sexual practices and their potential influences on the counseling relationship.  
*Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted through Instructor Observation of Student Participation and the Sexual Self-Analysis.*
3. Demonstrate fluency and genuine acceptance in discussing intimacy, sexuality, sexual behaviors and dysfunctions, and sex education with individuals, couples, families, and groups.  
*Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted through Instructor Observation of Student Participation, the Sexual Self-Analysis, and the Objective Final Examination.*
4. Identify and describe the legal and ethical issues of sexuality counseling, ethical decision-making models, and the relevant ethical standards.  
*Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted through Instructor Observation of Student Participation, the Sexual Self-Analysis, and the Objective Final Examination.*
5. Explain and discuss human sexual development and individual sexual uniqueness from an integrated biological-psychological-sociocultural perspective.  
*Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted through Instructor Observation of Student Participation, the Sexual Self-Analysis, and the Objective Final Examination.*
6. Describe the construction of sexuality and sexual behavior relative to social, historical, and cultural contexts with special emphasis on the bilingual and bicultural communities of South Texas.  
*Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted through Instructor Observation of Student Participation, the Sexual Self-Analysis, and the Objective Final Examination.*
7. Distinguish and illuminate developmentally appropriate sex education topics/objectives for each of the following life stages: Primary children (5-7 years old), elementary (8-11 years), middle school (12-14 years), adolescence (15-18 years), young adulthood (20-39 years), middle adulthood (40-59 years), and older adulthood (60+ years).  
*Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted through Instructor Observation of Student Participation, the Sexual Self-Analysis, and the Objective Final Examination.*

8. Demonstrate knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases and the clinical and/or counseling implications of the diseases.  
*Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted through Instructor Observation of Student Participation, the Sexual Self-Analysis, and the Objective Final Examination.*
9. Assess and analyze the sexual themes, issues, and problems expressed by clients implicitly and/or explicitly.  
*Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted through Instructor Observation of Student Participation, the Sexual Self-Analysis, and the Objective Final Examination.*
10. Design a counseling treatment plan that addresses the relevant sexual issues and the appropriate professional course of action.  
*Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted through Instructor Observation of Student Participation, the Sexual Self-Analysis, and the Objective Final Examination.*
11. Apply and practice culturally relevant counseling strategies and techniques for resolving sexual problems.  
*Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted through Instructor Observation of Student Participation, the Sexual Self-Analysis, and the Objective Final Examination.*
12. Evaluate the short-term and long-term effectiveness of the counseling treatment plan, as well as specific counseling interventions.  
*Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted through Instructor Observation of Student Participation, the Sexual Self-Analysis, and the Objective Final Examination.*

**Goals of the Counseling Program:** The faculty members of the Counseling Program strive toward achievement of the following programmatic and training goals:

- ☞ Develop and maintain a curriculum based on current knowledge and empirical research concerning the counseling and human development needs of a bicultural and bilingual society with its own vast diversity.
- ☞ Challenge and support the student's and the faculty member's growth in human understanding, personal dignity, mindfulness, ethnic identity, and productive interpersonal interactions on all levels.
- ☞ Preserve and promote the ongoing examination of the interplay between culture-specific knowledge and counseling effectiveness.
- ☞ Achieve and sustain excellence as a counselor preparation program as defined by state and national accreditation and credentialing standards, as well as unique regional cultural and linguistic characteristics.
- ☞ Plan and provide excellent instruction, role-modeling, supervision and advisement.

- ☞ Devise and participate in relevant research, scholarly contributions, and community service that benefit students, families, and the communities of South Texas.
- ☞ Organize and facilitate professional collaboration and networking between current graduate students in the Counseling Program and alumni who serve as counseling professionals in South Texas.

