

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON CLEAR LAKE  
SCHOOL OF HUMAN SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES  
**PRACTICUM IN PEERMENTORING AND LEADERSHIP--PSYCH 4839**  
FALL 2014

|                            |   |   |
|----------------------------|---|---|
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|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Office Hours</b> | Thursdays 3:00-4:00,<br>1:00-2:00 | Mondays 4:00-5:00,<br>Tuesdays 10:00-11:00 |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--|

This Class Emphasizes  
**Communication**  
Connections  
Concepts  
Creativity

**APPLIED CRITICAL THINKING STATEMENT:**

This course has been authorized by UHCL as an Applied Critical Thinking (ACT) Course which means that in addition to learning about the specified course content, students will be engaged with some or all of the Elements of Thought and Universal Intellectual Standards of critical thinking. The objective of an ACT course is to develop the student's ability to become skilled at analysis and evaluation by applying a set of intellectual tools that may be effectively used across all disciplines (as well as to the student's personal life). Based on the Foundation for Critical Thinking model (<http://www.criticalthinking.org/>), critical thinking involves thinking for a purpose, asking questions, using information, applying concepts, drawing inferences and conclusions, identifying assumptions, anticipating implications and consequences, and recognizing points of view. The Universal Intellectual Standards that are applied to these Elements of Thought of critical thinking in order to develop Intellectual Traits include clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This upper level course will focus on applying the tenants of critical thinking to higher education students' success and development through the practice of peer mentoring. Students are selected to participate in this leadership program that focuses on helping our diverse first-year student body succeed at the University of Houston Clear Lake. In this course, students develop the skills to make them effective mentors for first-year students and effective researchers of the best practices in higher education mentoring and leadership. This is a rigorous course in which research from the fields of psychology and higher education into how to best support student success is applied to practice in the context of service learning.

Students will be selected and assigned to support either a section of the PSYCH 1100 Learning Frameworks class or to a designated campus peer mentorship program for approximately 5 contact practicum hours each week with an additional weekly one hour breakout session with all peer mentors for discussion and lectures on best mentorship practices.

Students will think critically about higher education students' success as they:

- develop a broad and deep knowledge of the concepts of student success literature by exploring research on this topic from the disciplines of psychology and higher education
- apply relevant information from this body of knowledge to the practice of peer mentorship
- cultivate fairness by engaging in challenging assumptions about cross- and intra-cultural diversity.

**The central questions for this course are:**

How do we effectively foster critical thinking in the new student?

What are barriers to student success and how do we ameliorate these barriers?

How do we cultivate successful interpersonal and cross-cultural communication?

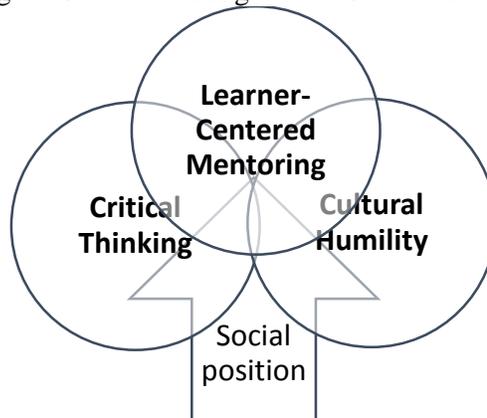
What does effective mentorship look like at UHCL?

**STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** As a member of Freshman Experience Team, practicum students play a crucial role in preparing new students to be active, successful participants in our University. This course is designed to facilitate students in gaining the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to support a productive personal, academic and social transition for new freshman and transfer students to UHCL and will provide students with mentoring skills that will transfer far beyond the university setting. Upon the successful completion of this course, students will develop the competencies necessary for effective mentoring, including:

1. Demonstrating a **BROAD** understanding of the *CONCEPTS* of higher education student success and the needs of underrepresented populations (learner-centered mentoring, critical thinking, cultural humility and social position);
2. Selecting relevant information when they connecting students to resources that support their success and create programs to address the challenges facing some first year students;
3. **CLEARLY** understanding the *IMPLICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES* of critical thinking as they apply the elements of thought and intellectual standards to their evaluation of students' work;
4. Using **FAIRNESS** to challenge *ASSUMPTIONS* about cross and intra-cultural diversity and model cultural humility for their mentees;
5. Students will communicate these outcomes to their team members, their mentees and the university-at-large through enhanced interpersonal and conflict resolution skills, writing and presentations.

