

### Course Syllabus

COURSE: VNSG 1219 Professional Development  
SEMESTER: Fall 2019  
CLASS TIMES: 1300-1600 {1:00 pm- 3:00 pm{.....  
INSTRUCTOR: Mary Backus, RN, BSN  
OFFICE: Reese Center, Building 5, Room 529  
OFFICE HOURS: Monday thru Thursday 8:00-4:00 and Friday 9:00-11:30 or by appointment  
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*"South Plains College improves each student's life."*

### GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

*\*It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with the content and requirements listed in the course syllabus.\**

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will study the importance of professional growth. The topics will include the role of the licensed vocational nurse in the multi-disciplinary health care team, professional organizations and continuing education.

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

"The expectation of your knowledge of nursing process and critical thinking also equalize the significance of the role and that practical/vocational nurse plays as part of the health care team". (S.Hill & H. Howlett, 2009, pg. xiv)
At the completion of the semester students will:
1. Describe the role of the licensed vocational nurse in multidisciplinary settings inclusive of basic principles of leadership and management
2. Discuss the role of professional organizations and regulatory agencies.
3. Identify criteria and appropriate resources for continuing education.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES - Outline form (C-5, C-6, C-7, C-8, F-1, F-2, F-5, F-6, F-8, F-9, F-12, F-16)

• Describe the expanded role of the LVN as described in your state's Nurse Practice Act. Identify the charge nurse position as an LVN and their scope of practice.
• Identify ways to attain competency in in which knowledge and skills are needed to be an effective first line leader.
• Using nursing process as a guide, discuss the method for assigning and delegating.
• List the requirements for continuing education; professional organizations and define the duties of the LVN.
• Describe the shift to long term care and home health nursing and identify the role of the LVN home setting.
• Discuss and prepare resumes', job applications and prepare for job interviews. Discuss requirements of state board of nursing eligibility and purpose for NCLEX exam.
• Be present and punctual for all classes.

### EVALUATION METHODS

Computer-based exams, written exams, written assignments, quizzes, and other projects as assigned. In addition, methods of instruction may include but are not limited to lecture, discussion, required reading assignments/nursing journals, charts/posters, Power Point and audio/video presentation.



## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is the aim of the faculty of South Plains College to foster a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own any work which he or she has not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a most serious offense and renders the offender liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension.

**Cheating** - Dishonesty of any kind on examinations or on written assignments, illegal possession of examinations, the use of unauthorized notes during an examination, obtaining information during an examination from the textbook or from the examination paper of another student, assisting others to cheat, alteration of grade records, illegal entry or unauthorized presence in the office are examples of cheating. Complete honesty is required of the student in the presentation of any and all phases of coursework. This applies to quizzes of whatever length, as well as final examinations, to daily reports and to term papers.

**Plagiarism** - Offering the work of another as one's own, without proper acknowledgment, is plagiarism; therefore, any student who fails to give credit for quotations or essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines and other reference works, or from themes, reports or other writings of a fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism.

## VARIFICATION OF WORKPLACE COMPETENCIES

Vocational Nurses are expected to know how to function within the boundaries of the Nurse Practice Act as well as know how to navigate legal and ethical responsibilities.

## BLACKBOARD

**Blackboard is an e-Education platform designed to enable educational innovations everywhere by connecting people and technology. This educational tool will be used in this course throughout the semester.**

## SCANS and FOUNDATION SKILLS

Refer also to Course Objectives. Scans and Foundation Skills attached

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### SPECIFIC COURSE INFORMATION

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#### TEXT AND MATERIALS

TEXTBOOK	Publisher	ISBN#
<u>Success in Practical/Vocational Nursing, From Student to Leader ;Patricia Knecht (8<sup>th</sup> Edition)</u>	Elsevier	978-0-323-35631-2

#### ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM ITEMS

Students should come to class prepared with pens, pencils, and a spiral notebook for taking notes or completed quizzes or assignments in class. Students should be prepared to take notes over lecture material if they choose.



## ATTENDANCE POLICY (\*READ CAREFULLY)

### Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes in order to be successful in a course. The student may be administratively withdrawn from the course when absences become excessive as defined in the course syllabus.

When an unavoidable reason for class absence arises, such as illness, an official trip authorized by the college or an official activity, the instructor may permit the student to make up work missed. It is the student's responsibility to complete work missed within a reasonable period of time as determined by the instructor. Students are officially enrolled in all courses for which they pay tuition and fees at the time of registration. Should a student, for any reason, delay in reporting to a class after official enrollment, absences will be attributed to the student from the first class meeting.

Students who enroll in a course but have "Never Attended" by the official census date, as reported by the faculty member, will be administratively dropped by the Office of Admissions and Records. A student who does not meet the attendance requirements of a class as stated in the course syllabus and does not officially withdraw from that course by the official census date of the semester, may be administratively withdrawn from that course and receive a grade of "X" or "F" as determined by the instructor. Instructors are responsible for clearly stating their administrative drop policy in the course syllabus, and it is the student's responsibility to be aware of that policy.

It is the student's responsibility to verify administrative drops for excessive absences through MySPC using his or her student online account. If it is determined that a student is awarded financial aid for a class or classes in which the student never attended or participated, the financial aid award will be adjusted in accordance with the classes in which the student did attend/participate and the student will owe any balance resulting from the adjustment.

