

GCO 660- Professional Issues for Genetic Counselors

Spring | 2025

Course Description: Prepares students for the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) certification exam. Covers techniques for mentoring and training others, effective transition into the workforce, and strategies for lifelong learning and self-care.

Course Overview: Professional Issues for Genetic Counselors is designed to prepare students for life after graduate school. Students will learn how to refine their study techniques for the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) Board Certification examination as well as plan for future credentialing and licensure processes. Students will also be taught techniques for mentoring and training other students as well as strategies for lifelong learning and how to effectively transition into the workforce. This course will expose students to a variety of genetic counselors with diverse career backgrounds to demonstrate the broad spectrum of professional opportunities. Finally, students will learn the importance of self-care throughout their professional career.

Credit Hours: 3 hours

Enrollment Requirements: M.S. in Genetic Counseling degree-seeking student

Course Access: Your ASU courses can be accessed by both my.asu.edu and myasucourses.asu.edu; bookmark both in the event that one site is down.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Katherine Hunt Brendish, PhD, MS, CGC

Email address: khuntbrendish@asu.edu

Phone number: (480) 314-7437

Office/room: Katherine- Health Futures Center/ Room 327A

Office hours: Spring A- by appointment

After Spring A- Tuesdays, 12:30-1:30 and by appointment

Preferred method of contact: Email khuntbrendish@asu.edu or call my cell phone: (480) 314-7437

COURSE BASICS

Textbook, Materials, Technology and Co-curricular Activities

Textbooks:

(GCP) Leroy, B.S., McCarthy Veach, P., Callanan, N.P. (Eds.). (2021). *Genetic Counseling Practice, second edition*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. ISBN#: 978-1-119-52985-9.

(GGC) Pan, V.Y., Schuette, J.L., Wain, K.E., & Yashar, B.M. (Eds.). (2025). *A Guide to Genetic Counseling, Third Edition*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. ISBN#: 9781119892083.

Special materials: N/A

Co-curricular activities: N/A

Required Technology

1. Desktop or laptop computer with current/updated operating software
 - *Note: A smartphone, iPad, Chromebook, etc. will not be sufficient for completing your work in ASU Online courses. While you will be able to access course content with mobile devices, you must use a computer for all assignments, quizzes, and virtual labs.*
2. Reliable broadband internet connection (DSL or cable) to stream videos.
3. Web browser updated to the most recent version. Chrome is preferred for Canvas.
4. Webcam, microphone, headset/earbuds, and speaker
5. Microsoft Office ([Microsoft 365](#) is free to currently enrolled ASU Students)
6. [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) (free)

Please inform the instructor if any of the above present a hardship for you. ASU may have some resources to help students in need. You have access to [24/7 technical support](#).

Course Objectives

1. Students will read and assess the American Board of Genetic Counseling, Inc. Examination Specifications for their upcoming board examination and identify their best learning strategy to prepare for the ABGC board examination.
2. Students will be exposed to resources that will allow them to identify licensure and credentialing requirements in the state/location where they plan to work.
3. Students will be asked to reflect upon their experiences with mentoring other students or professionals and learn new strategies to enhance their mentoring skills.
4. Students will be introduced to the concept of lifelong learning and recognize the importance of continuing to learn throughout their careers.

5. Students will read about strategies for a successful transition into the workforce.
6. Students will learn about a broad spectrum of genetic counseling career trajectories and how such careers are achieved.
7. Students will be taught self-care techniques and learn how to access similar resources later in their careers.

Expected Learning Outcomes

1. *Formulate* a study outline and schedule for the ABGC Board Certification examination.
2. *Determine* future credentialing and licensure processes.
3. *Test* a strategy for assessing future genetic counseling students.
4. *Design* a lifelong learning strategy.
5. *Evaluate* strategies for an effective transition into the workforce.
6. *Assess* a variety of genetic counseling careers and career trajectories.
7. *Compile* your entire digital portfolio and present it to fellow students.

Does this class have an honors contract? No

Grading Policy

Grades will not be rounded in this course.