**FUNDAMENTAL AND POWERFUL CONCEPTS**

Learner-Centered Mentoring    Critical thinking    Cultural Humility    Social Position



**TEXTS**

Zachary, Lois (2011) *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Wiley: New Jersey.

Pliner, Susan & Cerri Banks (2012) *teaching, learning and intersecting identities in higher education*. Peter Lang: NewYork.

*Students will be expected to familiarize themselves with the readings assigned to The Freshman Seminar (Psyc 1100 Learning Frameworks). Research Articles are available on Blackboard and due the day marked on the syllabus.*

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Participation</i>             | 20% |
| <i>Peer Mentoring Activities</i> | 50% |
| <i>H.W.I.K activity</i>          | 10% |
| <i>Belongingness Project</i>     | 10% |
| Reflection Paper                 | 10% |

### **COURSE OUTLINE & SCHEDULE:**

#### ***Class Participation:* (20%)**

One of the objectives for this course is to develop our ability to communicate with team members, mentees and university-at-large. Thus as we learn the analytic tools that inform this communication through our texts, research and lectures, it is important that we have the opportunity to develop this skill by participating together in class discussions and cultivating our own thoughts and voices.

As a requirement of your position as a peer mentor and to accomplish these important goals:

1. you are expected actively participate in class discussion, activities and exercises in the weekly breakout session. Active participation will include arriving in class having read and thoroughly digested all of the reading. You should reflect on how these materials illuminate your encounters with your mentees each week and come to the breakout session prepared to discuss these thoughts.
2. we will express our ideas in a respectful manner that advances our conversation. We should all consider not only the comments that we want to make, but the overall classroom dynamic: who is speaking more, who less? How might we best contribute to an atmosphere that enables everyone to participate meaningfully? How do we acknowledge and negotiate disagreements? Most importantly, what might a conversation that empowers students and cultivates their sense of belongingness look like? How might we collectively create such a conversation?

**On a practical note, checking email, texting, and surfing are behaviors which do not encourage our conversation and are not permitted during class time.**

#### ***Peer Mentoring Activities:* (50%)**

##### **ACT ACTIVITY (Student Learning Outcome #3)**

CLEARLY understanding the *IMPLICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES* of critical thinking as they apply the elements of thought and intellectual standards to their evaluation of students' work.

As a requirement of your position as peer mentor, you are expected to attend both the breakout session and the Learning Frameworks course or the Peer Mentorship working group to which you are assigned each week. Only absences discussed with the instructor prior to the start of the class session will be considered excused. You are expected to provide 3 hours each week of peer mentorship/instructional support to students each week. Any unexcused absence will be reflected in your final course grade and may require a one-on-one meeting with the Learning Frameworks instructor/Workshop Leader, Practicum Instructor or

both. It is here that you will become proficient in applying the key concepts in this course to the practice of mentoring or leadership.

Each week, your mentees will turn in preparation materials for the day's class. You will read these carefully and give your mentees feedback on how well they are using the Universal Intellectual Standards as they write. At the end of the course, the mentees will turn in a portfolio that contains all of these assignments and your feedback to the students. These portfolios will be evaluated for both you and the mentee. You will be evaluated based on your increasing ability to understand the implications and consequences of critical thinking as you become more sophisticated in spotting examples and errors in the mentees' work.

| Sample Rubric for Peer Mentoring Activities   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| Student Learning Outcome  | Fails to meet Expectations   | Adequate   | Excellent  |
| SLO # 3. CLEARLY understanding the IMPLICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES of critical thinking as they apply the elements of thought and intellectual standards to their evaluation of students' work. | Does not assess student work completely. Feedback is missing or consistently lacking in accuracy, i.e. fails to correctly identify the universal intellectual standards at issue in the mentees' examples or errors. | Assesses student work completely. Provides mentees with sufficient precision to encourage improvement. | In addition, excellent peer mentoring demonstrates an increasingly sophisticated ability to spot examples and errors of the universal intellectual standards. Students successfully communicate this clarity to the mentees and there is a general elevation in the quality to the mentees work over time. |

***Here's What I Know (H.W.I.K):***

***(10%)***

Demonstrating a **BROAD** understanding of the *CONCEPTS* of higher education student success.

