

**Psy 3450 Introduction to Child Life Practice and Theory**  
**Dixie State University**  
**Fall 2014**

**Instructor:** Michael Robertson CCLS  
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**Office Hours:** By Appointment  
**Class Time:** Tuesdays, 5:15 pm – 7:45 pm  
**Class Location:** McDonald Building 102

**Course Description**

This course is designed as an introductory class for persons who want to know more about the psychosocial needs of infants, children, adolescents and families who experience health care. This course will teach techniques helpful in minimizing the potential emotional trauma of childhood health care, and in aiding children and families in effectively coping with health care situations. It is designed for those who plan on entering the profession of as a child life specialist. However, many of the skills taught can be applied to those who will be, or are currently, working with children and families in any type of helping relationship. Parents who are not involved in professional helping relationships with children and families may also benefit from this course. During this course students will learn about the following topics:

- Family and social issues involved with childhood healthcare;
- Developmental factors for each age group and how they interface with illness, injury and healthcare;
- Characteristics of ‘total institutions’ such as hospitals;
- The impact of social and family values on concepts and practice related to health care;
- Typical responses of infants, children and adolescents to illness, injury and healthcare;
- Overview of the child life role on the pediatric healthcare team;
- Family centered care principles and theory
- Establishing and maintaining supportive relationships;
- The therapeutic use of listening skills and empathy;
- Developing assessment skills of child life professionals;
- Psychological preparation techniques for health care experiences;
- Effective communication with children and families about health care experiences through the use of soft language;
- Using play as a therapeutic tool in multiple applications
- Value of a “therapeutic playroom” to provide a healing environment;
- Value clarification/culturally sensitive care, diversity;
- Learning the value and application Relaxation and coping strategies;
- A review of The Official Documents of the Child Life Council

## **Course Text**

Thompson, D (2009). The Handbook of Child Life. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C Thomas Publisher.

Other articles and readings will be distributed through the course of the class.

## **Course Requirements**

Please do not cheat. Following the student code, I adopt a zero-tolerance policy for academic misconduct in this course. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information. It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct. Please also note that you may not submit an assignment for this class that has been previously submitted for another course. Do your own work unless the assignment is a group assignment. Any student who is found cheating will be subject to disciplinary action that may result in failure of the course or expulsion. If you have any questions, please refer to the Student Code in the Dixie State University Student handbook at <http://www.dixie.edu/humanres/policy/sec3/334.html> or [www.dixie.edu/humanres/policy/sec5/533.html](http://www.dixie.edu/humanres/policy/sec5/533.html).

If students miss a class period they do not need to inform the instructor of their absence and are directly responsible for getting the information presented from other students. Please note that there are experiential, in-class exercises and assignments. Exams and quizzes may not be taken late, but exams may be taken early if acceptable arrangements can be made. The final exam must be taken as scheduled for our class. Due to the amount of material covered during this semester, the instructor cannot review material from class presentation with students on an individual basis.

It is expected that students will maintain a respectful and civil atmosphere during class meetings. I expect students to prevent disruptions by turning off and refraining from use of cell phones, and by putting away extraneous reading materials. Use of laptop computers is not allowed without the instructor's permission. Side conversations during class will result in loss of points at the instructor's discretion.

## **Students with Disabilities:**

"If you are a student with a medical, psychological or a learning difference and requesting reasonable academic accommodations due to this disability, you must provide an official request of accommodation to your professor(s) from the Disability Resource Center *within the first two weeks of the beginning of classes*. Students are to contact the center on the main campus to follow through with, and receive assistance in the documentation process to determine the appropriate accommodations related to their disability."

You may call (435) 652-7516 for an appointment and further information regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 per Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The DRC office is located right next to the Testing Center in the North Plaza.

### **Free Outside Help:**

- Library - <http://library.dixie.edu>
- Writing Center - [http://dixie.edu/english/dsc\\_writing\\_center.php](http://dixie.edu/english/dsc_writing_center.php)
- Testing Center - <http://dixie.edu/testing>
- Tutoring Center - <http://dsc.dixie.edu/tutoring>

### **Class Assignments**

#### **Student Bio (25 points)**

Students will email the instructor a complete biographical sketch on themselves. Students will answer the following questions: Name, major and course of study, year in school, short term educational goals, long term educational goals, what they plan to do with their education, what they see themselves during five years from now, how this class will benefit them and what grade they expect to get in class.

This paper must be a minimum of two pages long, using 1.5 spacing, one inch margins and Times New Roman 12 point font.

#### **CLS History Class Presentation (50 points)**

This in-class assignment will help students to become familiar with the history and personalities that helped to shape the child life profession. Students will join together into groups to formulate a 10 – 15 minute discussion on a section of child life history handed out by the instructor. Students will be graded on their participation and their content which is presented and discussed.

#### **Class Discussion Questions (10 points for each week totaling 130 points)**

Class members will come prepared with three unanswered questions from the readings. They will use these questions as a way to promote topic discussion each class period. Questions will be turned in each week before class begins AND brought to class to be used during Topic Discussion.

