



COUN 5523 Counseling Individuals through Crisis, Grief, and Trauma
Midwestern State University
Gordon T. & Ellen West College of Education
Fall 2026

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Kayla Bryant, PhD, LPC
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Instructor Response Policy

During the week (Monday – Friday) I will respond within 24 hours. Do not expect a response from me on holidays and weekends. As professionals, it is important that we implement boundaries around home and work and model good self-care. Please try to ask your questions before the weekend.

Course Description

The purpose of counseling individuals through crisis, grief, and trauma is to provide students an overview of resources, tools, theories, and techniques to assist clients in dealing with trauma, grief, and crisis.

Course Expectations

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program, its faculty, and its students adhere to the University Code of Conduct, State of Texas licensure laws and regulations, and the American Counseling Association's (2014) *Code of Ethics*. The program has a professional responsibility to ensure that all students display ethical, professional, and personal behaviors that comply with these guidelines. Students are strongly encouraged to review, understand, and consult the [American Counseling Association website](#) for details related to these guidelines.

Department of Counseling students are expected to demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior, consistent with their counselor-in-training roles. Counselors-in-training are expected to convey attentiveness and respect in all professional and classroom settings.

Online Etiquette: It is expected that students use formal, professional language when corresponding online. It is expected that you use complete sentences,

address one another with respect, follow the American Counseling Association's (2014) *Code of Ethics*, and treat all members of the class with respect.

Inclusivity: It is my intent to present material and activities that are respectful of different backgrounds. My intent is that students from all perspectives and backgrounds be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the differences that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. Your suggestions about how to improve the value of inclusion in this course are encouraged and appreciated.

Confidentiality: Upholding confidentiality is a major responsibility of the student. Anything discussed during supervision, online in this class, or shared by individual students about themselves is considered confidential. Please do not share any information shared to you by other students.

The MSU Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling programs require at least a B average. Cs are unacceptable, and more than 2 Cs will put you in danger of being removed from the program. Please consult the Student Handbook for more information.

CACREP Standards

- 3.C.13 Effects of crises, disasters, stress, grief, and trauma across the lifespan
- 3.C.14 Effects of biological, neurological, and physiological factors on human development, functioning, and behavior
- 3.E.1 Theories and models of counseling
- 3.E.2 Critical thinking and reasoning strategies for clinical judgment in the counseling process
- 3.E.3 Case conceptualization skills using a variety of models and approaches
- 3.E.8 Counselor characteristics, behaviors, and strategies that facilitate effective counseling relationships
- 3.E.9 Interviewing, attending, and listening skills in the counseling process
- 3.E.10 Counseling strategies and techniques used to facilitate the client change process
- 3.E.11 Strategies for adapting and accommodating the counseling process to client culture, context, abilities, and preferences
- 3.E.12 Goal consensus and collaborative decision-making in the counseling process
- 3.E.15 Evidence-based counseling strategies and techniques for prevention and intervention
- 3.E.20 Crisis intervention, trauma-informed, community-based, and disaster mental health strategies
- 3.G.6 Ethical and culturally relevant strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and test results
- 3.G.11 Diagnostic processes, including differential diagnosis and current diagnostic classification systems

- 3.G.14 Procedures for assessing clients' experience of trauma
 3.H.2 Identification and evaluation of the evidence base for counseling theories, interventions, and practices

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Duffey, T., & Haberstroh, S. (2020). *Introduction to Crisis and Trauma Counseling*. American Counseling Association.
 Worden, J. W. (2018). *Grief counseling and grief therapy: A handbook for the mental health practitioner*. Springer Publishing Company, LLC.

Recommended Text

Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and Recovery*. New York: Basic Books.

*This text is not required but is highly recommended, as it provides an excellent description of trauma treatment.

Grading

All written assignments must be submitted via D2L. All work must be completed using proper citations and APA formatting.

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
Discussion Boards (15 at 5 pts each)	15
Window of Tolerance Exercise	20
Trauma Theory Comparison Paper	30
Grief Paper	35
Total Points	100

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	59 or below

Discussion Boards (15pts.)