**Counseling Program Student Learning Outcomes:** Upon successful completion of the Counseling Program, the candidates for the degree of Master of Education in Counseling, will clearly and unambiguously demonstrate to the Counseling faculty that they:

- ☉ Understand traditional and contemporary personality and counseling theories and can apply appropriate counseling interventions and strategies in individual and small group counseling.
- ☉ Identify and utilize basic assessment principles related to standardized assessments and designing an appropriate treatment plan.
- ☉ Comprehend the role and function of the counselor in a variety of work settings.
- ☉ Know and apply the professional standards of practice and the relevant code of ethics.
- ☉ Attend to their own personal growth, as well as that of their students and clients, through utilizing supervision, valuing interpersonal feedback, and engaging in mindful self-examination.
- ☉ Possess the knowledge and skills necessary to practice as a highly competent counseling professional.
- ☉ Employ personal self-awareness and professional sensitivity to the divergent values, behaviors, traditions, and counseling needs of all students and clients regardless of gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, ability, language, religion, ethnicity, or race.
- ☉ Engage in compassionate cultural sensitivity by applying core counseling concepts, mindfulness-based skills, and professional practices with diverse populations, in particular, the bilingual and bicultural students and clients living in the South Texas border region.
- ☉ Model intellectual curiosity and a strong personal commitment to continually expanding their counseling knowledge and proficiency through lifelong learning and professional development.

**Counseling Program Marketable Skills:** Upon successful completion of the Counseling Program, the candidates for the degree of Master of Education in Counseling will possess the following marketable skills:

1. The Master of Education Counseling student will demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills.
2. The Master of Education Counseling student will demonstrate empathy and listening skills.
3. The Master of Education Counseling student will demonstrate deductive and inductive cognitive skills.

**Marketable Skills Dissemination Strategy:** The marketable skills are included in the course syllabi for the Master of Education in Counseling; and the faculty present and discuss these skills online or in-class with students. Each marketable skill includes consideration of the cultural influences on an individual's perceptive outlook. The cultural focus will be reflected in all courses and considered explicitly in *Multiculturalism and Diversity in Counseling* (EDUC 6318) and *Bilingual and Bicultural Counseling* (EDUC 6340). Reflective writing or research assignments will be emphasized in all counseling classes with specialized research focus in the following graduate courses: *Research Methodology* (EDUC 5301), *Psychopathology* (EDUC 6319), *Substance Use, Abuse and Addiction* (EDUC 6320), and *Counseling and the Neurosciences* (EDUC 6350).

**Proficiencies for Counselors:** Proficiencies that students must master in this course are derived from two sources: the *State of Texas Standards Required for the School Counselor Certificate* (§239.15) and the *Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs* (CACREP).

The following school counselor certification standards (TAC §239.15) are addressed in this course:

**Standard I. Learner-Centered Knowledge:** The certified school counselor has a broad knowledge base. The certified school counselor must know and understand:

- (2) counseling and consultation theories and practices
- (6) changing societal trends, including demographic, economic, and technological tendencies, and their relevance to school counseling
- (7) environmental, social, and cultural factors that affect learners' development and the relevance of those factors to educational, career, personal, and social development, along with comprehensive school counseling programs
- (9) legal and ethical standards, practices, and issues and the importance of commitment to and implementation of ethical principles
- (11) techniques and behavioral interventions to assist teachers with classroom management;
- (13) the roles and responsibilities of a comprehensive school counseling program that is responsive to all students
- (14) counseling-related research techniques and practices
- (16) how cultural factors and group membership impact individual students
- (19) an understanding of systems, including family dynamics and school environments

**Standard II. Learner-Centered Skills:** The certified school counselor applies the knowledge base to promote the educational, personal, social, and career development of the learner as outlined in *The Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs*. The certified school counselor must:

- (3) counsel individuals and small groups using appropriate counseling theories and techniques in response to students' needs
- (4) consult with parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and other individuals as appropriate to enhance his or her work with students
- (9) use counseling-related research techniques and evidence-based practices to address student needs

**Standard III. Learner-Centered Process:** The certified school counselor participates in the development, monitoring, revision, and evaluation of a campus based on *The Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs* that promotes learners' knowledge, skills, motivation, and personal growth. The certified school counselor must:

- (3) use both preventive and intervening strategies to address the concerns of learners and to help them clarify problems and situations, set goals, explore options, and implement change

**Standard IV. Learner-Centered Equity and Excellence for All Learners:** The certified school counselor promotes academic success for all learners by acknowledging, respecting, and responding to diversity while building on similarities that bond all people. The certified school counselor must:

