

PSY 382: FOUNDATIONS OF CLINICAL PRACTICE
MWF 1:30-2:50, HC 311

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Office Hours: M 3-4, T 1:30-2:30, W 11:30-12:30, Th 3-4; or by appointment

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Course Description:

This course is designed to give you an introduction to the foundational skills needed for a career as a mental health service provider. Familiarity with these skills will help you determine if this a career path for you, and be of service in a number of other human service professions (e.g., medicine, teaching, case management). This course also serves as a prerequisite for the clinical psychology practicum capstone.

The first segment of the course will focus on therapeutic microskills, the basic skills of interacting with clients. This section of the course will include skill development via simulated counseling session role plays. The second segment of the course will focus on specific skills used by mental health practitioners to promote stress and anxiety management, healthy relationships, and overall wellness. The final segment of the class will focus on broader issues such as ethical practice and counselor self-care.

The format of this course is a combination of lecture, practical lab, and discussion. During a typical week, Monday will be more of a lecture and demonstration style class where a new skill is introduced. Wednesdays will typically be spent practicing the new skill in pairs or small groups. Fridays will usually focus on discussions of theoretical and empirical literature concerning the clinical outcomes of the skill. Thus it is imperative that you come to class having processed in the information in the readings. Notice the word “processed,” which is more than simply reading. Moving your eyes over the pages will not prepare you sufficiently for the discussions we will have in this course. You must reflect on what you read, critique the material, and be prepared to discuss the issues from multiple perspectives. As PSY 201 is a prerequisite for this course, be prepared to critique the research design of any empirical article we read.

The course is designed to help students reach the following learning objectives:

- Critique and synthesize peer-reviewed journal articles on the efficacy of a variety of mental health interventions.
- Develop preliminary competencies in basic therapeutic microskills.
- Develop preliminary competencies in applied therapeutic skill-focused interventions.
- Facilitate discussions of scholarly material with peers.
- Critically analyze the microskills performed in a therapy session.
- Design an assessment to measure the efficacy of a group-based intervention.
- Refine oral presentation skills.

Required Materials:

Skovholt, T. M., & Trotter-Matheson, M. (2011). *The resilient practitioner: Burnout and compassion fatigue prevention and self-care strategies for the helping professions* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. ****2nd edition okay too****

Additional readings will be posted via Moodle.

Assignments:*Microskills Critique I (50 points)*

For this assignment, you will watch and critique the microskills used by Paul Weston (a clinical psychologist from the HBO series *In Treatment*, played by Gabriel Byrne) during a session. We will watch a session together in class and you will have the opportunity to ask questions if aspects of the session are unclear. You will then write a critique of the use (or lack thereof) of each of the microskills we have discussed in class. You will also assess the impact of these microskills on the client and discuss how you think they will affect the client's relationship with the therapist moving forward. This critique will take the form of an APA Style paper (you do not need to include a cover page or a running header) of no more than 10 pages. You are not required to use references, but if you consult sources they must be cited correctly in APA Style.

Microskills Critique II (75 points)

This project will follow the same model as the first microskills critique, but this time you will be using a recording of yourself conducting a role play with another student. You will record a role play of 20-30 minutes where you demonstrate your microskills while the simulated client discusses an issue. You will then annotate the video in Classroom Salon to critique of the use (or lack thereof) of each of the microskills we have discussed in class. You are not expected to have mastered all the microskills; rather I want to see what you notice about what was effective and what was not. You will also assess the impact of these microskills on the "client" and discuss how you think they will affect the client's relationship with the therapist moving forward. **If you choose to role play with someone who is not a student in this course, you must have a signed consent form for recording and that person must make up an issue (i.e., do not discuss something the person is actually going through).** This assignment may be repeated once (using a new session) if you are not satisfied with your grade on the first attempt. Further information will be provided in class.