In order to enhance higher education students' success, it is important to understand and communicate to your mentees how UHCL student services can support students. The H.W.I.K. presentation will allow each of us the opportunity to learn a little bit more about the student services available. You will submit a list of three possible presentation topics. Select from the following list:

Library ~ Career Services ~ Math Center ~ Counseling Services ~ Student Assistance Center ~ Dean of Students Student Success Center ~ Disability Services ~ Student Conference for Research and Creative Arts ~ Health Services ~ Student Life ~ Intercultural Student Services ~ Writing Center~ Student Government Association

You will proceed to research this service by:

- 1<sup>st</sup> researching the office/organizations web presence,
- 2<sup>nd</sup> by interviewing a staff member,
- 3<sup>rd</sup> finding 5 peer reviewed journal articles that investigate best practices for such programs.

You will create a 5 minute Video. Your presentation should include the following:

- background information about the topic/organization/department on which you are presenting,
- your personal connection to the topic, how that involvement has impacted you or your friends at UHCL,
- what the research literature says about how this resource can best support student success,
- where your fellow peer mentors can go (or refer new students) to find additional information.

This presentation will become part of an on-line bank of such presentations which may be used by the peer mentors or Seminar instructors to provide this material to mentees. Students may be asked to

present these in the Learning Frameworks Seminar. Students will use the information gained, by reviewing the literature on best practices, researching the service our campus provides, reflecting on their own experiences as students attempting to find support, to broaden their understanding of the key concepts of higher education student success studied in our course.

| Sample Rubric for H.W.I.K.   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| Student Learning Outcome   | Fails to meet Expectations  | Adequate  | Excellent   |
| SLO 1. Demonstrating a BROAD understanding of the CONCEPTS of higher education student success | Incomplete presentation. Fails to use the literature, investigation into the service on campus and/or personal reflection to provide a faceted explanation of how this service can help students achieve success. | Complete and engaging presentation that uses multiple sources of information to broaden our understanding of how a specific type of student service can ameliorate some of the challenges to student success conceptualized in our readings, lectures and examination of the higher education literature. | In addition, the excellent presentation will skillfully and compellingly communicate to their team members, their mentees and the seminar instructors why students should utilize these services. |

***Belongingness Project:***

***(10%)***

This is a two part project that will assist you in overcoming barriers to belongingness among your mentees on campus. **PART 1** will showcase how although you, as peer mentors, were selected based on some similar qualities, each have your own experiences, stories, and backgrounds. Using PowerPoint you will create an anonymous “postcard” that will represent some secret you carry about your experience with education and/or the university. This is your chance to express yourself in a “being heard”, but not “being seen”, kind of way. They can be as funny or as serious as you want but the process should allow you space to consider how your unique social position has affected your encounters with education. These postcards should be completed and uploaded to the file sharing on the postcard link on our BB page. This assignment is supposed to be anonymous so when uploading your slide we trust that you will not look at any posts that are not yours. We will be checking periodically and saving it to another device to ensure your privacy. Remember to get creative and open your mind. Everyone will receive full credit as long as we end up with a slide for each person in class. These will be combined into a joint slideshow. **PART 2** you and several of your peers will hold an “Overcoming Barriers to Higher Education” panel discussion in several sections of the Learning Frameworks Seminar. With the Postcard slide show in the background, students will engage in an articulate discussion of their unique social positions and how those social positions framed their early anxieties when interacting with university institutions. **OBJECTIVE:** Student will employ **FAIRNESS** to generate conversations that challenge **ASSUMPTIONS** about cross and intra-cultural diversity and model cultural humility.

***Reflection Paper:***

***(10%)***

**ACT ACTIVITY (Student Learning #4) Using FAIRNESS to challenge ASSUMPTIONS about cross and intra-cultural diversity and model cultural humility for their mentees.**

At the end of the semester, you will turn in a 5 page reflection paper in which you examine your experience of peer mentoring with curiosity. You will describe at least three specific experiences you had during the semester in which they used fairness to challenge assumptions held by yourself or your mentees about cross and intra-cultural diversity. You will clearly articulate which alternate viewpoints you used to disrupt these assumptions, how successful you thought you were at dislodging each assumption and what you would do differently in the future.