- (1) understand learner differences, including those related to cultural background, gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic levels, academic ability, and learning styles, and know ways to create and maintain a positive school environment that is responsive to all learners
- (2) advocate for a school environment in which diversity is acknowledged and respected, resulting in positive interactions across all cultures, genders, ethnicities, and learning styles
- (4) take a positive, strength-based approach that builds on commonalities versus differences in all learners
- (5) understand how environment and behavior may impact or influence individual learners
- (7) understand how family values, group membership, and culture intersect

**Standard V. Learner-Centered Communications:** The certified school counselor, an advocate for all students and the school, demonstrates effective professional and interpersonal communication skills. The certified school counselor must:

- (1) demonstrate effective communication through oral, written, and nonverbal expression
- (3) support responsive interventions by effectively communicating with parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and community members
- (8) work effectively as a team member to promote positive change for individuals, groups, and the school community
- (9) take a positive, strength-based approach that verbalizes commonalities versus differences in all learners
- (11) adhere to best practices connected to ethical and legal considerations around appropriate use of technology and email, documentation, record keeping, privileged communication, and informed consent process

**Standard VI. Learner-Centered Professional Development:** The certified school counselor continues professional development, demonstrating a commitment to learn, to improve the profession, and to model professional ethics and personal integrity. The certified school counselor must:

- (1) use reflection, self-assessment, and interactions with colleagues to promote personal professional development
- (2) use counseling-related research techniques and practices as well as technology and other resources to facilitate continued professional growth
- (3) strive toward the highest level of professionalism by adhering to and modeling professional, ethical, and legal standards
- (4) apply research-based practice to improve the school guidance and counseling program
- (5) engage in ongoing professional development to improve the school guidance and counseling program

The following **CACREP Common Core** standards are addressed in this course:

**Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice**

- b. the multiple professional roles and functions of counselors across specialty areas, and their relationships with human service and integrated behavioral health care systems, including interagency and interorganizational collaboration and consultation
- f. professional counseling organizations, including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current issues
- g. professional counseling credentialing, including certification, licensure, and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues
- i. ethical standards of professional counseling organizations and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling
- k. strategies for personal and professional self-evaluation and implications for practice
- l. self-care strategies appropriate to the counselor role



***Social and Cultural Diversity***

- b. theories and models of multicultural counseling, cultural identity development, and social justice and advocacy
- c. multicultural counseling competencies
- d. the impact of heritage, attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences on an individual's views of others
- g. the impact of spiritual beliefs on clients' and counselors' worldviews

***Human Growth and Development***

- e. biological, neurological, and physiological factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior
- f. systemic and environmental factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior
- g. effects of crisis, disasters, and trauma on diverse individuals across the lifespan
- i. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for promoting resilience and optimum development and wellness across the lifespan

***Career Development***

- b. approaches for conceptualizing the interrelationships among and between work, mental well-being, relationships, and other life roles and factors

***Counseling and Helping Relationships***

- a. theories and models of counseling
- b. a systems approach to conceptualizing clients
- c. theories, models, and strategies for understanding and practicing consultation
- d. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for establishing and maintaining in-person and technology-assisted relationships
- f. counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence the counseling process
- g. essential interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization skills
- h. developmentally relevant counseling treatment or intervention plans
- i. development of measurable outcomes for clients
- j. evidence-based counseling strategies and techniques for prevention and intervention
- n. processes for aiding students in developing a personal model of counseling

***Group Counseling and Group Work***

- a. theoretical foundations of group counseling and group work
- b. dynamics associated with group process and development

***Assessment and Testing***

- c. procedures for assessing risk of aggression or danger to others, self-inflicted harm, or suicide
- d. procedures for identifying trauma and abuse and for reporting abuse

***Research and Program Evaluation***

- a. the importance of research in advancing the counseling profession, including how to critique research to inform counseling practice
- b. identification of evidence-based counseling practices
- e. evaluation of counseling interventions and programs
- g. designs used in research and program evaluation
- i. analysis and use of data in counseling
- j. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for conducting, interpreting, and reporting the results of research and/or program evaluation