Sleep Hygiene Workshop (50 points)

After covering sleep hygiene, you and a partner will conduct an outreach event where you present sleep hygiene tips in the form of a workshop. This may be done on- or off-campus, but if the latter it must be approved by me well in advance. Regardless of setting, the material should be targeted to your specific audience (e.g., college students, athletes, middle schoolers). There will be some material which is mandatory to convey, but much of the structure and format of the workshop will be up to your decision. We will review several different styles of workshops in class to help you make an informed choice. In addition to planning and presenting the workshop, you are also responsible for assessing how well your workshop is received. To this end you will create an assessment tailored to your workshop which you will give to your audience when your workshop is finished. Workshops will be scheduled in collaboration with me, as I must attend your workshop. You and your partner must also have a preparatory meeting with me to go through the material you plan to present, any activities you want to do, and review your assessment sheet.

Discussion Leadership Project (35 points)

During the specific skills portion of the course, we will cover a number of interventions therapists use with their clients. As potential future clinicians, you want to be sure the interventions you use are supported by empirical evidence. In small groups, you are going to investigate the empirical literature of either: sleep hygiene interventions, mindfulness, progressive muscle relaxation, or assertiveness training. On the date marked “Evidence for X” your group will lead the discussion evaluating the empirical evidence. Your group must find a minimum of four peer-reviewed, empirical articles (meaning they have a method and results section) and email them to me by noon 4 days before the discussion date (e.g., Monday for a Friday discussion). When discussing the articles be sure to address internal and external validity as well as the implications of each article. Unless otherwise instructed, assume the discussion will fill the entire class period.

Reflection Papers (90 total points)

Throughout the course you will be practicing the new interventions and exercises you learn on yourselves, your classmates, and other students. After going through this practice, you will write a short reflection paper (3-6 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1 inch margins) assessing how comfortable you were with the interactions, how the “client” seemed to respond to the exercise, what you thought went well, and what areas you need to continue to develop. There will be a total of six reflection papers, each worth 15 points: Sleep Hygiene Workshop, Breathing Exercises, Mindfulness I, Mindfulness II, Progressive Muscle Relaxation, and Assertiveness Training. The Sleep Hygiene Workshop reflection will be due 1 week after you conduct your workshop (see above), while the other due dates are listed on the calendar below.

Ethical Dilemma Exercise (15 points)

As potential future clinicians, it is critical that you begin to develop a sense of professional ethics. We will spend time in class learning about the APA Code of Ethics to become familiar with the responsibilities of mental health practitioners. We will also revisit a model for making ethical decisions discussed in the prerequisite course and apply it to challenging situations. Together with a partner, you will be assigned an ethical dilemma and be given 15 minutes to come up with your solution using the decision model. You will present your solution at the end of class.

Self-Care Paper (75 points)

Self-care is important for any human service profession, but especially so for mental health practitioners. Novice practitioners sometimes struggle to separate work and home life or fail to take care of themselves as they try to help their clients. We will discuss some of what makes psychotherapy a potentially draining experience and how to promote a healthy approach to this career path. In this paper of no more than 10 pages, you will reflect on which struggles of novice practitioners you would expect to be the most challenging for you and identify the resources in your life you already have and would like to develop.

Total Points:

Microskills Critique I	50
Microskills Critique II	75
Sleep Hygiene Workshop	50
Discussion Leadership	35
Reflection Papers	90
Ethical Dilemma Exercise	15
Self-Care Paper	75
Total	390

Grading:

Grades will be assigned on a scale no more stringent than the following percentages:

Letter	%	Letter	%
A	> 93%	C	73%
A-	90%	C-	70%
B+	87%	D+	67%
B	83%	D	63%
B-	80%	D-	60%
C+	77%	F	< 60%

Tentative Course Schedule:

