TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-CORPUS CHRISTI
College of Nursing and Health Sciences

NURS 5624 - Advanced Health Assessment and Differential Diagnosis

Syllabus
Spring 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACULTY</th>
<th>Connie Barker RN, PhD, FNP-C</th>
<th>Jean Herzog, DNP, RN, FNP-BC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OFFICE</td>
<td>Island Hall 328-F</td>
<td>Virtual Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TELEPHONE</td>
<td>915-274-3534 (cell)</td>
<td>254-723-7928 (cell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMAIL</td>
<td><a href="mailto:connie.barker@tamucc.edu">connie.barker@tamucc.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:jean.hertzog@tamucc.edu">jean.hertzog@tamucc.edu</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Blackboard email preferred</td>
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<tr>
<td>OFFICE HOURS</td>
<td>Available by phone or email</td>
<td>Available by phone or email</td>
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Clinical Faculty

Laura Alexander, RN, MSN, FNP-C  
Connie Barker, RN, PhD, FNP-C  
Larry Beville, RN, DNP, FNP-C  
Denise DeLaRosa, RN, DNP, FNP-C  
Lauren Gaudette, RN, MSN, FNP-C  
Jean Herzog, RN, DNP, FNP-C  
Shelley Leitch, RN, MSN, PNP-C  
Adiah Oyefesobi, RN, WHNP-C  
Nancy Rogers, RN, PhD, FNP-C  
Barbara Schwertner, RN, MSN, FNP-C

CREDITS          
6 semester hours (4:2)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course concentrates on the study and practice of complex skills for comprehensive health assessment with a focus on the differentiation and interpretation of normal and abnormal findings while developing a broad database to establish a list of differential diagnoses. Oral and written communication of findings in a collaborative relationship with other health care providers is emphasized. Variables related to rural and multicultural populations are incorporated into the total assessment. Opportunities are provided to develop skills necessary for the identification of health problems, while considering variables associated with multicultural populations.

The clinical component of the course provides the opportunity to practice complex health assessment techniques. The clinical practice also provides the opportunity for the student to perform basic laboratory tests and interpret other common laboratory and diagnostic data including radiology and EKGs.
COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Systematically apply a problem solving approach in the collection and synthesis of relevant data. (MSN Essentials I, II, IV, V, VIII, IX)
   - Perform a risk assessment of a client including assessing lifestyle and other risk factors.
   - Develop a comprehensive database, including a complete functional assessment, health history, physical examination and appropriate diagnostic examination.
   - Order, perform and/or interpret other selected laboratory and diagnostic tests.

2. Critically analyze and interpret health assessment findings. (MSN Essentials IX)
   - Demonstrate sound critical thinking and clinical decision making.
   - Identify signs and symptoms of common illnesses.
   - Establish a differential diagnosis based on the assessment data.
   - Compare text-recommended diagnostic tests to those ordered by the preceptor.
   - Relate assessment findings to underlying pathology or physiologic changes.

3. Incorporate into practice a structured format to communicate health assessment findings to other health care professionals. (MSN Essentials II, IV, V, VII)
   - Provide appropriate documentation of patient information in the medical record.
   - Present concise and organized oral case presentation.

4. Display commitment to expanding own role within the profession of nursing. (MSN Essentials IX)

REQUIRED DIDACTIC TEXTS:

Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.


Uptodate – The *Up to Date* database is available to students to use as a source of information as well. This on-line database can be linked through the library.

REQUIRED CLINICAL TEXTS:

**Optional Didactic Texts:**


**Optional Clinical Texts:**


**Please consider all texts as incomplete reference sources, since no complete reference book exists. Therefore, you are expected to use these texts as the primary sources of information, which can then be supplemented by other sources as needed to fulfill the assignment for identified content areas.**

**Learning Experiences and Teaching Methods**

Course objectives may be met through individual study of required and recommended resources, formal and informal exchange of ideas with classmates, colleagues and both clinical and class faculty regarding specific topics and practicum activities, while utilizing the critical thinking skills demanded of the graduate student.

Teaching methods include online asynchronous discussion, independent study of texts, library and other professional resources, web-based activities, analysis and synthesis of clinical applications, feedback on clinical experience activities and reports, and the assignments listed in the course. While faculty provide guidance and consultation, the student is responsible for identification of learning needs, self-direction, and demonstration of course objectives.