#### **Family Health Estate Paper (100 points)**

Students will describe their health conceptions and behaviors based on values formed, and learning that took place in their family of origin. Specific factors to be included and considered in this analysis will be presented and discussed in class. No specific length of paper is designated. However, most students thoroughly cover this topic in approximately 8 – 12 double spaced pages. Details of this paper will be discussed in class.

#### **Soft Language Assignment (25 points)**

- In this exercise, students will be given several potentially threatening or confusing/ambiguous medical terms and/or phrases children might hear during a health care experience. Students

will then provide terms and phrases utilizing soft language as found in reading materials and class discussion.

### **Stress Vulnerability Assessments (25 points)**

- Students will work in teams using their knowledge from reading and class to properly assess five different patients and families using the Stress Vulnerability tool.
- A write up of each case study will be turned in for each team with their names on the report.

### **Personal Boundaries/Values Assessment (25 points)**

This in-class assignment will help students explore their motivations and limits in personal and professional settings. Each class member will complete the assignment independent of others first and then gather in groups to discuss what they learned about themselves.

### **Midterm Exam (100 points)**

- The midterm will test your knowledge and understanding of all of the principles and theories learned since the beginning of class. The test will consist of essay, short answer and multiple choice questions.

### **Final Exam (100 points)**

- The Final Exam will test your knowledge and understanding of all of the principles and theories and skills learned since the beginning of class. The test will consist of short answers, case study assessments and multiple choice questions.

### **Class Assignment Requirements**

Whether assignments are turned in electronically or handed in you will be scored on your grammar and legibility as well as the actual assignment content of each paper. All papers, except those written in class are to be turned in through Canvas on or before the due date.

Papers that are turned in late will be docked 10% of your grade for each day it is overdue.

### **COURSE GRADING SYSTEM**

**Total Points in Course = 580**

**Percentage (%) Letter Grade**

100-93 = A

92-90 = A-

89-87 = B+

86-83 = B

82-80 = B-

79-77 = C+

76-73 = C

72-70 = C-

69-67 = D+

66-63 = D  
62-60 = D-  
Less than 60 = F

## **Class Schedule**

### **August 26<sup>th</sup> - Introduction to Class/Syllabus**

- Introduction to class semester
- Child development review test
- Child Life Specialist Pre-Test
- Child development refresher
- **Assignment:** Student Biography
- **Readings:**
  - Chapter One of Thompson textbook
  - APA Child Life Policy Statement

### **September 2<sup>nd</sup> - History of Child Life and Overview of Child Life Profession**

- History
- Child Life Services
- Scope of Practice
- Certification Requirements
- **Assignment:** CLS History Class Presentation
- **Readings:**
  - Chapter 2 of Thompson textbook
  - Chapter 13 of Thompson textbook

### **September 9<sup>th</sup> - The Effects of Hospitalization on Children and Families**

- Ecological theory of health care family dynamics
- Infant Developmental health care fears and concerns
- Toddler Developmental health care fears and concerns
- Acute vs chronic
- Effects of Hospitalization on families and pediatric patients
- **Readings:**
  - Chapter 4 of Thompson Textbook
  - Fleitas, Joan (1997). To Tell the Truth: Children Reflect on Hospital Care. Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing, 20:195-206, 1997
  - Wright, MC (1995). Behavioral effects of hospitalization in children. Journal of Paediatric and Children's Health, 31, 165-167.

### **September 16<sup>th</sup> - The Effects of Hospitalization on Children and Families**

- Preschooler Developmental health care fears and concerns

- School-age developmental health care fears and concerns
- Adolescent developmental health care fears and concerns
- **Readings:**
  - Chapter 5 of Thompson textbook

### **September 23rd - Foundations of Supportive Relationships and Professional Communication**

- Self-Reflective Questions – found in Help! I need Somebody, Help! Not just Anybody
- Listening/Empathy/Centering
- Communication with Patients, Families and other Health care professionals
- Interdisciplinary team dynamics
- Soft language usage
- Person first language
- Working with Children
- Being with vs. Doing for
- Supportive care vs curing care
- The human experience of suffering
- When Bad Things Happen to Good People
- **Assignment:** Soft language write-up
- **Readings:**
  - Chapter 6 of Thompson textbook
  - Child Life Council Evidence Based Practice Statement on Psychosocial assessment. <http://www.childlife.org/files/EBPAssessmentStatement-Complete.pdf>

### **September 30th - Family Centered Care and the Family Health Estate**

- Nine Components of Family Centered Care
- The Family Health Estate
- **Assignment:** Family Health Estate Paper
- **Readings:**
  - Chapter 7 of Thompson textbook

### **October 7th - Stress Vulnerability Assessment and Mid-term Review**

- Assess, Plan, Intervention, Evaluation
- Health care Variables
- Child and Family Variables
- Stress point potential
- Plan flexibility
- Providing meaningful interventions
- The importance of evaluation in a psychosocial plan
- Review of Mid-Term Exam Material