Date		Class Topic	Readings/Assignments
Week 1			
1/30	M	Empathy Overview	Parsons & Zhang, 2014a; Hill et al. 2007; Hutchinson, 2015
2/1	W	Empathy Practice	Parsons & Zhang, 2014b
2/3	F	Impact of Empathy	Greenberg et al., 2001; Krohn, 2013; Norcross & Wampold, 2011
Week 2			
2/6	M	Questions Overview	Boyd, 2003; James et al., 2010
2/8	W	Questions Practice	
2/10	F	Impact of Questions	Brodsky & Lichtenstein, 1999; Rautalinko, 2013
Week 3			
2/13	M	Communicating Non-Verbally	
2/15	W	Non-Verbal Practice	
2/17	F	Impact of Non-verbals	Dowell & Berman, 2013; Elson, 2001; Hill et al., 2003; Ladany et al., 2004
Week 4			
2/20	M	Self-Disclosure Overview	McCarthy Veach, 2011
2/22	W	Self-Disclosure Practice	
2/24	F	Impact of Self-Disclosure	Audet, 2011; Gibson, 2012; Myers & Hayes, 2006; Yeh & Hayes, 2011

Date		Class Topic	Readings/Assignments
Week 5			
2/27	M	Sleep Hygiene	
3/1	W	Sleep Hygiene Practice	
3/3	F	Evidence for Sleep Hygiene	TBA;
Week 6			
3/6	M	<i>No Class – ABGC Meeting</i>	
3/8	W	Putting Microskills Together	Ackerman & Hilsenroth, 2001; Williams & Fauth, 2005
3/10	F	Microskill Evaluation Practice	
Week 7			
3/13-17		<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>	
Week 8			
3/20	M	Breathing As Treatment	Microskills Critique I Due
3/22	W	Breathing Practice	
3/24	F	Mindfulness Overview	TBA
Week 9			
3/27	M	Mindfulness Exercises I	
3/29	W	Mindfulness Practice	Breathing Exercise Reflection Due
3/31	F	<i>No Class – SWPA Conference</i>	
Week 10			
4/3	M	Mindfulness Exercises II	
4/5	W	Mindfulness Practice	Mindfulness Reflection I Due
4/7	F	Evidence for Mindfulness	TBA
Week 11			
4/10	M	Progressive Muscle Relaxation	Microskills Critique II Due
4/12	W	PMR Practice	Mindfulness Reflection II Due
4/14	F	Evidence for PMR	TBA
Week 12			
4/17	M	Assertiveness Training I	
4/19	W	Assertiveness Training II	PMR Reflection Due
4/21	F	Assertiveness Practice	
Week 13			
4/24	M	Evidence for Assertiveness	TBA
4/26	W	Clinical Ethics	APA Ethics Code; Cavanagh & Levitov, 2002; Assertiveness Reflection Due
4/28	F	Ethical Decision Making Model	Pomerantz & Handelsman, 2004; Willingham & Boyle, 2011;
Week 14			
5/1	M	Ethical Dilemmas	
5/3	W	Burnout	S & TM, Ch. 5-7
5/5	F	Self-Care	S & TM, Ch. 10-12
5/12	F	Self-Care Paper Due (5pm)	

Technology

This course will be web-enhanced through the use of Moodle. 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 Moodle. You can access Moodle through the following link: <https://moodle.austincollege.edu/login/index.php>. Questions concerning content/postings should be directed to the instructor, while questions regarding access/technical issues should be directed to the Austin College IT Help Desk (903-813-2063; helpdesk@austincollege.edu). A PDF viewer is required to view the content posted to the Moodle site. Free Adobe software is available for download via <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>. This course will also make use of WordPress® a free online blogging tool, as described above.

Policies:*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 dishonesty includes (but is not limited to): cheating 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.

Plagiarism is a serious offense which will not be tolerated. Most of the time, however, plagiarism happens because students are rushing through assignments and do not leave themselves with sufficient time to properly attribute information taken from other sources. For this class you may cite your sources using either APA or MLA style. If you plan to be a psychology major or minor, I encourage you to get used to APA style, as you will be using this throughout your coursework. Note that for either style, you need to include citations each time you use information from a source. It is incorrect to use information throughout a paragraph and only include a citation at the end. Also, 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.

You will be required to submit an electronic copy of all major assignments which will be compared with 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. All academic misconduct (no matter how small) will be reported to the Academic Integrity Council, which may impose sanctions up to and including expulsion. Austin College's full academic integrity policy is available in the *Environment* (Austin College Student Handbook; the most recent edition is posted on Moodle) in the Student Conduct section. If you have any questions about whether something is plagiarism or not, please talk with me about it BEFORE you turn in an assignment.

