Welcome to Theory Construction and Evaluation. The purpose of this course is to build on your introduction to philosophical thinking and move toward the construction of a framework or lens through which to view your own nursing practice. The outcome of this semester will be the basis for parts of your dissertation: conceptual definitions of two of the variables and the theoretical framework section. Some of you have been thinking about your unique approach to solving nursing problems for a long time and may already have an idea in your mind regarding form and contents of your study. Some of you will begin or continue thinking about how to actually put your own personal ideas about nursing practice into a structure that you can test and share. The beauty of this panoply of readiness levels to move forward with your dissertation study is that each of you is in exactly the right place to do well in this course. The goal here is to make progress, not necessarily arrive at a finished product. I saw a recent article by Sister Callista Roy where she was talking about the ongoing development of her model – which started in the early 1970s. It is a work in progress, just as your own work surely is. Success is a journey, and this course will represent an important piece of that journey. It is a delight to have you along for this wonderful semester of new experiences, challenging thinking, and creative progress toward your own theoretical contributions to nursing science.

This semester is like a building project. We will work together to acquire a comfort zone with the building blocks of theory and will use them to construct a word picture of your approach to your study. Built into this endeavor will be plans and ideas about how to evaluate and test the theory you select within your research project. Wherever your theoretical meanderings take you, you will have captured the skill and satisfaction of organizing your thoughts along a theoretical line to form the structure for your thinking. This is a hands-on course in which you will be an active participant in your learning process.

The structure of this course has been arranged around four MODULES to assist you in organizing your time and efforts. Each MODULE will build upon the one before it. Just as when you build a house, you start with the foundation, then you add the walls, and finally when there is adequate support, you can put on the roof. We will start with the foundation of theory construction and evaluation which is an understanding of concepts. Each MODULE will have specific tasks and assignments. Two MODULES will involve an understanding and analysis of concepts; one will be observing how other scholars have used theory to drive their research using a concept of interest to you; and finally you will apply a theoretical framework to your own study which will be the theory section of the articles you write for your dissertation. Every effort has been made to be clear and concise about expectations. Your job is to ask questions and seek consultation any time things are unclear. This semester should be inspiring and meaningful to both your educational endeavor as well as your future in nursing.
Please refer to the information contained in this Syllabus anytime you have a question regarding the basic course information.

One final note - if you have questions regarding technical requirements, you may need to contact the Blackboard (Bb) Technical Assistance person who is listed on your Bb site. A list of basic technical requirements is also listed in this Syllabus for your convenience.

Welcome to theory class.

**Introduction**

Please refer to the brief PowerPoint introduction to the course. For many years, I was a member of the Society of Rogerian Scholars, and I have used the Science of Unitary Human Beings by Martha E. Rogers as the basis for my practice and research since the early 1970’s. I believe in the importance of being able to define what we do if we want to do it well and evaluate ways to do it better. I hope you find your niche early and make productive use of this semester. Lynn Wieck

**Your Instructors**

**Instructor:** K. Lynn Wieck, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN  
**Office:** online  
**Office Hours:** online most of the time  
**Course Email:** lynn@drwieck.com  
**Phone:** 281-375-8155 or 281-923-3242 (cell)  
**Fax:** 281-375-8154

If you experience any problems that you are not able to resolve by accessing the Technical Information section, you can contact me at the numbers listed above.

**Instructor:** Jenifer Chilton, Ph.D., R.N.  
**Office:** BRB 2310  
**Office Hours:** Mondays 9:00-12:00, online  
**Course Email:** jchilton@uttyle.edu  
**Phone:** 903-565-5874 or 903-721-2214 (cell)  
**Fax:** 903-565-5533
Course Title

NURS 6312 Theory Construction and Evaluation

Course Description

In-depth analyses of theories applicable to nursing science and transcultural health are conducted. Concept analysis to support development and critique of conceptual models will lay the foundation to guide programs of nursing research.

Prerequisites

Successful completion of NURS 6310 is the prerequisite for this course.

Course Goals and Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Examine concepts in relation to their potential contribution to nursing theory.
2. Synthesize input from multiple interdisciplinary sources to derive conceptual and operational definitions of concepts.
3. Analyze the structure and contribution of grand theories to the evolution of nursing practice.
4. Use concepts, assumptions, and principles from prior theory development to apply a middle-range theory of nursing practice to answer a research question.

