

**Graduate School of Public Health  
Department of Human Genetics  
INTERVENTION SKILLS IN GENETIC COUNSELING  
HUMAN GENETICS 2038  
Tuesday 11AM-12PM &  
Thursday 9:45-11:45AM  
3121C Public Health  
Credit Hours: 3.0  
Spring Semester 2020**

**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:**

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 divided into three areas: pediatric, cancer and adult genetic counseling (prenatal was covered during last semester). The pediatric and adult genetic counseling classes will focus on important issues to consider when working with children and adults, and the cancer genetic counseling classes will provide you with foundational information important for counseling individuals in a cancer setting. In addition to these areas, we will 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 weaknesses as you begin to enter your clinical rotations.

**Text Books**

***Required Text:***

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

**Highly Recommended Texts:**

LeRoy, B., McCarthy Veach, P., and Bartels, D., Genetic Counseling Practice, advanced concepts and skills. (2010) WILEY.

**Recommended Texts:**

P McCarthy Veach, BS LeRoy, D Bartels. (2003). *Facilitating the Genetic Counseling Process*. Springer.

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

**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](http://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.

A comprehensive description of the services of that office can be obtained at [www.drs.pitt.edu](http://www.drs.pitt.edu).

**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 professor, I am required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct that are directly reported to me, or of which I am 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:

[www.titleix.pitt.edu/report/confidentiality](http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report/confidentiality)

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: [www.titleix.pitt.edu/report-0](http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report-0)

Statement from the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies  
[This statement was developed by Katie Pope, Title IX Coordinator, in conjunction with GSWS instructors.]

### **Diversity Statement:**

The University of Pittsburgh Graduate 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. 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 instructor;
- the Pitt Public Health Associate Dean for Diversity at 412-624-3506 or [nam137@pitt.edu](mailto:nam137@pitt.edu);
- the University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion at 412-648-7860 or <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/make-report/report-form> (anonymous reporting form).

This course covers multi-dimensional academic topics. You are expected to share your views and be respectful of others' opinions. This will ensure a learning environment that values diverse experiences and expertise, which will facilitate Pitt Public Health's collaborative approach to solving problems.

### **Student Performance Evaluation:**

Your grade for the course is based upon the grades you receive on the assignments, midterm exam, and final exam. Each exam is 100 points and the total number of points for the assignments is 150 for a total of 350 points. Since you are not graded on a curve, you will not be competing with one another for a grade. Therefore, we encourage you to help each other achieve the best work you are capable of producing. Working with one another to achieve mastery of the material will help you learn with greater ease and enjoyment.

### **Grading Scale:**

97-100%	A+	77-79%	C+
93-96%	A	73-76%	C
90-92%	A-	70-72%	C-
87-89%	B+	67-69%	D+
83-86%	B	63-66%	D
80-82%	B-	60-62%	D-
		<60	F

**Late Work Policy**

Work that is turned in late without prior approval from the instructor(s) will result in 5% of the points for the assignment being deducted for each day the assignment is late. Students with extenuating or emergency situations should contact the instructor(s) as soon as possible, and preferably before the due date to make arrangements for assignments.

**Attendance**

Attendance is not taken for this class; however, ongoing and active participation in class discussions and projects is important for student learning, and students are encouraged to attend all class sessions unless excused by the course instructor(s).

**Schedule of Sessions:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Class Topic</b>	<b>Lecturer(s)</b>	<b>Readings</b>
T 1/7/2020	Introduction to clinical genetic counseling and community resources. View “Best Boy” and “Best Man” at home	Robin Grubs, PhD Andrea Durst, DrPH	Uhlmann Ch. 4
R 1/9/2020	Starting a Session: Small talk and Contracting  Cancer Genetic Counseling I: Basic Principles of Oncology	Robin Grubs, PhD Andrea Durst, DrPH  Phuong Mai, MD, MS	Uhlmann Ch. 3  Handouts and Articles  LeRoy, Veach & Bartels Ch. 1-4
T 1/14/2020	Empathy	Robin Grubs, PhD Andrea Durst, DrPH	Veach, LeRoy & Bartels (Facilitating the GC Process) Ch. 3-4*
R 1/16/2020	Cancer Genetic Counseling II	TBD	
T 1/21/2020	Elements of a Cancer Genetic Counseling Session	Alyson Evans	
R 1/23/2020	Cancer Genetic Counseling III	TBD	
T 1/28/2020	Elements of a Prenatal Genetic Counseling Session	Vickie Bacon Rose Venier	
R 1/30/2020	Palliative Care & Early Intervention	Robin Grubs, PhD Andrea Durst, DrPH	
T 2/4/2020	Elements of a Pediatric Genetic Counseling Session	Ashley Lahr Christine Drogan	
R 2/6/2020	Counseling for Pediatric and Adult Cases	Robin Grubs, PhD Sarah Drewes, MS	Handouts Uhlmann Ch. 8  Recommended: Weil Ch. 6, pages 181-211
Definitions Assignment Due 2/6/2020 by midnight			
T 2/11/2020	Discussing Risk with Patients	Robin Grubs, PhD	Uhlmann Ch. 7

