

The University of Texas at Tyler
Master of Occupational Therapy Program
OCTH 5211 Introduction to Professional Communication for Occupational Therapists
Fall 2025

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Office Hours: TBA by e-mail request*

Class times: MW 1230-150

*prefer e-mail appointment request for on campus or phone appointments.

Course Description: This course is for the entry-level clinician to learn professional communication with patients, caregivers/families, other health care professionals, and professional/community stake holders while upholding the AOTA Code of Ethics. Course includes techniques and understanding of how to navigate difficult conversations and challenging behaviors, how to build relationships with awareness of cultural diversity and sensitivity, review patient communication scenarios, role playing of effective vs. non-effective communication, learn how to appropriately navigate stressful situations, develop self-awareness as an entry-level therapist, use of empathy and therapeutic use of self.

Credits: 2

Required Textbooks:

Davis, C.M. & Musolino, G.M. (2016). *Patient Practitioner Interaction: An Experiential Manual for Developing the Art of Health Care*. (6th Ed). Thorofare, N.J.: Slack. ISBN 13: 9781630910464

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style* (7th ed.).

Course Objectives:

1. Student will analyze the role of sociocultural, socioeconomic, and diversity factors, as well as lifestyle choices in contemporary society and apply their understanding to meet the needs of persons, groups, and populations.
2. Apply and analyze the evidence to explain the importance of balancing areas of occupation; the role of occupation in the promotion of health; and the prevention of disease, illness, and dysfunction for persons, groups, and populations.
3. Demonstrate therapeutic use of self, including one's personality, insights, perceptions, and judgments, as part of the therapeutic process in both individual and group interaction.
4. Demonstrate clinical reasoning to evaluate, analyze, diagnose, and provide occupation-based interventions to address client factors, performance patterns, and performance skills.
5. Identify occupational needs through effective communication with patients, families, communities, and members of the interprofessional team in a responsive and responsible manner that supports a team approach to the promotion of health and wellness.

6. Demonstrate knowledge of the principles of interprofessional team dynamics to perform effectively in different team roles to plan, deliver, and evaluate patient- and population-centered care as well as population health programs and policies that are safe, timely, efficient, effective, and equitable.
7. Demonstrate knowledge of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics and AOTA Standards of Practice and use them as a guide for ethical decision making in professional interactions, client interventions, employment settings, and when confronted with personal and organizational ethical conflicts.

Connection to the MOT Curriculum

Essential Knowledge and Professional Skills – This course is an introductory course to establish foundational skills in communication, therapeutic use of self, and empathic understanding in healthcare interactions. It works simultaneously with other introductory courses for basic skills and fundamental knowledge for the entry-level practitioner.

Grading

Exams	30%
Assignments & Quizzes	30%
Lab Activities – skill demonstrations	30%
Participation & Professional Behavior	10%
Total	100%

Specific Content Areas

Verbal and non-verbal – face, dress, posture, emails, phone etiquette

Observation skills

First impressions

Conflict resolution/assertiveness

Communication barriers

Cultural diversity/sensitivity

Challenging medical communications

Communication with patient and family/rapport building

Communication with the Terminally ill

Communication with other healthcare workers

Communication with the OTA

Communication with peds/parents

Sexual harassment and workplace violence

Communication with blind/deaf

Self-awareness

Family History and values

Moral dilemmas

Stress management

Empathy and sympathy vs pity

Grading Policies

Written assignments are graded on content, style, clarity, conciseness, and comprehensiveness. Written assignments are expected to reflect the guidelines in the Publication Manual of the American Psychology

Association (APA) 7th edition. Some of the required assignments in this course may be checked for plagiarism using Turnitin or other plagiarism software.

Class preparation: All students are expected to complete assigned readings and review online materials before taking quizzes and/or attending software.

Late assignments: Assignments are due on the date indicated in the syllabus. Late work will be accepted with prior arrangement with the instructor and will be subject to penalty. The grade will reflect 10% off each day late, and not accepted after day 3 for anything other than “completed.” All assignments must be completed, with or without credit, to receive a grade in the course.

Laboratory Passing Policy: For courses where your instructor requires a competency or ‘check off,’ students will receive three attempts to ensure entry level skills are demonstrated. It is imperative students pass both laboratory and didactic sections of each course to pass the overall course. If the first attempt at a laboratory exam is not successful, the second attempt will be offered with the highest passing score of 75%. If the second attempt is not successful, a third attempt will need to be passed to continue in the course. Should the third attempt not be successful, the student will receive a 0 and need to discuss options with the Course Instructor. The student will meet with the Program Director who will request the student to return to the course next time offered to ensure successful skills in the required practice area. For this reason, it is imperative students study appropriately and pass the laboratory competencies and meet the course objectives for safety, skill, efficiency, and entry level performance.