Shadow Health® educational software will augment student learning in an interactive digital environment. Time spent working with the digital client will improve students’ abilities to complete a thorough review of medical history, conduct an organized and complete physical assessment while also extending students’ critical thinking and problem solving skills. Students will be provided log-in information to access this software. Assignments in Shadow Health® are to be completed as indicated in the schedule. Hours spent working with the digital client do not count toward clinical time. The following information is required to log in and access our course:

**Student Account Setup (use Mozilla Firefox browser)**

Students can create their accounts by visiting [http://app.shadowhealth.com/](http://app.shadowhealth.com/) and enrolling in your course with this course-specific PIN:

**XXXXXXXXXXXXX**
Course Setup

- Shadow Health Website: http://app.shadowhealth.com/
- Link to Shadow Health Support: http://support.shadowhealth.com
- Course Registration PIN for Students:

Students must have access to the Internet to successfully complete the web based assignments. *Word* is used as the word processor for the SOAP assignments. Students are reminded that web-based assignments, in general, take more time to complete than traditional face-to-face classroom work. However, time spent through independent internet work is determined both by each student’s learning style and the tasks involved in the assignment. Students with limited experience using Blackboard software are expected to seek assistance from the supportive services at the university Helpdesk to insure satisfactory completion of the required work.

Course Requirements and Grading

**Syllabus:** Students are expected to review the syllabus, Clinical Guidelines document, along with guidelines for assignments and related grading criteria throughout the semester to insure that class assignments are completed correctly. *Students must acknowledge that they have read the syllabus and course information by completing the syllabus/course quiz. The quiz is required; however, it does not count toward your overall course grade. You will access the syllabus/course quiz through the test/quiz feature on the homepage of the course. This assignment is due by January 25th no later than 11:59 pm.*

- **Course communication:** Communication should be conducted online, using the course specific Blackboard software.
  1. Blackboard email is to be used for private communication concerning the course.
  2. Blackboard discussions are to be used for group collaboration on weekly assignments and weekly clinical discussion group posts. All discussions should be posted in the body of dialogue box versus using attachments when possible. Tables can be posted as attachments.

As with most graduate courses, superior performance on assignments can only be achieved through independent efforts. Required readings provide a general framework for understanding topics relevant to this course. However, required readings are insufficient to establish expertise on any one topic. Therefore, students are expected to read additional material before completing most assignments. Course content sometimes promotes exchange of differing or alternative information during class discussion. Because it is assumed students are prepared for discussions, any student contributions will be considered “knowledgeable” ones on a given subject by demonstrating a breadth of reading as the foundation for ideas and opinions.

- **Student evaluations:** Students are expected to complete self, course, didactic faculty, clinical faculty, and preceptor evaluations at the end of the course.

- **Grading and evaluation of students:** The course is designed with evaluation as an ongoing process to provide feedback regarding the meeting of course objectives.
* The average of the five scheduled exams must be ≥ 75% to pass this course, regardless of any other grades received from required assignments. Therefore, less than a 75% average on these five exams will result in a course failure.

Furthermore, an unsatisfactory grade in the clinical portion of the course will supersede any class grade and result in a failing grade for NURS 5624.

**Grading Scale**

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td>90 - 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>83 – 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>75 – 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td>67 – 74</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 67</td>
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**Class Course Grade Components**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Graded Activity</th>
<th>Course Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>*5 Tests (14% each)</td>
<td>*70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Health Assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Discussions</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graded Case Study Assignment Peer Evaluation is 15% of total grade</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOAP notes</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly clinical discussion</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency based EKG exam</td>
<td>S/U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Course Grade</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Computer-based testing:**

1. **Computer-based testing:** Five exams are scheduled for this course; the exams in this course will be proctored and require the utilization of an approved secure testing site. See the course schedule for the content areas for each exam. Exams are NOT comprehensive and will be closed-book and timed. Exam material comes from the textbooks, learning activities, assignments, and class discussions. All exams will be on Mondays beginning at 11am and closing at 5pm, with an 85 minute window to complete the test. Exams will be given in a multiple choice format. Initial grades will be released at a designated time after the end of the testing period. Course faculty will evaluate individual test questions for psychometric soundness and based on this review, adjustment to scoring may occur. Test grades are usually finalized 2-3 days after testing. Should a student have concerns about specific questions on the test, the student should contact course faculty privately by emailing through BB.

