

SLHS 4918: INTRODUCTION TO CLINICAL PRACTICE
Speech-Language Pathology Prerequisites (SLPP) Program
University of Colorado Boulder

CREDITS	2
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

SLHS 4918 Introduction to Clinical Practice combines observing treatment and assessment sessions by Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP's), participating in full-class and small group discussions about the sessions with classmates, the instructor, and other professionals, and engaging with the class content regarding clinical methods and best practices in SLHS. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the field of SLHS -- its scope, its principles and practices, the issues important to those impacted by our work, and what this field can offer clients and clients' family members. Additionally, students should walk away from this class with a better understanding of current issues and best practices in our field related to first-person perspectives, public policy, evidence-based decision making, family-centered practice, ethics, assessment, intervention, counseling, and professional documentation related to goals, objectives, and session SOAP notes. Students will have the opportunity to obtain the 25 observation hours required for graduate programs in our field. Students are encouraged to observe as many sessions as possible in live settings but will be provided the opportunity to obtain either some or all the 25 observation hours through MCN in cases where they are not able to observe in-person sessions.

COURSE MODALITY

SLHS 4918 is a hybrid course delivered across the standard academic term. The course includes one scheduled in-person class meeting per week, complemented by structured asynchronous online modules that students complete independently outside of class time. Asynchronous components may include readings, recorded lectures, discussions, quizzes, video observations, and applied learning activities designed to prepare students for in-class application and clinical integration.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of SLHS 4918: Introduction to Clinical Practice, students will be able to:

1. Describe the roles and responsibilities of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) across clinical settings, including scope of practice, ethical responsibilities, and professional standards.
2. Demonstrate foundational clinical observation skills by analyzing assessment and treatment sessions (via MCN and/or in-person observations) and identifying clinical goals, procedures, and client responses.
3. Apply clinical reasoning to observed sessions by explaining therapy rationales, data collection methods, and evidence-based decision-making processes used by supervising clinicians.
4. Differentiate assessment and intervention approaches across communication disorders and client populations, including speech, language, fluency, voice, and social communication.
5. Document and reflect on guided observation experiences in alignment with ASHA requirements, demonstrating accurate tracking of observation hours and thoughtful professional reflection.
6. Identify professional behaviors including ethical conduct, confidentiality, cultural responsiveness, and effective professional communication.

COURSE ALIGNMENT MAP

Required Texts:

1. Paul, R., & Simmons, E. S. (2021). Introduction to clinical methods in communication disorders (4th ed.). Brookes Publishing.

Required Platforms:

1. Canvas
2. Master Clinician Network (MCN)

Module	Learning Objectives	Submissions
Unit 1: Foundations of Clinical Practice	Describe the scope of practice of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) across service delivery settings, including roles in prevention, assessment, intervention, and counseling. Explain the principles of evidence-based practice (EBP) and describe how research evidence, clinical expertise, and client values inform clinical decision-	In-class Lab 1

	making. Summarize ASHA requirements for guided observation hours, including supervision qualifications and documentation standards.	
Unit 2: Professionalism, Ethics, and Cultural Responsiveness	Apply ethical principles to clinical scenarios, including confidentiality (HIPAA/FERPA), informed consent, and professional boundaries. Describe culturally and linguistically responsive practices and explain how cultural variables influence assessment and intervention. Demonstrate emerging professional behaviors, including appropriate documentation, communication, timeliness, and reflective practice.	Intro Assignment (brief), Assignment 1, & Observations
Unit 3: Clinical Assessment Processes	Identify the components of a comprehensive speech-language evaluation, including case history, standardized testing, informal measures, and dynamic assessment. Differentiate between screening, assessment, diagnosis, and eligibility determination. Interpret basic assessment data, including standard scores, percentiles, criterion-referenced results, and observational findings.	In-class Lab 2
Unit 4: Intervention Planning and Implementation	Develop measurable, functional treatment goals that align with assessment findings and client needs. Describe common intervention approaches and service delivery models, including individual, group, classroom-based, and consultative services. Explain cueing hierarchies, scaffolding, and reinforcement strategies used in therapy sessions.	Assignment 2 & Observations
Unit 5: Clinical Data Collection and Documentation	Analyze therapy session data (e.g., accuracy percentages, prompting levels, response patterns) to determine client progress. Explain the role of progress monitoring and outcome measurement in clinical decision-making. Demonstrate accurate and professional clinical documentation, including SOAP notes and observation logs.	In-class Lab 3
Unit 6: Guided Clinical Observation (MCN & In-Person)	Analyze observed assessment and treatment sessions (MCN and/or in-person) to identify clinical goals, therapeutic techniques, and clinician reasoning. Evaluate clinician-client interactions, including rapport building, feedback, and responsiveness to client performance. Reflect on clinical observations to identify effective practices and areas for professional growth.	Assignment 3 & Observations
Unit 7: Clinical Populations and Service Across the Lifespan	Compare assessment and intervention considerations across communication disorders (e.g., speech sound disorders, language disorders, fluency, voice, social communication). Describe how intervention strategies vary across age groups and service settings.	In-class Lab 4
Unit 8: Developing Clinical Identity	Assess personal readiness for clinical practicum, identifying strengths and areas for continued growth. Develop a professional development plan aligned with graduate study and certification requirements.	Assignment 4 & Observations
Unit 9: Counseling	Describe the role of counseling in speech-language pathology, including its function during assessment, goal setting, and intervention. Differentiate between informational and personal adjustment counseling and identify appropriate clinical applications of each. Demonstrate foundational counseling skills (e.g., active listening, empathy, culturally responsive communication) when analyzing observed sessions or case scenarios.	In-class Lab 5
Unit 10: Interprofessional Practice (IPP) & Collaboration	Define interprofessional practice (IPP) and explain its importance in team-based service delivery across clinical settings. Identify the roles of related professionals and describe how collaboration supports comprehensive client care. Demonstrate effective professional communication strategies for case presentations, team meetings, and collaborative goal development.	Observations -- first 12 observation hours should be complete