([http://catalog.southplainscollege.edu/content.php?catoid=47&navoid=1229#Class\\_Attendance](http://catalog.southplainscollege.edu/content.php?catoid=47&navoid=1229#Class_Attendance))

There are no excused absences in the Professional Development Course. Roll is taken for each class. A student who is not present when roll is checked is "absent." A student must sign in for each class; a student who fails to sign in on the attendance form is absent.

Students are not allowed to disrupt the class for tardiness. It is disruptive to students who are on time for a tardy student to enter the classroom with books and backpacks. It also demonstrates a lack of caring and lack of respect to classmates for the tardy student to disrupt the class. Students who are either: (a) tardy to the start of class or (b) tardy following a break or lunch are counted as tardy within the first 5 minutes of the class starting **(after that, students are "absent")**. **Two tardies count as one absence.** A student may come into the classroom following a break, but the absence remains on the record. A student who does not stay for the entire class period is absent. A student who misses the morning session may attend the afternoon session to get the information, but the student is still marked "absent" for the day. There are no half-day absences. Students who are tardy to class for an examination are not allowed to come in to class once the exam has begun and are counted as absent. These students may come in to class after the examination is over to hear the information, but the absence remains for the day.

**The student may have only have 2 absences for the Professional Development Course. On the third absence, the student must bring a physician's excuse/release or a court order or some other official documentation as to why the student had to be absent.** Unused absences do not carry over to the next course or semester.



**A student who misses more than two classes in this course and does not bring the required documentation (as stated above), does not meet the course objectives and must withdraw from the Vocational Nursing Program with an "F".**

**Attendance and timeliness are two characteristics of professionals.**

#### **ASSIGNMENT POLICY**

It is the responsibility of the student to be informed of class progress and assignments and to come to class prepared to participate in discussion, to turn in any assignments due, and/or take the quiz or test scheduled for that day.

Assignments may include but are not limited to writing assignments, discussion boards, Vocabulary, Pop quizzes and group projects.

Reading any assigned material assists the student to listen to the lecture with a higher degree of acuity and to participate in class discussion more effectively. A student cannot expect to understand what is being said in class when she/he has had no previous contact with the ideas or terms related to the topic.

Much of the work of this course is in projects and reading work. Students will write reflective notes in a Blue Book purchased from the bookstore (please expect to be asked to share what you write in your blue book with the class). More information about each assignment can be found in this syllabus. Due dates will be noted on the course schedule. **ALL WORK IS DUE on Friday by 1200 ON THE SCHEDULED DATE! No late projects or incomplete work will be accepted for any reason—a grade of "0" is recorded for any project not turned in by the deadline. Please note, however, that ALL work must be complete and turned in to exit the course, even if the grade recorded is a "0."** Projects may be turned in early by handing them in directly to the course instructor (do not leave them in the box outside the office door). Projects should be submitted in a paper pocket folder. References should be appropriately used for all work. ALL assignments must be completed and turned in (a student cannot just be satisfied with a grade and neglect to complete all required assignments).

Each student is expected to come to class prepared with their assignment. All assignments must be completed by the assigned due date. Late and/or incomplete work will not be accepted and a grade of **zero** will be recorded. Assignments, quizzes, exams, and skills that are missed due to an unexcused absence may not be made up.

\*\*\*Course Assignment Packet and Course Schedule attached at end of syllabus

#### **COMPUTER USAGE**

As computer technology in the field of health occupations continues to become more popular, computers may be used in this course for several assignments. All students have access to computers and printers on the South Plains College campus. Students will be expected to utilize computers to access assignments and classroom resources. All registered students are supplied with a working email account from South Plains College. In order to take exams, students must have their user name and password.

**ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO KNOW THEIR SPC STUDENT USER NAME AND PASSWORD.**



## COMPUTER LAB USAGE

The computer lab(s) on any campus may be used by students during scheduled open hours or as assigned by an instructor. Printer paper will not be provided for students to print materials but students may seek assistance from faculty or staff to request lab paper from the college if needed. Lack of computer lab paper is not an excuse for not having homework assignments, skills lab sheets, or any other required documents. Students should come prepared for class.

## EXAMS

- See Lecture/Exam Schedule
- Presentation of material includes class lectures, discussion, handouts, videos, and power point.
- Exams may be essay, fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, matching and/or true- false.
- Exams may be essay, fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, matching and/or true-false.
- Grades will be posted to Blackboard; Exams will be reviewed in class as a group.. Grades will not be emailed or given out by phone.
- No exams will be given prior to originally scheduled exam.
- Students must earn a course average of 75 or better and meet all class criteria for progression to next course
- Students will have the opportunity to review all grades as they are recorded. Should the student have any questions about a specific grade or specific test question, the student must discuss this with the instructor within 48 hours of notification of grade. Once the 48 hours have passed without the student questioning the grade or question, the assigned grade is final and may not be challenged at the end of the course. The final exam that is taken in class may not be reviewed and will not be posted. The final letter grade the student earns will be posted at the end of the course.
- Students may bring only a #2 pencil and a four function calculator in for an exam.

**In order to pass and exit this course**, the student must

- have a 75 average or better for the final course grade AND
- pass the Texas Board of Nursing Online Jurisprudence Examination \* by the time designated on the schedule AND
- Complete program evaluation by time designated on schedule AND
- Complete **all** assignments (even if a student does not meet the deadline and receives a "0" on an assignment, **all** assignments must be complete and turned in order for the student to exit the class)
- AND have no more than 2 absences.

