

Course Name: COMD 5358 Dysphagia
Semester: Spring 2026
Course Times: Mondays, Wednesdays from 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm

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Office hours: by appointment
(virtual or in person)

Course Overview:

The course explores the nature, etiology, and physiology of normal and abnormal patterns of swallowing across the life span. Students will learn about the nature and structure of medical settings where dysphagia intervention is provided. They will study the neurological and cognitive issues pertinent to dysphagia. They will practice the procedures for gathering case history, reading medical charts, and conducting both clinical and instrumental swallow evaluations. Common patient populations will be highlighted (neurologic, head and neck cancer, end of life, tracheostomy and ventilated patients, esophageal, pediatrics). Management and treatment techniques for individuals with swallowing disorders will be covered and labs conducted to allow students to experience hands on application of concepts covered. The class will also address interprofessional collaboration in medical settings, and relevant cultural and ethical issues. This introductory level course in dysphagia is intended to provide students with the foundations of dysphagia. It is expected that continued dysphagia skills will be developed through clinical externship, fellowships and professional careers. This course is a graduate level course and active participation by all students is expected.

Course Pre-requisites: Admission to the graduate program. Basic foundational knowledge of the structures involved in swallowing.

Course Objectives KASA Standards:

1. Define and apply terminology commonly used in the evaluation and treatment of dysphagia across the lifespan. *Standard IV-B; IV-C*
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the anatomical structures, physiological mechanisms, and neural control involved in normal swallowing. *standard IV-B; IV-C*
3. Compare and contrast typical swallowing development and function in pediatric and adult populations. *Standard IV-C*
4. Identify and describe etiologies contributing to swallowing impairment, including congenital, structural, neurological, and iatrogenic causes. *Standard IV-C*
5. Describe clinical presentations of swallowing disorders in pediatric and adult populations and outline appropriate evidence-based treatment approaches. *Standard IV-C, IV-D*
6. Demonstrate knowledge and skills of clinical (non-objective) based screening and assessment of oral mechanism and swallow function *Standard IV-C, IV-D, V-B, V-B*
7. Analyze swallowing function using information gathered from clinical bedside assessments, modified barium swallow studies (MBSS/VFSS), and/or flexible endoscopic evaluations of swallowing (FEES). *Standard IV-C, IV-D, V-B, V-B*
8. Demonstrate culturally responsive interviewing, case history gathering, and basic counseling skills in the context of dysphagia assessment. *Standard IV-B; IV-C; IV-E*
9. Apply principles of effective clinical writing to produce organized, specific, and clinically relevant assessment and treatment reports. *Standard V-B; IV-D*

10. Develop individualized, evidence-informed treatment plans for individuals with dysphagia, incorporating compensatory, restorative, and skill-based rehabilitation strategies. *Standard IV-D, V-B*
11. Critically evaluate current research in swallowing and swallowing disorders and explain its application to clinical practice in speech-language pathology. *Standard IV-F*

Required materials:

Groher, M. E., & Crary, M. A. (2021). *Dysphagia: Clinical management in adults and children* (3rd ed.). Mosby. (ISBN Number 9780323636483)
MBSImp Self-Study Modules – access provided by the University
Other materials will be provided via Canvas

Supplemental Resources (not required):

Logemann, J. A., Hutcheson, K. A., Starmer, H. M., Ciucci, M. R., Gibbons, P. J., & Tellis, G. M. (2022). *Logemann's evaluation and treatment of swallowing disorders*. Pro-Ed.
Suiter & Gosa (2020). *Assessing and treating dysphagia: A lifespan perspective (1st ed.)* Thieme
Leonard, R. & Kendall, K.A. (2025). *Dysphagia Assessment and Treatment Planning: A Team Approach (5th ed.)*. Plural Publishing.
Arvedson, J.D., Brodsky, L., Lefton-Greif, M.A. (Eds.) (2020). *Pediatric Swallowing and Feeding: Assessment & Management (3rd ed.)*. Plural Publishing.
Walshe, M., & Huckabee, M.-L. (2018). *Clinical Cases in Dysphagia (1st ed.)*. Routledge.

