



University of North Texas
College of Health and Public Service
Department of Rehabilitation & Health Services
Addiction Studies Program

Spring 2026

ADDS 4575 Current Issues in Substance Use

3-hours

Tuesday/Thursday

12:30 – 1:50 PM

LANG 310

Pre-requisite: None

May be repeated 1 time for credit

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Current issues in substance use disorders are explored using various types of research reports and other professional literature. These sources are used to help students understand the role of research in developing programs, formulating policies and evaluating one's practice. Students become critical consumers of professional literature as they develop specialized expertise on specific problems, groups or practices used in treating addictions and substance use disorders.

This semester the course will explore Crisis Intervention, Employment Readiness, Employment Opportunities in Addiction, Certifications and Licensure in Texas, Professional Associations & Networking, Professional Presentations, and current trends and topics for substance use and the addiction profession.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of the course, students mastering content will be able to:

1. Understand crisis cycle, steps for de-escalation, signs of potential crisis, reasons for aggression, and therapeutic de-briefing tools.
2. Explore and strengthen readiness for employment in addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery profession.
3. Assess employment, certifications, and licensure opportunities.
4. Identify professional associations in addiction and evaluate networking opportunities.
5. Examine understanding of elements and demonstrate ability to create and deliver effective professional presentations. This objective includes the ability to evaluate the work of peers.
6. Describe importance of issues, trends, or topics in substance use.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Materials will be provided on Canvas.



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ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Attendance and participation are required. Activities in class cannot be replicated outside of the classroom.

COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Professor Heller Garland is a seasoned addiction professional with over three decades of experience in treatment, training, and leadership at the local, state, national, and international levels. She serves as a Principal Lecturer at the University of North Texas, where she coordinates the Addiction Studies and helped establish the nation's first fully integrated Collegiate Recovery Program embracing multiple pathways to recovery. A past leader of major addiction professional organizations and a 2016 inductee into the Texas Counselor Hall of Fame, she is also co-host of the [*Life, Lived Better*](#) Podcast and enjoys travel, cooking, writing, and time with her family and their dachshund.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My teaching philosophy centers on respect for the counseling profession and preparing students to become ethical, compassionate, and competent professionals. I emphasize accurate, up-to-date knowledge, ethical decision-making, practical application of theory, and active learning through open dialogue, critical thinking, and experiential engagement.

INSTRUCTOR COMMUNICATION

To communicate with instructor most effectively and to receive the quickest response:

- Use the messaging feature through the course in Canvas.
- Clearly include all the details necessary for the instructor to best address your concern.

MESSAGE RESPONSES

Monday – Friday, during normal business hours Canvas messages will be returned within 48 hours. Messages sent on weekends, holidays, during university sanctioned closures, or after normal business hours will be returned within 48 hours of normal business hours resuming.



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OFFICE HOURS

Walk in appointments on campus are available Wednesdays between 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM.

- Chilton Hall, 218

Virtual appointments are available Monday – Friday at a pre-arranged time.

Message the instructor for virtual appointments.

CANVAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Much information about this course will be conveyed through Canvas Course Announcements. You are expected to read those announcements. It is advisable to turn on the notifications for Canvas.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Assignments and their due dates are found on the Course Schedule on Canvas.
- Details for each assignment can be found on Canvas within each module.
- Follow directions carefully to ensure fulfillment of assignment criteria.
 - Following the directions for assignment criteria is a demonstration of professional readiness.
 - Format and content are equally important and weighted in value in course assignments.

ADDICTION LANGUAGE

During the Introductory Module, all Addiction Studies courses offer a reminder lesson regarding the accurate and current language used related to addiction and recovery. Each student is expected to refrain from the use of antiquated language in the classroom and in assignment submissions. This is such an important part of professional development that point deductions for non-adherence may be given.

PERSONAL WORK

You are enrolled in a senior-level Addiction Studies course that continues to prepare you for a career working with people who have substance use disorders. You are encouraged to view the classroom as an extension of a professional setting. Please



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avoid outdated or stigmatizing addiction language and be mindful of maintaining your self-care routine.

Working as an addiction counselor is one of the most challenging—and rewarding—roles in the helping professions. It is important that Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselors (LCDCs) in Texas maintain both personal health and self-awareness. Throughout the Addiction Studies program, students will participate in experiential activities and personal reflection. These activities may require you to explore personal experiences and challenges. Any personal information shared in class discussions or assignments will be kept confidential by course instructors. This self-exploration is not for instructor benefit, but to support your growth as a future helping professional. Because counselors are a key part of addiction treatment, taking care of yourself is essential. Counselors are encouraged to engage in their own therapeutic work. Doing personal work helps counselors remain effective, ethical, and emotionally healthy.

The reasons counselors are encouraged to have their own counselors include:

1. **Empathy** – Experiencing the client role firsthand helps build empathy, which is a critical skill for counselors.
2. **Understanding the Healing Process** – Healing is not linear, and this understanding is best learned through personal experience, not just textbooks.
3. **Ethics and Avoiding Harm** – Self-awareness helps counselors recognize how their own values, beliefs, and experiences may affect their work. The ACA Code of Ethics emphasizes the importance of avoiding harm, and personal insight helps reduce the risk of countertransference.
4. **Self-Care** – Burnout is common in addiction work. Regular self-care and personal support are necessary for long-term sustainability.
5. **Blind Spots** – Everyone has unresolved experiences or emotional triggers. Counselors who have not done their own work may unintentionally react to clients in ways that shift focus away from the client or cause harm.
6. **Third-Hand Trauma** – Addiction counselors regularly hear difficult and painful stories. Having a safe place to process this emotional impact is essential for maintaining well-being.

If you are not currently in counseling or do not have a private, safe, and confidential space to do personal work, begin planning now to put these supports in place.

WRITING QUALITY

Writing submissions should reflect that of a college senior. The format of a formal paper is as important as the content. The same is true for meeting length requirements.



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Combat senseless point deductions by reading assignment directions carefully. The [UNT Writing Center](#) is available to all students wishing to improve their writing. Other resources will be provided within the Canvas classroom.

GRADING PERCENTAGES

25% - Professional Identity Development
20% - Advocacy Focused
15% - Self-Awareness & Development
15% - Current Issues Research & Awareness
15% - Applied & Skills-Based
10% - Application Exercises, Attendance, Participation

GRADING BREAKDOWN

A: 90-100% (Outstanding. The student performs well above the minimum criteria.)
B: 80-89% (Good. The student performs above the minimum criteria.)
C: 70-79% (Solid. The student meets the criteria of the assignment.)
D: 60-69% (Below average work. The student fails to meet the minimum criteria.)
F: 59 and below (Sub-par work. The student fails to complete the assignment.)

ROUNDING UP FINAL GRADE

.5 and above are rounded up on final grade.
.04 and below are not rounded up on final grade.

GRADE DISPUTES

Message the instructor within 7 days of receiving a grade you desire to dispute. A meeting will be arranged between you and the instructor. Please provide rationale and plan to provide evidence that your assignment submission met the assignment requirements.

7-days after a grade has been posted, it is assumed you have no dispute, and the grade will stand.

LATE WORK / EXTRA CREDIT / MAKE UP WORK

Work turned in after the due date and time is considered late, unless the student has an absence meeting university excused absence policy.



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All work is due at 11:59 PM. Submissions at 12:00 are considered late.

Deductions:

After due date/time	Time	% Deduction
24 hours	12:00 – 11:59 PM day 1	25% Deduction
48 hours	12:00 – 11:59 PM day 2	50% Deduction
72 hours	12:00 – 11:59 PM day 3	75% Deduction

Submissions will not be accepted after the third day past the due date/time.

MAKE-UP WORK

There is no make-up work for this course. *Please do not ask for an exception.*

EXTRA CREDIT

One extra credit assignment will be provided and may be found in the Course Schedule. It will be due on the date listed and there will be no other extra credit options provided.

Should you be concerned about your grade or fail to submit assignments, contact the instructor immediately. Do not wait until the last week of the semester. As outlined in the policy related to “Grade Disputes”, grades will stand after 7 days of being entered, including 0 for failing to submit an assignment.

AI and CHAT GPT

ChatGPT, the AI-powered chatbot launched in fall 2022 has many uses. ChatGPT might be a helpful brainstorming platform or provide editing feedback for co-authored assignments. However, any assignment thought to have been written by ChatGPT and turned in by a student is considered plagiarism **and will be turned into UNT Office of Academic Integrity**. The offending submission will be given a 0 and students will not be allowed to make up the assignment. Second offenses will result in a 0 in the course.

UNT STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND AUTHORIZED ABSENCES POLICY

Please review [UNT Policy Number 06.039](#) to determine if the missed class or assignment submission meets UNT policy standards before messaging the instructor to ask for this modification.



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Attendance for an online course can be concluded based on the last sign-in date when work is completed.

TURNAROUND TIME

Grading - I aim to return the graded work to you within one week of the due date. If this is not possible, I will send an announcement to the class.

COLLABORATIVE WORK

When course work requires collaboration, you will be informed. Otherwise, please do your own work. Do not post course content on study sites, such as Quizlet or in student-initiated Group Me Chats. Action will be taken through the university if cheating is brought to the attention of the instructor.

WORKING AHEAD

When modules and assignments are open early, you are welcome to work ahead. This does not, however, afford you the opportunity to re-do or re-submit assignments if the score is less than you desire.

CITIZENSHIP

Senior level courses are an excellent place to practice professionalism. Interaction and exchange of ideas with people dissimilar to us is paramount to growth. Student interaction throughout this course is encouraged. However, there will be no tolerance for name-calling, condemnation, or other forms of aggression. *Please reach out to me if you have any issues in this area. I can only assist when I am aware.*

MINIMAL TECHNICAL SKILLS

This is an online course; therefore, you must have minimum technical skills and the ability to reach out to technical support when needed.

Students enrolled in this course must:

- Have ongoing access to the internet.
- Have familiarity with or be willing to become familiar with Canvas.
- Be able to create and attach Word Documents.
- Be able to create and attach jpegs.
- Be able to create and attach PowerPoint presentations.
- Be able to create original Discussions on Canvas.



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- Be able to respond to Discussion on Canvas.
- Be able to insert images and write accurate Alt Text descriptions.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WITH CANVAS

Help Desk: <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>

The University of North Texas provides student technical support. The student help desk may be reached by emailing helpdesk@unt.edu or by calling 940.565-2324

Canvas technical requirements: <https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements>

Contact tech support immediately if you encounter issues submitting an assignment or taking a quiz. Follow up by messaging their instructor about the issue and including the ticket number from tech support.

COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

It is a violation of Copyright to reproduce information from this course, as well as upload the contents to a website that is not university sponsored. Should information be found online that originated in this course, cease and desist will be filed, followed by all legal options.

This includes posting material from the course onto “study” websites, such as Quizlet or on the student created course GroupMe.

STUDENT SUPPORT

[Code of Student Conduct](#): provides Code of Student Conduct along with other useful links.

[Office of Disability Access](#): exists to prevent discrimination based on disability and to help students reach a higher level of independence.

[Counseling and Testing Services](#): provides counseling services to the UNT community, as well as testing services, such as admissions testing, computer-based testing, career testing, and other tests.

[UNT Libraries](#)

[UNT Learning Center](#): provides a variety of services, including tutoring, to enhance student academic experience.

[UNT Writing Center](#): offers free writing tutoring to all UNT students, undergraduate and graduate, including online tutoring.

[Succeed at UNT](#): information regarding how to be a successful student at UNT.



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UNT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. [Insert specific sanction or academic penalty for specific academic integrity violation.]

UNT ADA POLICY

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodation at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

ADDS 4175 is an online course and does not require timed quizzes or assignments. Therefore, assignments are expected to be submitted on time.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION & PROCEDURES

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

UNT RETENTION OF STUDENT RECORDS

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic



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environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

UNIVERSITY ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR POLICY

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION - EAGLE CONNECT

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

STUDENT EVALUATION ADMINISTRATION DATES

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 [insert administration dates] of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey, they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at <http://spot.unt.edu/> or email spot@unt.edu.



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SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759

SYLLABUS/SCHEDULE CHANGE POLICY

The Course Syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. The instructor has the right to adjust the syllabus and course schedule at any time during the semester.

Course Schedule will only be changed in an unforeseen situation, such as a technology outage or university shutdown.