

This document contains select information from one of my recent course syllabi to help illustrate some of the ways I integrate trauma-informed teaching and learning principles into my courses.

COURSE COMMUNICATION



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Commented [JC1]: I continue to work on making my course syllabi and other course documents accessible. For example, the image has alt-text, the headings levels are formatted, and the tables are formatted as tables.

Formatting the heading levels also serves the purpose of making the document easier to navigate for all. If you click on View and then check the box for Navigation Pane, menu will pop up on the left that will navigate easily within the document.

Commented [JC2]: Remember also to ask students for their names and pronouns. Be aware that student's names do not always match the legal names listed on the roster. Be prepared to provide information to students about how to go about changing the way their name appears in the course management system, if possible.

✚ **The best way to contact me is email.** I check email several times a day; if you don't hear back from me within 24 hours, try again. I am also happy to make appointments to meet with you on campus, by phone, and via chat or web conferencing.

✚ **I will contact you via email.** Be sure to check email regularly.

✚ **Use the Question Board to ask (and answer) questions about course assignments, content, policies, and such.** It's likely others have similar questions, and responding to them in this forum saves us all from repetitive emails. I encourage you to **subscribe to this forum** so you will be notified by email when new posts are made.

✚ **Use the Social Board to socialize, share news and events, and chat informally.** I also encourage you to subscribe and contribute to this forum.

✚ **Contact me by email or schedule a meeting to discuss personal questions and concerns** such as grades or assignment feedback.

✚ **Open office hours** will be held from 7-8 pm EST on Thursday evenings. I will post a Zoom link on D2L.

Commented [JC3]: One of the most common complaints I get from students is that instructors do not reply in a timely manner or that they do not reply at all.

Commented [JC4]: Syllabi can find their way to the world wide web so it's safer to post in a static location in your course site.

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Format/Methods/Structure

Format: This course is 100% online. This course meets asynchronously, which means that no scheduled online meetings are required. Students may access materials and submit work on their own schedule; however, they are expected to complete activities and submit assignments by the due dates indicated.

Methods: I use a variety of learning-centered teaching methods that involve the use of readings, videos, audio, discussions, case examples, role plays, experiential exercises, and small group activities. My role is to facilitate learning by providing structure, learning materials, feedback, and resources. Your role is to be responsible for your proficiency in the course content and skills, to seek assistance when needed, and to be supportive of your co-learners.

Structure: Course content and activities are structured using a weekly module format. Modules will open at 12:00 am EST on Mondays. Once opened, they will remain visible for the remainder of the semester.

Commented [JC5]: Making sure your course is logically and consistently organized helps reduce everyone's stress and also reduces the number of questions from students who cannot find things.

Trauma Exposure, Self-Care, and Trauma-Informed Teaching

Some of the material presented in this course—and some of the ways in which it is presented—may be upsetting or temporarily overwhelming at times. It is well-documented that indirect exposure to trauma narratives may put helping professionals and trainees at risk for developing trauma reactions, particularly those who have a personal trauma history or limited clinical experience. Self-awareness and good self-care go a long way in recognizing and minimizing distress and bouncing back from it. Be sure to do periodic self-checks on how the material in the course—and the ways in which the material is delivered and discussed—are affecting you.

Commented [JC6]: Even if you don't explicitly teach about trauma in your courses, there are other reasons students may experience stress. This section could be reworded to focus on recognizing and managing personal and course-related stress.

Titration exposure, limiting exposure before bedtime, and practicing [grounding techniques](#) if you start feeling overwhelmed can be helpful strategies for minimizing and managing distress. Getting support from friends, colleagues, family, and mental health professionals is also important, especially if you have risk factors that might make you more likely to be triggered by some material or you find yourself becoming distressed. Free campus and community services are listed in the [Help Seeking Resources](#) section below. And, of course, please talk with me if you find you are having difficulties with any aspect of the course. I am committed to using [trauma-informed teaching and learning principles](#) to cultivate an educational environment that is congruent with social work values, that reduces the risk of retraumatization, and that supports your resilience and your success in the course and in the profession.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS AND POLICIES

Check-Ins

Purpose/Overview: Check-Ins serve two main purposes. First, they provide timely and specific feedback that helps inform course delivery. If several students are struggling with a particular concept, skill, or assignment, for example, I can use the feedback to provide additional instruction or make adjustments. Second, Check-Ins also provide an opportunity for students to communicate individually, privately, and regularly with me so that I can help them track their progress, individualize their learning, and ensure their success in the course.