# Proposed Course Outline

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPICS, TASKS &amp; ASSIGNMENTS DUE</b>
Week #1	Introductions Course Overview and Expectations
Week #2	Personal Experiences and Perspectives on Sexuality Familial and Sociocultural Influences on Sexuality Clinical Comfort and Mindful Empathy in Sexual Counseling
Week #3	Female Sexual Anatomy and Physiology Male Sexual Anatomy and Physiology Anatomical Sexual Assignment: A Continuum
Week #4	Gender-Role Development and Gender-Role Stereotypes Gender Identification: A Continuum
Week #5	Sexual Arousal and Response Cycle Correlates and Disparities with the DSM-5 Sex, Love and Intimate Relationships Sexual Orientation: A Continuum
Week #6	Society, Culture and Sexual Orientation Developmental Perspectives and Sexual Behaviors Atypical Sexual Behavior and Sexual Dysfunctions
Week #7	Assessment in Sexuality Counseling Treatment Planning and Interventions in Sexuality Counseling
Week #8	Female Sexuality: Diagnosis and Counseling Interventions Male Sexuality: Diagnosis and Counseling Interventions
March 7-11	<b>Spring Break: No Class Meeting</b>

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Week #9                      Conception and Contraception  
                                    Counseling for Conception and Contraception

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Week #10                     Sexually Transmitted Infections and Diseases  
                                    Counseling and STI's (STD's)

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Week #11                     Sexual Addictions  
                                    Counseling and Sexual Addictions  
                                    Problematic Sexual Behavior  
                                    Counseling and Problematic Sexual Behavior

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Week #12                     Sex Education across the Lifespan  
                                    Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment Planning

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Week #13                     Sexual Violence and Incest  
                                    Family Boundaries and Sexual Abuse  
                                    Counseling and Sexual Abuse

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Week #14                     Reframing and Re-Experiencing Sexuality  
                                    Self-Assessment of Courageous Comfort with Content  
                                    Sexual Self-Analysis and Awareness  
                                    **Due: *Sexual Self-Analysis***

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Week #15                     Last Class Session  
                                    Special Issues in Counseling and Sexuality  
                                    Specific Applications and Issues of Sex Therapy  
                                    Special Issues in Counseling and Human Sexuality

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Week #16                     ***Objective Final Examination***

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# Assignments and Activities

**Attendance and Participation:** This class is being offered as an *enhanced web-based course*. Participation in the virtual world is worth a total of 100 points toward your final grade in this course. The format for this course is non-traditional and experiential. Enhanced web-based courses regularly use the Collaborate Ultra feature of Blackboard or the Zoom platform online. During the spring semester of 2022 regular class sessions will be conducted on Zoom in *real time* on Mondays from 5:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. If you do not have reliable Internet service you will want to simultaneously connect via the link and the telephone. This will help ensure that you remain connected to the class even when your Internet “freezes, fails or fucks up.” All Monday class meetings will be recorded and available to students on our class Blackboard site for review. As with all virtual learning platforms, students can participate in the class meetings from home, office, or the corner coffee bar. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra is a simple, convenient, and reliable web conferencing feature created especially for graduate education and training. Collaborate and Zoom both facilitate learning experience, regardless of the student’s actual physical location or digital device. Relevant and required readings, resources and learning materials are all made available to students on the class Blackboard site. The instructors will strive to maintain an experiential focus.

**Confidential and Supportive Discourse and Discussion:** A rich and valuable component of learning about human sexuality and its role in the counseling relationship and therapeutic setting is having the opportunity to share experiences with each other in a safe and trusting “container.” The following guidelines can help ensure a powerful learning experience for all.

- ☯ Appropriate themes include the joys, difficulties, and insights experienced in meditation practice and the multitude of ways to bring mindfulness alive in relationships, work and daily life.
- ☯ Participants should feel free to share at any time but will not be obligated to do so.
- ☯ Be comfortable with silence and pauses; slowing down can promote awareness of what is arising within.
- ☯ Speak about what’s alive for you in this moment, from your heart and your own direct experience.
- ☯ Listen deeply to the speaker, noticing what arises within you as you listen – and what arises as you speak.
- ☯ Refrain from offering unsolicited advice and at all times honor unconditional confidentiality.