Accommodations

Austin College seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all individuals with disabilities and will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines. If you have a documented disability for which you would like accommodations, please inform me by the second week of class. It is your responsibility to remind me of your accommodations at

least a week before I distribute each assignment or exam. To arrange for accommodations, you will need to register as soon as possible at the Academic Skills Center with Laura Márquez, the Director of the Academic Skills Center, (903-813-2454, Suite 211 of the Wright Campus Center). For information on this process, go to <http://www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/academic-skills-center/>. This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request.

Attendance

Attendance is required and critically important to your success in this class. A major component of the course is the lived experience of using the microskills and basic interventions we learn, along with the giving and receiving of feedback from your peers, which cannot be replicated outside of class. Students who miss more than three classes without documentation may be dropped from the course at the instructor's discretion. If you know you are going to miss class for a medical, religious, or Austin College sanctioned academic/athletic reason, let me know in advance and potential alternative assignments may be given at the discretion of the instructor. PowerPoint slides will be posted to the Moodle site, but will be outlines which require additional information from lectures or activities. If you miss class it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate. Full lecture slides will not be distributed. If you must arrive late or leave early, please sit near the door and do so in the least disruptive manner possible.

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 a post to Moodle.

Communication

Outside of class, I will communicate with you most frequently via your *Austin College 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 Moodle, so you are encouraged to check Moodle 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. I check Moodle daily and will respond to questions posted in the forum within 24 hours.

Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities may be given at the discretion of the instructor. Possible examples of extra credit opportunities include: participation in psychological research, attendance at events, or further research into a topic of interest. The maximum amount of extra credit possible for this class is 4 points (~1% of your final grade).

- Students can earn extra credit points by participating in research authorized by the psychology department. These research opportunities are current studies being conducted by your peers and/or the psychology faculty, and are opportunities to contribute to the knowledge of the field as well as your classmates' education. Participation is a serious commitment that requires honest and thoughtful responses. If you give false, misleading, or thoughtless (i.e., choosing "4" on every item on the scale) data, it not only compromises the work of your peers and faculty but can potentially cripple research that took months or years to set up. The researchers can see how much time it took you to complete the study (even the online surveys) and have to throw out data that is clearly

carelessly entered. If you do not have enough time to complete the research appropriately (as described in the informed consent statement), do it at another time.

All students will be added to the email list to receive notifications of research opportunities for extra credit. If you do not want to receive these emails, you will be given the opportunity to opt out. For every 30 minutes of research participation, students will receive 1 point of extra credit. **MAKE SURE to keep a list of the studies you participate in** so you can be sure you have received all your extra credit slips. At a minimum, write down the name of the study, date of participation, and contact information for the researcher. If you write a 2 page (double-spaced, 12 pt., Times New Roman) reflection paper about your experience participating in the study, you will earn 1 additional point.

- Research Participation Response Paper Requirements:
 - Describe the study you participated in as well as you can. In other words, what were you asked to do?
 - Describe how you felt during the study. Was it fun? Uncomfortable? Confusing? Surprising?
 - Tie the research to something we discussed in class or is discussed in your readings. If you're not sure what the research was investigating, say so but try to guess what it was about.
 - How would you improve the study? Evaluate the research design to the extent possible (i.e., you may not know the reliability of the instruments being used but you can say you thought the questions were worded poorly).
- Additional extra credit assignments may arise during the semester as opportunities to attend campus or community events become available. The amount of points received for attending such events will vary by the time commitment (the points will be posted along with the information about the event). The length of the response paper required will also vary, but will be a minimum of 2 pages.
 - Event Attendance Response Paper Requirements:
 - Describe the event (e.g., where, when, why)
 - Who was the target audience?
 - What did you learn?
 - How does this relate to something we have discussed in class or some other aspect of psychology?
 - If you had been in charge of the event, what would you do plan next as a follow-up? How might the event coordinators continue to build momentum, conduct additional research, etc.?
- Students can also write a 3 page paper on an approved psychology topic for 1.5 points of extra credit. These papers must be proposed no later than 4/17 and turned in no later than 5/1.