Commented [JC7]: In face-to-face courses I ask students to complete a check-in card (3x5 index card) at the beginning of each class and a check-out card at the end of each class. Each card is worth 1 point and missed cards cannot be made up. Grading the cards helps improve student attendance. I can follow up by email with individual students, if necessary, or addressing more general concerns with the whole class at the next class meeting.

Format: Each Check-In will comprise one or two short answer questions about students' experiences in the course and progress on their assignments.

In online courses, I ask students to complete weekly or bi-weekly check-ins. I respond individually to each student, referring to them by name. I try to make sure it's easy for students to find and read my feedback.

General Expectations: Each Check-In should take only a few minutes to complete. Be honest, be thoughtful, be specific, and be yourself. Also be brief. If you find yourself needing to write a lot, it would probably be a good idea for us to set up a time to chat by phone or web conference.

Grading/Rubric: Check-Ins will be graded on completion. If you answer all of the questions by the due date, you will get full credit. If you do not answer all of the questions, you will get partial or no credit. Late days cannot be used on check-ins. Check-Ins submitted more than 12 hours after the due date will receive feedback but will earn 0 points.

Activity Forums

Purpose/Overview: Forums provide opportunities to process course content and practice skills. They also provide opportunities to connect with classmates and to improve interpersonal and professional communication skills by providing feedback and engaging in constructive discussion and debate with others.

Format: During modules that forum posts are due, you will submit initial posts by 11:59 pm on **Friday** and follow-up posts by 11:59 pm on **Monday**. Forum prompts and formats will vary, but each week there will be 3-4 threads available, and you will be asked to choose and respond to 1 or 2. Specific instructions for initial posts and peer responses will be posted in each forum.

General Expectations: Use informal but professional language just like you would if you were chatting face-to-face. Remember to de-identify individual and agency identification when giving examples. Remember to cite source material. If it's a source from the course, just use an in-text citation. If it's an outside source, also provide a link or reference citation. Strive for meaningful interaction with class members. Think critically; demonstrate reflective listening skills; ask clarifying questions; disagree; challenge each other to consider alternative points of view; empathize and validate emotions. Hone your interpersonal communication skills. Have a conversation.

Grading/Rubric: You will have the opportunity to participate in 13 forums. The 3 lowest forum grades will be dropped. I will grade each forum using the rubric below. I will also provide individual forum feedback in the gradebook and group feedback in the following week's module video. Late forum posts will be accepted but cannot earn full credit.

	4 points	3-3.99 points	0-2.99 points
Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged Submitted all posts on time Posted responses to peers that provoked deeper analysis and conversation Provided relevant evidence and examples Related discussion to course content and to real life Demonstrated sophisticated listening and feedback skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present Submitted all posts on time Posted responses to peers that were appropriate but that did not provoke much analysis or conversation Provided evidence and examples Related discussion to course content and to real life Demonstrated effective listening and feedback skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disconnected Posts were missing or late Responses to peers were insubstantial, irrelevant, or unproductive Failed to provide examples or evidence Failed to relate discussion to course content or to real life Failed to demonstrate effective listening or feedback skills

Practice Quizzes

Purpose/Overview: Practice quizzes are designed to help you increase your understanding of course content.

Format: Quizzes comprise multiple-choice questions. Each quiz has a 30-minute time limit. You will be able to see all of the questions at once. You will not be able to make changes when the time is up.

General Expectations: Each quiz is open book. You are welcome to consult course texts while you are taking them, though you will have limited time to do so. It's possible to just take the quiz without trying to figure out the correct answer and then re-take once you see the correct answer; however, you will learn more if you try to figure out the correct answers on your own.

Grading/Rubric: After you submit, you will be able to immediately see your score, which questions you answered incorrectly, and feedback to help you understand the correct answers. You will have unlimited attempts on each quiz, so you can retake them until you get full credit. The highest score for each quiz will be recorded, and the

Commented [JC8]: I find that putting students into small groups helps foster more connection between students. I have also been using Flipgrid as an option for students to post video responses in a easy-to-use format. Students report that the small groups and videos help them feel more like they are in a traditional classroom.