\* During the 2007 Legislative session, the Texas Legislature mandated that all candidates for licensure pass a jurisprudence examination prior to being licensed in Texas. Therefore, all students are required to pass the online Nursing Jurisprudence Examination (NJE) prior to completing this course. The student must answer 38 out of 50 questions correctly in order to pass. The student can re-take the examination every 7 days.

AFTER YOU HAVE APPLIED FOR LICENSURE with the Texas Board of Nursing, please go to the BON website at [www.bon.state.tx.us](http://www.bon.state.tx.us), scroll down to the online nursing jurisprudence examination, and click on it and take the examination. Once you pass the examination, please print two copies. One copy will go to your permanent school record and one will be your copy for you to keep. You **must pass the exam in order to pass the course and the program**. You can only take the exam every seven days. Please allow time to retake the exam in case you do not pass on your first attempt.



### Missed Exams:

There will be two (2) examinations—a mid-term exam and a final examination. There is NOT a make-up exam for either exam. A student who misses either exam, receives a “0” for that exam.

**There will be No make-up exams. No exams will be given prior to the originally scheduled date and time**

### **GRADING POLICY**

**Students must earn a “C” (75) or better in this class to pass.**

#### **Grade Scale**

90-100 = A

80-89.9 = B

75-79.9 = C

70-74.9 = D

69.9 & below =F

**Grades are not rounded up or down.** Example a 79.9 shows a 79 which would be a C. The FINAL COURSE GRADE is a letter grade only and is the grade that will appear on the SPC transcript. Numeric final course grades will not be listed on Blackboard.

Some assignments will be completed in class (as noted on the course schedule).

Grade Breakdown:

Exams:	60%
Projects/Assignments	40%
Jurisprudence Exam	required
Program Evaluation	required

### **COMMUNICATION POLICY**

- Electronic communication between instructor and students in this course will utilize the South Plains College “My SPC” and email systems. The instructor will not initiate communication using private email accounts. Students are encouraged to check SPC email on a daily basis. Students will also have access to assignments, web-links, handouts, and other vital material which will be delivered via Blackboard. Any student having difficulty accessing the Blackboard or their email should immediately contact their instructor for direction. The instructor will work with any student to ensure the student has access to a computer on campus and can obtain the needed class content that is located on the course website.
- Students are expected to read and, if needed, respond in a timely manner to college emails. It is suggested that students check college email daily to avoid missing time-sensitive or important college messages. Students may forward college emails to alternate email addresses; however, SPC will not be held responsible for emails forwarded to alternate addresses. A student’s failure to receive or read official communications sent to the student’s assigned email address in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the official communication. The official college email address assigned to students can be revoked if it is determined the student is utilizing it inappropriately. College email must not be used to send offensive or disruptive messages nor to display messages that violate state or federal law.
- Mrs. Backus will answer all emails in a timely manner. If a student emails the instructor prior to 4:00pm Monday-Friday, the student can expect to receive a response via email the same day. If email is sent after 4:00 pm, the student can expect to receive a response the next business day. Emails will not be checked or answered on the weekend. Any email sent after 4:00 pm on Friday will be answered the following Monday.



## **Additional Information: Expected Student Behavior**

The student is expected to abide by the policies in this syllabus and should conduct themselves in a manner that is not disruptive and allows others to have an environment to learn in.

1. Talking/giggling while the instructor/guest speaker/another student/or video is “talking” is not acceptable
2. Sleeping during class time is not acceptable
3. For Test Security, no hats, caps, backpacks or purses are permitted in the classroom during exams.
4. No drinks or food may be brought into the classroom during an exam.
5. Bottled drinks with a screw top lid only may be brought into the classroom during lecture only
6. Using cell phones or passing notes during class time is prohibited

### **ATTENTION: CELL PHONES ARE NOT ALLOWED DURING CLASS.**

**The following penalties apply to students who choose to sneak in their phones:**

(1) If a cell phone rings during an exam, that student’s exam will end immediately with a “50” recorded for the exam grade, even if the student was answering the last question. There is no makeup for this grade. (2) If a cell phone goes off during lecture, the cell phone will be taken up and left in the Director’s office till 4:00 p.m.

The student is allowed to use the cell phone only during breaks, please keep cell phones in your locker or car.

Should the above behavior disrupt the class, the student(s) can expect to be asked to leave the classroom.

## **CAMPUS CARRY**

Campus Concealed Carry - Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in South Plains College buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and South Plains College policy, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the SPC policy at: ([http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human\\_resources/policy\\_procedure/hhc.php](http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human_resources/policy_procedure/hhc.php)) Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all South Plains College campuses. Report violations to the College Police Department at 806-716-2396 or 9-1-1.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

Rules and regulations relating to the students at South Plains College are made with the view of protecting the best interests of the individual, the general welfare of the entire student body and the educational objectives of the college. As in any segment of society, a college community must be guided by standards that are stringent enough to prevent disorder, yet moderate enough to provide an atmosphere conducive to intellectual and personal development.

A high standard of conduct is expected of all students. When a student enrolls at South Plains College, it is assumed that the student accepts the obligations of performance and behavior imposed by the college relevant to its lawful missions, processes and functions. Obedience to the law, respect for properly constituted authority, personal honor, integrity and common sense guide the actions of each member of the college community both in and out of the classroom.

