

GCD 8921: Professional Development Seminar I

M: 1:25-2:15pm; Amundson Hall 240

Instructor:

Ian MacFarlane, Ph.D.

MCB 5-136; 612-301-2789

macf0010@umn.edu (best way to contact me)**Drop-In (Office) Hours:**

In person (MCB 5-136): W 10:30-12; Th 3-4:30

(please email me dates/times that would work for you if these times don't fit your schedule; I'm also happy to meet via Zoom)

Course Description:

This 2-semester course counts for 2 credits (1 credit in the fall and 1 credit in the spring). Over these 2 semesters we will focus on developing awareness, attitudes, and skills to promote readiness for clinical placements in the second year. Course content in the fall semester will focus on the impact of identity on the professional life of genetic counselors. After introducing the importance of metacognition and self-care to success in graduate school and the profession, the major topics of the course will be exploration of personal intersectional identity, understanding the lenses by which we view the world, tools for navigating cultural differences, and assessing systemic barriers to inclusion in healthcare.

Instructor Positionality:

As humans, we all approach life with a specific worldview shaped by our identities, personal and community histories, and values. Being aware of these “lenses” by which we interact with each other and with information is vital to the work of a culturally engaged person. We will define “culturally engaged” as part of the course, but I want to share with you a little about me and my worldview, since my position of power as the instructor privileges my worldview in the class. Professionally, I am a psychologist with relatively little training in biology beyond foundational knowledge. Because of my research interests and career journey, I have been engaged with genetic counseling for over 15 years. I am familiar with many of the nuances of this work, but I am still an outsider. This position gives me the ability to look at genetic counseling practices without having “grown up” in the systems that govern this work, and thereby ask questions or propose ideas that may not occur to those in the systems. My outsider position also means I do not always appreciate the nuances and demands of the medical system, so I may not be able to answer all your questions. In these situations, I have a strong network of contacts I can leverage to find the answer and we can learn together.

Personally, I wield significant privilege in society due to my many majority identities (visible and invisible). I actively try to use this privilege to center the voices of those who have been historically, and continue to be today, marginalized. While I have considerable training on these issues, I still regularly make mistakes. When I make these mistakes, I seek to apologize and repair relationships when possible, reflect on the origins of the mistake, educate myself on the historical and current contextual factors involved, and do better in the future. I am still learning and growing in the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and every time I teach this course I am fortunate to learn from my students while I teach. It is my goal to grow alongside you rather than position myself as an authority or expert.

At the intersection of my personal and professional identities, I firmly believe it is the responsibility of people the current systems empower to seek ways to deconstruct the oppressive nature of these systems. As such, I work to be actively involved in DEI efforts. Because of my

majority identities I am often praised for this work more than the many people of marginalized identities who built the foundation upon which I stand. I recognize the historical and ongoing effort of these scholars, educators, activists, and revolutionaries, and seek to honor their fight by adding my work to theirs. I hope by the end of this class, you will join me in this continual process.

Course Student Learning Outcomes (Fall Semester):

Following successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify factors related to metacognition and self-care that affect academic performance and develop a self-care plan for your graduate school career.
2. Describe your personal identities in both discrete and intersectional fashions.
3. Articulate intercultural communication strategies informed by theoretical and empirical literature.
4. Critically assess systemic barriers to inclusive healthcare.
5. Discuss and critique genetic counseling research articles.

Required Materials:

Readings and resources will be posted via Canvas.

Grading:

This is a S/N course, meaning no letter grades will be assigned. To earn an S (passing grade), students must complete each of the required assignments at a satisfactory level (defined by University policy as a C- level) and meet the attendance requirement.

Assignments:

Basic descriptions of the required assignments are provided below. Specific instructions will be posted to Canvas for each assignment.

Due Dates

Due dates for assignments in this class are mostly flexible. The assignments with firm deadlines are Journal Club preparation and the final paper, the former because the pre-work informs what happens in class and the latter because I have a tight window in which to submit grades for the course. All other assignment deadlines are negotiable. While I prefer you to turn assignments in on the dates listed on the schedule, I understand that Mondays are busy days for you in this program. The assignments in this course are largely reflective, so you will get more out of them if you have sufficient time and energy to put in, rather than slapping something together to meet a deadline. If you turn in the assignment by the Friday after it's listed as due in the schedule, there is no need to contact me about it. If you need more time than that, please communicate with me to determine a reasonable extension.