Tests will only be given on the scheduled date and at the scheduled time. In the event that a student has a valid reason for missing a test, as determined by University policy AND with proper faculty notification PRIOR to the exam, faculty will follow official guidelines.
Please refer to the Secure Testing Site Policy adopted by the Graduate Department in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences for additional information regarding student responsibility and test process information. The policy is located under a separate tab located on the left side of the course home page.

Secure Test Sites must be established and paperwork submitted to the Graduate Nursing Secretary at least two (2) weeks prior to the first exam. Failure to comply may affect one’s ability to take the exam.

2. **Unit quizzes:** Unit quizzes will be offered through Blackboard and will not require a secured test site contract. These quizzes will be limited to 15 questions or less and will cover pertinent information from current unit reading assignments and topical outline materials. These are to be used for self-improvement and are **not counted toward your course grade**.

3. **Competency-based EKG Quiz:** A basic understanding of EKG interpretation is important for advanced practice. Students are required to pass a *mandatory* competency-based EKG quiz with a minimum score of 85% by the end of the semester. Multiple attempts are allowed to achieve a passing score.

4. **Group Case Study Assignment:** The purpose of the Group Case Study Assignment is to demonstrate the students’ application of knowledge for the clinical assessment of a hypothetical “textbook case” patient with a common primary care clinical problem, relevant to the content areas covered thus far in this course. This assignment involves using the information available related to clinical presentation and relevant diagnostic testing. Students use this information to “rule in” or “rule out” multiple diagnoses related to the system or systems relevant to the week’s discussion. Additionally, the students, on completion of this assignment, will be able to demonstrate their ability to incorporate risk factors relevant to the selected clinical problem within the assigned subject area and to incorporate appropriate health promotion and disease prevention assessments. Each member of the group is responsible to all other members of the group. If a group member is significantly late or inadequately contributes to their portion of the assignment, their lack of participation impacts all other group members. Course faculty will be members of all the groups and will be able to monitor activities within the group discussion area if needed. Students who are holding back other members of the group will be noted. Student interactions and assignment planning should occur within blackboard, through postings/discussions within your group, chats, or course emails not through telephone conversations or private email. *Each group member will complete a PEER Evaluation Form on each of their group members’ contribution to the Group Case Study. Each student’s PEER Evaluation grade will represent 15% of the student’s Group Case Study grade.*

5. **Shadow Health® Assignments and Weekly discussion participation:** Shadow Health® assignments are individual assignments and are graded accordingly. Students should earn >75% on each assignment in Shadow Health; the software does allow students more than one opportunity to complete the assignment. You are only allowed repeated attempts for the initial three (3) Shadow Health Assignments to accommodate the learning curve associated with the use of the digital client.
6. Students are assigned to two discussion groups during the semester: a didactic discussion group and a clinical discussion group. Students will only use the didactic discussion group when working on the group case study assignments. Students are assigned clinical discussion groups; the groups are organized in accordance with their clinical faculty.

The weekly unit’s “Overview and Assignment” structures the content to be studied during that particular week or unit. Participation in the didactic discussions is required and will be randomly graded. Testing will reflect weekly discussion content; therefore participation is important.

The Overview and Assignment, topical outline and Shadow Health® case (when assigned) will be posted each week by faculty no later than 12:01 (AM) on Sunday.

Discussion postings (study questions) are to be completed no later than midnight on Friday.

- **Minimally**, students are expected to post 1-2 substantive postings within 48 hours and to post thoughtful responses to a minimum of 2 peer postings on at least 2 different days each week. To earn the full credit for each discussion the student must participate at a higher level than minimum requirements. Please see rubric and grading criteria are located under the Information tab.

**Group Discussion Netiquette**

- Recognize that everyone’s contribution is important.
- Respect a group member’s confidentiality if requested.
- When disagreeing with other student(s), do so without judgment or blame.
  - Be open to new paths and new ways of thinking.
- If a group leader emerges, that person should identify him/herself as such and communicate with the faculty periodically about the group progress when necessary; if a group leader does not emerge, chose one.

  **Being a group leader does not reduce expectations to contribute to group discussions.**

  Group leaders are held to the same **minimal** standard of one initial post and 2 response posts.

- Feel free to develop group dynamic working guidelines, but make them guidelines (not rules) that everyone can live with; if a guideline does not fit the group any more, then negotiate to change or eliminate it.
- Members should stay in touch and communicate with group members. If a personal situation develops preventing an individual from meeting a group assignment deadline, please notify group members and course faculty as soon as possible.
- Remember that satisfactorily working within groups is a learned skill that is important in the FNP’s career.

**Clinical Course Grade Components**
Component | Grading
--- | ---
1. Completion of a minimum of 90 clinical hours spread throughout the semester. | S/U

2. Typhon documentation: Electronic clinical log documentation of patient encounters must be posted within a one-week period from date of patient visit. Entries later than one week may lead to “Not Approved” status which will necessitate additional clinical hours. **See Clinical Guidelines** | S/U

3. Minimum six SOAP note Assignments (2 comprehensive visit notes and 4 focus visit notes) | Max Average >85%

4. Preceptor & Self-Evaluation (found in the “Preceptor Guide”) | S/U

5. Faculty Observation and Evaluation | S/U

6. Discussions include **weekly** sharing of scholarly clinical discussion. | Max Average >85%

- **Clinical hours:**

  At least ninety (90) hours of clinical experience related to course content are required. Additional hours may be assigned at the discretion of the clinical faculty based on student needs.

  Students are responsible for working with their clinical faculty member to plan experiences that meet the course objectives and take into consideration student skills and learning needs. Clinical learning experiences should reflect the course’s didactic content and also be flexible to meet the needs of the clinical setting. In order to meet the course requirements and assignments, students should organize their clinical hours/days, so that they **span across the entire semester**. This allows for continuing development of skills and affords clinical faculty ample time to schedule visits and evaluate students during the semester.

  **Clinical practice prerequisites:** Clinical hours may **NOT** begin until the following requirements are met-

  - Current information on file in Certified Profile Database Software: BLS for Healthcare Providers, TB test results, immunization record, urine drug screen, criminal background check and verification of Texas RN license.
  - Clinical site and preceptor approval by the clinical faculty member: A signed and approved Preceptor Agreement must be sent to the clinical faculty member. Following approval, a “Student Clinical Information Form” and “clinical schedule” must be submitted to the clinical faculty member.
  - Successful completion of the Skills Seminar Weekend and Validation of RN Skills. **Students are expected to come adequately prepared to perform these skills after reviewing and practicing at home prior to the seminar attendance.**
All students are expected to have a good quality stethoscope that has both an adult and pediatric bell and diaphragm, and a reflex hammer for use during the clinical experience.

- **Typhon documentation:** Electronic clinical log documentation of EVERY patient encounter must be posted using the Typhon software within a one-week (7 calendar days) period from date of the patient visit in order for the clinical time to count toward the minimum 135 hours. Typhon entries are reviewed and must be approved by clinical faculty. Incomplete entries in Typhon after the 7 day deadline are subject to non-approval of the cases and the deletion of the associated Shift Time. Participation in clinical procedures must be documented in Typhon.

- **SOAP Note Assignments:** Students will complete a minimum of six SOAP note assignments throughout the semester. The due dates for the SOAP note assignments are included in the course schedule. The assignments will be submitted through Blackboard Assignments and graded by clinical faculty. Subsequent assignments should reflect improvement from previous submissions. Additional SOAP note assignments may be assigned by clinical faculty as indicated. Students should complete notes on the following types of visits:
  - Two (2) Comprehensive Annual Exam Visit
  - Four (4) focus or episodic

- **Preceptor and Self-Evaluations:** All the end of clinical, Preceptor and Student Evaluations must be completed and submitted within one week of completion of the clinical experiences.

- **Faculty Observation and Evaluation:** Safe and satisfactory clinical practice is mandatory for successful completion of the course. The clinical laboratory portion of this course is graded as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory (S/U) and is based on the Clinical Course Components listed above.

  There will be at least one evaluative clinical site visit made by the clinical faculty member based on their evaluation of the student’s needs. Additional visits are dependent on individual student progress observed or reported in the clinical area.

