

GS/NURS 5100 6.0
Theoretical and Philosophical Foundations of Nursing Science
Course Outline – Fall 2014

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Calendar Course Description

This online course focuses on the major paradigms and core assumptions guiding nursing science. Students explore, analyze, and critique selected nursing theories and their own philosophical beliefs and values about the core of nursing through dialogue, reflection, and aesthetic inquiry.

Expanded Course Description

This six-credit foundations course is offered online using a new eLearning tool called **Daagu***. This course focuses on the major philosophical assumptions and concepts informing nursing science. Students explore, analyze, and critique specific concepts aligned with nursing science and connect these with their own philosophical beliefs and values about nursing through dialogue, reflection, and aesthetic inquiry. This introductory course lays a conceptual foundation for other courses in the master’s program. Students have opportunities to explore questions that are relevant in the context of their own nursing contexts and that are of personal interest. Students are offered essential understandings and critical questions relating to the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of nursing as a science and discipline. Students are supported to develop their own critical questions and to search for answers in a community of inquiry and diverse views.

* Students will be introduced to the Daagu platform during orientation to the MScN program

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Critically analyze and evaluate core philosophical concepts from perspectives consistent with human science (such as existential phenomenology, critical perspectives, socio-ecological perspectives, complexity theory, etc.).
2. Synthesize and articulate major points of intersection and divergence among selected philosophical concepts and human science perspectives.
3. Examine and critique nursing theories and selected philosophical concepts in relation to systemic values, assumptions, and structures that limit and/or promote health and healing and social justice.
4. Demonstrate understanding of a diversity of perspectives relevant to nursing science.

Essential Understandings:

- Nursing science is informed by multiple philosophical traditions that contribute to the emerging discipline.
- Discussions of philosophical/theoretical ideas in the form of ‘this AND that’ rather than ‘either/or’ capture the historical complexity of nursing knowledge development.
- Different philosophical traditions have (generally) coherent assumptions, discourses, and narratives that define and distinguish them.
- Different philosophical perspectives have different implications for practice and research.
- Personal philosophical perspectives tend to align with one or more extant philosophical perspectives/traditions in nursing science.
- Views of reality are perspectival and evolving.

Critical Questions:

- What is truth and how does it relate with philosophical assumptions?
- What is nursing and its fundamental values and concepts?
- What is science and how did it develop?
- What does 'human science' mean?
- Of what value is art in a scientific world?
- How is science a narrative?
- What is an assumption that informs science?
- What assumptions are taken for granted, and thus, not examined?
- What happens when assumptions are shattered?
- What is knowledge?
- What is a discipline, and how is nursing a discipline AND not a discipline?
- How did the subjective-objective dichotomy develop historically and what are current views about this dichotomy? Why is this dichotomy of interest in nursing science, education, and practice?

Resources

Some core readings and resources will be provided as a place to start engaging the vast amount of resources available. You will also be contributing resources that are meaningful to you and that you believe may be helpful for others to read, see, or consider.

Overview of Learning Activities

Course teaching-learning activities are informed by complexity pedagogy. Complexity pedagogy proposes that all persons in a community of inquiry learn together. Teachers and students come together to engage, share, and question in order to develop more personal understandings. Diverse views and different perspectives are required for deep learning and so in many ways we are all responsible for contributing, not only to our own understanding and growth, but to that of our colleagues and classmates. There are no right and wrong answers in complexity learning and we all have different views and understandings, because our understanding is contextual, historical, and experiential. We are all coming together from a different place to spend time in a shared quest for insights and emergent learning.

There are many excellent resources on complexity pedagogy. One written by faculty at York can be found at this link: <http://www.sciedu.ca/journal/index.php/jnep/article/view/1601/1132>. Perhaps begin with this article and see what questions and interests surface for you. The course activities and assignments have been designed to align with the basic beliefs of complexity pedagogy. Here are some ideas that you will experience as part of our community of inquiry. The following definitions have been informed by:

Moss, L. J., & Normore, A. H. (2006). An exploratory analysis of John Dewey's writings: Implications for school leaders. In M. S. Plakhotnik & S. M. Nielsen (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Fifth Annual College of Education Research Conference: Urban and International Education Section* (pp. 82-87). Miami: Florida International University. Available: <http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1244&context=sferc&sei-redir=1&referer=http%3A%2F%2Fscholar.google.ca%2Fscholar%3Fq%3Dreflection%2Bdefinition%2Bin%2>

[Beducation%26btnG%3D%26hl%3Den%26as_sdt%3D0%252C5%26as_ylo%3D2013#search=%22reflection%20definition%20education%22](#)

Trueit, D. (2012). Pragmatism, post-modernism, and complexity theory. The “fascinating imaginative realm” of William E. Doll, Jr. New York, NY: Routledge Taylor & Frances Group.

Complexity Pedagogy Terms and Definitions

Reflection: A process of contemplation about one’s thinking and actions in specific situations in order to better understand the pros and cons of different ways of thinking and acting.

Recursion: An iterative process of revisiting what one knows in order to see with new eyes. Recursion is a looping back with intent to discover again.

Emergent Learning: As students and teachers inter-relate, offering different views and posing different questions, new learning emerges in the shifts of understandings and perspectives. All students and teachers can create teachable moments by introducing different ways of thinking about and acting in various situations.

Perturbations: Disrupt the status quo by challenging assumptions, providing alternative views, asking different questions that expand understandings. Perturbations may point out paradox, ambiguity, and critical aspects of familiar ways of knowing.

Diversity: Difference is needed for deep thinking and critical understanding. Seeing only one way does not represent the complexities of life and learning. When diverse views are shared new insights often surface and propel thinking and problem-solving in new ways that surface as difference is considered and conversed.

Non-linearity: Life, living systems, thinking, responses are all evolving historically, experientially, reflectively and non-reflectively in stops and starts, transformative leaps, and sometimes with unexplainable emergence. Change in living systems and processes cannot be controlled in simple formula or directives. Living systems are continuously evolving in unpredictable ways.

Relationality: Reflects the ways people, things, ideas, preferences, patterns connect and interrelate. An idea can link with many different experiences, an event might link with many memories, a concept can connect with particular ideas across multiple contexts in a web of relationality.

Evaluation of Learning (subject to revision)

1. Individual Assignment: Final Paper - 40%
2. Group Assignment 1 (mid-term) - 15%
3. Group Assignment 2 (End of Term) - 20%
4. On-line Participation - 25%