Students are subject to federal, state and local laws, as well as South Plains College rules and regulations. A student is not entitled to greater immunities or privileges before the law than those enjoyed by other citizens. Students are subject to such reasonable disciplinary action as the administration of the college may consider appropriate, including suspension and expulsion in appropriate cases for breach of federal, state or local laws, or college rules and regulations. This principle extends to conduct off-campus which is likely to have adverse effects on the college or on the educational process which identifies the offender as an unfit associate for fellow students.

Any student who fails to perform according to expected standards may be asked to withdraw.

Rules and regulations regarding student conduct appear in the current Student Guide.



## ACCOMMODATIONS

### DIVERSITY STATEMENT

In this class, the teacher will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves. By promoting diversity and intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

### DISABILITIES STATEMENT

Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at Levelland Student Health & Wellness Center 806-716-2577, Reese Center (also covers ATC) Building 8: 806-716-4675, Plainview Center Main Office: 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611, or the Health and Wellness main number at 806-716-2529.

### PREGNANCY ACCOMMODATIONS STATEMENT

#### 4.1.1.4 Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations Statement (updated 6/2019)

If you are pregnant, or have given birth been within six months, under Title IX you have a right to reasonable accommodations to help continue your education. Students who wish to request accommodations must contact the Health and Wellness Center at 806-716-2529 to initiate the process.

## FOUNDATION SKILLS

### BASIC SKILLS—Reads, Writes, Performs Arithmetic and Mathematical Operations, Listens and Speaks

F-1 Reading—locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and in documents such as manuals, graphs, and schedules.

F-2 Writing—communicates thoughts, ideas, information and messages in writing and creates documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts.

F-3 Arithmetic—performs basic computations; uses basic numerical concepts such as whole numbers, etc.

F-4 Mathematics—approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques.

F-5 Listening—receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues.

F-6 Speaking—organizes ideas and communicates orally.

### THINKING SKILLS—Thinks Creatively, Makes Decisions, Solves Problems, Visualizes and Knows How to Learn and Reason

F-7 Creative Thinking—generates new ideas.

F-8 Decision-Making—specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks, evaluates and chooses best alternative.

F-9 Problem Solving—recognizes problems, devises and implements plan of action.

F-10 Seeing Things in the Mind's Eye—organizes and processes symbols, pictures, graphs, objects, and other information.

F-11 Knowing How to Learn—uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills.



F-12 Reasoning—discovers a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and applies it when solving a problem.

**PERSONAL QUALITIES—Displays Responsibility, Self-Esteem, Sociability, Self-Management, Integrity and Honesty**

F-13 Responsibility—exerts a high level of effort and perseveres towards goal attainment.

F-14 Self-Esteem—believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self.

F-15 Sociability—demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy and politeness in group settings.

F-16 Self-Management—assesses self accurately, sets personal goals, monitors progress and exhibits self-control.

F-17 Integrity/Honesty—chooses ethical courses of action.

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**SCANS COMPETENCIES**

C-1 **TIME** - Selects goal - relevant activities, ranks them, allocates time, prepares and follows schedules.

C-2 **MONEY** - Uses or prepares budgets, makes forecasts, keeps records and makes adjustments to meet objectives.

C-3 **MATERIALS AND FACILITIES** - Acquires, stores, allocates, and uses materials or space efficiently.

C-4 **HUMAN RESOURCES** - Assesses skills and distributes work accordingly, evaluates performances and provides feedback.

**INFORMATION - Acquires and Uses Information**

C-5 Acquires and evaluates information.

C-6 Organizes and maintains information.

C-7 Interprets and communicates information.

C-8 Uses computers to process information.

**INTERPERSONAL—Works With Others**

C-9 Participates as a member of a team and contributes to group effort.

C-10 Teaches others new skills.

C-11 Serves Clients/Customers—works to satisfy customer's expectations.

C-12 Exercises Leadership—communicates ideas to justify position, persuades and convinces others, responsibly challenges existing procedures and policies.

C-13 Negotiates—works toward agreements involving exchanges of resources; resolves divergent interests.

C-14 Works With Diversity—works well with men and women from diverse backgrounds.

**SYSTEMS—Understands Complex Interrelationships**

C-15 Understands Systems—knows how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operates effectively with them.

C-16 Monitors and Corrects Performance—distinguishes trends, predicts impacts on system operations, diagnoses systems performance and corrects malfunctions.

C-17 Improves or Designs Systems—suggests modifications to existing systems and develops new or alternative systems to improve performance.

**TECHNOLOGY—Works with a Variety of Technologies**

C-18 Selects Technology—chooses procedures, tools, or equipment, including computers and related technologies.



C-19 Applies Technology to Task—understands overall intent and proper procedures for setup and operation of equipment.

C-20 Maintains and Troubleshoots Equipment—prevents, identifies, or solves problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE SCHEDULE POSTED ON BLACKBOARD**



## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Refer to the Course Schedule for Due Dates

### REQUIRED Information for all writing assignments:

1. Your name, title, class name, and date should go on the top left corner of every page (*exception: your resume and your letters—these should be formal*)
2. All work must be typed using Times New Roman, 12 point font (except resume), double spaced. Exception: Job Application may be neatly handwritten in black ink.
3. Scholarly references must be appropriately referenced and used if indicated (see reference information in clinical course)
4. Work must be done in complete sentences, meaning there must be a subject and a verb.
5. In most cases, one or two sentences DOES NOT answer the question. You need to write in paragraphs.
6. You are expected to read the corresponding chapters PRIOR to completing the assignment because there is information you need in the chapters to correctly complete the assignment.
7. ANY work that requires a “signature” must actually be signed . . . a typed name **is not** a signature. *Signatures must be legible.*
8. All work should be professionally submitted—this means placed in a pocket (not manila) folder; if several assignments are due on the same day, they should be placed in individual folders—not in the same folder.
9. Any work that is incomplete is a “0”.