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.

Late Work

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date listed in the syllabus. Assignments turned in after class but on the same day will be penalized 5%, with 10% additional penalty for every additional calendar day the assignment is late (thus if the assignment is due on Tuesday but turned in on Thursday the maximum score you could receive is 75%). No assignments will be accepted more than 7 days after the original due date. Extensions may be given at the discretion of the instructor, but **no extensions will be given during the 24 hours before an assignment is due**. It is your responsibility to budget your time so you are not working on assignments at the last minute. Specific arrangements must be made with the instructor as to how late work will be turned in (e.g., email vs. hard copy) or it will not be accepted.

Make-Up Exams

If circumstances prevent you from being in class on the day of an exam, please notify me as soon as you can (BEFORE the exam) in order to arrange to complete a make-up exam. Make-up exams will be scheduled prior to the exam date if possible. Please note **I will require documentation** (e.g., a doctor's note) explaining your absence from class in nearly all cases. Make-up exams may be different than the original exam and **must be completed within 1 week of the original exam date**.

Role of Instructor

I will provide learning opportunities designed to provide students with information about psychology and foster critical thinking. Every effort will be made to accommodate different learning styles and students will be 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 students in a respectful, professional manner and creating a classroom atmosphere where students treat each other as such. I will be accessible outside of class and encourages you to meet with me either during office 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 careers in psychology.

Role of Student

Students will come to class prepared to learn and open to new ideas. Assignments (including readings) will be completed before class begins and to the best of each student's ability. Classroom discussions will be conducted in a respectful manner, where all opinions are valued regardless of whether you agree or disagree with the content. Students who cannot maintain respectful communication will be asked to leave the classroom. Students will take responsibility for their own learning throughout the class. Students will consult available resources (e.g., the syllabus, Moodle, email messages) before asking administrative questions.

Statement on Classroom Conduct

All students have the right to a civil, productive, and stimulating learning environment. In turn, instructors have a responsibility to nurture and maintain such an environment. Lively, even heated, discussion is not disruptive behavior. Both instructors and students 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 behavior.

Statement on Diversity

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 will be explicitly included in many of our discussions and will likely come up in many others. 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.

Writing Tips

Your ability to write will greatly impact your grades in this course. I expect you to make strides in your writing in terms of mechanics, style, and ability to write concisely. Writing skills make up a substantial portion of your grade on written materials, so make sure to take this seriously.

Professionalism

- You will turn in most assignments for this class electronically via Moodle. On the rare occasions where I ask for a hard copy, assignments must be printed in black ink on white paper. Pages must be clean (i.e., no coffee rings, dog drool, rips, etc.) and stapled together. I do not read anything that is not attached to the first page and your grade on the assignment will reflect this.
- Your name, the date, and the assignment title must be included on the first page.
- Pages must be numbered (if assignment is more than 1 page).
- Proofread your papers. Writing is about communicating to the reader so you need to make sure you are getting your point across. If you typically have issues with grammar and/or spelling, make sure you have your papers done early enough to have someone proof them for you. The Academic Skills Center has writing tutors available and I strongly encourage you to make use of them. These tutors will not proofread your paper for you, but can help you learn proper writing mechanics. For example, if I give you feedback about improper use of commas, you can make an appointment to discuss the rules for using commas.

Use of Quotes

- Quotes should be included **very infrequently**. You should not use more than 2 quotes in any paper you write for me. Most of your papers will likely not contain any quotes. This is both an APA style issue and a pedagogical issue. I want to see that you can paraphrase and explain what happened in your own words.
- If you do use quotes, you still have to explain what the authors are saying.
- Remember, if you use **5 or more consecutive words** from another source, you must use quotation marks and include the page number (or paragraph number if it is an online source) in your citation.