Course Outline

MODULE I – Concept Evolution and Analysis

1-a. Connecting Theory to Philosophy of Science
1-b. Thinking in Concepts
1-c. Relating Concepts

MODULE II – Concept Derivation and Analysis

2-a. Concept Derivation
2-b. Concept Analysis

MODULE III – Theory – Grand, Mid-range, Situation-specific, Borrowed

3-a. Grand Theories – Relevant or Relics
3-b. Middle-range Theories
3-c. Relational Statements
MODULE IV – Theory Application and Validation

4-a. Mechanics of Theory Development: Validation
4-b. Theory Application to Research

Course Calendar/Schedule

The course calendars can be accessed in the Syllabus/Orientation area.

Textbook and Additional References

The required textbook for this course is:


Recommended (not required) texts and resources:


Nursing Theorist source – Any source that describes the major theorists is fine. These are often available at used bookstores. You can also find a lot of information about the theorists on the WWW.

Mid-range Theory source - Any source relating to mid-range theories is fine. You can find a lot of information about the MRTs on the WWW. (http://www.nurses.info/nursing_theory_midrange_theories.htm Many of these links are not active, but there are good ideas for where to go next.)

It is highly recommended that you have the current edition of The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), version 6. Washington D.C.: Author. Much of it is available on the internet, but having the book will greatly facilitate your doctoral written work, including your dissertation.

Booklists and bookstore links may be accessed at the UT at: http://uttyler.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/BNCBHomePage?storeId=65060&catalogId=10001
Grading Information and Course Requirements

1. FORMAT OF “WORK FOR A GRADE:” All written works for grade will conform to APA format.

2. MODULES I & II: Concept analyses. You will identify two concepts that will be tested in your research study. Choose one of the two for the first concept analysis will be conducted using a modification of the Walker and Avant approach. This work will lead you into an application of the concept to future work. The second concept will then be analyzed using the Walker and Avant format plus feedback from the first effort in order to give the opportunity to perfect your technique and move both concepts into relational statements and contribution to a theoretical framework. Please refer to the GRADING PACKET for Guidelines and Grading Criteria for Concept Development Paper #1 & #2 which provide a thorough discussion of how to successfully complete this project. Both concepts must be pre-approved by Dr. Wieck.

3. MODULE III: Identification of a mid-range theory (MRT) which uses at least one of the concepts you analyzed. A Blackboard Discussion will be conducted during the last two weeks of March regarding potential theories. You will share ideas and get feedback. The product for Module 3 will be a one-page slide of your selected MRT which contains a schematic of the MRT, the relationship of the concepts you identified, and the relationships of the variables involved in the MRT. Please refer to the GRADING PACKET, Guidelines and Grading Criteria for Paper #3 for a discussion of the expectations for this assignment.

4. MODULE IV: Written Presentation of the theoretical framework you intend to use for your dissertation which includes at least one of the concepts you have analyzed. The theory may be one found in the literature (nursing or other discipline) or a modification of a published MRT in nursing. The goal for this paper is to provide the section of your dissertation work that will usually be labeled “Conceptual Framework” or “Theoretical Framework of Study” or something similar. See GRADING PACKET for explicit directions.

5. Engagement Grades: Each of you will receive a grade based on your degree of engagement in the course. This grade will derive from participation in group activities (Elluminate sessions, group discussions), promptness of delivering assignments, depth of investment of time in readings and other course work. You will get an engagement grade at the end of coursework.

6. Final Exam: A final exam will be given on 7 am May 1, 2014 (Thur) to 7 pm May 3, 2014 (Sat).

Final grades for the course will be determined based upon the following point assignments:

A - 90-100
B - 80-89
C - 70-79
D - 60-69
F - Below 60

The work you will perform for this course is weighted as follows:

20% - Concept Analysis Paper #1
20% - Concept Analysis Paper #2
10% - Schematic - Theoretical Framework Relationship to Concepts: one page slide
20% - Theoretical Framework of Study (MRT paper)
20% - Final exam
10% - Engagement in Course Grade

Assignments must be turned in on time. No assignments will be accepted after the due date unless arrangements for an exception have been made with Dr. Wieck or Dr. Chilton BEFORE the day the assignment is due. Please do not assume that this exception will automatically be granted by asking for more time. The reason for seeking an exception to the due date must be a true emergency which was unforeseen in your time management planning for this course. Early submission of papers will be positively reflected in the engagement grade.

Assignments

Reading Assignments

- Assigned readings in doctoral education are the beginning, not the endpoint. These readings will point you in the direction of continued reading and pondering of your scholarly thoughts. Each participant is responsible for completing the reading assignments in a timely manner. Deadlines are listed in the Course Calendar.
- Discussion and written assignments are made with the assumption that required reading assignments are completed prior to completion of discussion and written assignments.