ASHA 2020 CERTIFICATION STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS COURSE

This upper-division course provides foundational knowledge aligned with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) 2020 KASA Standards, including:

- Standard IV-B: Biological, neurological, acoustic, psychological, developmental, linguistic, and cultural bases of human communication and swallowing across the lifespan.
- Standard IV-C: Characteristics of communication and swallowing disorders and differences, including the etiologies, signs and symptoms, and impact on individuals across the lifespan.
- Standard IV-D: Principles and methods of prevention, assessment, and intervention for persons with communication and swallowing disorders, including consideration of anatomical/physiological, psychological, developmental, and linguistic and cultural correlates.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The basic requirements for this class are listed in the table below.

Submission	# items @ # points Total	Points
A. Prompted Introductory & Closing Assignments	1 of each @ 5 pts each	10 pts
B. 25 Hours of Approved, Guided Observations of Clinical SLP Sessions – can be completed on the Master Clinician Network platform and/or via live sessions (see details below).	First 12 hours: 3 pts x 12 hrs = 36 pts + 4 pts Final 13 hours: 3 pts x 13hrs = 39 pts	40 pts 39 pts
C. In-class Labs	10 @ 8 pts	80 pts
D. In-class summaries of observed sessions	3 @ 7 pts	21 pts
E. Assignments	8 @ 20 pts	160 pts
F. Final Exam	1 @ 50 pts	50 pts
Total Points for the Class		400 pts

GRADING SCALE

Grades are assigned based on the percentage of the total points earned and calculated using the following scale.

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
Percentage Grade *	93+<100	90- <93	87- <90	83- <87	80- <83	77- <80	73- <77	70- <73	67- <70	63- <67	60- <63	<60

*< indicates less than

OBTAINING OBSERVATION HOURS

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) requires 25 guided observation hours for entry into most graduate SLP programs. The SLPA program at CU requires the same. This course supports students in meeting that requirement.

Students may complete observation hours through:

- Assigned sessions on the Master Clinician Network (MCN) platform
- Live, in-person observations
- A combination of both (recommended)

MCN Observations

- Students must watch each assigned session in full and complete all related questions within the designated week. Observation hours are approved only if responses demonstrate careful viewing and thoughtful reflection. If an observation is not approved, students may resubmit within one week for a 10% point reduction.
- MCN tracks hours in minutes (no rounding up). Approved hours appear on the student's downloadable MCN log.

In-Person Observations

Although all hours may be completed through MCN, in-person observations are strongly encouraged. Before completing an in-person observation, students must verify that the supervising SLP:

- Holds the ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC-SLP)
- Has completed required continuing education in clinical supervision
- Students must use the approved observation documentation form available on Canvas and submit verification promptly. Students are responsible for maintaining copies of all in-person documentation.

Previously Completed Hours

- Students may submit documentation for up to 10 previously completed observation hours (subject to instructor approval and current ASHA guidelines) within the first week of class.

Checking to see if an SLP can supervise observation hours

1. Go to the certification page of the ASHA website.

2. Scroll down to click on the “Verify ASHA Certification” button.
3. Scroll down to select “Verify by Name and Location.”
4. Enter the name and state of the SLP & click “Verify Certification.”
5. If the SLP has current ASHA certification, their name will come up.
6. Click on their name & scroll down to below the rectangle with their information in it to where you can see if they HAVE MET or HAVE NOT MET the new (2020) ASHA standards for supervising.

SUBMISSION POLICIES

Assignments are submitted through the Learning Management System (Canvas). Please communicate asap if it looks like that won't happen – email the instructor asap and request an extension. Doing this before the deadline has passed will allow for an extension without a penalty for 2 submissions per course per semester. Amount of extension offered will depend on a variety of factors, so this will need to be discussed on an individual basis.

COURSE PLAGIARISM POLICY

Students should submit their own work in this course. Review Honor Code and Student Conduct for University policies.

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) COURSE POLICY

Students should not use AI tools during quizzes. Students should give credit to AI tools when used on assignments.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. Understanding the course's syllabus is a vital part of adhering to the Honor Code. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: StudentConduct@colorado.edu. Students found responsible for violating the Honor Code will be assigned resolution outcomes from Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution and will be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](#) for more information on the academic integrity policy.

Accommodation for Disabilities, Temporary Medical Conditions, and Medical Isolation

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or DSinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website. If you have a temporary illness, injury or required medical isolation for which you require adjustment, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Accommodation for Religious Obligations

Campus policy requires faculty to provide reasonable accommodations for students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. Please communicate the need for a religious accommodation in a timely manner. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information does not always align with how they identify. If you wish to have your preferred name (rather than your legal name) and/or your preferred pronouns appear on your instructors' class rosters and in Canvas, visit the [Registrar's website](#) for instructions on how to change your personal information in university systems.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, marital status, political affiliation, or political philosophy.

Additional classroom behavior information

- [Student Classroom and Course-Related Behavior Policy.](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct.](#)
- [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance.](#)
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Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [protected-class](#) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email OIEC@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and [OIEC support resources](#) including confidential services can be found on the [OIEC website](#). Please know that faculty and graduate instructors are required to inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these concerns regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure the person impacted receives outreach from OIEC about resolution options and support resources. To learn more about reporting and support a variety of concerns, visit the [Don't Ignore It page](#).

Mental Health and Wellness

The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stressors, mental health or substance use concerns that are impacting academic or daily life, please contact [Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#), located in C4C, or call (303) 492-2277, 24/7.