**Objective Final Examination:** Students will be expected to satisfactorily complete a 100-point objective final examination that is based on the readings (posted articles and handouts), resources, lectures, presentations, discussions and class experiences. The examination items will expect you to integrate course content with the readings and will consist of one hundred objective items (multiple-choice and true/false). The final examination will be available on Blackboard from April 28, 2022 through May 3, 2022 at 11:00 p.m. This examination is worth a total of 100 points toward your final grade in the course.

**Sexual Self-Analysis:** Writing your *Sexual Self-Analysis* is an unusual assignment that counseling students consistently rate the most helpful and important exercise they have ever done. This project gives you the opportunity to look at your growth as a sexual person from your childhood to the present. For most students, this is the first time that they have written about their lives from this standpoint. The important point about this paper is for you to be as honest as you can with yourself about your life, both past and present. Being honest with yourself is essential for creating a support and compassionate therapeutic environment for your clients. This assignment is highly confidential and will only be read by the instructors. You must describe important events and then analyze these events from a counseling and psychological perspective. You can include thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and values. The *Sexual Self-Analysis*, due on Sunday, April 24, 2022, by 11:00 pm, is worth 100 points possible toward your final grade in the course. Further instructions will be available later in the semester.

**Mindfulness and Counseling:** Mindful counselors are able to interact more effectively with their personal and professional environments; they are able to respond rather than react to life's unexpected happenings; they are more effective communicators professionally and personally; and they are more creative and effective agents of client-desired change. A routine personal mindfulness practices provides the counseling graduate student with the knowledge and skills to:

- ☺ Slow down or stop the cascade of automatic and habitual reactions.
- ☺ See oneself and others more clearly.
- ☺ Listen deeply and understand situations just as they are.
- ☺ Be open to creativity beyond conditioning.
- ☺ Respond effectively to complex and/or emotionally charged situations.
- ☺ Act competently and ethically.
- ☺ Achieve balance and resilience in personal and professional lives.

**Professional Counseling Identity and Behavior:** In registering for classes in the Counseling Program at Rio Grande College, graduate students accept responsibility for attending scheduled class meetings, completing assignments on time, contributing to class discussions, and fully participating in all experiential learning activities. Counseling faculty members maintain specific attendance and participation requirements for each particular class. Faculty members may impose academic penalties upon absences from some classes and/or experiences; however, such penalties for absences will be a part of each course syllabus and will be distributed to each class at the beginning of each class and a copy filed in the departmental office.

The Counseling Program has specific policies and procedures which provide students with a sequential, growth-oriented progression of courses to take; students are fully responsible for knowing and following these policies and procedures. The *Counseling Program Handbook* details and describes all aspects of the Counseling Program, from taking the first courses to passing the Comprehensive Oral Examination and graduating with the Master's in Counseling. This is not a singular academic program to prepare students for advanced levels of teaching or beginning levels of administration, but rather a distinctly different profession entirely. Counseling is not an appropriate career field for all students. In the process of pursuing professional training in counseling, some students discover (or faculty may advise) that they are not appropriate for the counseling field and/or the field of counseling is not appropriate for them. Faculty of the Counseling Program will provide continuous, honest and pragmatic feedback to each student regarding progress and suitability in this program.

The Counseling Program expects graduate students to demonstrate the following characteristics and attitudes at all times inside and outside the classroom:

- ⊙ **Commitment** to professional identity as a counselor, investment, advocacy, collaboration, and interpersonal competence
- ⊙ **Openness** to ideas, learning, change, giving and receiving feedback, others, and self-development
- ⊙ **Respect** to self and others, including honoring diversity, self-care, and personal wellness
- ⊙ **Integrity** demonstrated through personal responsibility, maturity, honesty, courage, and congruence
- ⊙ **Self-awareness** modeled through humility, self-reflection, and understanding of context

Unethical behavior (as defined by the *Code of Ethics* of the American Counseling Association) by a student enrolled in any counseling course will result in the exclusion of that student from the Counseling Program of Rio Grande College and may subject the student to civil penalties as well. Professional behavior is expected of each and every student at all times across all counseling courses. Failure to maintain professionalism is considered unethical behavior. The Counseling Program emphasizes professional, personal, and academic development as essential in counselor education and training. Students must not only excel academically but must adhere to the professional and ethical standards of the profession, demonstrate effective counseling skills and competencies, and focus on their own personal development as it impacts their ability to work effectively and ethically as counseling professionals.