Participation Expectations and Discussion Assignments

- Discussion boards will be done intermittently during the semester as assigned. There are no weekly DB assignments. I will post an announcement if an unanticipated discussion is underway. Please feel free to start your own discussion if you have a question or insight.
- Discussion Board will be used to discuss the following:
  - Week #1 – post the concepts you found in your mining experience with your State of the Science paper. (If you do not have a SOS paper, do not worry. Check with Dr. Wieck.)
  - Week #3 – post your first concept on the Discussion Board for feedback from instructors and student colleagues.
  - Week #6 – post your second concept on the Discussion Board for feedback.
  - Week #10 – post the mid-range theories you are exploring. What do you like about them? What is missing that you need? Help each other find the best fit.
  - Week 12 – post several relational statements between your two concepts; how do they fit with your MRT? Critique each other’s relational statements – do they make sense, do they really relate to each other, is the relationship of any value to nursing, etc.
  - Week 16 – post on DB any insights you have had about your theoretical framework. After reading feedback from Dr. Wieck and Dr. Chilton, do you think you might be able to use this theory for your dissertation?
• We will use the Discussion Board for questions and any types of discussion of questions or assignments you may have. You may also discuss with each other in this medium or any other that has worked for you. I urge you to check the DB every 2-3 days, and I will try to do the same. I am always available quickly by email at lynn@drwieck.com if there is an emergency or burning question. I reserve the right to copy and paste my responses to a direct email question into the DB if I think the other students will benefit from the question and response. Identity of the questioner will be protected (unless it is a particularly brilliant observation and you want credit for it! 😊). This action is similar to holding up your hand and asking a question in a face-to-face class. If you request that your question not be shared, I will respect that request.

Written Assignments

• All written assignments are to be completed in Microsoft Word and submitted on time. Deadlines are listed in the Course Calendar. All times are Central Time Zone, USA.
• Please note that all written assignments must be submitted by midnight Central Standard Time on the due date unless another time is indicated (such as the Final Exam).
• Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Please avoid the consequences of academic dishonesty by citing all sources that you use in your work.
• Late assignments will not be accepted.

Assignments/Projects Turn-In Process

All assignments and projects will be submitted through the assignments link of Blackboard. Use the following process to prepare and submit assignments:

• Prepare your assignment using Microsoft Word. Name your assignment with the following convention: last name, first initial, assignment title (ex. LastF_AssignmentTitle)
• Click on "View/Complete Assignment" in the assignments overview area or project area
• Number 1-shows the assignment instructions
• Number 2-is where you add your comments and attach your completed assignment
• Number 3-when all attached files (your completed assignment files) are uploaded, click submit

When written assignments are received, they are opened in Microsoft Word for grading using the “Track Changes.” This method allows instructor comments, questions, etc. Your assignment will be returned through the Student Gradebook link or by email. An announcement will be made when papers are returned to remind you to check the Student Gradebook. To see comments about your assignment, click on your grade. Assignments are usually not returned until all have been graded.

If you need more instructions on how to submit files through the assignment link, please read the Blackboard Student Manual located in the Tools area.
Completion Time

You should expect to spend as much time on an online course as you do in a face-to-face course. As a rough guide, you should plan to spend six to ten hours per week on this course. The actual amount of time will vary from individual to individual. This estimate includes the time you spend in reading, discussions, and assignments.

You will have access to most of the course materials from the start of the course to the end. You may look and study ahead, or go back and review, at any time during the course. The exception is the final exam which will be available for 60 hours only. Plan your time so you complete this assignment BEFORE the ending time (7 p.m. on Saturday, May 3, 2014). The final exam window will close at 7 p.m. All assignments have set due dates.

Email and Course Discussions

Email

To communicate by email within the course with other participants or all participants, click the Communications link on the left side of the Blackboard frame. Click Send E-mail to send a message. You are able to send messages to All Users or Select Users in the course, including the instructor. If you need more instructions on how to send email messages with Blackboard please read the student manual located in the Resources area of the course.

The course email is lynn@drwieck.com (primary email); also may reach your instructor at lwieck@uttyler.edu. Dr. Chilton is available at jchilton@uttyler.edu.

Questions or problems other than technical problems (see Technical Requirements in this Syllabus) may be submitted to the email address above.

We will make every effort to respond quickly to your emails. Generally speaking, we check our email inbox several times a day during the workweek and less frequently on the weekend. One caveat: technical problems in email systems may slow down responses! Our priority is communicating with you, so if there are any problems, we will work to solve them.

Discussions

The Discussions feature in Blackboard is an online discussion forum in which students and faculty can communicate asynchronously (anytime) via message postings.

