School of Health & Exercise Sciences

HES 231: Exercise Counselling & Behaviour Modification

Winter 2026
3 Credits

We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which this course is taught is the unceded, ancestral, unsurrendered land of the Syilx Nation.

Instructor: Alex Santos (he/him)
Office: ART 161
E-mail: alexandre.santos@ubc.ca
Office Hours: Fridays 11am-12pm

Lecture Time & Location

Time: Fridays 8am-11am
Location: FIP 204

Academic Calendar Course Description

Application of evidence-informed behavior change techniques to help individuals adopt and adhere to health behaviors. Credit will only be granted for one of HES 231 or HMKN 316. [3-2-0]

Prerequisite: Either (a) HES 131 or (b) HMKN 201.

Methods of Delivery

In lectures, we will use a variety of learning methods, including lectures, group discussions, case studies, the use of e-learning tools, critical reflections, and partner work. Asynchronous assignments will help students apply course material to real-life situations.

Required Text

There is no required text for this course. Any recommended reading materials will be made available to students via Canvas.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, successful students will be able to:

1. Recognize the roles of biases, power imbalance, cultural differences, therapeutic alliance, and rapport building when working with clients.

2. Apply evidence-based skills to exercise counselling scenarios, including but not limited to body language, active listening, behaviour change techniques, OARS, BAP, ask-tell-ask, biofeedback, and WOOP.

3. Demonstrate high levels of empathy, communication, and professionalism when working with clients.

Evaluation Criteria and Grading

In-Class Activities ……10%
Asynchronous Practical Reflections ……..10%
Assignment 1: Pre-Course Counselling Session ……5%
Assignment 2: Post-Course Counselling Session ……...20%
Assignment 3: Counselling Session Reflection ……25%
Oral Counselling Assessment ……30%

In-Class Activities

The purpose of these activities is to evaluate Learning Outcomes 1, 2, and 3. Throughout the semester, a total of 7 activities will be completed in the second half of class time. These activities are designed to help students practice the skills discussed in the first half and make connections between course content and real-life scenarios. Students will not be marked on the competency of each skill in these activities, but rather on effort in participation. Please refer to the schedule below and Canvas for each activity's date and weighting.

Asynchronous Practical Reflections

The purpose of these reflections is to evaluate Learning Outcome 1. There are 2 practical reflections that need to be completed. First, students will need to perform an activity relevant to content from previous weeks in their own time. The nature of these activities will be explained on Canvas. Once the student has performed an activity, they will then need to write a maximum 250-word reflection on their experiences in the activity, following a prompt provided on Canvas. Each practical reflection is worth 5% of the final grade. Please refer to the schedule below and Canvas for each reflection's due date.

Assignment 1: Pre-Course Counselling Session

The purpose of this assignment is to evaluate Learning Outcome 3. For this assignment, you will need to video-record a 5-minute exercise counselling session with your partner. This session will be based on your prior knowledge, experiences, and perspectives; you are not expected to know any counselling skills at this point in the semester! This assignment will serve as the baseline for your counselling skills, which you will then compare to a subsequent exercise counselling session. Instructions on what to include in your video and how you will be assessed can be found on Canvas.

Assignment 2: Post-Course Counselling Session

The purpose of this assignment is to evaluate Learning Outcomes 1, 2, and 3. Now that you have learned some counselling skills, you will video-record another exercise counselling session with your partner. This session can be up to 8 minutes long. In this assignment, you will showcase your ability to implement different counselling techniques when working with a client, while also demonstrating an acceptable level of professionalism. Further information on what skills to include and a detailed marking rubric can be found on Canvas.

Assignment 3: Counselling Session Reflection

The purpose of this assignment is to evaluate Learning Outcomes 1 and 2. Now that you have recorded 2 exercise counselling sessions, you will record one final video reflecting on your progress from video 1 to video 2. This solo reflection video should be a maximum of 10 minutes, in which you will focus on your counselling skills and connect your progress to course content. Further information about what to include in your reflection and a detailed marking rubric can be found on Canvas.