APA Style tips

- The *Publication Manual* has more in it than just how to cite sources!
- The goal of scientific writing is to be concise and precise. You will not get bonus points for inserting “fluff” into your papers. In fact, your grades will suffer if you are including a bunch of filler instead of substance.
- Avoid sexist language. Do not refer to people generally or groups of mixed genders as masculine. You do not have to write “his or her” every time either. You can switch between he and she as long as they are approximately balanced throughout the paper as a

whole. As a side note, many people identify outside the dichotomy of male and female, so genderless pronouns such as “ze/zir” or “zhe/hir” are likely to be more common in the future. There are a number of variations of these pronouns and there is no standard as of yet. In my classes these are acceptable and in fact encouraged, but you should check with other professors before using genderless pronouns. If you are discussing a person who prefers the pronoun “they” in your paper, respect that person’s wishes and use “they/their.” In this case, you need to include a statement in the paper that “their” is the preferred pronoun of this individual so I do not take points off.

- For longer papers (>3-4 pages) it is often helpful to include headings and subheadings to organize your writing.

Additional tips

- Never, ever use the word “prove” in your writing. Research studies do NOT prove anything. Research can support, suggest, indicate, demonstrate, corroborate, show, etc.
- The writing assignments you do for me are considered formal writing. Therefore, there should not be any contractions (e.g., you’re, can’t, don’t) in your papers. The exception is when I ask you to write reflection papers. These are less formal and may include contractions.
- I am not impressed by your vocabulary. I am impressed by your ability to communicate clearly. Do not use big words if you do not know what they mean.
- Know your target audience. Avoid jargon unless you are sure the entire audience will know what it means. Unless specifically told otherwise you can assume the target audience is me.
- If you are critiquing a research article, you need to be able to articulate why the issue you are pointing out is important. Do not just say they needed a bigger sample. What would be gained by having a bigger sample? How does a small sample limit the ability to interpret the results?

Common Writing Mistakes

- The word “that” is the most overused word in the English language, and is often included in sentences unnecessarily. When you come to a sentence which includes “that” while proofreading your paper, read the sentence again without “that.” You will often find it still makes sense. If so, remove the unnecessary “that.” Here is a non-exhaustive list of words commonly followed by “that” which typically do not need to be: state, say, mention, believe, feel, think, agree, found, indicate, conclude, imply, and realize.
- Do not start a sentence with the word “however.” Not only is it a conjunction (just like “and,” “but,” etc.) but in this context the word does not mean what you intend it to mean. At the start of a sentence, “however” means “in whatever manner,” not “nevertheless.” This is true even when there is a comma after the “however.” This can always be fixed by simply moving the “however” a few words into the sentence or using “nevertheless” to start the sentence. For example, “However, the research does not support this idea” becomes “The research, however, does not support this idea.”
- Periods and commas always belong inside quotation marks. Do not put the period after the quotation mark.
- Be aware of the verb tense you are using. Students often shift tenses back and forth throughout papers, paragraphs, and even sentences. Some tense shifts are appropriate, but

many are due to sloppy editing. Make sure you are consistent and intentional with your tenses.

- Do not use “they” when you are referring to a single person. This is usually done in an effort to avoid choosing he versus she (see above).
- The word “pique” means interesting or stimulating. The word “peak” means comes to a point or summit. The word “peek” means a brief look. Attention is “piqued” not “peaked.”
- The word “feel” should only be used if you are describing an emotion or the sensation of touch. “Feel” should NOT be used to suggest intuition, judgment, agreement, or beliefs. These are examples of thoughts or cognitions. It is incorrect to write “I feel I deserve a better grade.” This is a judgment and should be stated “I think I deserve a better grade.”
- The software used to create presentations is “PowerPoint” not “power point.”
- The word “therefor” is used to describe an exchange, such as “I traded my sandwich and received a salad therefor.” The word “therefore” refers to a statement based on the preceding information, such as “I did not like the salad, therefore I regretted the trade.”
- When you are referring to people, use the word “who” instead of the word “that.” For example, “the students who took this class last semester” instead of “the students that took this class last semester.”
- The word “everyday” means commonplace or usual. If you mean to say something happens each day, use the phrase “every day.”
- If you are a leader, you lead people. The past tense of this verb is “led.” For example, I led the meeting yesterday. The homophone “lead” is a type of metal. For example, I led the meeting yesterday about removing the lead paint from the building.