		Andrea Durst, DrPH	
R 2/13/2020	Bereavement Counseling I	Andrea Durst, DrPH	Handouts Uhlmann Ch. 5 LeRoy, Veach & Bartels Ch. 5-6
T 2/18/2020	Interviewing Techniques	Robin Grubs, PhD Andrea Durst, DrPH	Review Uhlmann Ch. 3
R 2/20/2020	Bereavement Counseling II	Robin Grubs, PhD	Handouts View or Read <i>Ordinary People</i>
T 2/25/2020	Genetic Counseling for Patients with Intellectual Disabilities	Robin Grubs, PhD Andrea Durst, DrPH	LeRoy, Veach & Bartels Ch. 12
R 2/27/2020	Midterm	Robin Grubs, PhD Andrea Durst, DrPH	
T 3/3/2020	Introduction to Clinical Rotations- Clinical Site Supervisors	TBD	
R 3/5/2020	Individual Assessment	Robin Grubs, PhD	Handouts LeRoy, Veach & Bartels Ch. 7-8
Spina Bifida Letter Due 3/5/2020 by midnight			
T 3/10/2020	No Class		
R 3/12/2020	No Class		
T 3/17/2020	Preparation for simulations	Robin Grubs, PhD Andrea Durst, DrPH	Review Uhlmann Ch. 8  Uhlmann Ch. 9,12  LeRoy, Veach & Bartels Ch. 3 and 9-11  Recommended: Weil Ch. 6
R 3/19/2020	Intervention	Robin Grubs, PhD	
Case Reports Due 3/19/2020 by midnight			
T 3/24/2020	Preparation for simulations (cont.)	Robin Grubs, PhD Andrea Durst, DrPH	
R 3/26/2020	Introduction to Clinical Rotations-	TBD	

	Clinical Site Supervisors		
T 3/31/2020	Transference and Countertransference	Robin Grubs, PhD Andrea Durst, DrPH	McCarthy, Veach & LeRoy Ch. 12*
<b>R 4/2/2020 9:30a-1p</b>	Simulation I Rooms TBD		
T 4/7/2020	Delivering Difficult News	Robin Grubs, PhD	
<b>R 4/9/2020 9:30a-1p</b>	Simulation II Rooms TBD		
Support Group Papers due 4/9/2020 by midnight			
T 4/14/2020	Introduction to Clinical Rotations- Clinical Site Supervisors	TBD	
<b>R 4/16/2020 9:30a-1p</b>	Simulation III Rooms TBD		
T 4/21/2020	Clinical Rotations: What to Expect	Robin Grubs, PhD Andrea Durst, DrPH	
<b>R 4/23/2020 9:30a-1p</b>	Simulation IV Robin's and Andrea's offices		

\* If you do not have this book, please see instructors for chapter copies

Final exam-Your final will be a take home exam and can be scheduled any time after 4/7/2020.

## **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. Communicate complex genetic and medical information to clients and the public.
3. Identify and practice the skills associated with providing genetic counseling in prenatal, pediatric, and adult cases.
4. Describe the grieving process and explain its importance to patients in genetic counseling sessions.
5. Demonstrate the process of client assessment and various counseling interventions.
6. Initiate and conduct a genetic counseling session.

## **Assignments:**

All assignments should be turned in via Canvas by the due dates indicated in the class schedule. Should a due date be problematic, please let us know as there is some flexibility in the scheduling of the due dates. All file names should follow the format LASTNAME.ASSIGNMENT (i.e. Durst.Definitions.doc). When possible, documents should be in Word or PowerPoint format (it is harder to add comments in pdf documents).

## **Support Group Experience and Paper 40 Points**

Learning Objective 1: Describe community resources available to clients and their family members.

Instructions: You will visit a local support group at some point during the semester. After your visit you will write a short paper (1-2 pages) describing and assessing your experience, the dynamics of the group, and how this experience will inform your future practice of a genetic counselor.

## **Definitions Assignment 40 Points**

Learning Objective 2: Communicate complex genetic and medical information to clients and the public.

Learning Objective 3: Identify and practice the skills associated with providing genetic counseling in prenatal, pediatric, and adult cases.

Instructions: You will be given a list of terms related to prenatal and cancer genetic testing. You will write a paragraph describing each term as you would describe them to a client who has a high school degree and who has a very limited knowledge of prenatal testing.

**Patient Letter: Spina Bifida**  
**30 Points**

Learning Objective 1: Describe community resources available to clients and their family members.

Learning Objective 2: Communicate complex genetic and medical information to clients and the public.

Learning Objective 3: Identify and practice the skills associated with providing genetic counseling in prenatal, pediatric, and adult cases.

Instructions: You will write a letter to a couple who has sought your services as a genetic counselor because they had a previous child with spina bifida based on a short clinical scenario (provided in the assignment module in Canvas). You must discuss issues such as the recurrence risk and available prenatal testing options.

**Genetic Counseling Case Studies**  
**40 Points**

Learning Objective 1: Describe community resources available to clients and their family members.

Learning Objective 2: Communicate complex genetic and medical information to clients and the public.

Learning Objective 3: Identify and practice the skills associated with providing genetic counseling in prenatal, pediatric, and adult cases.

Learning Objective 5: Demonstrate the process of client assessment and various counseling interventions.

Learning Objective 6: Initiate and conduct a genetic counseling session.

Instructions: You will be assigned cases to research and determine diagnoses based on medical summaries. You will write a case report and a one page genetic counseling session outline for the initial genetic counseling appointment with each patient/family. Additional instructions are available in the assignment module in Canvas.

## **Patient Simulations**

Learning Objective 1: Describe community resources available to clients and their family members.

Learning Objective 2: Communicate complex genetic and medical information to clients and the public.

Learning Objective 3: Identify and practice the skills associated with providing genetic counseling in prenatal, pediatric, and adult cases.

Learning Objective 4: Describe the grieving process and explain its importance to patients in genetic counseling sessions.

Learning Objective 5: Demonstrate the process of client assessment and various counseling interventions.

Learning Objective 6: Initiate and conduct a genetic counseling session.

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 two class sessions on preparation for simulations. Cases will be made available in the assignment module on Canvas. While required, there is no grade for patient simulations.