Grade breakdown:

Letter grade	Percentage
A+	97 - 100
A	93 - 96
A-	90 - 92
B+	87 - 89
B	83 - 86
B-	80 - 82
C+	77 - 79
C	70 - 76
D	60 - 69
E	59 and below

Assignments/Exams

All assignments, unless otherwise announced, **MUST** be submitted to the designated area of Canvas. Do not submit an assignment via email.

Assignment due dates/times follow Arizona Standard Time. View the [Time Converter](#) to account for the difference in Time Zones. Note: Arizona does not observe daylight savings time.

Assessment Type	Number in Course	Due Dates	Total Points
Board examination preparation exercise	1		10
Short essays	3		10 each (30 total)
Board questions	1		10
Lifelong learning exercise	1		10
Class presentation-final digital portfolio	1		40
Total			100

Final Exam:

There is no final exam for this course but there is a final project due the week before finals.

Make-up work/late submission general policy:

All work is due by the date and time noted in the class schedule and Canvas. To avoid a grade penalty, and to be fair to other students in the class, students must submit assignments on time. You may submit a written assignment up to two (2) days late (or 48 hours) and each day 10% will be deducted from the earned grade. This means you will lose 10% of the total possible points per day for every day your written assignment is late past the due date for up to two (2) days. If you submit your assignment more than 48 hours late, you will receive a grade of zero on that assignment.

Please notify the instructor **BEFORE** an assignment is due if an urgent situation arises and you are unable to submit the assignment on time.

In the event you fail an assignment, we will work together on your remediation plan that will allow you to resubmit for a new grade. The assignment and grading will be based on the specific circumstance.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions and records. The [Academic Integrity Policy](#) is strictly enforced for students found in violation. Read more about this policy in the **ASU Policies** section.

Course Schedule: (please note: schedule is subject to change)

Week/Date	Topic	Activities (Readings/videos)	Assessments (Due Dates and Points)	Associated Learning Outcome(s)
<u>Week 1</u> January 16 th	Course Overview Map out this last semester together & Review board study materials	Presentation, questions, and discussion	Assigned Reading (before class): None	LO 1
<u>Week 2</u> January 23 rd	First Board Practice Exam	Presentation, questions, and discussion	Assigned Reading (before class): None	LO 1
<u>Week 3</u> January 30 th	Dr. Knoll (2 to 3:15) Job interview techniques, challenges & practice Interviewing	Presentation, questions, and discussion	Assigned Reading (before class): Guide to GC-Green Chpt. 17 pgs. 537-552	LO 5
<u>Week 4</u> February 6 th	How to create a new genetic counseling position & Supervision strategies & Self-care strategies	Presentation, questions, and discussion	Board Preparation Exercise Due Assigned Reading (before class): Guide to GC-Green Chpt. 13 Guide to GC-Red Chpt. 14 Quiz in Canvas	LO 6 LO 3 LO 5
<u>Week 5</u> February 13 th	Non-traditional genetic counselor roles Guest speakers: Matthew Basham, MS, CGC & Sarah Cox, MS, CGC Catch up day	Presentation, questions, and discussion	Assigned Reading (before class): None	LO 6

<u>Week 6</u> February 20 th	Non-traditional genetic counselor roles <i>Guest speakers: Cary Armstrong, MS, CGC & Teresa Kruisselbrink, MS, CGC</i> & Research boards questions	Presentation, questions, and discussion	Assigned Reading (before class): Advanced GC-Chpt 10 Guide to GC-Green Chpt. 14 Guide to GC-Red Chpt. 13 AGA Abstract Due Feb. 21	LO 6
<u>Week 7</u> February 27 th	Prenatal Lecture with Tessa Nelson, MS, CGC Join Journal Club with first-years- How to write a case report for an abstract	Presentation, questions, and discussion	Short essay #1 due Assigned Reading (before class): None	
<u>Week 8</u> March 6 st	We are our own best advocates; licensure and legislation in genetic counseling Guest Speaker: Madison LaFleur, MS, CGC & Possible disease focus day	Presentation, questions, and discussion	Short essay #2 due Assigned Reading: None	LO 2
<u>Week 9</u> March 13 th	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break	
<u>Week 10</u> March 20 th	Minkoff Center for Jewish Genetics Sun Lakes Presentation	Students present	Off-campus presentation	
<u>Week 11</u> March 27 th	Boards Tips & Resources with McKenna Le & Discussion of non-traditional job Join Journal Club with first-years- Journal Club Presentations by first-year students	Presentation, questions, and discussion Practice writing board questions	Assigned Reading (before class): None Watch the video on writing board questions in Canvas	LO 1 & LO 6