*Major Assignments*Formatting

Students in previous years have asked for more flexibility in the format of assignments. I strongly value written communication and outside of your case preparation assignments there is not a lot of extended writing in the first-year curriculum, which is why my assignments have traditionally been papers. I've been hesitant to shift to presentations because you will do many of those in your other first year courses, but this year I'm experimenting with a more flexible framework to allow you to have more control over the formatting.

You have four major assignments in this class, which are listed below. At least two of these must be written as papers and at least 1 must be a presentation. The remaining assignment can be either. You will choose which format to use for each assignment. In the descriptions below, I have provided the page length as well as the time length requirements. Since we have limited time together in class, assignments completed in presentation format will be pre-recorded, use PowerPoint (or alternative presentation software), and be housed in MediaSpace (U of MN's media repository). You will turn in a link to the video in MediaSpace in place of a paper. Your video must be closed captioned accurately to make it accessible.

Metacognition Reflection

In this 4 page paper (7 minute presentation), you will assess your preparation for your first 8911 exam using the metacognitive framework we discuss in class. You will critique your plan for the first exam and then develop a plan for your next exam (either your first 8917 exam or your second 8911 exam).

Self-Care Plan

Genetic counseling training is demanding, and we want to help our students proactively manage their well-being. We will discuss some of what makes this training a potentially draining experience and how to promote a healthy approach to this career path. In this paper of no more than 6 pages (10 minute presentation), you will reflect on your current self-care strategies, identify personal warning signs of stress, articulate additional strategies you can utilize in times of increased stress, and forecast situations that may be particularly challenging for you over the next 2 years.

Cultural Autobiography

In this 8-10 page paper (15 minute presentation) you will explore your own cultural identity and values, along with the history of how they evolved using the theories and lenses discussed in class. We will consider culture in a broad sense, and you will discuss your identities in both singular and intersectional contexts. The central goal of this assignment is to help you articulate your worldview in a structured format to facilitate understanding of dynamics between you and future patients. This will also inform your proposal for a cultural immersion project in the spring semester.

Values Alignment Reflection

The NSGC Code of Ethics defines values of the profession but it is up to individual genetic counselors to reconcile these values with your own personal values. For this assignment, you will review the values from the ethics code and compare them with the values you identified in your cultural autobiography. By exploring areas of alignment and potential conflicts in a paper of no more than 6 pages (10 minute presentation), you will be able to better prepare to navigate interactions with patients and supervisors. This reflection can serve as a springboard for planning conversations with supervisors, program faculty, and personal reflection.

Minor Assignments

AI Prompt Assignment

As AI become more and more prevalent in many aspects of our society, healthcare and education are exploring how to use this technology ethically and effectively. We will discuss the use of AI in our program and some ways you can attempt to improve what AI gives you using prompt engineering. In this assignment you will compare the outputs of the two UMN supported AI

programs (Co-Pilot and Gemini) and see how well you can shape the outputs to meet specific criteria.

DEIB Journal Club

We will have 3 journal club days this semester. On these days we will meet with the second years so we can discuss an important genetic counseling research study. To help you prepare for these discussions, you will complete a short reflection exercise by 1:30pm on the Friday before journal club meets. These will help the second year facilitators shape the discussion around specific thoughts and questions from the group.

Digital Accessibility Project

As we strive to create inclusion and belonging in our professional work, one often overlooked area is digital accessibility. While most people have heard of and implement alt text for images, other components get less attention. We will cover best practices for a variety of formats, including word processors, presentation software, video, and PDFs. Since you will be creating work that uses all these types of files, you will have the chance to demonstrate your command of accessibility as part of those assignments. You can select which assignments you want to use for accessibility checks during the semester.

Metacognition Check In:

You will complete a short worksheet to assess how well the plan you developed in the Metacognition Reflection worked on your next exam.