Grading Scale

A = 90-100% total points

B = 80-89% total points

C = 70-79% total points

D = 60-69% total points

F = less than 60% total points

Date of Final Exam: n/a

Date to withdraw without penalty: See university academic calendar

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to be in class every day it is scheduled, including outside fieldwork visits. In-class laboratory activities cannot be made up, and no points can be given for missed classes. In the event of an excused absence, there will be no penalty for the absence, but the student is solely responsible for obtaining missed information. Lab check offs, exams, and/or presentations that are missed because of an excused absence, the student needs to notify the instructor in advance and will need to be made up at the discretion of the instructor.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors. Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products. There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quit lines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. (For Fall, the Census Date is Sept. 12.) Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar. Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract. The Census Date (Sept. 12th) is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware.

These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid.

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

1. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying from another student's test paper,
- using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;

- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
 - divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
 - substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
 - paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
 - falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
 - taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
 - misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.
2. "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit.
 3. "Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.
 4. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- UT Tyler Writing Center (903-565-5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903-656-5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- UT Tyler Counseling Center (903-566-7254)

Texas Pregnancy and Parenting Student Laws

For UT Tyler to comply with Texas Laws SB 412, SB 459, and SB 597/HB 1361, faculty need to be aware that pregnant and parenting students have a suite of supports available to them. Part of the support for pregnant students includes excused absences. Students must opt into these resources. They do this by contacting the Parenting Student Liaison at parents@uttyler.edu and completing the Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form. Faculty with students who have opted into these resources will receive a Maxient email from the Parenting Student Liaison (Ashton Maisel) with the appropriate and required accommodations. Accommodations for pregnant and parenting students mirror the SAR accommodations process, and these accommodations are required. Faculty should only provide the accommodations documented by the Parenting Student liaison. If a student shares that this suite of supports is needed, the faculty member should refer the student to the Parenting Student Liaison at parents@uttyler.edu.

AI Use:

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without

attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

For this course: AI is not permitted in this course at all. a. Example 1: I expect all work students submit for this course to be their own. I have carefully designed all assignments and class activities to support your learning. Doing your own work, without human or artificial intelligence assistance, is best for your efforts in mastering course learning objectives. For this course, I expressly forbid using ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for any stages of the work process, including brainstorming. Deviations from these guidelines will be considered a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code and academic honesty values. b. Example 2: To best support your learning, you must complete all graded assignments by yourself to assist in your learning. This exclusion of other resources to help complete assignments includes artificial intelligence (AI). Refrain from using AI tools to generate any course context (e.g., text, video, audio, images, code, etc.) for an assignment or classroom assignment. c. Example 3: The work submitted by students in this course will be generated by themselves. This includes all process work, drafts, brainstorming artifacts, editing, and final products. This extends to group assignments where students must collaboratively create the project. Any instance of the following constitutes a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code: a student has another person/entity do any portion of a graded assignment, which includes purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, using a previously submitted assignment and/or using AI tools (such as ChatGPT). This document was adapted from AI Syllabus information from Carnegie Mellon University, Stanford University, The University of Texas at Austin, and The University of Texas at San Antonio. This document was edited for grammar using Grammarly, an AI tool for writing.

ACOTE Standards

Assessment Measures

1. Assignment
2. Objective Test
3. Essay Test
4. Project
5. Demonstration
6. Alternative Assessment

ACOTE Standard 2023		Syllabus Objective Number	Assessment Measure Number
B.1.2.	Sociocultural, Socioeconomic, Diversity Factors, and Lifestyle Choices: Apply and analyze the role of sociocultural, socioeconomic, and diversity factors, as well as lifestyle choices in contemporary society to meet the needs of persons, groups, and populations. Course content must include, but is not limited to, introductory psychology, abnormal psychology, and introductory sociology or introductory anthropology.	1, 3	2,5
B.2.5	Balancing Areas of Occupation, Role in Promotion of Health, and Prevention: Apply and analyze scientific evidence to explain the	2,	1, 2, 5

	importance of balancing areas of occupation; the role of occupation in the promotion of health; and the prevention of disease, illness, and dysfunction for persons, groups, and populations.		
B.3.1	Therapeutic Use of Self: Demonstrate therapeutic use of self, including one's personality, insights, perceptions, and judgments, as part of the therapeutic process in both individual and group interaction.	3,	1, 2, 3, 5
B.3.2	Professional Reasoning: Demonstrate professional reasoning to evaluate, analyze, diagnose, and provide occupation-based interventions to address client factors, performance patterns, and performance skills. Focus on creation, promotion, establishment, restoration, maintenance, modification, and prevention	4	1, 2, 5
B.3.21	Effective Communication: Demonstrate effective communication with clients, care partners, communities, and members of the interprofessional team in a responsive and responsible manner that supports a team approach to the promotion client outcomes.	3, 5	1, 2, 5
B.3.22	Principles of Interprofessional Team Dynamics: Demonstrate knowledge of the principles of intraprofessional and interprofessional team dynamics to perform effectively in different team roles to plan, deliver, and evaluate patient- and population-centered care as well as population health programs and policies that are safe, timely, efficient, effective, and equitable.	5, 6	1, 2, 5
B.2.10	Ethical Decision Making: Demonstrate knowledge of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) <i>Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics</i> and AOTA <i>Standards of Practice</i> and use them as a guide for ethical decision making in professional interactions, client interventions, employment settings, and when confronted with personal and organizational ethical conflicts.	7	1, 2, 5