

**GS/NURS 5100 6.0**  
**Theoretical and Philosophical Foundations of Nursing Science**  
**Course Outline – Fall 2013**

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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 and will be using a new eLearning tool called PerLS. 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.

**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**

Professors have prepared some core readings and resources that can be a place for you to start to engage 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. Once the course starts you can visit the Global View and explore the resources there for GS 5100 Fall Term 2013.

Obtaining Required Articles Online through York Library

**Go to <http://www.library.yorku.ca/ccm/jsp/homepage.jsp>**

- Under "Search library resources", type in the name of the journal (e.g., Nursing Science Quarterly) and then scroll down on the menu to the right to "Periodical Title"
- Click on the link to access the journal
- You will then need to sign in (Passport York or library number)
- Click on the desired year, e.g., 2013
- Click on the required issue, e.g., 26 (1)
- Scroll down to find authors' names and click on PDF version; you can then print the article

**Web-Based Resources**

- 1) We all will be visiting the WWW as we search for relevant materials, videos, images, texts, etc. Students are required to reference all material in keeping with Copyright Law and the Principle of Fair Use.
- 2) The PerLS system prompts you to enter urls (links) to materials you would like others to see or share.
- 3) An excellent resource website about nursing theory, including links to websites about multiple theorists, is based at the Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science. Available at: <http://www.sandiego.edu/academics/nursing/theory/>

## 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 schoolleaders. 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.  
[http://coeweb.fiu.edu/research\\_conference/](http://coeweb.fiu.edu/research_conference/).

[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%2Beducation%26btnG%3D%26hl%3Den%26as\\_sdt%3D0%252C5%26as\\_ylo%3D2013#search=%22reflection%20definition%20education%22](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%2Beducation%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.

The teaching-learning activities are designed to engage you in exploring, discovering, and clarifying how your ideas connect with nursing science and nursing scholarship through reading, writing, and discussing. As you will see, there is a strong emphasis on collaborative learning in the course. There are two required group presentations, a final individual paper, and an evaluation of your participation with the community of your colleagues. The assignments are designed to enable you to achieve the program objectives and course learning outcomes.

### **Individual Assignment – Final Paper (10 Pages) - 40%**

Choose one of the two assignments below: A) or B). Both require you to keep a journal of your thinking over the course of the term. You are asked to keep a journal linked with your selected choice of assignment question and to write a final paper that demonstrates how your thinking evolved over the course of the term and in what ways your thinking was influenced

A) At the beginning of the term write a personal philosophy of nursing that describes how your values and assumptions about human beings and health get lived out in practice (as practitioner, educator, or leader). Compose three questions or ideas that puzzle you about nursing theory and philosophy at the beginning of the course. Submit this philosophy and your questions/puzzlements to the professor. Keep a journal of how your thinking changes over the term and revisit your philosophy and questions/puzzlements mid-way through the term. Submit a final paper at end of term that describes how your leaning is emerging and shifting views about your personal philosophy of nursing. Your final paper might include the discussions or literature that most influenced your thinking and why, the “aha” moments (important insights) that helped shift your understandings, and how your questions evolved over the term.

B): At the beginning of the term, choose one published article on nursing philosophy/theory (one provided in the PerLS global viewer or one you locate yourself) and explore the ideas in the article. Write a review of the article and identify what points you agree with, what points you have different views about, and what perplexes or worries you. Compose three questions that are inspired by the article. Submit your review and questions to the professor. Keep a journal on your three questions and how your thinking about these questions change over the term. At mid-term revisit these questions and update or refine them according to your changing understandings. Submit a final paper at end of term that describes your emergent learning and shifting views about your questions and the ideas described in your initial review. Your final paper might include a reflection of your original review and how your thinking has changed through the process of recursion. You might include how other discussions or literature helped you to have deeper thinking on an issue or about one of your questions. You might include the specific discussions and “aha” moments that helped shift your views, and how your questions evolved over the term to new questions that you take with you in the program.

**Group Assignment 1 (15%). Choose ONE of the following A) or B):**

A) *Philosophical Concepts in Teaching-Learning*. In your group, individually identify three philosophical concepts you think are important to nursing practice. Provide a rationale for why you believe each of these concepts is important and show how they link with practice. Once this individual work is completed, share your three philosophical concepts and rationales with the other students in the group. As a group, discuss the selected philosophical concepts. What are the similarities and differences? What new ideas come up in discussion about the concepts? What had you not considered before? What ideas did you challenge and what ideas challenged you? Next, select the two philosophical concepts your group believes are most important to include in education related to nursing practice. Then, as a group, create two original teaching-learning activities that you believe will advance students' and/or nurses' learning and understanding of these philosophical concepts. Share a description of the two teaching-learning activities (maximum one page each) with the whole class. Include a statement of purpose and how the activity will invite deep learning with each T-L activity.

B) *Creation of a Concept Map*. Diverse views spawn new thinking, so aim for diversity in this assignment. In a group, select a question from the list of critical questions in the syllabus and begin a process to see how many different understandings you can gather. (Your group can design the process and keep a record of it). What are some different assumptions beneath group members' thinking—about human beings, about nursing, about science? Based on the differences and similarities in your thinking, create a concept map to show where the ideas are similar and different. What new questions about philosophical ideas come up in your group? What new insights? Share the concept map along with a one-page summary of your group's process, questions, and new insights with the rest of the class.