Tentative Fall Semester Schedule

Date	Topic(s)	Readings/Assignments
9/8	Class Overview & Introduction	
9/15	Self-Care	Pre-class video lecture; McGonical's TED Talk
9/22	Academic Success 1 – Metacognition	Jug et al. (2019); Mahdevi (2014); Dweck's TED Talk
9/29	Academic Success 2 – Technology	Pre-class video lecture; Self-Care Plan
10/6	Identity 1 – Looking Inward	Pre-class video lecture; Handelsman et al. (2005); Crenshaw's TED Talk ; AI Prompt Assignment
10/13	Mentorship Network Development	Metacognition Reflection
10/20	Identity 2 – Looking Outward	Pre-class video lecture; McIntosh (1988); Reeder et al. (2017)
10/27	Journal Club #1	TBD
11/3	Digital Accessibility 1 – Documents	Watch videos and review resources posted to Canvas; Cultural Autobiography

Date	Topic(s)	Readings/Assignments
11/10 ***	Digital Accessibility 2 – Presentations	Watch videos and review resources posted to Canvas;
11/17	Navigating Cultural Differences	Pre-class video lecture; Digital Accessibility Project
11/24	Identifying Systemic Issues	Pre-class video lecture;
12/1	Journal Club #2	TBD; Metacognition Check In
12/8	1 st Semester Reflections	Course evaluation (in-class)
12/14	Final Paper	Values Alignment Reflection Paper Due 12:30pm

***We will not be meeting on 11/10 due to NSGC conference

Technology

Canvas

This course will be web-enhanced through the use of Canvas. Readings, lecture slides, some handouts, and links to other resources will be provided through this system. Unless otherwise specified, you will turn your assignments in via Canvas. You can access Canvas through the following link: <https://umn.instructure.com/>. Questions concerning content/postings should be directed to me, while questions regarding access/technical issues should be directed to the U of MN IT Help Desk (612-301-4357; help@umn.edu). A PDF viewer is required to view the content posted to the Canvas site. Free Adobe software is available for download via <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

Zoom

While the plan is currently to conduct all class sessions in person, there may be times where class will take place using Zoom. Should this become necessary, I will give you as much advanced warning as possible, including instructions for joining and expectations for online interactions.

Policies (in alphabetical order):

Artificial Intelligence

The Board of Regents [Student Conduct Code](#) states the following in Section IV, Subd.1: Scholastic Dishonesty:

“Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarism; cheating on assignments or examinations, including the unauthorized use of online learning support and testing platforms; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work, including the posting of student-generated coursework on online learning support and testing platforms not approved for the specific course in question; taking, acquiring, or using course materials without faculty permission, including the posting of faculty-provided course materials on online learning and testing platforms; ...”

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) models, such as ChatGPT/Co-Pilot/Gemini, and online assignment help tools, such as Chegg®, are examples of online learning support platforms: they cannot be used for course assignments except as explicitly authorized by the instructor. The following actions are prohibited in this course:

- Submitting all or any part of an assignment statement to an online learning support platform;
- Incorporating any part of an AI generated response in an assignment;
- Using AI to brainstorm, formulate arguments, or template ideas for assignments;
- Using AI to summarize or contextualize source materials;
- Submitting your own work for this class to an online learning support platform for iteration or improvement.

The use of Grammarly is permissible in this course, even though it uses generative AI, because it will not compose text for you. It will help sharpen your writing via prompts and suggestions, but you have to have something there for it to work, as opposed to ChatGPT which will create an entire body of text.

If you would like to use AI for assignments other than the AI Prompt Assignment, please talk to me ahead of time about your plan for use and why this tool is the best option for you. If you are in doubt as to whether you are using an online learning support platform appropriately in this course, I encourage you to discuss your situation with me.

Any assignment content composed by any resource other than you, regardless of whether that resource is human or digital, must be attributed to the source through proper citation. Examples of citing content composed by digital tools are presented in: libguides.umn.edu/chatgpt.

Unattributed use of online learning support platforms and unauthorized sharing of instructional property are forms of scholastic dishonesty and will be treated as such.

Attendance

Regular and engaged attendance is critically important to your success in this class. Much of our learning will be discussion-based and this cannot be adequately simulated by makeup assignments. That being said, we continue to be in extraordinary times due to the ongoing health crises, global conflict, and acts of violence directed toward vulnerable and/or oppressed communities. Take care of yourselves as you need to, but if you are not going to be able to attend class, please let me know ahead of time if possible. With a small class, absences can affect the ability to do certain activities and it is helpful if I can plan ahead. PowerPoint slides will be posted to the Canvas site, but you will definitely want additional information beyond what is printed on the slides. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate. I am happy to meet with you about course material you missed if you have questions remaining after getting notes from a classmate and completing the reading assignments. If you miss two consecutive class sessions without contacting me or replying to my attempts to reach you, you may be dropped from the course at the discretion of the instructor.