<u>Week 12</u> April 3 rd	Building a Clinical Practice Lauren Maynard, MS, CGC & Karina Nall, MS, CGC Prenatal Topics <i>Join Journal Club with first-years-</i> Journal Club Presentation by first-year students	Presentation, questions, and discussion	Assigned Reading (before class): Review chpt. 17- Prenatal Diagnosis & Screening in <i>T & T</i>	LO 6
<u>Week 13</u> April 10 th	Career Ladders Jennifer Siettmann, MS, CGC Transitioning into the workplace; workplace policies, etiquette, and culture & Establishing a love for lifelong learning and professional development for genetic counselors <i>Join Journal Club with first-years-</i> Second-year students will teach you boards related research questions	Presentation, questions, and discussion	Boards Questions Due Assigned Reading (before class): <i>Guide to GC-Green</i> Chpt. 15 (pgs. 469-481) <i>Guide to GC-Red</i> Chpt. 15 Articles in Canvas	LO 6 LO 5 LO 4
<u>Week 14</u> April 17 th	Board Practice Exam #2 Insurance & billing practices for genetic counselors (updates) Or Disease focus day <i>Join Journal Club with first-years-</i> Second-year students will teach you boards related research questions		Short essay #3 due	LO 1 LO 2
<u>Week 15</u> April 24 th	Late-breaking topics-review of genetic conditions	Presentation, questions, and discussion	Life-long Learning Exercise Due	

Week 16 May 1 st	Presentations of e-portfolios <i>Join Journal Club with first-years</i>	Presentations with all faculty & students	Presentation of e-portfolios	LO 7
	Congratulations Class of 2025!!!!		Congratulations Class of 2025!!!!	

Note: While every effort is made to keep the course evaluation process consistent with what is in the initial syllabus, it is possible that slight changes may have to be made as the semester progresses. These changes will be communicated thoroughly to the students and although total points may potentially fluctuate, the percentages remain constant, meaning there is no intention of harm to the student's grades. Any changes to the course evaluation process will be posted on Canvas as part of an announcement; however, it is the student's responsibility to be aware of the points and their grade and be proactive in speaking to the instructor if there are questions or concerns. Students should not rely on Canvas or other students if they have a question on their grade in class, contact the instructor.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Classroom Behavior Policy

Disruptive and violent behavior is not tolerated. Read more about this policy in the **ASU Policies** section.

Electronic devices are permitted so long as they are used in a manner that contributes to class and do not disrupt the learning environment.

Please be prepared for each class by reading the assigned material prior to class. This will allow for a more robust engagement in the topic. During our discussions, please be respectful of your fellow classmates, the instructor and any guest lecturers.

Please refrain from using cell phones during class time. If you are unable to participate in a class discussion or require accommodations due to a disability, you must speak with the instructors prior to the start of class.

Please let me know if you are running late to class 😊. I would be happy to meet with you outside of class hours to discuss any material missed during class time.

Attendance Policy

Some absences are excused in accordance with ASU policy. They include accommodations for religious practices, University-sanctioned activities, and death of a family member. Read more about university-excused absences in the **ASU Policies** section.

Attending in-class lectures is vital for success in this course. While there is no grade penalty for missing class, making up in-class assignments is only available if prior arrangements are made with the instructor.

prior to the missed class, in accordance with university excused absences or extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g. illness, car accident, etc.).

I would be happy to meet with you outside of class hours to discuss any material missed during class time.

Expectations from Instructor

As your instructor for this course, you can expect for me to be on time to class. When possible, I will arrive early and stay late to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about the class. I will be sure to communicate with all of you in the event of an emergency and we are unable to attend class. You will be informed as soon as it is possible for me to let you know. ASU's policy on instructor's time obligation is found at the end of this section.