**CLASS ASSIGNMENTS IN YOUR BLUE BOOK:** You will write about these in class in your blue book and then we will have discussion over what you have written. You will be asked to share what you write in your blue book, so please be prepared. You must bring your blue book daily; it will be turned in from time-to-time.

**FIRST ASSIGNMENT:** *This exercise is intended to get you thinking about yourself, nursing, and where you fit into nursing history. In your blue book, answer each question thoroughly, clearly, paying attention to spelling, grammar and punctuation as well as sentence structure.*

1. **1. Write a short paragraph about who you are as a person.**
2. **Discuss this question: WHY are you in school?**
3. **Write the top three reasons you are in this class at this moment.**
4. **What motivates you?**
5. **Identify who you are friends with in this class and give a rationale for this friendship.**
6. **Identify who you know *least* in the class. Why do you believe you don’t know them well?**

**PERSONAL VALUES AND MISSIONS STATEMENT:** (TO BE WRITTEN IN CLASS WHEN ASSIGNED) : Setting priorities is a part of everyday life and it is a great part of nursing. Making something a priority is based on the value you place on it in your life. If something is important to you, it will have priority. To set priorities, (1) determine your personal value system—what is important to you, (2) plan activities that fulfill your personal values, (3) determine your mission statement.

“When you consciously put your personal values and your mission statement together, you have a clear road to follow in terms of setting your priorities.” (Dahlkemper, 2013, pg 200).

1. **Write a personal values statement.** A personal values statement gives you clear direction in what you value. What is really important to you?  
Example: “I believe in being honest, true, benevolent, and in doing good to all people.” (Dahlkemper, 2013, pg 200)
2. **Write a mission statement.** A mission statement gives you purpose in life. Ask what is it you want in life? Why did you choose nursing? What do you want to achieve? What are your concepts for living?  
Example: “I will be a loving mother, an effective teacher, and a benevolent person throughout my life.” (Dahlkemper, 2013, pg 200).



## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS (PROJECTS):

- PROJECT: Instructions to come
- RESUME: Prepare a professional resume for employment in nursing. For example, see figure 18-1 in Knecht textbook. Your resume should be
  - Chronological going present-past
  - Typed, 9-14 point Times New Roman or similar font
  - One page
  - Follows the rules of good resume writing
  - Be on quality paper (not just plain white typing paper—use a heavier weight)
  - Be free of grammar, punctuation or spelling errors

*SEE WRITING YOUR CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME AT THE END OF THE INSTRUCTIONS.*

- COVER LETTER: (please note: for all letters, personal pronouns may be used)  
You are applying for this job:



**LVNs WANTED!**  
**SPC Acute Care and Assisted Living Center**  
**Seeking LVNs for all shifts to staff facility!**  
**New grads considered!**  
**Excellent salary! Excellent benefits!**  
**Contact Rod Smith, Human Resources Director for more information!**  
**Send resume outlining qualifications to**  
**Korbi Berryhill, Director of Nurses**  
**SPC Acute Care & ALC**  
**1233 Sunnydale Lane**  
**Lubbock, Texas 79416**

Write a Cover Letter for this job to send with your resume. See example **Box 18-A in Knecht textbook**.

Your letter must have the following elements:

- Date (use the date you are writing the letter)
- Addressed to an individual
- Statement of interest
- Statement of qualification
- Statement of availability to discuss the job
- 3-4 paragraphs in length
- No longer than 1 page
- Have student contact information
- Must be signed (please note: a TYPED name is NOT a signature)



- THANK YOU LETTER (this will be written in class after you interview)—please bring paper and an envelope to use in class. Required elements include
  - Either pre-printed form or quality stationary used
  - Dated
  - Addressed
  - Appreciation expressed
  - Any additional thoughts
  - Expression of continued/discontinued interest in position
  - Signed
  
- RESIGNATION LETTER: (see example **Box 18-14 in Knecht**)

***SCENARIO for Resignation LETTER: You have worked at SPC Acute Care & Assisted Living Center for the last two years. The mission statement of the facility encourages staff to continue their education and you have decided to pursue your BSN. You have the financial resources which allow you to focus solely on school and so you are resigning your position. You began your career there as a staff LVN and have been the 2 p.-10 p. charge nurse over 45 residents for the last year. Write a letter of resignation (you may include any honors or committees with which you may have served).***

The Resignation Letter must:

1. Be typed
2. Be dated
3. Must have the name and address of the manager receiving the letter
4. Must include the date that the resignation is effective
5. Must be signed
6. Must be free of GSP errors
7. Must be signed (please note: a typed name is not a signature)

***SEE HOW TO WRITE A LETTER LATER IN THIS SECTION FOR MORE INFORMATION***

#### ➤ REFERENCE LIST

Determine a Reference Hierarchy for yourself of a minimum of six (6) professional references for a job in nursing. Professional references are people who can attest to your professional work as a nurse, nursing student or employee—*not friends, family, classmates or pastors*. Prior to using someone as a reference, you must ask each reference if indeed that reference will be a **positive** reference for you. Explain to each reference what you are doing and ask them if it is okay to be contacted. Make a table of your references, listing the most important reference (by title or position) first and so on. Since this is a job in nursing, you must have at least 1 nursing reference.