Oral Counselling Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate Learning Outcomes 2 and 3. As a culmination of your work, this assessment will be an in-person counselling session with either the instructor or one of your teaching assistants between **March 23rd to April 2nd**. You will act as the counsellor and the instructor/TA will act as a standardized client. Your job is to demonstrate proficiency in various counselling skills, while also integrating the main components of exercise counselling into practice, such as empathy, communication, and professionalism. Details about scheduling your assessment, expectations, and a detailed marking rubric will be made available on Canvas.

Class Policies

Attendance

Lecture attendance is highly recommended as material discussed in class will be the substance of assignments. Students who attend lectures achieve higher grades. Class participation is encouraged and has also been found to lead to higher grades. The lecture slides and other resources will be available on Canvas, but it is impossible to duplicate the discussions, activities, challenges and interactions that take place in the classroom.

If you are sick but still attending, please wear a mask to lecture. If you cannot attend or are unsure, please email your professor for guidance on how to catch up.

Late Policy

It is expected that reflections and assignments are submitted by the posted due dates. **These are firm deadlines**. In cases where assignments are late, 10% of the eligible grade will be deducted **per day**. Assignments will not be accepted for marking more than five (5) days past their due date. Students need to be present in class to receive grades for in-class activities.

There are certain extenuating circumstances that will allow for further extension of an assignment due date, re-opening of a reflection, or alternate work for an in-class activity. These are: serious health concerns, family emergencies, and travel for team sports. Please note that the instructor will not make accommodations for work schedule or other extracurricular activities. Please reach out to your instructor BEFORE an upcoming due date and the instructor will determine eligibility for further extension on a case-by-case basis. The instructor may require that you submit written confirmation depending on the circumstances (i.e., self-declaration form).

Final grades are not negotiable; this syllabus is the contract you agree to by registering for this course. No extra or additional assignments will be permitted to increase a student's grade at the end of the term. All students will be treated equally. Grade appeals are subject to university policies and must follow the formally established process.

The Use of Artificial Intelligence

Students are permitted to use artificial intelligence tools, including generative AI, to gather information, review concepts, help with brainstorming, or practice skills. However, students are ultimately accountable for the work they submit, and any content supported by an artificial intelligence tool **must be cited appropriately**. Use of AI tools for the explicit completion of assignments is not permitted.

Safety & Respect in the Classroom and Beyond

UBCO students have the right to work, learn and socialize in a supportive, safe, and healthy environment. The university is committed to developing a sense of community that is dedicated to creating a working and learning environment of the highest quality – one which is characterized by mutual respect, consideration, social and moral development of its members; and is free from harassment, discrimination and any form of disruptive behaviour or violence.

The university understands and recognizes that students have responsibilities related to appropriate student conduct. Students are responsible for reviewing relevant guidelines and policies.

Any student that demonstrates inappropriate behaviour; reckless behaviour that endangers themselves or others; or damages equipment will be asked to leave the class and, according to university policies, may be subject to further sanctions.

Please demonstrate professionalism and respect to the professor and other students, both in-person and virtually (i.e., e-mails). The professor of this course will ensure all possible steps are taken to guarantee a learning environment that is inclusive and equitable for all.

Tentative Course Timeline

Date	Topic	In-Class Activity	Assignment
Fri Jan 9	Welcome to HES 231! Building Rapport	#01 (1%)	
Fri Jan 16	Compassion: Sympathy vs. Empathy, Body Language, Active Listening	#02 (1%)	**Assignment 1 Due @ 11:59pm**
Fri Jan 23	Acceptance: Implicit & Explicit Biases, Weight Bias, Sex & Gender Biases Cultural Awareness	#03 (2%)	
Fri Jan 30	Partnership: Power Imbalances, Autonomy, OARS	#04 (2%)	**Practical Reflection 1 Due @ 11:59pm**
Fri Feb 6	Evocation: Brief Action Planning, MCII (WOOP)	#05 (2%)	
Fri Feb 13	Is this Important? Lessons from a Clinical Counsellor Assignment 2 Time		**Practical Reflection 2 Due @ 11:59pm**
Fri Feb 20	**READING BREAK – NO CLASS**		
Fri Feb 27	Behaviour Change Wheel: Behaviour Change Techniques	#06 (1%)	**Assignment 2 Due @ 11:59pm**
Fri Mar 6	Breaking Bad News: Knowledge Provision, Re-focus, Ask-Tell-Ask	#07 (1%)	
Fri Mar 13	Biofeedback: mHealth, eHealth		**Assignment 3 Due @ 11:59pm**
Fri Mar 20	Prep for Oral Counselling Assessments		
Mon Mar 23 - Thu Apr 2	**Oral Counselling Assessments**		
Fri Apr 3	**GOOD FRIDAY – NO CLASS**		

