



MHS 6338
Post-Secondary Access Counseling for School
Counselors
54457 001
Summer 2026

Instructor Name

Chloe Lancaster

University Course Description

Provides systematic training in counseling K-12 students to transition to post-secondary settings. Topics address inequities in college access, post-secondary and vocational planning, organizing a college counseling office, developing a post-secondary culture, college admissions criteria, financial aid and scholarships, and advocacy in post-secondary access for underrepresented minority students.

Course Prerequisites

Prerequisite(s):

Corequisite(s):

Course Format

This asynchronous course will be structured through weekly modules consisting of quizzes and discussion boards, while also incorporating multiple active

learning strategies designed to support differentiated learning and promote real-world application.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes			
Student Learning Outcome	Relevant CACREP 2024 Standard(s)	Assignment	
1. Analyze changes in higher education and evaluate their impact on the school counselor's role in promoting postsecondary access.	CACREP 3.A.2, 5.H.6	• Discussion Board 1 • Quiz 1	
1. Apply ethical standards from professional counseling organizations and credentialing bodies to scenarios in college admission counseling.	CACREP 3.A.10	• Discussion Board 2 • Quiz 2	

1. Design strategies to engage postsecondary institutions and increase access for underrepresented student populations.	CACREP 5.H.19, 5.H.10	• Discussion Board 3 • Quiz 3 • Case Study • Advocacy Project	
1. Integrate counseling and developmental theories into postsecondary advising practices for diverse student populations.	CACREP 5.H.11, 5.H.15	• Discussion Board 4 • Quiz 4 • Case Study • Advocacy Project	
1. Evaluate multiple postsecondary pathways and advise students and families on appropriate options based on individual needs and career goals.	CACREP 5.H.2, 5.H.16	• Discussion Board 5 • Quiz 5 • Case Study • Advocacy Project	

1. Assist students in preparing authentic admission applications and explain the components of holistic application review processes.	CACREP 3.A.5, 5.H.18	• Discussion Board 6 • Quiz 6	
1. Develop and implement a comprehensive PK-12 college and career readiness plan that supports schoolwide postsecondary access.	CACREP 5.H.6, 5.H.19	• Discussion Board 7 • Quiz 7 • Case Study • Advocacy Project	
1. Use data and technology tools to deliver effective and culturally responsive college counseling interventions.	CACREP 5.H.15	• Discussion Board 8 • Quiz 8 • Case Study • Advocacy Project	

1. Educate students and families about financial aid options and deliver informed guidance to support college affordability decisions.	CACREP 5.H.10, 5.H.18	• Discussion Board 9 • Quiz 9 • Case Study • Advocacy Project	

Course Objectives

Upon Completion of this Course;

- **students will be able to** analyze current trends in college enrollment and the economic returns of a bachelor's degree and articulate evidence-based arguments about the value of higher education in order to effectively support and advise students considering postsecondary pathways.
- **students will be able to** examine ethical standards and professional codes relevant to college admission counseling and apply ethical decision-making frameworks to promote equity, transparency, and fairness in postsecondary advising.
- **students will be able to** apply asset-based and culturally responsive frameworks to develop strategies that promote equitable college access for underserved students and address structural barriers in the postsecondary pathway.
- **students will be able to** apply developmental theories and Hossler and Gallagher's three-phase college choice model (predisposition, search, and choice) to guide students through the college planning and decision-making process.
- **students will be able to** describe the range of postsecondary pathways—including community colleges and technical training programs—and apply counseling strategies that help students identify affordable, practical, and personally meaningful educational options.
- **students will be able to** analyze key components of the college admissions process, interpret institutional data sources (e.g., the Common Data Set),

and develop informed, ethical strategies to guide students through a personalized college application journey.

- **students will be able to** apply career and college development theories to design, implement, and evaluate equitable career and college readiness programming within a Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Supports (MTMDSS).
- **students will be able to** evaluate AI tools and other technologies for use in school counseling while applying data-informed frameworks to support equitable college access and ethical, student-centered practice.
- **students will be able to** explain major sources of financial aid, interpret financial aid award information, and utilize key tools and resources to guide students and families through the postsecondary financial aid process.