Commented [JC9]: To me, forums are the ideal place to encourage students to make and learn from mistakes. In their professional lives, they will not be conversing with others primarily in academesse, so forums also provide opportunities to rehearse practical professional communication skills.

Commented [JC10]: I find that many students will continue to participate anyway because they enjoy learning and interacting with their peers.

Commented [JC11]: I comment in the forum only rarely to clarify info or answer questions. I read/view student posts and provide feedback on what they've posted and what I'd like to emphasize, clarify, or build upon at the beginning of the weekly videos I make before I go over what's coming up next. In the gradebook, I typically keep my comments focused on how well students participated in the forum. These strategies help ensure students get relevant feedback but also makes the grading interesting and manageable instead of overwhelming and burdensome.

Commented [JC12]: During the covid-19 crisis I have waived this rule and have been giving full credit for made up forums. I am debating whether to continue this practice in future courses.

Commented [JC13]: The practice quizzes and policies are designed to emphasize a growth mindset and help students take ownership of their learning.

lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Late days are unnecessary for quizzes. Once opened, quizzes will remain open and can be re-taken late without penalty.

Self-Care Paper

Purpose/Overview: This assignment is designed to help you develop your knowledge about the potential effects of trauma on helping professionals and an understanding of the importance and practice of self-care.

Format: Familiarize yourself with the [Self-Care Starter Kit](#) and use the resources in the kit to develop (or update) your own self-care plan. Then submit a brief paper (approximately 4-5 pages) in which you:

- A. Define and differentiate the following terms: *trauma, complex trauma, secondary traumatic stress, vicarious traumatization, burnout, countertransference, and retraumatization*. What are they? How are they similar/different? Cite reputable sources for your definitions and give examples.
- B. Discuss how self-care relates to these concepts: Why is it important for helping professionals to be aware of these concepts and to practice self-care? Cite the Butler, Carello, and Maguin (2016) article, Armstrong (2019) Ch. 16, and one of the [Self-Care Readings](#) from the Self-Care Starter Kit.
- C. Personalize this: What does *self-care* mean to you? Which two of the [Self-Care Exercises and Activities](#) look most helpful to you (remember to cite them)? How come? What obstacles to self-care do you anticipate while completing this program? What internal and external resources would help you overcome these obstacles?

General Expectations: This is an academic paper, so you are expected to use APA paper and documentation format. You are also expected to cite credible sources for all of your definitions. Tip: Remember to italicize terms the first time you refer to them as terms (e.g. “*Secondary traumatic stress* refers to...”).

Grading/Rubric: Late days may be used on this assignment. Copy/paste the rubric below on a separate page at the end of your paper and use the highlighting feature or a colored font to indicate your ratings. One the same page as the rubric, also answer the following:

- What did you do well in this assignment?
- With what did you struggle?
- What is one specific thing you’d like feedback on from me about this assignment?
- What else, if anything, would you like me to know about this assignment and/or your process completing it?

Commented [JC14]: I've included this for those interested in integrating a self-care assignment into their courses.

Commented [JC15]: I'm highlighting this to illustrate ways I incorporate student self-evaluation. If my ratings differ from student ratings, we can have a conversation about whether I or they missed something. The questions help me focus my feedback and have a conversation with students about their understanding of course concepts/skills as well as their process completing the assignment.

	A, A-, B+	B, B-, C+	Below C+
Attention to task	Thoughtfully addressed all parts of the assignment prompt.	Adequately addressed all parts of the assignment prompt.	Neglected to address some or all parts of the prompt or does so inadequately.
Definition Quality	Clearly defined all terms accurately in own words and cited sources of definitions.	Defined most terms accurately, though some definitions may be vague or comprise mostly quotations; cited sources of definitions.	Definitions were missing, inaccurate, or unclear, and/or sources of definitions were not cited.
Critical Thinking	Presented abundant examples, evidence, and explanation.	Presented adequate examples, evidence, and explanation.	Failed to present accurate, relevant examples, evidence, or explanation.
Organization	Paper was effectively organized and included meaningful subheadings and transitions.	Paper was coherently organized, though some paragraphs or transitions may need revision.	Paper was ineffectively organized; paragraphs were ineffectively structured and/or subheadings or transitions were missing or ineffective.
Sentence Structure	Sentence structure displayed sophistication and variety.	For the most part, sentences were clear, concise, and well-constructed.	Sentences were often wordy, awkward, and/or unclear; problems exist with sentence combining, parallel construction, misplaced modifiers, fragments, and/or run-ons.