  **Unsatisfactory Clinical Performance** - One-third of the academic credit for this course is based on meeting the clinical performance components of the course. Safe and satisfactory clinical practice is mandatory for successful completion of the course. Unsatisfactory performance in the clinical laboratory requirements of the course results in a failure of the course.

  In the unusual circumstance that a student is unable to provide safe and satisfactory care to patients, based on the clinical instructor’s professional judgment, and if this deficit cannot be remedied in the remaining clinical time and (within the limits of available faculty or preceptor supervision), the student may be removed from the clinical setting at any time. This would result in a grade of “F” in the course.
• **Clinical group discussion posts:** A weekly scholarly clinical discussion is required. Clinical discussion posting may include clinical pearls and patient case encounters and must include relevant references. Students should participate in their clinical discussions each week. Please note that your clinical faculty may choose to communicate to the clinical group via this forum; therefore, you must check this site at least weekly. In the event that a student is not scheduled for clinical, discussion participation is still required in the form of scholarly responses to other student’s postings...

**SOAP note documentation and weekly clinical group participation is included in your overall course grade.**

**POLICIES:**

**Evaluation Input from Students**

The faculty of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences places great value on evaluative input from students. Evaluation of courses, instructors and clinical facilities provides the College with important data which is used to strengthen the program. Data is analyzed as to trends and themes and is important to curriculum and sequencing decisions. All evaluations for courses posted are online. The online mechanism allows us the opportunity to tabulate and store information in order to analyze trends within the curriculum. Please be assured that this information is secured and not released until after grades are submitted. No names are available to faculty. In order to garner some reliability and validity, the College must have representative data from the student population. That representation, based on the literature, has been set at 70%. The College is anticipating that students will thoughtfully participate in the evaluation process which will assist the faculty with the growth of the program. A link to evaluations will be available on Blackboard toward the end of the semester. Thank you in advance for your assistance with the evaluation process.

**Academic Integrity and Honesty**

It is expected that University students will demonstrate a high level of maturity, self-direction, and ability to manage their own affairs. Students are viewed as individuals who possess the qualities of worth, dignity, and the capacity for self-direction in personal behavior. University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to a penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is intentionally, knowingly, or carelessly presenting the work of another as one’s own). Please see the following sites for additional information:

- University Student Handbook and Code of Conduct: [http://www.tamucc.edu/~students](http://www.tamucc.edu/~students)
- University catalog related to academic integrity and honesty: [http://catalog.tamucc.edu/](http://catalog.tamucc.edu/)
- University Rules and Procedures: [University Procedure 13.02.99.C3.01 Academic Misconduct Cases](http://www.tamucc.edu/~students)
Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office at 361.825.5816 or visit the office in CCH 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disabilities Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Title IX

As part of the Texas A & M Corpus Christi University policy, pregnant students are urged to contact the Title IX office for facilitation of academic issues impacted by pregnancy, delivery and subsequent complications. Contact information: Mr. Samuel Ramirez, Title IX Coordinator or Ms. Rosie Ruiz, Deputy Title IX Coordinator (825-5826).

Grade Appeals Process

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS) adheres to the University’s student grade appeal procedures described in Section 13.02.99.C2.01 (revised May, 2013) and follows those guidelines. See http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/Rules_Procedures/ for the University procedure and see http://conhs.tamucc.edu/shb/ for the CONHS process identified in the Student Handbook.

Support Services

Students are encouraged to seek faculty assistance in accessing University Services, including tutoring, health services, personal counseling, degree counseling, financial aid, learning resources, job/work placement, career guidance, and computer/technical support/instruction. If a student is interested in other support services provided by the University, the student is encouraged by the College of Nursing and Health Sciences and the University to seek these services.

Military students

Active duty military personnel, military spouses, and veterans with special circumstances (e.g.: deployment, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the course and clinical instructor.

Syllabus Disclaimer: While the provisions of this syllabus are as accurate and complete as possible, the faculty reserves the right to change non-critical aspects of the course to accommodate emergencies, unexpected technical problems, or any unforeseen circumstances. Such changes will be announced as soon as feasible and will be communicated by course email or announcements via Blackboard. It is the
**STUDENT’S responsibility to keep abreast of course announcements.** Questions regarding course requirements should be addressed when the syllabus is received, within the first week of the course.

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**Envisioning the future**

*Transforming healthcare through education, research, innovation and practice*