Campus Policies

Academic Integrity

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise, and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating usually result in a failing grade or mark of zero on the assignment or in the course. Careful records are kept to monitor and prevent recidivism.
A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures, may be found in the Academic Calendar at:
http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,0

Final Examinations

Except in the case of examination clashes and hardships (three or more formal examinations scheduled within a 27-hour period) or unforeseen events, students will be permitted to apply for out-of-time final examinations only if they are representing the University, the province, or the country in a competition or performance; serving in the Canadian military; observing a religious rite; working to support themselves or their family; or caring for a family member. Unforeseen events include (but may not be limited to) the following: ill health or other personal challenges that arise during a term and changes in the requirements of an ongoing job.

Further information on Academic Concession can be found under Policies and Regulation in the Okanagan Academic Calendar:
http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=3,48,0,0

Grading Practices

Faculties, departments, and schools reserve the right to scale grades in order to maintain equity among sections and conformity to university, faculty, department, or school norms. Students should therefore note that an unofficial grade given by an instructor might be changed by the faculty, department, or school. Grades are not official until they appear on a student's academic record.
http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=3,41,90,1014

Student Services Resources

UBC Okanagan Disability Resource Centre

The DRC facilitates disability-related accommodations and programming initiatives to remove barriers for students with disabilities and ongoing medical conditions. If you require academic accommodations to achieve the objectives of a course, please contact the DRC at:

UNC 215 250.807.8053
email: drc.questions@ubc.ca
Web: www.students.ok.ubc.ca/drc

UBC Okanagan Equity and Inclusion Office

Through leadership, vision, and collaborative action, the Equity & Inclusion Office (EIO) develops action strategies in support of efforts to embed equity and inclusion in the daily operations across the campus. The EIO provides education and training from cultivating respectful, inclusive spaces and communities to understanding unconscious/implicit bias and its operation within in campus environments. UBC Policy 3 prohibits discrimination and harassment based on BC's Human Rights Code. If you require assistance related to an issue of equity, educational programs, discrimination, or harassment please contact the EIO.

UNC 325H 250.807.9291
email: equity.ubco@ubc.ca
Web: www.equity.ok.ubc.ca

Student Wellness

At UBC Okanagan health services to students are provided by Student Wellness. Nurses, physicians and counsellors provide health care and counselling related to physical health, emotional/mental health and sexual/reproductive health concerns. As well, health promotion, education and research activities are provided to the campus community. If you require assistance with your health, please contact Student Wellness for more information or to book an appointment.

UNC 337 250.807.9270
email: healthwellness.okanagan@ubc.ca
Web: www.students.ok.ubc.ca/health-wellness

Student Learning Hub

The Student Learning Hub is your go-to resource for free math, science, writing, and language learning support. The Hub welcomes undergraduate students from all disciplines and year levels to access a range of supports that include tutoring in math, sciences, languages, and writing, as well as help with study skills and learning strategies. Students are encouraged to visit often and early to build the skills, strategies and behaviors that are essential to being a confident and independent learner. For more information, please visit the Hub's website.

LIB 237 250.807.8491
email: learning.hub@ubc.ca
Web: www.students.ok.ubc.ca/slh

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Safewalk

*Don't want to walk alone at night? Not too sure how to get somewhere on campus? Call Safewalk at **250-807-8076**.*

For more information, see: www.security.ok.ubc.ca