The Reference List Must:

1. Be typed
2. Must show the hierarchy of references (highest titles or credentials first)
3. Must include the following:
  - a. reference's name,
  - b. credential (RN, BSN, MSN, LVN) [in writing credentials, always give the highest educational credential first]
  - c. title of position (faculty, CN, staff nurse, etc.),
  - d. complete address (be sure you ask for their complete address, including zip code)
  - e. email address
  - f. complete telephone number (includes area code),
  - g. best days and times for contact by someone checking your references
4. The list should also include the date and time the reference agreed to become your *positive* reference (in other words, the day and time you asked them to be your reference)
5. You must indicate the reference's preferred method of contact for the employer.



➤ **JOB APPLICATION**

Complete the job application found on Black Board. Some places still require an application and this is used to begin the employment process. Be sure to be thorough; answer every question. Write N/A (not applicable) if a question does not apply to you. Be sure you sign and date the application.

*SEE COMPLETING YOUR JOB APPLICATION AT THE END OF THIS INSTRUCTION.*

- **CEU:** Continuing education is a part of maintaining your license. Search online or through your clinical facilities for a Continuing Education Workshop that is of interest of you. Write a **FORMAL** letter to Mrs. Trull requesting to attend the workshop.

The letter should include the following:

- What the workshop is and why it is of interest to you
- The cost of the workshop
  - hotel cost (if applicable)
  - transportation cost (if applicable)
  - how much you are asking them to pay
  - how much you are willing to pay
- What you plan to do with the knowledge you obtain from this workshop to enhance your nursing practice and that of those you work with
- include the names of anyone else you plan to take with you (like if your family will be accompanying you or another co-worker)
- Attach a copy of the flyer or the website advertising the event.

- **PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO:** Create a Professional Portfolio which you could take with you on job interviews. You should be able to pull information from your portfolio when asked by the interviewer. The Portfolio should be in a 1” notebook or similar device. You should have divided sections [with dividers for each section] which should include (but not limited to)
- **Your resume** (corrected from initial turn in)
  - **Your immunizations** (you were told to keep a copy or to keep the original when you submitted this to the program; we cannot release the records we have on file)
  - **Your CPR card**
  - **Transcript** (you may submit an unofficial transcript from the college for this assignment. You need to update after graduation with an official transcript)
  - **Place for nursing license**
  - **Awards/accomplishments**
  - **Reference List** (corrected from initial turn in)
  - **2-3 Reference letters**—these should be actual letters that you have obtained from a few of your references—people who can attest to your **WORK** abilities etc. and not friendships. See the reference notes above. If you ask an instructor to be a reference, please give them at least a week’s notice (instructors will only be able to provide reference letters to five (2) students each to avoid over-using a single instructor and to avoid a “cookie-cutter” reference appearance).
  - **Professional Goal statement:** A written statement of what you want to accomplish in your professional life, answering why you want the job
  - **Professional future statement:** A written statement of your professional goals for one year, five years, ten years out.

**OTHER PROJECTS MAY BE DEVELOPED AND ASSIGNED OVER THE COURSE OF THE PROGRAM.**



## WRITING YOUR CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

A resume is “a brief account of one's professional or work experience and qualifications”

(<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/r%C3%A9sum%C3%A9>).

In your resume, you are giving a potential employer a snapshot of your education, your employment and other experiences that would be valuable in the job for which you are applying. This is the first step in getting an interview. Your resume should be “user-centered,” meaning that your resume is specific to the job for which you are applying. It must be brief—research suggests that employers spend no more than 20-30 seconds looking at your resume before deciding to put in the “pile” or to mark it for interest.

In most cases, your resume should be limited to one page, should be neat and clean, and free of grammar, spelling or punctuation errors. A Chronological resume puts the most recent event FIRST. Your resume must be accurate and correct—don't pad your resume to make it look better. Your resume should make an impression—therefore, use quality paper, not just plain typing paper.

What should your resume include?

1. Contact Information: This tells employers who you are and how to get in touch with you. Don't label this section as “contact information,” just put the information under your name. It should include:
  - Name and credential
  - Address
  - Phone number (be sure your voicemail doesn't have something offensive)
  - Email (email is increasingly becoming a more popular way of contact).

Your name is usually at the very top of your resume and usually is the largest item. It can be in a different font, but don't get carried away with fancy or elaborate styles—it needs to be easily readable.

2. Professional Goal or Objective—the objective should be a short, concise statement that is written specifically for the job you want. The objective statement should tell the potential employer how you will help the organization achieve its goals, rather than focus on what you want from the job.

*Bad Example: I am looking for a position that will give me medical surgical experience.*

*Better example: To obtain an LVN position that will expand my nursing education, skills and knowledge and utilize it to reinforce nursing care of XYZ Hospital.*

*Better example: As a graduate vocational nurse, with my good interpersonal and communication skills, I will bring enthusiasm and dedication to enhance the nursing on the medical surgical unit.*

3. Education: in the education section, state your most recent educational experiences or highest degree provide the following:
  - Institution name and address where degree granted
  - Date of graduation or expected graduation
  - Degree or certificate.
  - GPA is optional; however, if you do not list it, the employer may assume it was “bad” so most experts recommend listing it UNLESS it is less than a 3.0

The Vocational Nursing Program is a CERTIFICATE program, so you graduate from here with a Certificate in Proficiency in Vocational Nursing, not a degree.