**Group Assignment 2- End of Term- 20%**

In groups, choose a practice area—for example, education, acute care, community, leadership—and then identify a current issue or trend of interest to you in that area. In your group identify and discuss different perspectives about the issue or trend and how it is framed as a relevant concern in nursing. How does this issue or concern connect with nursing philosophy and human science? Explore how nursing/human science can offer different ways of thinking about the issue. Following your exploration and discussion, complete the two parts to this assignment 1) write a scholarly paper of 5 pages, with at least 10 references, and 2) prepare a 15-minute presentation of your group process (how did you approach the search for an issue, how did you select the issue, what did you learn from each other, how did you write together, what were some interesting differences in thinking in the group, how were differences of view built on in order to move forward, etc) for a one day symposium on campus. If you cannot be on campus, please arrange to have your portion of the presentation video-taped or have the rest of the group present your views, giving written evidence of your contribution to the professor.

**On-line Participation-25%**

Discussion about topics will take place online within the class space.

During week one (commencing Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013), you will be asked to select two critical questions from the course syllabus and commence a search to better understand the question and possible answers. You may start your search for answers to your two questions in the Global Viewer of PerLS and you will find resources on the internet (WWW) in the form of scholarly articles, images, videos, reports, etc. As you begin to find literature that is meaningful for your understanding and learning, upload these resources to your Individual Learning Spaces. As you will see, when you upload a resource, you are asked to provide some rationale or reason for why you find that resource meaningful. Don't forget to upload links or URLs for published resources, being cognizant of the copyright process.

During week one you will also be asked to form groups. If you are having difficulty finding a group, please let the course professor know. Your group will work together online on at least two (and possibly, three) group projects. One member of each group should inform the course professor who is in the group by Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>.

Participation in the online discussion is critical to your learning and the learning of your colleagues. Students are asked to be responsive and generous with ideas and different views. Since there are no right or wrong answers or preferred pathways for learning, we can all contribute to the layers of understanding and the breadth of possible ways of thinking. Please focus on asking questions, posing other ways of thinking, challenging assumptions, and questioning power, structure, and politics. We all have different perspectives and will agree and disagree on many issues and ideas during the course. Attending to these foci and questions is the work we will do together.

The online discussion will be in the form of a dialogue or conversation that is more informal and spontaneous, without the requirement of references. Of course you may include references when you bring in content that can further the thinking and understanding that is emerging in the discussion.

Using the criteria below you will do a self-evaluation of your participation throughout the course and submit it to your course professor at the end of the course. The professor reserves the right to discuss your mark with you, for the purpose of potentially raising or lowering it if s/he disagrees with your self-evaluation. If you want to discuss your participation at any time, please contact the course professor.

### ***Evaluation of Participation in Online Discussion***

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Exceeds Standard (2 marks)</b>	<b>Meets Standard (1 – 1.5 mark)</b>	<b>Below Standard (0 - .5 marks)</b>
<b>Class Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributes weekly to opportunities for discussion and suggests different viewpoints, connections, and possibilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributes weekly to opportunities for discussion and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not participate in discussion during one or</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts insightful comments on personal understandings and questions that prompt further discussion by others</li> </ul>	poses questions and personal views	more weeks. Poses questions.
<b>Exploration of Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploration of readings and resources are incorporated into the discussions in order to show shifts in understanding and meaningful connections</li> <li>• Offers new and different interpretations of ideas, issues, resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explorations of readings and resources are incorporated into discussions</li> <li>• Personal views are expressed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion contains no reference to exploration of resources</li> <li>• Short perfunctory postings</li> </ul>
<b>Emergence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postings demonstrate how thinking is changing in relation to others' thoughts and ideas and in relation to engagement with resources</li> <li>• Contributes to the emergent learning of others by offering perturbations</li> <li>• Points out when new ideas emerge in conversations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postings demonstrate how thinking is changing and notes distinctions and similarities with others' ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postings do not demonstrate awareness of emergence in personal thinking or community conversation</li> </ul>
<b>Reflection &amp; Recursion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postings include several examples of reflection and recursion and how these processes change thinking and acting in practice</li> <li>• Shares at least two "aha" moments with colleagues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postings have one or two examples of reflection and recursion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postings do not include examples of reflection or recursion</li> </ul>

### Evaluation

There are four aspects to evaluation in this course: participation in online discussions, presentation group presentation, and individual assignment. Due dates and weighting of assignments are presented below.

<b>Evaluation Strategy</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
1. Online Participation 2.5% per week	Weeks 2-11	25%
2. Group presentation 1	November 4 <sup>th</sup> at midnight	15%
3. Group presentation 2	Last day of class-both paper and presentation –Dec 6 <sup>th</sup> -on campus day	20%
4. Individual Assignment	Dec 10 <sup>th</sup> at midnight	40%

**Grading for Graduate Courses**

Grades will be reported in accordance with the Faculty of Graduate Studies regulations:

- A+ (Exceptional)
- A (Excellent)
- A- (High)
- B+ (Highly Satisfactory)
- B (Satisfactory)
- C (Conditional)
- F (Failure)
- I (Incomplete)

For further information please see the website <http://www.yorku.ca/grads/cal/regs.htm#gs>