Changes to the Syllabus

All aspects of this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Students will be informed in writing of any changes to the syllabus via an announcement in Canvas.

Classroom Conduct

All students have the right to a civil, productive, and stimulating learning environment. In turn, as the instructor I have a responsibility to nurture and maintain such an environment. Lively, even heated, discussion is part of a stimulating learning environment. Both instructors and students, however, have a fundamental obligation to respect the rights of each other and an

equally fundamental obligation to respect the instructional setting as a place for civil, courteous, and courageous behavior. We all bring different backgrounds, experiences, assumptions, and opinions into this class. The class will be a better experience for everyone if everyone feels safe enough to share their perspectives. It is encouraged to challenge each other's perspectives, but we will debate ideas and theories using evidence to support our own positions. Repeated behaviors that undermine the learning environment described above may result in being asked to leave the class for a day or, if other interventions do not succeed, you may be dropped from the course at the instructor's discretion.

Communication

Outside of class, I will communicate with you most frequently via your **U of MN email address**. It is your responsibility to monitor this address and you are responsible for the information delivered to this address. **I highly recommend you check your email at least daily.** I will also post messages to Canvas, so you are encouraged to check Canvas regularly. The best way to contact me is through email. I will always attempt to respond to email promptly, which means within 24 hours. **I typically do not check my email after 8pm**, so if you email me at night, do not expect a response until the next morning at the earliest.

Disability Accommodations

I and the University view disability as an important aspect of diversity and is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- If you have, or think you have, a disability in any area such as, mental health, attention, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical, please contact the DRC office (612-626-1333) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
- Students with short-term disabilities, such as a broken arm, can often work with instructors to **minimize** classroom barriers. In situations where additional assistance is needed, students should contact the DRC as noted above.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have a disability accommodation letter dated for this semester or this year, please contact your instructor early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have questions or concerns about your accommodations please contact your (access consultant/disability specialist).
- For additional information, please see [the DRC website](#) or email drc@umn.edu.

Diversity Statement

I believe the tenets of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) should be infused into my policies, coursework, and teaching practices. I hope that these foundational experiences will not only foster an environment in which your intersecting identities, lived experiences, and cultural backgrounds are supported but will also provide you with the knowledge and skill set to carry forward into the communities you will interact with in your career and general life. I recognize that systemic oppression, discrimination, bias, and prejudice have been pervasive in science and education in overt and subtle ways. I am in the process of improving my awareness of and active process of either eliminating biased materials in my course or critiquing their use in science.

We will all bring unique perspectives to this course and I hope those who feel comfortable will share insights and alternative interpretations throughout the semester. Cultural perspectives are the heart of this course and will be explicitly included in most of our discussions. I welcome feedback on ways to increase the diversity of perspectives being provided in class and methods for creating a more inclusive atmosphere through my teaching.

The University provides equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, membership or activity in a local commission created for the purpose of dealing with discrimination, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult the [Board of Regents Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action Policy](#).

Drop-In/Office Hours

You are not required to attend office hours, but these are times I hold open for you to come ask me questions about anything related to class or broader questions, such as about career preparation. Some students use these times to ask questions about a concept in class they want to understand better. Others use these times to explore connections they are making between material in our class and something else in their lives (e.g., other classes, current events, personal interactions). Others may want to discuss careers in genetic counseling, psychology, or other roles. You might just want to get to know me better and debate Star Trek vs. Star Wars, compare fandoms of sports teams, or trade book/movie/tv show recommendations. All these interactions and many more are welcome.

Holidays & Observances

The GC program welcomes and supports the observance of religious and cultural holidays. In addition to the U of M's [holiday and observances calendar](#), we recognize that there are other holidays and practices that may be important for you to observe. Please let me know at the beginning of the semester if there are any potential conflicts with assignments, exams, or other required attendance so we can discuss reasonable adjustments.

Incompletes

An "incomplete" only may be given as a grade for the course when a student has a passing grade the course and has an unforeseen and uncontrollable event occur that prevents him or her from earning a significant number of points in the course. Thus, incompletes are rarely given and each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To have an incomplete changed to a different grade all missing work must be completed by the end of the following term.

