



## Master of Arts in Counseling Course Syllabus

### Course Information

COUN 699 B: TOPICS: SEXUAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS  
Spring 2020  
1 Semester Hour

### Location/Date/Time

Thursday, 2:15 – 4:15 pm  
(January 16 – February 6)

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### INSTRUCTOR'S INFORMATION:

**Emily Petkus**

emily.petkus@emu.edu

708-269-3632

Office Hours: by appointment only

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will introduce students to the various components of sexual health and wellness that impact the practice of counseling. Students will learn about sexual health, wellness, and the important role clinical mental health practitioners have in fostering overall wellness.

### COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Students will develop an emerging understanding of sexual health. Students will also explore different strategies to incorporate this new information in their work with clients. This course will be both didactic and experiential. Students will be encouraged to participate in individual reflection, large and small group discussion, and work in dyads.

### Syllabus Disclaimer:

This syllabus is not a contract. The instructor reserves the right to alter the course requirements, schedule, and/or assignments based on new materials, class discussions, or other legitimate objectives. Students will be given notice of relevant changes in class or via e-mail.

### TECHNOLOGY:

**Please turn cell phones off and please do not text during class as it is disruptive and takes away from the focus of the class.** Inadvertently, we all forget to turn them off and that's okay. If for some reason you need to have your cell phone on, please let me know prior to class.

The EMU MA in Counseling program, in accordance with a national professional conversation about the use of technology in counselor education, is supporting a return to engagement and paper notebooks. As we are in the profession of presence and attunement, we want to be intentional about how we address this in our classes. Therefore, we will ask that you keep your phone and your computer/iPad in your bag, unless you are required to use it in class. We have been reading and researching about the impact of technology on the brain related to social engagement and learning, in addition to the strong correlation between writing and learning. We wish to promote an embodied learning and discovery experience and can only be successful to do so in a context that minimizes disruption and interruption. We recognize there will be times when access to a phone is necessary and want to encourage advanced planning and communication with faculty.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS AND OTHER RESOURCES:**

- **Required Reading:**

Buehler, S. (2014). *What every mental health professional needs to know about sex*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

## **Writing Guidelines:**

EMU has adopted a set of writing [guidelines](#) for graduate programs that include six sets of criteria: content, structure, rhetoric & style, information literacy, source integrity, and conventions.

## **Academic Integrity Policy (AIP):**

EMU faculty and staff care about the integrity of their own work and the work of their students. They create assignments that promote interpretative thinking and work intentionally with students during the learning process. Honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility are characteristics of a community that is active in loving mercy and doing justice. EMU defines plagiarism as occurring when a person presents as one's own someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source (Adapted from the Council of Writing Program Administrators). This course will apply [EMU's AIP](#) to any events of academic dishonesty. If you have doubts about what is appropriate, [Indiana University's Plagiarism Tutorials and Tests](#) may be a useful resource.

## **Moodle:**

[Moodle](#) is the online learning platform that EMU has chosen to provide to faculty, administrators and students. Students will have access to course information within Moodle for any class they are registered for in a given term. The amount of time a student has access to information before and after the class is somewhat dependent on the access given to students by the individual faculty member. However, please note that courses are not in Moodle permanently – after two years the class will no longer be accessible. Please be sure to download resources from Moodle that you wish to have ongoing access to.

## **Graduate & Professional Studies Writing Center:**

Please utilize the [writing program](#)! They offer free individual tutoring from a [graduate student tutor](#). Please visit the website to schedule an appointment.

## **Institutional Review Board (IRB):**

All research conducted by or on EMU faculty, staff or students must be reviewed by the [Institutional Review Board](#) to assure participant safety.

## **Library**

The [Hartzler Library](#) offers research support (via e-mail, chat, phone, or SSC campus) and the library home page offers subject guides to help start your research.