Attendance:

It is the expectation that students will attend all in-person classes scheduled. There are certainly times when the unexpected happens. Per the handbook: When students are sick and will miss class, students must notify the instructor by email, preferably before class begins. (p.45)

If you know you will be out, I would appreciate an email so I do not worry that something has happened to you. You will be responsible for any information presented in class that day.

Cell phones and Computers:

Electronic devices are expected to be used for course-related activities only. If it is course-related, please be mindful of the distraction it may cause others in your environment. We want this to be an atmosphere of learning.

Research

Being able to find, analyze and incorporate research is critical to your skills as a Speech Language Pathologist. You will continue to evolve in practice as new evidence becomes available. Now is the best time to learn how to read and review research as you have university access to great resources. In the “real world” you may not have such free access to research.

This is also a good time to “think outside the box” and seek sources that are beyond the SLP focused books, journals, etc. Other areas which may be helpful include: general medicine, specialized medicine (otolaryngology, pulmonology), dentistry, rehabilitation (occupational and physical therapy), psychology, etc.

Academic Misconduct:

I embrace honor and integrity. Therefore, I choose not to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

Please remember the Honor Code of the University as well as ASHA's Code of Ethics as you complete your coursework.

<https://www.utt Tyler.edu/research/centers/ethics/honor-code/>

<https://www.asha.org/siteassets/publications/code-of-ethics-2023.pdf>

Assignments and Examinations (% of Final Grade)

Grades will be determined based on a combination of assignments, presentations, a mid-term exam, and a final exam.

Quizzes (10%) – Periodic quizzes to test mastery of learned material periodically throughout the semester. These will be announced in advance.

Modified Barium Swallow Impairment Profile (MBSImP™) Student Certification (10%)

The Modified Barium Swallow Impairment Profile, or MBSImP™, is a standardized approach to instruction, assessment, and reporting of physiologic swallowing impairment based on observations obtained from the MBS study. It includes assessment of 17 components of the swallowing mechanism in adults and includes a scoring metric to objectively profile physiologic impairment of swallowing function. As part of your program, you have been enrolled in the student version of the MBSImP™. Full instructions will be included within in the module and in the files section. Bonus points available (Due Week 14.)

In Class Labs/Presentations/Assignments (20% total)

Group presentations – evaluation (Week 4) and treatment (Week 9-10)

Students will work in groups to demonstrate a clinical evaluation or treatment strategy. Specifics to be assigned by the instructor.

Continuing education dysphagia course review (Week 11)

Students will work in groups to present a continuing education opportunity. This 5–7-minute presentation will include: course name, cost, training platform, credentials available, pros/cons, any pertinent research available. As part of this project, groups will create a single page handout/pamphlet to be uploaded into Canvas and shared with the class. Classmates may ask questions of the presenters after the presentation.

Journal article review “Journal Club” (Week 8)

Students will identify an article related to any aspect of dysphagia, give a 5 minute presentation regarding the highlights of the article. Classmates will be expected to participate in discussion on the article content.

Dysphagia case studies (Week 13)

Students will complete 1 case study (assigned by instructor) including chart review, clinical findings, documentation of the evaluation, appropriate goals, and recommended interventions.

Mid-term Exam (30%) – format TBD, but may include multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay format. This exam will cover material learned in the first half of the semester. (Week 8)

Final Exam (30%) – format TBD, will cover material learned throughout the semester. (Week 15)

What is the MBSImP™?

The Modified Barium Swallow Impairment Profile, or MBSImP™, is a standardized approach to instruction, assessment, and reporting of physiologic swallowing impairment based on observations obtained from the MBS study. It includes assessment of 17 components of the swallowing mechanism in adults and includes a scoring metric to objectively profile physiologic impairment of swallowing function. For the first time, the MBSImP™ approach provides the means for clinicians to communicate MBS study results in an evidence-based manner that is consistent, specific, accurate and objective.

As part of your program, you have been enrolled in the student version of the MBSImP™. Below you will find information on enrollment, Zones, grading for your dysphagia class and common mistakes. This student version is not for certification, but can be used as part of your resume for clinicians who desire to work in adult settings. There are options for obtaining full certification listed below as well.