- **In-Class Assignment:** Stress Vulnerability Assessment
- **Readings:**
  - Exam material review

### October 14<sup>th</sup> - **Mid-Term Exam**

- Essay/short answer/multiple choice exam from readings and class presentations.
- **Readings:**
  - Chapter 9 of Thompson textbook
  - Stephens, B, Barkey, M, Hall, H (1999). Techniques to comfort children during stressful procedures. *Advances in Mind-Body Medicine*. 15, 49-60

### October 21<sup>st</sup> - **Child and Family Coping**

- Comfort Positioning
- The power of distraction
- The importance of procedural support
- Validation vs reassurance
- The supportive relationship
- Using what has been used in the past
- Understanding the developmental issues of the child
- Being an advocate
- **Readings:**
  - McGuigan, F, Salmon, K (2005). Pre-event discussion and recall of a novel event: how are children best prepared? *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, Vol. 91, Issue 4, 342 -366
  - Child Life Council Evidence Based Practice Statement: Preparing children and Adolescence for medical procedures, <http://www.childlife.org/files/EBPPreparationStatement-Complete.pdf>
  - Chen, E, Zeltzer, L, Craske, M, Katz, E (1999). Alteration of memory in the reduction of children's distress during repeated aversive medical procedures. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, August 1, 1999, Vol 67, Issue 4
  - Benefits of Psychologically Preparing Young Patients for Health Care Experiences – handout
  - Medical Play: What To Do When – Handout

### October 27<sup>th</sup> - **Psychological Preparation**

- Evidenced Based Practice with psychological preparation
- Sequence, Duration and Sensory Info
- Rehearsing and the work of worry
- **Due:** Family Health Estate Paper
- **Readings:**

- Chapter 8 in Thompson textbook
- Child Life Council Evidence Based Practice Statement on Therapeutic Play.  
<http://www.childlife.org/files/EBPPlayStatement-Complete.pdf>
- Axline's eight client focused principles of play

#### November 4<sup>th</sup> - **Therapeutic Play**

- Developmental Issues of Play
- Paradigms of Play
- Types and modalities of play
- Directed vs. non-directed play
- The Child's Sailboat Analogy
- Axline's eight client focused principles of play relationships
- Landreth's play principles and techniques
- **Readings:**
  - The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds -  
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/119/1/182.full.pdf+html>
  - Moore, M, Russ, S (2006). Pretend Play as a Resource for Children: Implications for Pediatricians and Health Professionals. *Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*, Vol. 27, No. 3, June 2006
  - Betz, C, Poster, E (1984). Incorporating play into the care of the hospitalized child. *Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing*, 7:343-355, 1984
  - The Use of Stuffed, Body-Outline Dolls with Hospitalized Children and Adolescents - <http://d1bss1pd495w5k.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/The-Use-of-Stuffed-Body-Outline-Dolls-with-Hospitalized-Children-and-Adolescents.pdf>

#### November 11<sup>th</sup> - **Therapeutic Play Cont. and Expressive Interventions**

- Expressive Play In Health Care
- Expression Art in Health Care
- **Assignment:** Expressive Art write-up
- **Readings:**
  - Chapter 14 of Thompson textbook
  - The Role of Child Life in Pediatric Pain Management: A Survey of Child Life Specialists - <http://kythe.org/site/wp-content/themes/kythe/resources/role-of-child-life-in-pediatric-pain-management.pdf>

#### November 18<sup>th</sup> - **Behavioral Pain Management**

- How Pain works (Gateway Theory of Pain)
- Developmental responses to pain and behavioral treatments



- Relaxation and Guided Imagery Exercise
- **Readings:**
  - Chapter 11 of Thompson textbook
  - Chapter 12 of Thompson textbook

**November 25<sup>th</sup> - Death and Dying with Children and Families and Self-Care**

- Developmental issues with death and dying
- Bereavement Support and interventions
- The value and importance of continued self-care
- **Readings:**
  - Sherman, Sandra A., McCuskey-Shepley, Mardelle and Varni, James W. (2005). "Children's Environments and Health-Related Quality of Life: Evidence Informing Pediatric Healthcare Environmental Design." *Children, Youth and Environments* 15(1): 186-223. Retrieved [date] from <http://www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/>.
  - Official Documents of the Child Life Council

**December 2<sup>nd</sup> - Healing Environments and Official Documents of the Child Life Council**

- Physical space and emotional health
- Official Documents of the Child Life Council Overview
- **Readings:**
  - Rushton, C, McEnhill, M, Armstrong, L (1996). Establishing therapeutic boundaries as patient advocates. *Pediatric Nursing*, May-June, Vol. 22, No. 3

**December 9<sup>th</sup> - Charting/Documentation and Professional Boundaries/Final Exam Review**

- The importance of charting and documenting
- Maintaining healthy professional relationships
- Final Exam Review
- **In class Assignment:** Personal Values Assessment
- **Readings:**
  - Final Exam Review

**December 16<sup>th</sup> - Final Exam**