When you click the Communications link on the left of the Blackboard frame, then the Discussion Board area, a listing of general subject categories will appear in a table format. Each general subject category is represented by a file folder icon.
All threads (topics) pertinent to a general subject category will appear as links under that subject category folder. The instructor has control of what general subject categories are available for discussion in the course. Students may introduce and name threads under the general subject or may reply to the threads of other students. That is why it is called “Discussion.” At the instructor's discretion, students may or may not have the option of starting a new thread under the general subject categories and may or may not be able to edit their comments after they have been posted. If there are restrictions on your access, you will know in advance what these restrictions are and why they are in place.

Students can respond to threads in the course discussion. To respond to a thread:

- In the Discussion Board area, you will see a list of forums
- Click on a forum link to open it and view the contents within
- Open a message
- Click Reply to respond to the message

Your response will now appear in the table, along with your name as author and date/time of posting. Icons will appear to the right allowing either a response or perhaps editing and deletion options. If the edit icon or the trash can (delete icon) doesn't appear, the student doesn't have editing or deletion privileges.

**Accessing Library Resources**

Students enrolled in this course have excellent access to your home campus library, the Robert R. Muntz Library, at the University of Texas at Tyler. Follow this link, and then complete the instructions at those sites for accessing information from a distant site. Many of the database subscriptions funded by student fees give you access to full text journals that you will need for your review of the literature in each course. Please take the time to set up your account and get familiar with the resources available. They are awesome.

**Technical Information**

**Technical Support**

If you experience technical problems or have a technical question about this course, you can obtain assistance by emailing itsupport@patriots.uttyler.edu.

When you email IT Support, be sure to include a complete description of your question or problem including:

- The title and number of the course
- The page in question
- If you get an error message, a description and message number
- What you were doing at the time you got the error message
You may also visit the Help Tab in Blackboard for useful information or check out On Demand Learning Center for Students [http://ondemand.blackboard.com/students.htm](http://ondemand.blackboard.com/students.htm)

**Plug-ins and Helper Applications**

UT Tyler online courses use Java, JavaScript, browser plug-ins, helper application and cookies. It is essential that you have these elements installed and enabled in your web browser for optimal viewing of the content and functions of your online course.

- **Adobe Flash Player** allows you to view content created with Flash such as interactive web applications and animations. [http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/)

**University Policies**

**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://www2.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php](http://www2.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php)

**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. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at [http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar](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 is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. 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
Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability Services
In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, PTSD or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with the Accessibility Case Manager/ADA Coordinator, Cynthia Lowery Staples. If you are unsure if the above criteria applies to you, but have questions or concerns please contact the SAR office. For more information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to cstaples@uttyler.edu

Student Absence due to Religious Observance
Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities
If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.
Social Security and FERPA Statement:
It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation:
Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor’s directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Course Evaluation

UT Tyler may ask you to complete a voluntary evaluation to help them make improvements and adjustments in their overall online learning forums.

Also, an end-of-semester evaluation specifically for this course will be made available for you to complete in the last week of instruction. Your comments and recommendations will be considered seriously as the course is updated. Your input throughout the semester contributes to my commitment to continually improve the quality and relevance of this course.

Netiquette Guide

"Netiquette" is network etiquette, the do's and don'ts of online communication. Netiquette covers both common courtesy online and informal "rules of the road" of cyberspace. Review and familiarize yourself with the guidelines provided.

Navigation

In order to effectively participate in online learning, it is imperative that you understand how your course is arranged and how to access and contribute information. If you have a question regarding the navigation within this course, please refer to the Blackboard user manual available under the Tools area.

Getting Started

Please refer to the information contained in this Syllabus anytime you have a question regarding the basic course information.
Please begin this course by clicking on the Outline button in the left-hand navigation bar in Blackboard, and then choose Assignments.

**Final Note:**

Theory is an aspect of nursing that is often glossed over in the frantic efforts to cover the night shift or gain dietary compliance by a 16-year-old diabetic. It sounds like fluff, decoration, a cruel hoax to torture doctoral students. But theory is the basis for what we do as nurses and why we do it. Nursing without theory is action without meaning. Taking someone’s blood pressure is a waste of time unless you have an action in mind if it is high, low, or even just right. There is a basis to everything we do—that is our theoretical underpinning of nursing actions. What if our theory is wrong? What if our theory is detrimental or harmful? That is why we study, evaluate, critique, and reinvent theory all of the time—to ensure that the actions we take as nurses and the practice in which we engage have the optimal outcome, meeting the needs of our patients. Nursing without patients is like air traffic controllers without airplanes—why bother? Why we do what we do for patients is at least as important as how we do what we do. The “why” is our theoretical framework. At the end of this semester, you will have a working relationship with the theory that will guide your research efforts. What could be more important to the future of nursing than scholars like you asking the hard questions and searching for the answers. Theory will be your guide. **Welcome aboard! It is going to be a wonderful semester.**

*Lynn Wieck and Jeni Chilton, Instructors*