	A, A-, B+	B, B-, C+	Below C+
Mechanics (grammar, spelling, punctuation)	Mechanics were nearly flawless.	Mechanics were mostly accurate and did not obscure meaning.	Mechanics were not well executed and, at times, may have obscured meaning.
Documentation	Expertly used APA to format the paper and the in-text and reference citations. There are few or no formatting errors.	Adequately used APA to format the paper and the in-text and reference citations. There are only minor formatting errors that would not be considered plagiarism.	Failed to use APA or there were errors in formatting that may be considered plagiarism: e.g. in-text citations do not match references list, source material is not cited, or word-for-word source material is not quotations.

Independent Learning Showcase

Purpose/Overview: This assignment involves developing and exploring a question you have related to trauma theory or treatment. **What is important to you to learn?** What population, trauma type, trauma theory, or trauma treatment skill would you like to learn (more) about? How will you go about learning this? For example, attend an event, conduct interviews, review articles or books, listen to podcasts, view films, compare workbooks, try out one or more apps, shadow someone, complete online or in-person training?

Commented [JC16]: This assignment can be adapted for any course. So far it has been extremely popular with students. I find that many students spend much more than the required amount of time on their projects and that the knowledge and skills they learn are very meaningful to them both personally and professionally.

Format: You may present your learning in whatever audio, visual, and/or written format you prefer. For example, if you read numerous articles, you might write up a literature review. If you conducted one or more interviews, you might create a podcast. If you compared workbooks, apps, or films, you might create a comparison chart or discuss them in a video. If you completed a training, you might submit evidence of completion. Whatever format you choose, be sure to include the following information, along with any other information you'd like to convey:

- your research question,
- why you are interested in this question,
- the methods you used to explore your question,
- what you discovered,
- what this new knowledge means to you personally and/or professionally,
- a reference list, if applicable.

General Expectations: You may complete this project on your own or with one or more classmates. Your research question and methods should be focused enough to complete the project in approximately 8-10 hours. You may complete the project all at once or divide up your time over the semester. No double dipping: by this I mean the research and product you complete for this project must be original for this course and not duplicated for work, field, or another course.

Grading/Rubric: Late days may be used on this assignment. **You will determine half of your grade for the project using criteria you develop, and I will determine the other half of your grade using the rubric below.** Submit your final learning product to the Learning Showcase forum to share with the class. Then submit a document to the Showcase Grading drop box in which you specify the grade you are giving yourself the assignment and explain how you arrived at that grade.

Commented [JC17]: Another way I incorporate student self-evaluation and power sharing.

	A, A-, B+	B, B-, C+	Below C+
Attention to Task	Effectively addressed all parts of the assignment prompt	Adequately addressed all parts of the assignment prompt	Neglected to address some or all parts of the assignment prompt or did so inadequately
Demonstration of Learning	Final learning product demonstrated significant time, effort, and learning	Final learning product demonstrated adequate time, effort, and learning	Final learning product demonstrated little time, effort, or learning

COURSE POLICIES

Grading

Grading is hard. In addition to ensuring that grades are meaningful, instructors must take into account the needs and values of individual students, the class as a whole, those of the department, university, and profession, and also their own needs and values. I've developed the following grading policies to address these varied needs and values and to emphasize fairness, flexibility, and compassion.

Late Days: Each student has a total of 5 late days that may be used on the following assignments without any consequence to the assignment grade: Self-Care Paper, Evidence-Based Practice Presentation, and Independent Learning Showcase. Late days may not be used on the Check-Ins, Forums, or Extra Credit. To use late days: notify me by email at least 30 minutes before the assignment is due. Late days start immediately after the due date and run for 24 hours. If more than 5 late days are accumulated, or if you do not notify me in advance, the assignment will be graded as late.

Late Work: Late assignments cannot earn a grade higher than B.

Revise and Resubmit: If you receive a grade lower than B on the Self-Care Paper or Evidence-Based Practice Presentation, you may revise and resubmit it once for regrading. No other assignments may be revised and resubmitted. In order for the assignment to be regraded, I need you to submit a document in which you have tracked all of the changes or provided a detailed list of all of the changes with page and paragraph numbers where they can be located. Revised and resubmitted work will be graded as late.

File Formats: In order for me to grade work as on time, I need it to be submitted by the due date to the correct location in a format that I can access. If you submit the wrong file, submit a file I cannot open, or submit to the wrong location, you may resubmit; however, the submission will be counted as late. Please include your last name followed by the assignment name (e.g. Carello TI treatment plan) to label all files submitted for grading.

Response Time: Responses to assignments will vary based on length. Unless otherwise specified, you can generally expect that I will provide a grade and/or feedback within a week for forums and check-ins and within ten days for major assignments.

Netiquette

Netiquette is online etiquette. Professional decorum is an important part of students' socialization into the social work profession; therefore, it is important that all course participants demonstrate respectful online behavior. Though we may use less formal speech in some of our course discussions, remember that obscene, threatening, or contemptuous language would never be appropriate. For more information about Netiquette, see [The Core Rules for Netiquette](#) by Virginia Shea.

RESOURCES

Help Seeking Resources

It is expected that students seek assistance in assuring their success as they deem necessary. Campus and community resources are available to help ensure success such as:

- **Library Help:** see Jack Widner, Senior Reference Librarian and Social Work librarian liaison, for assistance with identification and access to academic resources. He can be reached M-F 8AM-4PM EST (Except Tuesdays 11-7pm) at 814-732-2175 or widner@edinboro.edu or Twitter [@socworkwid](#). Chat is available during those times and sometimes late evenings, too.
- **APA Help:** Visit the [Social Work Resources page](#) for APA, citation information, and more! The [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\) APA Introduction](#) is also a helpful resource.

Commented [JC18]: This has been the most popular policy change I have made. Some of my colleagues allow students to use late days for all assignments, including forum posts. You could also specify something like "all assignments worth 5 or more points" if preferred. And, of course, you could change the number of late days. Many of my colleagues increased the number of late days available in response to the covid-19 crisis, for example.

Commented [JC19]: I find this encourages students to turn work in on time without punishing them for turning work in late. A B is still a good grade, and students perceive it as a fair grade if they had more time to complete an assignment than others, especially since I have a no questions asked policy for late work and late days available. This policy also eliminates complex methods for calculating late penalties. Further, it has virtually eliminated conflict with students about late grades and provides me an opportunity to encourage them to submit work late rather than not submitting at all.

Commented [JC20]: I strive to use "I" statements vs statements such as "students must" or "students should" throughout the syllabus in order to model assertive, non-violent communication skills and to take ownership of my course policies and practices.

- **Writing Help:** The [Campus Writing Center](#) provides students with help during all phases of the writing process. [Grammarly](#) might also be helpful.
- **Academic Support Services:** The [Academic Success Center](#) is located on the second floor of the Baron-Forness Library and is open Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1 - 4:30 pm EST.
- **Tutoring:** [Smarthinking](#) is a 24/7 online supplemental tutoring service available via D2L.
- **Technology Help:** The [Technology Help Center](#) provides assistance to students in meeting their technology needs.
- **Student Support and Resources:** Links to additional resources are available through the [Student Support and Resource page](#).
- **Counseling:** [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) provides referral services for students in any locality.
- **Therapist Finder:** Psychology Today hosts a [therapy finder database](#) where you can find detailed listings of mental health professionals in your area.
- **Crisis:** The [National Hope Line](#) provides free 24/7 confidential crisis support in the US: call or text 1-877-235-4525. The [Crisis Text Line](#) provides free 24/7 crisis support in the US: text HOME to 741741.
- **211:** Call 211 to get referrals for local community services or visit the [211 website](#) for more info.

Commented [JC21]: The campus services linked to above are mostly specific to my college or discipline; however, I also provide these additional links to services available to educators and students across the country.