Mental Health and Stress Management

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the [Student Mental Health Website](#). In addition, I am happy to work with you to secure off-campus referrals if you would prefer.

Role of the Instructor

I will provide learning opportunities designed to prepare you to understand culturally engaged practice in precision medicine and foster critical thinking. I have created the course to incorporate different methods of learning and assignments draw upon multiple skillsets to be successful. Every effort will be made to accommodate different learning needs and you are encouraged to provide feedback both formally and informally. I pledge to carefully consider constructive feedback about teaching methods and incorporate suggestions to the extent feasible. I am responsible for treating you in a respectful, professional manner and creating a classroom atmosphere where students treat each other with civility and respect. I will be accessible outside of class and encourage you to meet with me either during drop-in hours or individual appointments to discuss concerns (e.g., about the class, workload, assignments, etc.), conflicts or problems that affect course performance, concepts which need further clarification, additional resources related to course material, or career plans.

Scholastic Misconduct & Academic Integrity

Scholastic misconduct is broadly defined as any act that violates the rights of another student in academic work or that involves misrepresentation of your own work. Scholastic misconduct includes (but is not limited to): cheating on assignments or examinations; helping another student cheat on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, which means misrepresenting as you own work any part of work done by another; submitting the same paper, or substantially similar papers, to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of all instructors concerned (including papers you have submitted in previous semesters); providing others with copies of your assignments; depriving another student of necessary course materials; or interfering with another student's work. Academic integrity is doing your own work to the best of your ability given the circumstances at the time of the assignment. It includes proper attributions to knowledge you are using from other sources and succeeding on your own merits. Academic integrity is the goal for all of us in this class, including me. Remember that you are not defined by your grades and you are worthy of being here. I'm happy to support you in improving your work if you are not satisfied with your grades.

Plagiarism is a serious offense, however, most of the time, it happens because students are rushing through assignments and do not leave themselves with sufficient time to properly attribute information taken from other sources. You need to include citations each time you use information from a source. Include your citation in the first sentence where you begin using material from other sources. If you use 5 or more consecutive words from a source, you must include quotation marks and include the page number (or paragraph number if you are using an online source) in your citation. Failure to provide the page/paragraph number for a direct quote is actually a form of plagiarism, so make sure to double check before submitting assignments.

Your major papers will be screened for plagiarism via the TurnItIn database. Penalties for scholastic misconduct in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be made at the discretion of the instructor and may range from point deductions on the assignment to failing the class. If you have any questions about whether something might be considered an academic integrity issue or not, please talk with me about it BEFORE you turn in an assignment.

The Office for Community Standards has compiled a useful list of [Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to scholastic dishonesty](#). For additional information, see the *Student Conduct Code* section below.

Sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking and relationship violence

The University prohibits sexual misconduct and encourages anyone experiencing sexual misconduct to access resources for personal support and reporting. If you want to speak confidentially with someone about an experience of sexual misconduct, please contact your campus resources including the Aurora Center, Boynton Mental Health or Student Counseling Services. You can also [make a sexual misconduct report online](#). If you want to report sexual misconduct, or have questions about the University's policies and procedures related to sexual misconduct, please contact your [Title IX office](#) or relevant policy contacts.

Instructors are required to share information they learn about possible sexual misconduct with the campus Title IX office that addresses these concerns. This allows a Title IX staff member to reach out to those who have experienced sexual misconduct to provide information about personal support resources and options for investigation. You may talk to instructors about concerns related to sexual misconduct, and they will provide support and keep the information you share private to the extent possible given their University role. For more information, please consult [Board of Regents Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking and Relationship Violence Policy](#).

Statement on School Closure

In the event of a school closure (due to inclement weather or another issue) on a day when we are scheduled to have class, please be sure to check your email for a message from me. We will likely continue to meet remotely (e.g., using Zoom), but I may contact you with instructions for an assignment or activity you could complete using Canvas or other course resources.

Student Conduct Code

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University you are expected to adhere to [Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code](#). Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach and/or a student's ability to learn." The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities.

Thank a Teacher

If you would like to send a [short note of thanks](#) to any of your instructors, including TAs, it can make their day or week. Your note can be signed or anonymous.