

GS/NURS 5100 3.0
Theoretical and Philosophical Foundations of Nursing Science
Course Outline – Fall 2017

Course Professor: Gail J. Mitchell

Section B & C

Calendar (Short) Course Description

This course focuses on the major ontological schools of thought, including the assumptions, concepts, and theories that integrate the breadth and depth of nursing knowledge across domains of practice. Students explore, analyze, and critique specific concepts, nursing theories, and theoretical approaches aligned with nursing practices and connect these with their own philosophical beliefs and values about nursing through dialogue, reflection, and aesthetic inquiry.

Expanded Course Description

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 [practice or praxis] and that connect with different ontological approaches, including: critical theory, positivism/post-positivism, complexity, and human science. Students explore 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.

The course will introduce and explore foundational philosophical and theoretical concepts from the four major ontological schools of thought underpinning nursing science: **Critical Theory, Post-positivism, Complexity, and Human Science**. For example, students consider concepts such as: Power, Intersectionality, Explanation, Evidence, Relationality, and Emergence. Consistent with Master's level expectations, the course provides students with a conceptual understanding of the philosophical and theoretical breadth of the discipline enabling students to understand complex issues and judgements that are based on the scientific foundations of nursing science.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students demonstrate the ability to differentiate assumptions for core ontological schools of thought in nursing science.
2. Students demonstrate the ability to compare practice approaches across four ontological schools of thought.
3. Students demonstrate the ability to analyze conceptual links among nursing concepts/theories and ontological paradigms.
4. Students demonstrate a critical awareness of current challenges for each school of thought for advancing the discipline of nursing.

Essential Understandings:

- Nursing science is informed by multiple philosophical traditions that contribute to the discipline. For example, **Critical Theory, Post-positivism, Complexity/Relationality,** and **Human Science** are ontological schools of thought present in nursing scholarship.
- 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 that require examination in light of relational practice, ethics, and issues of social justice.
- Personal philosophical perspectives tend to align with one or more extant philosophical perspectives/traditions in nursing science.
- Views of reality and their respective ways of knowing are perspectival and evolving.

Overview of Teaching-Learning Approach

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 personal understandings. Diverse views and different perspectives enable 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. 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 together in a shared quest for insights and emergent learning.

We will be using the online platform called Daagu in this course. Orientation to the platform will be provided during orientation. You will also be provided with a user guide for this teaching-learning platform.

Evaluation of Learning: Due Dates & Weighting

Evaluation Activity	Due Date (Midnight)	Weighting
1. Ongoing Participation for 12 weeks from Sept 8 to Dec 5	Self-evaluation of participation due Dec 5	35%
2. Short Scholarly Paper	Oct 8	25%
3. Final Scholarly Paper	Dec 3	40%