If you have another college degree or certificate, be sure to include it. If this is the only educational experience, be sure to include your high school. Listing high school education is not encouraged for those with college degrees or certificates. The GED may be substituted for the high school education.



FORMAT: Most often this section is in a column format to make it easier to read and to cut down on the space needed. If you are going to use columns for other sections of your resume, you must make them match so that your resume looks nice and is easy to read.

Most often, the institution and address are placed in the left column, the degree or certificate in the center, and the graduation date on the right. Usually, no more than 3 columns are used in a resume—the page just is not big enough for more than that.

4. Work Experience: Work is usually listed by company or position with the most recent experience listed *first*. It should include:
  - Name and address of the organization
  - Dates of employment
  - Position title
  - Responsibilities

If you have no work experience or if your work experience cannot demonstrate skills that are applicable to the job, you may want to entitle this “Relevant Experience” or “Volunteer Experience”—a title that may more accurately describe this section. As a new graduate, you may want to entitle this as “Student Clinical Experiences” and bullet some of the different rotations that you have had, especially if you have not had relevant (nursing) work experience.

“Homemaker” is a relevant job and if this describes your work experience, you should include it. Try to list details of what you accomplished as a homemaker.

Regardless of your work experience, you want to try and highlight anything that can be applicable to this job—skills or experiences that the employer can see as being relevant. Most people find it easier to bullet this section, rather than write a full paragraph (also it helps on the space). Each bulleted item should be written in active voice and grammatically formatted the same.

FORMAT: Most often this is formatted in columns for ease of reading and conservation of space. Usually, the company name and address go in the left column, the job title in the center column (with bullets underneath) and the dates of employment in the right.

If you use columns in any other section, they must be complimentary to this section.

You can also write this section with the company listed in the left column, and then bullets underneath.

5. Accomplishments: You can add other sections if space allows that tells the employer a bit more about you, especially if you hold special skills and achievements, or if you have volunteer hours—things that tell the employer you are valuable. Things you might want to highlight would be if you were bilingual (and in what languages—don’t just assume English/Spanish), special certifications (CPR is not a special certification, it is an expected certification), honors and awards (Perfect Attendance is a good thing to mention).

Do not mention skills that go along with the job description—things like “administer medications” “practice sterile technique” “do dressing changes” “insert Foley catheters” are all a part of the LVN’s job—these are *expectations*, not “special.”

6. Most of the time there is not space available to list your references. Instead, most people who wish to list references write at the bottom “References Available on Request” rather than include references.
7. Design of your resume: the most important thing to remember is that you want to have an easy to read resume that attracts the employer’s attention! Keep in mind that we read from left to right, so the most important information will need to be on the left—the resume writing should smoothly flow from left to right. We also read from top to bottom, so you want to remember that and not put the most important information at the bottom—what is most important? How to contact you!



- a. Font—font styles can provide emphasis or interest to your resume, but remember to limit it two (2) different types or styles and make sure that both are easily readable. Basically, fonts are in two styles: serif—those with short stems on the ends of the letters, and sans-serif—those without stems (sans means without).

The most common styles are serif styles—that is what we use (this is a serif style) and it makes the reading flow. **San Serif styles make the reading stop.** So most of your work should be in a serif style but your headings and titles could be in a sans serif style.

Be consistent in whatever you choose to use. Don't use Arial (a sans serif) for some titles, but not all, while using some Times New Roman (a serif) for one title and most of the body.

- b. Emphasis—can also be done by the use of bold face, CAPITALS, *italics*, or underline. However, these can become visually unappealing to the reader, so do not mix styles or use them too often—they can cause the reader to skip over that information. Also, be sure that you have the right information highlighted.
- c. Remember the rule of thirds and most important information (first, left)

## COMPLETING YOUR JOB APPLICATION

Most Health Care organizations will still require you to complete a job application, even if you have submitted a resume and cover letter. Your application must be complete and accurate. It should not contain errors. Many applications are online, so you need to have all of your information gathered before you apply.

Most job applications will require the following information:

1. Personal information:
  - Full name (may ask for all married names, etc.)
  - Address—includes street, mailing, city, state, zip code
  - Telephone number—include area code, may also ask for cell
  - Criminal Background—indicate that you have a DO
2. Title of the job you are applying for
  - Hours/days available to work
  - When you can start work
3. Education:
  - Schools/Colleges Attended
  - Major
  - Degree/Diploma
  - Graduation Dates(s)
4. Employment Information:
  - Names, addresses, phone numbers of previous employers
  - Supervisor's name
  - Dates of employment
  - Salary
  - Reason for Leaving
5. List of three to five references - names, job title or relationship, addresses, phone number



### TIPS for Completing the Job application

1. Complete all requested information—take the time to gather addresses and phone numbers so that you have the information. *Blanks draw the eye and raise questions.* Don't leave anything blank.
2. Write clearly and neatly, using black or dark blue ink.
3. Check for grammar and spelling errors! Proof-read your job application form before turning it in. I recommend having someone else proof-read also to catch mistakes or misworded sentences.
4. List your most recent job *first* when completing employment information.
5. List your most recent education *first*. Include vocational schools and training programs as well as college and high school.
6. References: choose people from your list. ALL information required on the form must be included.
7. Don't forget to sign your application! Often potential employers will throw away an unsigned application without ever talking to you!