MBSImP™ Enrollment Pathway:

- Navigate to NorthernSpeech.com
- Click the link for [University Access].
- Select University of Texas, Tyler in the drop menu.
- Enter access code UTT659
- Scroll down to Course #e95 - MBSImP™.
- Click [Purchase] and then click [Redeem My Code].
- On the Order Screen, enter promotion code EC-MPD8D7
- Click [Apply] and the course fee will adjust to \$0.
- Click Check Out
- Create a user account in the *New Customers* box and click Sign up.
- Ensure you enter University of Texas, Tyler university name on the user profile screen.
- Click Review Order.
- Double check info, and click Process Order.

An email will arrive to you shortly with your access information to begin training at www.mbsimp.com. For enrollment & tech support please email: tom@northernspeech.com.

You will have ongoing access to this platform for the duration of your program and even after your complete this class and the program. It is not for any competency or certification purposes. After graduation, you may elect to upgrade your access for the full credit and certification SLP version (additional fees and reliability testing will be required).

You will be required to submit a screenshot of your enrollment into Canvas.

Sections/Zones

The MBSImP™ is divided into 3 zones: Learning, Training and Reliability. You will not receive a score on the Learning or Training Zones, but you do have opportunities to obtain bonus points for completing them within a timely manner. For your reference, the Learning Zone Prerequisite Videos will take approximately 51 minutes to complete. Once inside the Learning Zone, each of the 17 components is reviewed and will take a minimum of 62 minutes to watch, but you may benefit from repetitive reviewing of each component for mastery. You can also return to this section for review at any time. The

Training Zone is divided into Swallow by Swallow and Full Study sections. Before entering the Training Zone, you will have prerequisite videos required for each section (Swallow by Swallow 31 minutes; Full Study 29 minutes). I put these minimum times in here so you are aware of the time commitment to completion of this project and a recommendation to work on it throughout the semester. You will not be very successful by waiting until the last minute and retention of information will suffer.

Scores/Grades (TOTAL POINTS - 100)

Learning Zone – If completed on time, bonus +1 point to your final reliability zone grade. You must submit a screen shot proof of completion to earn the bonus. You must complete this section before moving to the Training Zone.

Training Zone – If you complete the Single Studies Training Zone by Week 5 **and** the full studies by week 8, you will receive a bonus +1 point for each milestone to your final Reliability Zone grade. You must submit a screenshot proof of completion to earn the bonus. You **are not required to complete these tasks by these specified dates**. You must complete this section before moving to the Reliability Zone.

Reliability Zone – Students who score 80% in the Reliability Zone will be given full credit (100). To calculate the grade below that, take your % correct and divide by 80. For example, if you score 72% in the Reliability Zone, your grade would be $72/80 = 90$. If you score 64% in the Reliability Zone, your grade would be $64/80 = 80$. This grade is due by Week 14.

Note: You can return to previous zones for review, but cannot skip ahead without completing each zone.

Time Frames for Completion

MBSImP™ suggests the following timelines:

- Learning Zone – 1 week
- Training Zone – Single Swallow by Swallow – 3 weeks
- Training Zone – Full Studies – 3 weeks
- Reliability Zone – 1st attempt – 1 week
 - Reviewing after Reliability Zone – 1 week
 - Reliability Zone – 2nd attempt – 1 week
 - Reliability Zone – 3rd attempt if needed**

If you do not get the score you desire on the 1st attempt, please review for a week before retesting.

**From MBSImP™: Students rarely improve their testing accuracy score after the 3rd test attempt, unless they do significant content review. Common student behavior is to move too quickly through the learning & training portions and then complete a reliability test before they are ready. These students often do not score well on the first reliability test attempt. At this point rather than re-test again immediately, students should spend several days reviewing content. Scores on the 2nd test attempt then typically improve significantly. Most students test 2-3 times. Those who test 4+ times typically get similar accuracy scores each time and this is not a good use of their time!

Re-testing

Please note, after all 17 components across the 10 MBSS are scored, the platform will return the overall accuracy score across all studies and all components (i.e., a score of 77% overall accuracy). If a student elects to retest, a new set of 10 MBSS will be presented, and students will be asked to again score all 17 components across the 10 MBSS. The platform will save & retain their highest (best) testing score if multiple attempts.

Common Student Mistakes

#1. Skipping the prerequisite videos and recommended downloads prior to each of the Zones. These materials are key to understanding the overall *MBSImP™* approach and viewing the videos and downloading the materials should not be skipped.