## **Office of Academic Access:**

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your work in this course, it is your responsibility to contact the [Office of Academic Access](#) in the Academic Success Center on the third floor of the Hartzler Library. They will work with you to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. All information and documentation is treated confidentially.

## **Course Extensions and Outstanding Grades:**

For fall and spring semesters, all coursework is due by the end of the semester. If a student will not be able to complete a course on time, the student must submit a request one week before the end of the semester for an extension (up to 6 months), by emailing the instructor, academic advisor and the Academic Program Coordinator. If the request is granted the student will receive an "I (incomplete) for the course which will later be replaced by a final grade when the work has been turned in on the agreed upon date. If the request for an extension is denied, the student will receive a grade for the work that has been completed up until the time the course was expected to have been completed. If no work has been submitted, the final grade

will be an F (or W under unusual circumstances and with permission of the Program Director). Extensions will be given only for legitimate and unusual situations. Extensions are contracted by the student with the program for up to a maximum of 6 months after the deadline for the course work. *PLEASE NOTE: Grades for coursework submitted late may be reduced at the instructor's discretion and in line with their course policy on turning in coursework after the due date. If the extension deadline is not met, the instructor will submit the final grade based on what has been received to date.*

**Inclusive, Community-Creating Language Policy:**

Eastern Mennonite University expects all its faculty, staff, and students to adopt [inclusive written and spoken language](#) that welcomes everyone regardless of race or ethnicity, gender, disabilities, age, and sexual orientation. We will use respectful and welcoming language in all our official departmental documents and correspondence, including those put forth by way of Internet communication, and throughout all academic coursework, inclusive of classroom presentations and conversations, course syllabi, and both written and oral student assessment materials.

**Title IX:**

*The following policy applies to any incidents that occur (on or off campus) while you are a student registered at EMU. It does not apply if you are talking about incidents that happened prior your enrollment at EMU. It is important for you to know that all faculty and staff members are required to report known or alleged incidents of sexual violence (including sexual assault, domestic/relationship violence, stalking). That means that faculty and staff members cannot keep information about sexual violence confidential if you share that information with them. For example, if you inform a faculty or staff member of an issue of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or discrimination he/she will keep the information as private as he/she can, but is required to bring it to the attention of the institution's Title IX Coordinator, Rachel Roth Sawatzky can be reached at [540-432-4133](tel:540-432-4133) or [rachel.roth.sawatzky@emu.edu](mailto:rachel.roth.sawatzky@emu.edu). You can also report incidents or complaints through the [online portal](#). You may report, confidentially, incidents of sexual violence if you speak to Counseling Services counselors, Campus Ministries' pastors, or Health Services personnel providing clinical care. These individuals, as well as the Title IX Coordinator, can provide you with information on both internal & external support resources. Please refer to the [Student Handbook](#) for additional policies, information, and resources available to you.*

**Academic Program Policies:**

For EMU graduate program policies, please see the complete [graduate catalog](#).

**Writing Standards –Graduate Level**

[https://emu.edu/writing-program/docs/Graduate\\_rubric.ProvostCouncil.Feb22.2017.pdf](https://emu.edu/writing-program/docs/Graduate_rubric.ProvostCouncil.Feb22.2017.pdf)

## SCHEDULE AND TOPICS: Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings and Assignment
1 1/16/2020	Course Overview	Buehler, ch. 1-3  Activity: In-class role play
2 1/23/2020	Assessing sexual problems	Buehler, ch. 5-8  Due: Journal entries 1 and 2 Activity: In-class role play
3 1/30/2020	Sexual health constructs	Buehler, ch. 9-10; 17  Due: Journal entry 3 Activity: In-class role play
4 2/6/2020	Counseling strategies for addressing sexuality	Buehler ch. 12-14  Due: TV/Movie presentations Due: Journal entry 4 Activity: In-class role play

**Please Note:** The above schedule and procedures for this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

Student engagement- in class	20
Reflection journal	30
Reaction to media and counseling implications project	50
Total Points	100 points

### REACTION/REFLECTION JOURNAL:

Self-awareness about personal biases, phobias, fears, prejudices, reactions, etc. is an important part of professional development. The purpose of this assignment is to assist you in exploring your own beliefs and values about human sexuality and reflect on how they might impact your counseling efforts. In so doing, you will be better able to responsibly and effectively assist counseling clients with issues related to sexuality.

Every student is required to complete a personal journal about their experiences, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs related to human sexuality.

The ability to observe and reflect upon personal awareness and reactions is more important than explicit details of sexual experiences. You are expected to be candid in your writing.

If you find this exercise creates undue personal distress, please speak to the instructor about your apprehensions. You may also decide to seek personal counseling to explore concerning aspects of this experience. You may wish to consider making an appointment with your counselor. Remember that we cannot appropriately assist clients with their problems when our own issues are left unattended to.

a. Each week write a reaction / journal entry about what you are learning in this class. You will turn the journal during weeks 2, 3, and 4 as class begins. Each entry should be no more than 3 pages single spaced.

b. Your journal/reaction entries will consist of a selection of a minimum of 2 "Activities" that are located at the end of each chapter. Please select activities that you found thought-provoking to guide your reflections.

c. As time permits you will get in small group and talk about what you are discovering.

**REACTION TO POPULAR MEDIA AND COUNSELING IMPLICATIONS ASSIGNMENT- DUE WEEK 4 IN CLASS:**

Working in groups of 3-4 you will review a popular movie or television series that addresses some aspect of human sexuality. After reviewing the movie or TV series (individually or as a group), students will meet as a group and reflect on the questions provided. Below is a list of possible films or TV series but you can choose whatever you like. If you choose a TV series, you only need to review one season. Everyone must review the same entire season of the TV series or the film before participating in the discussion.

- |                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Transparent             | Kinsey             |
| Philadelphia            | Brokeback Mountain |
| Boys Don't Cry          | Boys on the Side   |
| Call me By Your Name    | Game of Thrones    |
| Orange is the New Black | Saved!             |
| Big Love                | The L Word         |
| Queer as Folk           | Transgeneration    |
| Sixteen and Pregnant    | Teen Mom           |
| Masters of Sex          | Californication    |
| Insecure                | Juno               |
| Moonlight               | Bessie             |
| Naz and Maalik          | Loving             |
| Love, Simon             | Carol              |
| The Danish Girl         | Milk               |

**Questions to respond to:**

1. What were your reactions (thoughts and feelings) to watching the film/TV series?
2. Which of the key characters did you identify most with and why?
3. What did you learn about \_\_\_\_\_ from viewing the film/television series that you were not previously aware of?
4. How does the media typically portray \_\_\_\_\_? What myths and truths are evident in common media portrayals of \_\_\_\_\_?
5. How might media portrayals impact how counselors approach working with \_\_\_\_\_?
6. Pick one character you would most like to work with. Explain why you would want to work with this character. What specific issues would you expect that person to bring to counseling? How would you go about addressing the identified issues?
7. Pick one character you would least like to work with. Explain why you would not want to work with this character. What specific issues would you expect that person to bring to counseling? What would you do if this person sought counseling from you?
8. What else would you want to learn or experience in order to effectively work with \_\_\_\_\_?
9. Do you think it is in the best interest of persons seeking counseling related to \_\_\_\_\_ to select a counselor who has/had similar life experiences or does it not matter? Why?
10. How will watching this improve your ability to address \_\_\_\_\_ in counseling? Why?

You and your group members will create a presentation (10-15 minutes in length) addressing at least 5 of the 10 questions you answered from above. Your presentation can take any creative form you would like- you may create a video, poster, PowerPoint, dance, skit- anything that helps you present your ideas! Presentations will be given on the last day of class. Your final submissions will include (1) your 10 answered questions as a group and (2) handout materials for the class to follow along with during your presentation.