Required Texts and/or Readings and Course Materials

Gilfillan, B. H., & Trembley, C. W. (2024). *Fundamentals of college admission counseling: A textbook for graduate students and practicing counselors (6th Edition)*. National Association of College Admission Counseling

Supplementary (Optional) Texts and Materials

Any required supplemental material will be provided in weekly modules.

Because pathways to higher education a dynamic field, students are encouraged to pursue their own independent reading such as field relevant periodicals (Chronicle of Higher Education- Available through the USF library) that can expand knowledge and promote consideration of the course content from multiple vantage points.

How to Succeed in this Course

To help you stay on track and get the most out of this course, please keep the following expectations in mind:

- Check Canvas regularly. Important course announcements, updates, and reminders will be posted there. It's a good idea to adjust your Canvas notification settings so that announcements are also sent to your email.
- Don't wait if something is unclear. If you have questions about assignments or course expectations, please reach out before the due date so we can address any confusion early.

- Email communication. Please send course-related emails directly to me at clancaster2@usf.edu rather than through Canvas so I can respond more efficiently.
- Staying engaged, checking course updates, and communicating early will help ensure a smooth and successful experience in this online course.

Grading Scale

Points/Percent

No grade below “B” will be accepted toward a graduate degree. This includes B- grades

Grading Scale (%)

94 – 100 A 74 – 76 C
 90 – 93 A- 70 – 73 C-
 87 – 89 B+ 67 – 69 D+
 84 – 86 B 64 – 66 D
 80 – 83 B- 60 – 63 D-
 77 – 79 C+ 0 – 59 F

Grade Categories and Weights

Grade Categories and Weights

Assignment Due	Points/Percent	Due
Discussion Boards	45/ 45%	Weekly
Quizzes (27%)	27/27%	Weekly
Case Study	14/14%	Term
Advocacy Project	14/14%	Term

Assignments

Discussion Posts (45 points):

Students will complete **nine weekly discussion boards**, each worth **5 points**, for a total of **45 points**. Discussion questions will be posted by Monday morning, and both initial posts and responses are due each **Sunday by 11:59 p.m.** Each original post must be **at least 200 words** and address all parts of the prompt, drawing from assigned readings, videos, or other course materials. In addition to their original post, students are required to respond to **at least two classmates**. Effective responses should connect

meaningfully to the classmate's post by referencing relevant experiences, course content, or external sources such as news, research, or professional practice. Discussion participation is a key measure of student engagement and should reflect thoughtful analysis and respectful dialogue. While discussion posts are visible to the class, **grades remain private** and are accessible only to the student and instructor. To foster meaningful interaction, students are encouraged to post early in the week, allowing peers ample time to read and respond. Students' work will be graded per the discussion board rubric in APPENDIX A.

Weekly Competency Quizzes (27 points):

Students will complete nine weekly multiple-choice quizzes, each worth 3 points, based on the assigned chapter readings. Quizzes are designed to assess students' understanding of key concepts and content. Each quiz is due by Sunday at 11:59 p.m. [Student Learning Outcomes 1–9]

Case study (14 points):

You will receive several summaries of real-world, first-generation, predominantly minority, college-bound seniors. Pick one of the profiles for your case study assignment. Please note that this semester we'll be folding many elements of this assignment into weekly discussion boards. In this regard, the assignment can be partially completed cumulatively through your responses to relevant discussion board questions. As such, I do not recommend that you complete this assignment before the due date

All of the students are high school seniors and plan to go to college, but their aggregate risk factors (e.g., first-generation status, academic readiness, finances, family responsibilities, lack of vigorous course) place them at risk for stopping or dropping out of college. Using your accrued knowledge, pretend that you were this student's school counselor throughout his/her high school years. Write a case study that outlines, from a systemic perspective, how you could have strengthened the students' cognitive (e.g., academic) and non-cognitive skills (e.g., social capital) to promote his/her college success and reduce his/her risk. Use the following subtitles to organize your paper; within each section, provide a scholarly citation to support your recommendation/s and, where appropriate, indicate at which grade level you would implement the identified strategy. See Rubric in the case study assignment in Canvas. [*Student Learning Outcomes; 3,4,5,7,8,9*]