#2. Waiting until late in the semester/term to begin the training. Students should budget between 20 and 30 hours to compete this training. This is not something that can be put off until the end of the semester.

#3. Sharing accounts. The training website will only recognize progress and scores in the name of the student who is logged in. Also, the training is setup to function best as an individual learning module. Sharing one account is cumbersome and limits the teaching effectiveness of the training platform. Only one student will be able to get the credit for course completion.

#4. Using slow Internet connections. The *MBSImP™* website runs a lot of videos, thus a high-speed internet connection is needed. Download speeds below 10 Mbps will often cause video loading and freezing issues. You should be able to find reliable internet speeds on campus, at the library, etc. Please let me know ASAP if you have difficulty with downloads.

#5. Re-testing and re-testing. Students who score lower than they wish on the Reliability Zone testing should spend ample time (days) reviewing within the Training Zone and Scoring Help area before testing again. Jumping back into a re-test without proper review will likely lead to a similar low score and thus not be a productive use of time.

WEEKLY OUTLINE*

Week 1

- Introductions, review of course expectations and assignments
- The swallow team
- The normal swallow
- The aerodigestive tract – anatomy, physiology and neurological control
- Swallowing maturation and development
- Due 1/14: Log into MBSImP
- *Before class – Read Groher & Crary Ch 1, 2, 13*

Week 2 (1/19 – MLK Holiday/no class)

- Etiologies contributing to dysphagia
- Pillars of Aspiration Pneumonia
- Alternative nutrition sources
- Due 1/21: Learning Zone pre-requisite videos
- *Before class – Read Groher & Crary Ch 3, 4, 8*

Week 3

- Case history, chart review, medical terminology
- Clinical Swallow Evaluation - Oral Phase
- In class case history activity (1/28)
- MBSImP Learning Zone Oral Stage (Components 1-6) due
- *Before class – Read Groher & Crary Ch 2*

Week 4

- Clinical Swallow Evaluation - Pharyngeal & esophageal phase
- Putting it together – making recommendations from the CSE
- Group Activity – CSE putting it into practice
- MBSImP Learning Zone Pharyngeal and Esophageal Phases (Components 7-17)
- *Before class – Read Groher & Crary Ch 9*

Week 5

- MBSS – structure identification
- MBSS – oral phase; pharyngeal phase
- In Class Activity – MBSS review
- *Before class – Read Groher & Crary Ch 10*

Week 6

- MBSS – pharyngeal phase
- Putting it together – documentation; making recommendations from the MBSS
- In Class Activity – MBSS review

Bonus – Single study completion – 1 pt added to final MBSImP grade

Week 7

- FEES – structure identification
- Oral phase
- Pharyngeal Phase
- Putting it together – documentation; making recommendations from the FEES study

Week 8

- Putting all the pieces together – clinical and instrumental reports
- Journal Club
- Midterm Review
- 3/4: Midterm

Bonus – Full study completion – 1 pt added to final MBSImP grade

Week 9

- Therapeutic interventions
- Principles of motor learning, behavior and motivation, appropriate candidate selection
- Indirect & direct methods of intervention
- Group Activities – Treatment technique demonstrations
- *Before class – Read Groher & Crary Ch 11*

Week 10

- Therapeutic interventions continued
- Group Activities – Treatment technique demonstrations

Week 11

- CEU Presentations
- Ethical considerations in dysphagia
- Special Populations – End of life considerations
- Special Populations – Head and neck cancer
- *Before class – Read Groher & Crary Ch 12, 5*

Week 12

- Special Populations – Esophageal dysphagia
- Special Populations – Respiratory disorders
- *Before class – Read Groher & Crary Ch 6, 7*

Week 13

- Pediatric Dysphagia
- Case Studies Due
- *Before class – Read Groher & Crary Ch 14, 15*

Week 14

- Pediatric Dysphagia
- Special Populations - NICU
- MBSImP Reliability Zone Due (4/22)
- *Before class – Read Groher & Crary Ch 16*

Week 15

- 4/27 Review for exam
- Instructor/Student feedback
- 4/29 Final exam

*Timing and schedule subject to change, as well as any additional reading/resources. Notifications will be made in advance through Canvas.