Counseling students are expected to attend to their own social and emotional development through extensive self-reflection and mindfulness. They must be open to new and divergent ideas, prepared to examine their own values and assumptions, ready to recognize their own prejudices and biases, willing to be present in the moment with highly uncomfortable (painful) emotions that initially evoke the “fight-flight-freeze” hijacking of the primitive limbic system, able to receive critical feedback in the company of peers with an open mind and a tender heart, and capable of engaging in personal growth and transformation. At times this will involve examining one’s own life experiences while creating space and understanding for one’s inner demons and emotional obstacles to personal growth. Willingness to do this important personal work is an integral part of any counselor’s professional training.

Therefore, graduation from the Counseling Program requires that students successfully complete the academic and experiential requirements with mindful regard to both professional and personal development. Students must, in the professional judgment of the faculty and supervisors, understand and behave in accordance with the professional standards of behavior, meet the requisite counseling competencies and skills to work as an effective professional counselor, and be free from any psychological or emotional impairment that may act as a barrier to effective interpersonal and therapeutic interventions. Throughout the counseling course work and the practical experiences, the faculty members regularly review student progress on the following basic qualities:

- Openness to new ideas
- Flexibility
- Cooperativeness with others
- Willingness to accept and use feedback
- Awareness of own impact on others
- Ability to deal with conflict
- Ability to accept personal responsibility
- Ability to express feelings effectively and appropriately
- Attention to ethical and legal considerations
- Initiative and motivation
- Development of professional skills and competencies
- Psychological functioning and mindful self-management

**Distance Education Statement:** Due to the personal health conditions and remaining restrictions associated with the COVID-10 pandemic, the engaged learning and skill emphasis of *Counseling and Human Sexuality* (EDUC 6364) will take place on Blackboard, Collaborate Ultra, Zoom and Google platforms. Required readings, assignments, presentations, and videos will be posted on Blackboard. All students are expected to regularly access the class site on Blackboard and participate fully in the virtual aspect of this course. The policy on Distance Education at Sul Ross State University is as follows: Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university’s academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments directly to the Instructors, which require secure login information to verify students’ identities and to protect students’ information. Students enrolled in distance education courses at SRSU are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook.

**Accessibility and Safe Learning Environment:** The Counseling Program of Rio Grande College is committed to providing a learning environment that is free from intentional or unintentional sexual harassment, as defined below, or harassment on the basis of any protected classification including, but not limited to race, gender, color, religion, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, medical condition, marital status, veteran status or on any other basis protected by law. Such conduct is unprofessional, unproductive, illegal, and generally unacceptable. All conduct of this nature is expressly prohibited, regardless of whether it violates the law. The Counseling Program of SRSU supports equal employment and educational opportunities for all persons. No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored by SRSU on any basis prohibited by applicable law, including but not limited to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or disability. The Counseling Program is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. Students with disabilities are provided assistance in gaining opportunities for full participation in programs, services and activities. It is university policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. RGC students seeking accessibility services should contact Ms. Paulette Harris, Executive Assistant to the Vice President and Dean, at 830-279-3023 or email [pharris@sulross.edu](mailto:pharris@sulross.edu). Ms. Harris's office is at 2623 Garner Field Road, Uvalde, TX 78801 (this is the mailing address, too).

**Verbal and Physical Harassment:** Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. Examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to unwanted sexual advances; demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies; leering; whistling; touching; pinching; assault; coerced sexual acts; suggestive, insulting or obscene comments or gestures. The Counseling Program prohibits all conduct of this nature whether or not such conduct violates any applicable laws.