|                                    |
|------------------------------------|
| Sample Rubric for Reflection Paper |
|------------------------------------|

| Student Learning Outcome  | Fails to meet Expectations   | Adequate  | Excellent   |
|---|--|---|---|
| SLO #4: Using FAIRNESS to challenge ASSUMPTIONS about cross and intra-cultural diversity; | Reflection paper is incomplete, vague or lacking in precision. Does not evidence a clear understanding of the concept of fairness or depict attempts to use alternate P.O.V's from the literature or the students to challenge assumptions about cross and intra-cultural diversity. | Reflection paper evidences three clear attempts to use alternate P.O.V.'s to challenge assumptions. Paper provides enough detail of these events to engage in useful analysis of the experiences but may sometimes lack precision or clarity. | Reflection paper evidences three clear attempts to use alternate P.O.V.'s to challenge assumptions. Paper engages in a deep analysis of these experiences and carefully examines the implications of these experiences on future mentoring and leading. |

### ***COURSE BUSINESS***

***Late Assignments:*** All assignments should be turned in on time unless arrangements are made with the instructor prior to the class meeting when an assignment is due. Late assignments will be penalized 10% off of the total grade for each day they are late.

***Blackboard:*** Please use BB for all course communication. I will check email Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. If you have a personal question please email me but if you have a question that is general interest, please post it in the Questions tab. I encourage you to blog or post links in the stuff to share tab. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with Blackboard, especially the tools utilized in this course. Should you run into technical difficulties please contact Technical support (support information is on log on screen or call 281-283-2828).

***Academic Honesty Policy:*** Students are required to do their own work on exams and papers. All UHCL students are responsible for knowing the standards of academic honesty (see UHCL catalog). Plagiarism, using research without citations or using a created production without crediting its source, is forbidden and will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Indiana University has a useful website on plagiarism. [Http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html).

***Disabilities: Disabilities:*** The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, each University within the System strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary Aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact your University's student disability services center (281) 283-2627.

***Incompletes:*** A grade of "I" is only given in cases of documented emergency or special circumstances late in the semester, providing that you have been making satisfactory progress. A grade contract must be completed and the criteria adhered to.

| <b>Week</b>                       | <b>Class Topic</b>   | <b>Readings/Assignments</b>   |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Week #1<br>Aug. 29 <sup>th</sup>  | Overview of Course/ What is Critical Thinking?   | Read: Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools, The Thinker's Guide to Analytic Thinking |
| Week #2<br>Sept. 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Teaching critical thinking using student evaluation.<br>Mission, Vision & Objectives, Values, and Ethics<br>Mission of the First-year Activity | Read: Mentors Guide Ch. 1<br>Banks 14-31  |
| Week #3<br>Sept. 12 <sup>th</sup> | What is Learning-Centered Mentoring?   | Read:<br>Mentors Guide Ch. 3<br>Banks 32-48   |
| Week #4<br>Sept 19 <sup>th</sup>  | Interpersonal Skills & Leadership/Cultural Humility  | Read:<br>Mentors Guide Ch. 5<br>Banks 49-68   |
| Week #5<br>Sept 26 <sup>th</sup>  | Student Development Theory & Application   | Read:<br><b>Blackboard</b>  |
| Week #6<br>Oct. 3 <sup>rd</sup>   | Considering social position in the peer mentoring process/ Student Development & Resources   | Read:<br>Mentors Guide Ch. 4<br>Banks 116-130   |
| Week #7<br>Oct. 10 <sup>th</sup>  | HIWK Presentations   | Due: HIWK Presentations   |
| Week #8<br>Oct. 17 <sup>th</sup>  | HIWK Presentations   | Due: HIWK Presentations<br>Read: Mentors Guide Ch. 2                                  |
| Week #9<br>Oct. 24 <sup>th</sup>  | Differences in Social Position<br><b>Presentation from ISI</b>   | Read:<br>Banks 85-100<br>Due: Belonging Project Part 1                                |
| Week #10<br>Oct. 31 <sup>st</sup> | Group Dynamics & Growth  | Read:<br>Mentors Guide Ch. 6<br>Due: Belonging Project Part 2                         |
| Week #11<br>Nov. 7 <sup>th</sup>  | Challenge & Support  | Read:<br>Banks 131-147  |
| Week #12<br>Nov. 14 <sup>th</sup> | Motivating & Learning Outcomes Revisited   | Read:<br>Mentors Guide Ch. 7<br>Banks 148-161   |
| Week #13<br>Nov. 21 <sup>st</sup> | Overcoming Obstacles   | Read: Mentors Guide Ch. 8<br>Banks 116-130  |

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| Week #14<br>Dec. 4 <sup>th</sup>  | Reengagement: Closing the Loop | Read: Mentors Guide Ch. 9 |
| Week #15<br>Dec. 11 <sup>th</sup> | Reflection and Assessment      | Due: Reflection Papers    |