### EXAMPLE OF HOW TO WRITE A SHORT PAPER/SUMMARY FOR YOUR BLUE BOOK OR OTHER REQUIRED WRITING WORK

Nancy Nurse, SVN  
4/4/14  
Class 77

The QSEN competencies and the theory of transpersonal caring relate in several ways. The caring theory means that nurses care for the whole patient, body, soul, and mind. The theory incorporates that the nurse accept the uniqueness of each person and includes caring for everything important to the patient. The QSEN competency of patient centered care focuses on the patient, the patient's preferences and the patient's needs. This is basically the same idea as the caring theory.

In my clinical rotations, I have seen examples of transpersonal caring. One instance occurred in the labor and delivery room with a still born infant. The nurses immediately embraced the mother AND the father. The patient's nurse pulled a chair up for the father right next to his wife as the other staff nurses cleaned the baby. They wrapped the child in a beautiful blanket and gave it to the father to hold. The nurse also went out and brought the grandparents in so that they could all have this moment together.

Another good example of transpersonal caring occurred on a med surg. unit after a code. The nurse who lost the patient was visibly upset because the death was completely unexpected. The other staff members took over providing post-mortem care and allowed the TPCN to get off the floor for a time. The nurse returned to the floor about 20 minutes later and looked more composed. Her team had completed all care for the deceased patient, have called the appropriate authorities, and had cared for the family.



# HOW TO WRITE FORMAL LETTERS

Letters of business are more formal than friendly letters and much more formal than emails and texts. For a medical professional, a formal letter is indicated when responding to prospective employers. Terminology in these letters are formal—do not use any email or texting terminology. Be sure that you check spelling, punctuation and grammar. These letters say something about you and your professionalism!

One of the first things you need to decide is the format of the letter. There are usually two styles: block format and indented format.

**BLOCK:** When you use block format, all information is typed flush left with one (1) inch margins all around.

- (1) Unless you have letterhead stationary with your name and address already on it, begin your letter with your own address (flush left), single spaced. [If you have letter head, just start at #2]. SKIP A LINE
- (2) Provide the date, flush left. SKIP A LINE
- (3) Provide the name and address of the party to whom you are writing the letter, flush left. Avoid abbreviations whenever possible except in cases of titles. The typing should be single-spaced. SKIP A LINE
- (4) Write the Salutation followed by a colon (:). The Salutation is a greeting. It should be formally addressed as either Mr., Mrs. Ms. or by title (Dr., etc.)—even if you are personally acquainted with the person. Example : Dear Mrs. Smith: If you do not have the name of the person, address it by title: Dear Human Resources Director:  
SKIP A LINE
- (5) Write the body of the letter, beginning each paragraph flushed left, single spaced. SKIP A LINE between each paragraph. SKIP A LINE after the last paragraph
- (6) Type the formal closing, followed by a comma. Appropriate closings include “Sincerely” “Regards”. LEAVE THREE (3) BLANK LINES.
- (7) Sign the letter in the blank space
- (8) Type your name and title, all flush left below your signature.

**INDENTED:** When you use indented format, you will have some items to the right and will indent the start of your formal information.

- (1) Unless you have letterhead stationary with your name and address already on it, begin your letter with your own address with the left edge aligned with the center of the page, single spaced. SKIP A LINE.
- (2) Type the date so that it lines up underneath your address, left edge aligned with the center of the page. SKIP A LINE.
- (3) Provide the name and address of the party to who you are writing the letter, flush left, single spaced. Avoid abbreviations whenever possible except in cases of titles. SKIP A LINE
- (4) Write the Salutation flush left, followed by a colon (:). See notes above for more information on a salutation.  
SKIP A LINE
- (5) Write the body of your letter. Begin each paragraph indented five (5) spaces. SKIP A LINE BETWEEN EACH PARAGRAPH. SKIP A LINE after the last paragraph.
- (6) Instead of placing the closing and signature lines flush left as in BLOCK, indent the closing in the center in line with the date above. See more about the closing above. LEAVE THREE (3) BLANK LINES
- (7) Keeping in line with your closing, sign the letter
- (8) Type your name and title line in line with the closing.



## WRITING A COVER LETTER

A cover letter, also known as an application letter, introduces you to your potential employer. It explains your purpose for writing and submitting a resume, highlights a few of your experiences and skills, and requests an opportunity for an interview. IT IS THE FIRST IMPRESSION you make on a potential employer! It is important to write an impressive and effective letter!

A cover letter should:

- ❖ Be limited to one page
- ❖ Match your skills with those needed by the employer (means you need to know something about the job for which you are applying)
- ❖ Write in a mature, clear style; avoid long and intricate sentences and paragraphs, avoid jargon and texting language. Use action verbs and active voice.
- ❖ It's okay to show some personality but don't brag or use gimmicky language.
- ❖ Arrange the points in a logical manner; each paragraph should be around a main point.

- (1) Your opening paragraph should state why you are writing and briefly say you are. Did you see an ad? Did a friend tell you about the job? Are you graduating? Licensed? Working?
- (2) In the next paragraph or two, highlight a few points from your resume that match what you know about the job position. This is your opportunity to tell the potential employer why you are right for the job. State how your education and experience will enhance the position you are seeking. Don't state everything from your resume.
- (3) