

**Graduate School of Public Health  
Department of Human Genetics  
GENETIC COUNSELING INTERNSHIP  
HUGEN 2036  
Thursday 3:00-5:00 PM  
3121C Pitt Public Health  
Credit Hours: 4.0  
Spring Semester 2022**

**Instructors and Contact Information**

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**Goal of the Course:**

The goal of this course is to provide students with the knowledge and clinical experience necessary to be well prepared to enter the workforce as a genetic counselor.

**Course Description:**

Students will participate in supervised genetic counseling clinical rotations throughout this course in a variety of settings including prenatal, pediatric, cancer, adult, primary care, and specialty genetics. During clinical rotations, feedback will be provided to students by the clinical rotation supervisors to help them build their genetic counseling skills, knowledge and competencies as well as develop their personal genetic counseling style. Students will be involved in the direct care of patients, as well as additional administrative work related to patient care and operations of the genetic counseling clinic.

The purpose of the lectures and activities in the classroom setting is to familiarize the genetic counseling intern with topics relevant to clinical genetics and counseling.

## **Learning Objectives:**

1. To describe how genetic counselors can collaborate with other health care professionals when working with clients.
2. To explain the clinical characteristics of a variety of genetic conditions as well as testing options for these conditions.
3. To describe the characteristics of effective helpers.
4. To employ attending skills, active listening, and emphatic responding.
5. To demonstrate self-evaluation skills, writing skills, and critical thinking skills.
6. To integrate theoretical and experiential learning in order to develop your own personal model of the counseling process.
7. To assess your own qualities that support and hinder your attempts to being therapeutic for others.

## **Recommended Texts:**

*Genetic Counseling Practice: Advanced Concepts and Skills*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. B.S. LeRoy, P. McCarthy Veach, and N.P. Callanan. Wiley-Blackwell. 2021

*Psychosocial Genetic Counseling*, J.Weil. Oxford University Press, USA, 2000.

## **Course Format and Delivery:**

This class utilizes Canvas for class content. Notifications will be sent when course content is updated. Please make sure to set up your Canvas to receive email notifications from Canvas and please check for announcements and notifications on a regular basis.

For the first two weeks of the semester, the course will be held using Zoom for remote course access. It is expected that after this two-week period, class will take place in person and students are required to attend in-person. However, due to the shifting nature of the pandemic, it may be necessary to alter the delivery of the course. Any changes will be shared with students via announcements on Canvas. Given the pandemic, it is important that students abide by public health regulations and University of Pittsburgh health standards and guidelines. For example, at this time, face coverings are required indoors for everyone regardless of vaccination status. For the most up-to-date information and guidance, please visit <https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/>. If you are sick, please do not come to class in-person. Please email all course instructors, and we will determine the most appropriate make-up plan for class depending on the content.

We plan on recording synchronous classes to make them available on Canvas. We recognize that some guest lecturers may prefer to not be recorded and we will communicate this information during the semester. Recordings will only be available for the semester and should not be distributed for non-class purposes.

### **Academic Integrity:**

All students are expected to adhere to the school's standards of academic honesty. Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. The Graduate School of Public Health's policy on academic integrity, which is based on the University policy, is available online in the Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook [www.publichealth.pitt.edu/home/academics/academic-requirements](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/home/academics/academic-requirements). The policy includes obligations for faculty and students, procedures for adjudicating violations, and other critical information. Please take the time to read this policy.

### **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 as early as possible in the term.

A comprehensive description of the services of that office can be obtained at [www.drs.pitt.edu](http://www.drs.pitt.edu).

### **Sexual Misconduct, Required Reporting and Title IX Statement**

The University is committed to combatting sexual misconduct. As a result, you should know that University faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct, including harassment and sexual violence, to the University's Title IX office so that the victim may be provided appropriate resources and support options. What this means is that as your professor, I am required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct that are directly reported to me, or of which I am somehow made aware.

There are two important exceptions to this requirement about which you should be aware:

A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here: <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix/make-report/report-form>

An important exception to the reporting requirement exists for academic work. Disclosures about sexual misconduct that are shared as part of an academic project, classroom discussion, or course assignment, are not required to be disclosed to the University's Title IX office.

If you are the victim of sexual misconduct, Pitt encourages you to reach out to these resources:

Title IX Office: 412-648-7860

SHARE @ the University Counseling Center: 412-648-7930 (8:30 A.M. TO 5 P.M. M-F) and 412-648-7856 (AFTER BUSINESS HOURS)

If you have a safety concern, please contact the University of Pittsburgh Police, 412-624-2121.

Other reporting information is available here: <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix-compliance/make-report>

### **Diversity Statement:**

Pitt Public Health Diversity Statement | Effective Academic Year 2021-22

The University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health considers the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff to be a strength and critical to its educational mission. Pitt Public Health is committed to creating and fostering inclusive learning environments that value human dignity and equity and promote social justice. Every member of our community is expected to be respectful of the individual perspectives, experiences, behaviors, worldviews, and backgrounds of others. While intellectual disagreement may be constructive, no derogatory statements, or demeaning or discriminatory behavior will be permitted.