- **Student Description:** Describe the student profile. Reflect on any discrepancies between the student's high school GPA and standardized test scores, favorite subject, and intended college major.
- **Risk factors:** Based on the student demographic variables (e.g., ethnicity, first-gen status), describe factors identified in the research that have affected this population's college access and success
- **Academic readiness:** Identify how you would support students in becoming academically prepared in high school to support their transition to college. Identify at least three ways that you would assist this student to be academically ready for college (e.g., access to vigorous coursework, study skills, time management, test prep)
- **Social/ cultural capital:** Identify research-based strategies for how you would boost the student's social and or cultural capital for college success (e.g., through mentor programs, summer bridge programs, teaching hidden curriculum)
- **Financial:** Describe the financial barriers this population encounters in their path to college. How would you help your case study student plan for the financial burden of attending college?
- **Career guidance.** What career counseling strategies/assessments would you use to assist them in identifying career interests and viable majors (Kuder, My Plan, Naviance)?
- *You may use your textbook for two citations. However, you will need at least six references. Your paper will be assessed based on the thoroughness of each section, overall conceptualization, and adherence to APA style 7th edition. The paper should be at least 4-6 pages in length.*

Advocacy Project: College Access counseling with a specific population (14 points): In this assignment, you will create either a multimedia presentation, flyer, webinar, or podcast that educates an audience of your choosing (e.g., parents, teachers, administrators, freshman instructors, and or parents) about the needs of a special population as they transition to college. Examples of special populations include but are not limited to students with learning differences, undocumented students, LGBTQ students, students with autism, students from foster care, and students with identified mental health disorders: Depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, etc. (you must select one). Part two of the textbook provides several chapters focused on specific populations, which you could select as your target population. For those students who select a population covered in the textbook, you may use the relevant chapter as one of your four sources. Additional reference material can be found using journal-specific searches, such as in the Journal of College Counseling, Journal of College Student Development, or by conducting a Google Scholar search through the USF Library website. Your project must include at least four scholarly sources from peer-reviewed journals. To maximize your learning, students will upload their projects to a discussion

board entitled "Advocacy Project" and respond to the projects of at least two classmates. See Rubric in the Advocacy Project in Canvas. [Student Learning Outcomes; 3,4,5,7,8,9]

While you can be creative in terms of the platform (e.g., PowerPoint, Canva, Prezi) you utilize to advocate for this population, your project must include the following:

- **Description of population**
- **K-12 Barriers:** Documented problems encountered in high school (academic outcomes, bullying, etc.)
- **College Barriers:** Documented problems encountered by this population in college (lack of support, academic unpreparedness, disengagement, etc.)
- **K-12 Strategies:** Strategies noted to assist students in the transition from high school to college
- **College Strategies:** Evidence-based strategies for promoting retention in college
- **Resources:** Resources that can assist this population in their path to college (e.g., websites, organizations, apps)

Reference List: Include a minimum of 4 references

Instructor Feedback Policy & Grade Dissemination

I. Instructor Feedback Policy & Grade Dissemination

Instructor will respond to email communication relevant to the subject matter within 48 hours of the date received. Instructor will provide feedback on assignments within one week of the posted deadline, and feedback on final papers within two weeks of the posted deadline. You can access your scores at any time using "Grades" in Canvas

Course Schedule

Week 1 (May 18-26)

- Changing landscape of higher education and college counseling (*Student Learning Outcome 1*)
- Chapter 1 read
- Chapter 1 Quiz
- Discussion Board (DB)

Week 2 (May 26-May 31)

- Ethical Practices (*Student Learning Outcome 2*)
- Chapter 2
- Week 2 quiz (chapters 2)

- DB # 2

Week 3 (June 1-7)

- Engaging with colleges and increasing access for underrepresented populations (*Student Learning Outcome 3*)
- Read Chapters 3
- Week 3 quiz (chapter 3)
- DB # 3

Week 4 (June 8-14)

- Theory and Developmental Approaches (*Student Learning Outcome 4*)
- Read Chapter 4
- Week 4 quiz (chapters 4)
- DB # 4

Week 5 (June 15-21)

- Post-secondary options (*Student Learning Outcome 5*)
- Read Chapter 5
- Week 5 quiz (chapters 5)
- DB # 5

Week 6 (June 22-28)

- Components of the Admission Application & Admission Application Review & evaluation (*Student Learning Outcome 6*)
- Chapters 6 & 7
- Week 6 Quizzes: chapters 6 & 7
- DB # 6

Week 7 (June 29- July 5)

- College Counseling Cultivating Pathways & College and Career Readiness in School (*Student Learning Outcome 7*)
- Read Chapters 8 & 9
- Week 7 Quizzes: chapters 8 & 9
- DB # 7

Week 8 (July 6-12)

- Data in College and Career Readiness & Technology in College Counseling (*Student Learning Outcome 8*)
- Read Chapters 10 & 11
- Week 8 Quizzes: Chapters 10 & 11
- DB #8

Week 9 (July 13- 19)

- Paying for College: A guide to student Financial Aid *Student Learning Outcome 9)*
- Read Chapter 12
- Week 9 quiz (chapter 12)
- DB # 9

Week 10 (July 20-25)

- *Work on Semester assignments*
- Due: Case Study Assignment-July 25
- Due: Advocacy Assignment- July 25

** Note: The Schedule is subject to revision*

USF Core Syllabus Policies

USF has a set of central policies related to student recording class sessions, academic integrity and grievances, student accessibility services, academic disruption, religious observances, academic continuity, food insecurity, pregnancy and related conditions, and sexual harassment that **apply to all courses at USF**. Be sure to review these online:

<https://www.usf.edu/provost/faculty-success/resources-policies-forms/core-syllabus-policy-statements.aspx>

Student Recordings

Florida Statute 1004.097 Free Expression on Campus

Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal, educational use (USF Policy 10-048). A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab sessions,

student presentations (whether individually or part of a group), class discussion, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member is prohibited. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the USF Student Conduct Code.

Course Policies: Grades

First Day Attendance Policy

During the first week of the semester, all students must complete the 'first day attendance' requirement. This is a USF requirement that applies to online courses. This requirement is satisfied via the completion of the Introductions Discussion Board. Students who don't complete this first day attendance activity run the risk of being dropped from the course.

Late Work Policy

There are no make-ups for weekly lessons, quizzes, discussion boards or other course assignments. Late-work will be assessed a penalty: a half-letter grade if it is one day late, or a full-letter grade for 2-7 days late. Student work will not be accepted if overdue by more than seven days.

Grades of "Incomplete"

The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course.

For graduate courses: An Incomplete grade ("I") is exceptional and granted at the instructor's discretion only when students are unable to complete course requirements due to illness or other circumstances beyond their control. The course instructor and student must complete and sign the "I" Grade Contract Form that describes the work to be completed, the date it is due, and the grade the student would earn, factoring in a zero for all incomplete assignments. The due date can be negotiated and extended by the student/instructor as long as it does not exceed two semesters for undergraduate courses and one semester for graduate courses from the original date grades were due for that course. An "I" grade not cleared within the two semesters for undergraduate courses and one

semester for graduate courses (including the summer semester) will revert to the grade noted on the contract.

Rewrite Policy

At the instructor's discretion, a student may have an option to rewrite their work with the intent of earning a passing or better grade than the original one earned.

Grades of "Incomplete"

An Incomplete grade ("I") is exceptional and granted at the instructor's discretion only when students are unable to complete course requirements due to illness or other circumstances beyond their control. The course instructor and student must complete and sign the "I" Grade Contract Form that describes the work to be completed, the date it is due, and the grade the student would earn factoring in a zero for all incomplete assignments. The due date can be negotiated and extended by student/instructor as long as it does not exceed two semesters for undergraduate courses and one semester for graduate courses from the original date grades were due for that course. An "I" grade not cleared within the two semesters for undergraduate courses and one semester for graduate courses (including summer semester) will revert to the grade noted on the contract.

Campus Free Expression

It is fundamental to the University of South Florida's mission to support an environment where divergent ideas, theories, and philosophies can be openly exchanged and critically evaluated. Consistent with these principles, this course may involve discussion of ideas that you find uncomfortable, disagreeable, or even offensive.

In the instructional setting, ideas are intended to be presented in an objective manner and not as an endorsement of what you should personally believe. "Objective" means that the idea(s) presented can be tested by critical peer review and rigorous debate, and that the idea(s) is supported by credible research.

In this course you may be asked to engage with complex ideas and to demonstrate an understanding of the ideas. Understanding and engaging with an idea does not require you to believe it or to agree with it.

Course Policies: Technology and Media

Canvas

This course is offered via USF's learning management system (LMS), Canvas. If you need help learning how to perform various tasks related to this course or other courses being offered in Canvas, please consult the [Canvas Student Guides](#). You may also contact USF's IT department at (813) 974-1222 or help@usf.edu.

Canvas Technical Support

If you have technical difficulties in Canvas, you can find access to the Canvas guides and video resources in the “Canvas Help” page on the homepage of your Canvas course. You can also contact the help desk by calling 813-974-1222 in Tampa or emailing help@usf.edu.

[IT website for the Tampa campus.](#)

[IT website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

[IT website for the Sarasota-Manatee campus.](#)

Course Policies: Student Expectations

Health and Wellness

Your health is a priority at the University of South Florida. We encourage members of our community to look out for each other and to reach out for help if someone is in need. If you or someone you know is in distress, please make a referral at www.usf.edu/sos so that the Student Outreach & Support can contact and provide helpful resources to the student in distress. A 24-hour licensed mental healthcare professional, offered through the counseling center, is available by phone at 813-974-2831, option 3. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, please dial 9-1-1.

Title IX Policy

USF is committed to fostering a safe and respectful learning environment, free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment, in accordance with Title IX and USF Policy 0-004. If a student shares an experience of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, or relationship violence with a USF employee (including faculty), that employee will notify the Title IX Office. This allows the Title IX Office to send the student an email with information about support resources and options—if it is safe to do so. Students are not required to respond to this email. The Title IX Office is a private resource. Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis to provide students with support measures. To speak to a confidential resource, students may contact USF Center for Victim Advocacy at 813-974-5757. Confidential resources do not notify the Title IX Office unless the student requests it. For more information

about Title IX, available resources, or to make a report, please visit www.usf.edu/title-ix.

Course Hero / Chegg Policy

The USF Policy on Academic Integrity specifies that students may not use websites that enable cheating, such as by uploading or downloading material for this purpose. This does apply specifically to Chegg.com and CourseHero.com – almost any use of these websites (including uploading proprietary materials) constitutes a violation of the academic integrity policy.

Professionalism Policy

Per university policy and classroom etiquette; mobile phones, iPods, etc. must be silenced during all classroom and lab lectures. Those not heeding this rule will be asked to leave the classroom/lab immediately so as to not disrupt the learning environment. Please arrive on time for all class meetings. Students who habitually disturb the class by talking, arriving late, etc., and have been warned may suffer a reduction in their final class grade.

Turnitin.com

In this course, turnitin.com may be utilized. Turnitin is an automated system which instructors may use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you will be expected to submit all assignments in both hard copy and electronic format. After the assignment is processed, as instructor I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process visit <http://www.turnitin.com>. Essays are due at turnitin.com the same day as in class.

Netiquette Guidelines

1. Act professionally in the way you communicate. Treat your instructors and peers with respect, the same way you would do in a face-to-face environment. Respect other people's ideas and be constructive when explaining your views about points you may not agree with.
2. Be sensitive. Be respectful and sensitive when sharing your ideas and opinions. There will be people in your class with different linguistic backgrounds, political and religious beliefs or other general differences.
3. Proofread and check spelling. Doing this before sending an email or posting a thread on a discussion board will allow you to make sure your message is clear and thoughtful. Avoid the use of all capital letters, it can be perceived as if you are shouting, and it is more difficult to read.
4. Keep your communications focused and stay on topic. Complete your ideas before changing the subject. By keeping the message on focus you allow the readers to easily get your idea or answers they are looking for.
5. Be clear with your message. Avoid using humor or sarcasm. Since people can't see your expressions or hear your tone of voice, meaning can be misinterpreted.

Email and Discussion Board Guidelines

1. Use the subject line effectively by using a meaningful line of what your email or discussion is about.
2. Keep your emails and postings related to the course content. You should not post anything personal on a discussion board unless it is requested by the instructor.
3. Any personal, course or confidential issues should be directly communicated to the instructor via email. The discussion boards are public spaces; therefore, any issues should not be posted there.

End of Semester Student Evaluations

All classes at USF make use of an online system for students to provide feedback to the University regarding the course. These surveys will be made available at the end of the semester, and the University will notify you by email when the response window opens. Your participation is highly encouraged and valued.

Food and Drink Policy (for in-campus sessions only).

Please adhere to the firm policy of no beverages (other than bottled/capped water), food, tobacco products, or like items in the classroom. Your understanding of the necessity for this policy and cooperation will be greatly appreciated. This policy will be strictly enforced.

Learning Support and Campus Offices

Academic Accommodations

Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in order to receive academic accommodations. For additional information about academic accommodations and resources, you can visit the SAS website.

[SAS website for the Tampa and Sarasota-Manatee campuses.](#)

[SAS website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Academic Support Services

The USF Office of Student Success coordinates and promotes university-wide efforts to enhance undergraduate and graduate student success. For a comprehensive list of academic support services available to all USF students, please visit the [Office of Student Success website.](#)

Canvas Technical Support

If you have technical difficulties in Canvas, you can find access to the Canvas guides and video resources in the “Canvas Help” page on the homepage of your Canvas course. You can also contact the help desk by calling 813-974-1222 in Tampa or emailing help@usf.edu.

[USF IT Service Support Tampa Campus](#)

[USF IT Support St. Pete Campus](#)

[USF IT Support Sarasota-Manatee Campus](#)

Center for Victim Advocacy

The [Center for Victim Advocacy](#) empowers survivors of crime, violence, or abuse by promoting the restoration of decision making, by advocating for their rights, and by offering support and resources. Contact information is available online.

Counseling Center

The Counseling Center promotes the wellbeing of the campus community by providing culturally sensitive counseling, consultation, prevention, and training that enhances student academic and personal success. Contact information is available online.

[Counseling Center website for the Tampa campus.](#)

[Counseling Center website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

[Counseling Center website for the Sarasota-Manatee campus.](#)

Tutoring

The Tutoring Hub offers free tutoring in several subjects to USF undergraduates. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information, email asctampa@usf.edu.

[Tutoring website for the Tampa campus.](#)

[Tutoring website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

[Tutoring website for the Sarasota-Manatee campus.](#)

Writing Studio

The Writing Studio is a free resource for USF undergraduate and graduate students. At the Writing Studio, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you, at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, email: writingstudio@usf.edu.

[Writing studio website for the Tampa campus.](#)

[Writing studio website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

[Writing studio website for the Sarasota-Manatee campus.](#)

Student Ombuds Office

Florida Statute 1006.51 and Florida Board of Governors Regulation 6.011 require that all public institutions provide ombuds services to students. The Student Ombuds Office at USF is a confidential, impartial, informal, and independent resource for students experiencing challenges related to the university. Ombuds can help students safely explore options, clarify processes, and consider next steps. [Learn more or make an appointment at usf.edu/student-ombuds.](https://usf.edu/student-ombuds)