I will do my best to ensure that the classroom is a safe environment for you to share your thoughts and opinions. Please feel free to meet with me in office hours or at a designated time if you would like to discuss any topics from class.

In the event the instructor fails to indicate a time obligation, the time obligation will be 15 minutes for class sessions lasting 90 minutes or less, and 30 minutes for class sessions lasting more than 90 minutes. Students may be directed to wait longer by someone from the academic unit if they know the instructor will arrive shortly.

Student Success Tips

To be successful, you are encouraged to:

- come to class prepared for a lively and engaging discussions
- communicate with your instructor as often as necessary to ensure that you are understanding the assignments, expectations for each as well as due dates and late submission policies
- support and encourage your peers as we dive into advanced and challenging genetic counseling scenarios
- check the course Canvas site daily
- read announcements
- read and respond to course email messages as needed
- complete assignments by the due dates specified
- communicate regularly with your instructor and peers
- create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track
- access [academic support resources](#), including [free tutoring](#)
 - ASU Online students, please see [ASU Online Student Resources](#)

Available Academic Resources

ASU has a wealth of resources to enable your success. Access the [University Academic Success Programs](#) website for information on the writing center, tutoring, supplemental instruction, graduate academic support and more.

Mental Health

Students may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These emotional health concerns or stressful events may diminish academic performance and/or reduce the ability to participate in daily activities. [ASU Counseling Services](#) provides counseling and crisis services for students who are experiencing a mental health concern. Any student may call or walk-in to any ASU counseling center for a same day or future appointment to discuss any personal concern. ASU's dedicated crisis line is available 24/7 for crisis consultation by calling 480-921-1006.

Campus Network Outage and Technical Support

When access to Canvas is not available for an extended period of time (greater than one entire evening) you can reasonably expect that the due date for assignments will be changed to the next day (assignment still due by 11:59pm).

To monitor the status of campus networks and services, please visit the System Health Portal (<http://syshealth.asu.edu/>).

Technical Support

This course uses Canvas to deliver content. You can access Canvas through your [MyASU](#) portal.

To contact the help desk you have two options:

- For immediate assistance, call ASU at 1-855-278-5080.
- Visit the [ASU Experience Center](#) to get personalized support through 24/7 live chat or submit your request online (<https://my.asu.edu/service>).

For more information on Canvas the following resources are suggested:

- [Canvas Course Tour Video](#)
- [Canvas Student guide](#)
- [Digital Portfolios Help Resources](#)
- [Library Resources for Students](#)
- [Best Practices for Setting Course Notifications](#)
- Canvas Student App - Download through Google Play ([Android](#)) or the App Store ([iOS](#))

Third-Party Software and FERPA

During this course you might have the opportunity to use public online services and/or software applications sometimes called third-party software such as a blog or wiki. While some of these are required assignments, you need **not** make any personally identifying information on a public site. Do not post or provide any private information about yourself or your classmates. Where appropriate you may use a pseudonym or nickname. Some written assignments posted publicly may require personal reflection/comments, but the assignments will not require you to disclose any personally identifiable/sensitive information. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your instructor.

ASU POLICIES

Add/Drop/Withdraw

Access the [University Registrar website](#) for information on grades, the academic calendar, and add/drop/withdrawal options among other things. NOTE: If you are considering withdrawing, please check with financial aid as it may be impacted by a withdrawal.

University Excused Absences

Accommodation for Religious practices in accordance with [ACD 304-04](#)

The university community should, in all its activities, be sensitive to the religious practices of the various religious faiths represented in its student body and employees. Faculty are asked to recognize the obligations of their students who may be participating in the observance of religious holidays. Students should notify faculty at the beginning of the semester about the need to be absent from class due to religious observances.

Missed class due to University-sanctioned activities in accordance with [ACD 304-02](#)

Students who participate in university-sanctioned activities that require classes to be missed, shall be given opportunities to make up examinations and other graded in-class work. However, absence from class or examinations due to university-sanctioned activities does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of the absence.