If you feel uncomfortable or would like to discuss a situation, please contact any of the following: the course director or course instructor;

- the Pitt Public Health Associate Dean responsible for diversity and inclusion;
- the University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion at 412-648-7860 or
- <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix/make-report/report-form>  
(anonymous reporting form)

### **Copyright Notice**

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### **Student Performance Evaluation and Grading:**

Your grade for the course is based upon the midpoint and final grades you receive in your clinical rotations. The clinical rotation grades will be assigned based upon your mastery of the genetic counseling practice-based competencies. The following is the grading rubric:

- A: student exceeds expectations for the majority of competencies
- B: student meets expectations for the majority of competencies and exceeds expectations of some
- C: student meets expectations for some competencies and needs improvement in a number of competencies
- F: student does not meet the expectations for the rotation for reasons including, but not limited to: insufficient progress towards the development of competencies, insufficient progress on a remediation plan, incomplete assignments, and/or issues with professionalism. Please see extension/remediation paragraph below.

- G (unfinished course work): student needs additional time to complete the rotation due to extenuating personal circumstances that resulted in absence or leave from the rotation and/or incomplete assignments. A student with a G grade in any individual rotation will also receive a G grade for the course until the work is completed. Please see extension/remediation paragraph below.
- I (incomplete): student needs additional time to complete the rotation beyond the end of the semester if it is determined the student would benefit from additional cases to successfully demonstrate one or more of the practice-based competencies. A student with an I grade in any individual rotation will also receive an I grade for the course until the work is completed. Please see extension/remediation paragraph below.
- Some rotations, such as optional rotation sites, choose to give a pass/fail grade rather than a letter grade. A passing grade is rendered when a student fulfills expectations for a C grade or higher. A failing grade is given when a student does not meet the expectations of the rotation and does not meet expectations for the majority of competencies.

Extensions and Remediation: Students given an F, G, or I grade for any rotation will have a plan for completion and/or a remediation plan developed by the Program Leadership and site supervisor(s) with input from the student. Additionally, remediation plans may be required for students who have earned other letter grades in rotations and at any time during rotations if Program Leadership and/or site supervisors recognize that additional support is needed to help students meet one or more of the practice-based competencies or other rotation requirements.

The rotation grades from your last six rotation blocks will be combined to determine your grade for the Genetic Counseling Internship course this semester. The thesis block will not contribute to the grades in this course.

There are no examinations or projects required for this class. However, class attendance in-person (except when the University requires remote instruction) is required. Attendance will be tracked and when a session is missed, a student should alert the instructors to the absence and indicate when the recorded class was viewed. *If you miss more than two classes, you must write a paper on a topic selected by the instructors.*

### **Copyright Notice**

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**Schedule of Sessions:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Class Topic</b>	<b>Lecturer(s)</b>	<b>Description</b>
1/13	Introduction	Andrea Durst, DrPH Jodie Vento, MGC	Introduction to the course, review of oral exams (both), preparation for Dean's Day (A), discussion of thesis defense (A), professional organizations, and rotation evaluations.
1/20	In utero fetal therapy	Stephen Emery, MD	An overview of in utero fetal therapeutics including indications and outcomes.
1/27	Reproductive technologies	Rachel Beverley, MD	An overview of procedures used in reproductive medicine to assist individuals/couples who are experiencing infertility.
2/3	No Class – Oral Examination Week		
2/10	Counseling Skills- Decision making	Andrea Durst, DrPH	A psychosocial focus on interventions designed to facilitate client decision making.
2/17	Sex Development and Considerations regarding Gender Identity	Selma Witchel, MD Lee Williams, MS Kelsey Bohnert, MS Elizabeth Sheehan, MS	A lecture and panel discussion about fostering equitable interactions with gender and sexual minority populations
2/24	Ophthalmologic Genetic Counseling	Hannah Scanga, MS	A review of eye anatomy, common genetic eye diseases, and the role of the genetic counselor in an ophthalmology clinic.
3/3	Craniofacial anomalies	Damara Ortiz, MD	A review of craniofacial anomalies including their genetic etiology and surgical management.
3/10	No Class – Spring Break		
3/17	FORCE Digital Health Information Training	Dr. Sue Friedman	A training session to discuss factors that impact digital health literacy and strategies for communicating with patients about health media reports.
3/24	Test Stewardship	Jodie Vento, MGC	An overview of the history of laboratory genetic testing, roles of laboratory GCs, and utilization management.
3/31	Precision/Personalized Genomic Medicine	Mylynda Massart, MD, PhD	A discussion of strategies and approaches to tailoring medical care based on an individual's variability in

			genes, environment, and lifestyle.
4/7	Pharmacogenomics	Chris Munro, MS, MPH Natasha Berman, MS, MPH	An overview of pharmacogenomics and the role of a GC in the delivery of pharmacogenomic testing services.
4/14	Licensure and Board Certification Preparation	Andrea Durst, DrPH Jodie Vento, MGC	A discussion of licensure and its relevance to genetic counseling practice and study strategies to increase success for passing the certification exam.
4/21	Management Skills for Genetic Counselors	Andrea Durst, DrPH, Michelle Alabek, MS	An overview of basic management skills important to genetic counselors in a variety of practice settings
4/28	Create Your Own GC Program Focus Group	Andrea Durst, DrPH Jodie Vento, MGC	Focus group—drawing on your experience, you will design your “ideal” genetic counseling program.