Students will complete discussion board posts related to the weekly reading. On selected weeks, students will be required to answer questions about the reading or be asked to reflect on a particular topic for that week. If there is a discussion, students are required to participate and comment on at least one other person's

thread. *The assignments and weekly comments are due by Sunday at 11:59 pm at the end of the week, aside for the last week. *In the final week of this course, everything is due on Thursday. Follow directions to get full points each week. Late discussion board posts will not be accepted.
CACREP: 3.B.4, 3.C.13, 3.E.2, 3.E.3, 3.E.9, 3.E.20, 3.G.14

Window of Tolerance Exercise (20pts)

Students will engage in an experiential exercise in which they learn about the Window of Tolerance and reflect on their own responses to the regulation strategies. Students will apply the Window of Tolerance framework to a vignette. Students will then write a 2 page paper describing how they can use the Window of Tolerance to conceptualize clients, use it as a framework for clients in session, and use it for their own regulation in session. APA formatting and citations are required. Late work will result in a 10% grade deduction.
CACREP: 3.C.13, 3.E.2, 3.E.3, 3.E.8, 3.E.15, 3.E.20

See Appendix A

Trauma Theory Comparison Paper (30pts)

Students will compare two theories; one they are familiar with to a new theory they have not yet been trained in. Students will examine how to apply theories to align with important facets of trauma work, including safety, autonomy, and effectiveness. Students will consider how each theory influences treatment decisions and outcomes.
CACREP: 3.A.11, 3.B.4, 3.B.8, 3.B.9, 3.C.13, 3.D.2, 3.E.1, 3.E.2, 3.E.8, 3.E.10, 3.E.20

See Appendix B

Grief Paper (35pts)

Students will be given resources to analyze a fictional client through an intake interview. Students will read through their intake interview psychosocial and write a paper dissecting and assessing the fictional client. Students will address possible areas of concern, strengths, weaknesses, safety considerations, two possible diagnoses, treatment planning, a case conceptualization, self-care, and a reflection. Students will discuss possible DSM-5 TR diagnoses using correct in-text citations and listing the source on the reference page. Students will also write about how they would approach working with the client and any possible challenges they might face while working with the client. Students will follow the template given in D2L and will use the fictional client provided. Papers must be academically written with appropriate grammar. Please use appropriate APA 7 formatting.

CACREP 3.A.3, 3.A.11, 3.E.17, 3.G.6, 3.H.2, 3.G.11, 5.C.1

See Appendix C

Course Schedule:

Important: This course's weeks start on a Monday and end on Sunday for each week except for the Final Week! During the final week, everything is due on ***Thursday, October 15th**. Please plan accordingly.

Class Dates	Class Topics	Assignments/ Readings
Week 1 Monday, August 24, 2026 – Sunday, August 30, 2026	Introduction to Trauma Syllabus Review Read Duffey & Haberstroh Chapter 1 and Chapter 4 Watch Window of Tolerance Videos Recommended: Read Herman Chapter 1	Read assigned chapters, watch assigned videos Nothing is due this week
Week 2 Monday, August 31, 2026 – Sunday, September 6, 2026 *3.C.13, 3.E.2, 3.E.3, 3.E.8, 3.E.15, 3.E.20	Trauma and Relational Attachment Read Duffey & Haberstroh Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 Recommended: Read Herman Chapter 3 and Chapter 7	Read assigned chapters • Discussion board post and reply *due by Sunday, September 6 • Window of Tolerance assignment *due by Sunday, September 6
Week 3 Monday, September 7, 2026 – Sunday, September 13, 2026 Labor Day Monday September 7, 2026	Special Issues in Trauma Read Duffey & Haberstroh Chapter 1 and Chapter 4 Recommended: Read Herman Chapter 1: A Forgotten History	Read assigned chapters Nothing is due this week
Week 4 Monday, September 14, 2026 – September 20, 2026 *3.B.4, 3.C.13, 3.E.2, 3.E.3, 3.E.9, 3.E.20, 3.G.14	Assessment in Trauma Read Duffey & Haberstroh Chapter 6 Review trauma assessments: ACES, PCL-5, DES II, and IES-R	Read assigned chapters • Discussion board post and reply *due by Sunday, September 20
Week 5 Monday September 21, 2026 - September 27, 2026 *3.A.11, 3.B.4, 3.B.8, 3.B.9, 3.C.13, 3.D.2, 3.E.1, 3.E.2, 3.E.8, 3.E.10, 3.E.20	Treatment of Trauma Read Duffey & Haberstroh Chapter 5 and Chapter 15 Recommended: Read Herman Chapter 8, Chapter 9, and Chapter 10	Read assigned chapters • Trauma Theory Comparison Paper *due by Sunday, September 27

Week 6 Monday, September 28, 2026 - October 4, 2026	Introduction to Grief Read Worden Chapters 1-3	Read assigned chapters Nothing is due this week
Week 7 Monday, October 5, 2026 – October 11, 2026	Treatment of Grief Read Worden Chapters 4-6	Read assigned chapters • Discussion board post and reply *due by Sunday, October 11
Week 8 Monday, October 12, 2026 – Friday, October 16, 2026 *3.A.3, 3.A.11, 3.E.17, 3.G.6, 3.H.2, 3.G.11, 5.C.1	Special Issues in Grief Read Worden Chapters 7-10	Read assigned chapters • Grief Client Paper *due by Thursday, October 15

Late Work

Late discussion boards will not be accepted. There will be a 10% deduction on all other late work.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information.

Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Important Dates

- Last day for term schedule changes: Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Deadline to file for graduation: Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ****Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.*** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. ****Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!*** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Emergency Aid Resources for Basic Needs

Unexpected life circumstances can affect anyone. If you are experiencing challenges meeting basic needs—such as housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, technology, textbooks or other life necessities, resources may be available to help. Visit the [Student Emergency Support and Resources webpage](#) to learn more, and explore emergency support opportunities through MSU and how to access them. For additional information, please contact the Office of Student Affairs: Clark Student Center #108, (940) 397-7500, student.affairs@mstuexas.edu.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Grade Appeal Process

Midwestern State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. State and federal law require University employees to report sex discrimination and sexual misconduct to the University’s Office of Title IX. As a faculty member, I am required to report to the Title IX Coordinator any allegations, personally observed behavior, or other direct or indirect knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual

harassment, dating violence, or stalking, involving a student or employee. After a report is made, the office of Title IX will reach out to the affected student or employee in an effort to connect such person(s) with resources and options in addressing the allegations made in the report. You are also encouraged to report any incidents to the office of Title IX. You may do so by contacting:

Laura Hetrick
Title IX Coordinator
Sunwatcher Village Clubhouse
940-397-4213
Laura.hetrick@msutexas.edu

You may also file an online report 24/7 at [Online Reporting Form](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Appendix A

Window of Tolerance Exercise

Grading Rubric

Criterion	Excellent (5)	Proficient (3-4)	Developing (0-2)
Conceptualization	Includes detailed information about conceptualizing the client's sessions using Window of Tolerance	Includes basic information about conceptualization, but lacks depth or complete understanding	Does not include conceptualization or does not provide accurate understanding
Clinical Application	Includes detailed and evidenced based strategies or techniques for regulation in session, using Window of Tolerance as guidance	Includes basic strategies, but lacks depth or appropriate application	Does not include application or does not include evidence-based strategies or techniques
Personal Application	Includes detailed personal reflection on the importance of self-regulation and includes thoughtful strategies for self	Includes basic reflection, but lacks depth or appropriate strategies for self	Does not include reflection or does not provide effective strategies
APA Formatting, Academic Writing, and Grammar	Demonstrates graduate level writing with little to no errors in APA, academic writing, spelling and/or grammar.	Demonstrates graduate level writing with minor errors in APA, academic writing, spelling and/or grammar.	Does not demonstrate graduate level writing and has major errors in APA, academic writing, spelling and/or grammar.

CACREP Standards: 3.C.13, 3.E.2, 3.E.3, 3.E.8, 3.E.15, 3.E.20

Appendix B

Trauma Theory Comparison Paper

Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (5)	Proficient (3-4)	Developing (0-2)
Writing Style and APA	Clear, organized, no APA errors	Clear, mostly organized, minor APA errors	Disorganized, major APA errors
Autonomy	Provides a thorough and accurate understanding of both theories as they relate to autonomy, provides depth of understanding, includes thoughtful analysis and supporting resources	Provides a description on how theories support autonomy but lacks insight and critical analysis	Does not address autonomy or does not provide an accurate description
Safety	Provides a thorough and accurate understanding of both theories as they relate to increasing client safety, provides depth of understanding, includes critical analysis and supporting resources	Provides a description on how theories support safety but lacks insight and critical analysis	Does not address safety or does not provide an accurate description
Client Experience	Provides critical thought and supporting resources regarding client	Description lacks depth of understanding and does not clearly articulate	Does not address client experience or does not provide an

	experience, demonstrates strong client awareness, empathy, and effects of trauma on counseling	how trauma may impact the counseling experience	accurate description
Effectiveness	Provides effectiveness of each theory with depth and accuracy, thoroughly discusses cultural considerations	Provides shallow description of effectiveness and cultural considerations	Does not address effectiveness of both theories and does not address cultural and demographic considerations or provides misinformation
Overview	Provides a thoughtful response to choosing theories and a thorough plan for continued learning	Provides a response that lacks depth and does not provide a thorough plan for continued learning	Does not address the process of choosing theories and continued learning

CACREP: 3.A.11, 3.B.4, 3.B.8, 3.B.9, 3.C.13, 3.D.2, 3.E.1, 3.E.2, 3.E.8, 3.E.10, 3.E.20

Appendix C

Grading Rubric

Criterion	Excellent 5	Proficient 3-4	Developing 2	Unsatisfactory 0-1
Assessment of Client	The student's paper includes detailed information about the client that provides a deep understanding of the client assessed.	The student's paper includes a discussion of basic information about the client in addition to relevant information that creates an understanding of the client assessed.	The student's paper includes basic information about the client, but does not include additional information that provides understanding about the client assessed.	The student's paper does not include basic information about the client assessed.
Ω>Safety Considerations	The student's paper includes a safety consideration section and exceptionally addresses safety planning steps.	The student's paper includes a safety consideration section and adequately addresses safety planning steps.	The student's paper includes a safety consideration section, but does not address safety planning steps.	The student's paper does not include a safety consideration section.
Diagnosis	The student's paper provides three possible diagnoses including exceptionally detailed DSM-V diagnostic codes and symptom information.	The student's paper provides three possible diagnoses including the DSM-V diagnostic codes and symptoms.	The student's paper provides three possible diagnoses but does not include the DSM-V diagnostic codes and symptoms.	The student's paper does not provide possible diagnoses.
Treatment Planning	The student's paper provides exceptionally detailed treatment goals that are directly related to the three possible diagnoses for	The student's paper provides treatment goals that are directly related to the three possible diagnoses for the client assessed.	The student's paper provides treatment plan goals; however, they are not directly related to the three possible diagnoses.	The student's paper does not provide treatment plan goals.

	the client assessed.			
Case Conceptualization	The student's paper includes an exceptionally detailed case conceptualization as well as a counseling theory and counseling techniques for the client assessed.	The student's paper includes a case conceptualization as well as a counseling theory and counseling techniques for the client assessed.	The student's paper includes a basic case conceptualization but does not include a counseling theory or counseling techniques.	The student's paper does not include a case conceptualization.
Self-Care and Reflection	The student's paper includes a self-care and reflection section and exceptionally addresses both self-care and reflection.	The student's paper includes a self-care and reflection section and adequately addresses both self-care and reflection.	The student's paper includes a self-care and reflection section, but does not address both self-care and a reflection.	The student's paper does not include a self-care and reflection section.
APA Formatting, Academic Writing, and Grammar	The student's paper demonstrates graduate level writing with little to no errors in APA, academic writing, spelling and/or grammar.	The student's paper demonstrates graduate level writing with minor errors in APA, academic writing, spelling and/or grammar.	The student's paper demonstrates graduate level writing with moderate errors in APA, academic writing, spelling and/or grammar.	The student's paper does not demonstrate graduate level writing and has major errors in APA, academic writing, spelling and/or grammar.