Academic Integrity and Student Code of Conduct:

ASU expects and requires its students to act with honesty, integrity, and respect. Required behavior standards are listed in the [Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Procedures](#), the [Computer, Internet, and Electronic Communications Policy](#), the [ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy](#), and outlined by the [Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#). Anyone in violation of these policies is subject to sanctions.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is taken very seriously. While interaction among students is encouraged, students are expected to adhere to the [ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy](#). Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Students must properly cite sources used for assignments. Students must take exams independently without assistance from others. Students may not submit papers written by persons other than themselves. Students must submit original work for this course and may not submit papers previously submitted to another class. Consequences of non-compliance can be significant, including: failing the assignment or course, receiving a permanent "XE" grade for the course, removal from a major or program of study, expulsion from the university, among others.

The [ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy](#) lists violations in detail. These violations fall into five broad areas that include, but are not limited to:

1. Cheating on an academic evaluation or assignment.
2. Plagiarizing.
3. Academic deceit, such as fabricating data or information.
4. Aiding academic integrity policy violations and inappropriately collaborating.

5. Falsifying academic records.

Information on the Academic Integrity procedure within the College of Health Solutions can be found at <https://catalog.asu.edu/policies/chs>.

Student Code of Conduct

Violations of the ASU Student Code of Conduct, other than the provision concerning academic dishonesty, are more generally considered inappropriate behavior. The [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) reviews and sanctions these matters. If a student violates both the academic integrity provision and additional provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, both the college and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities will review the matter. Each independently makes determinations concerning violations and appropriate sanctions.

Disruptive or Violent Behavior

In the classroom and out, students are required to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes a safe environment that is conducive to learning and conducting other university-related business. All incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student will be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students. Such incidents will be dealt with in accordance with the policies and procedures described in Section 104-02 of the Student Services Manual, available at <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm104-02.htm>. Be advised that an instructor may withdraw a student from the course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process per Instructor Withdrawal of a Student for Disruptive Classroom Behavior (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi201-10.html>).

Disability Accommodations:

Reasonable accommodations are determined on a case-by-case, course-by-course basis to mitigate barriers experienced due to a disability ([SSM 701-02](#)). Students with disabilities who require accommodations must register with the [Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services](#) and submit appropriate documentation. It is recommended students complete this process at the beginning of the term and communicate as appropriate with their instructor.

- Email: Student.Accessibility@asu.edu
- Phone: (480) 965-1234
- FAX: (480) 965-0441

Inclusive Excellence and Health Equity

The College of Health Solutions has a mission to improve the mental and physical health of our larger and immediate communities by better understanding the challenges that individuals and populations face, while striving to be part of the solution. The college is committed to the idea that every member of our society should have the opportunity for good health and wellness throughout their lifespans. In an effort to actualize this ideal, we embrace and support inclusive excellence in everything we do, including teaching, research,

service and clinical practice. Learn more about the College of Health Solutions' commitments to inclusive excellence at <https://chs.asu.edu/about/inclusive-excellence>

Students have access to the [ASU Office of Advancing Inclusion and Culture](#), which is dedicated to supporting and fostering a culture of inclusiveness, promoting and assisting with equal opportunity and diversity initiatives.

Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, & Retaliation

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. [ASU Counseling Services](#) is available if you wish discuss any concerns confidentially and privately. ASU online students may access 360 Life Services, <https://goto.asuonline.asu.edu/success/online-resources.html>.

Copyright

Students must refrain from uploading to any course shell, discussion board, or website used by the course instructor or other course forum, material that is not the student's original work, unless the students first comply with all applicable copyright laws; faculty members reserve the right to delete materials on the grounds of suspected copyright infringement. For more information, see the Computer, Internet, & Electronic Communications Policy at <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd125.html>

The course syllabus and all other class materials (slide presentations, handouts, assignments, digital recordings, exams, quizzes, etc.) are intellectual property of Arizona State University and are not to be publicly distributed or otherwise commercialized since these materials are copyright protected. Such materials are for sole use in that designated semester. It cannot be used in any other form unless via a written statement of approval from the instructor. Commercial note taking services are prohibited in accordance with ACD 304-06 available at <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd304-06.html>

Information in this syllabus, other than grade and absence policies, is subject to change with reasonable advance notice. Please consult Canvas regularly.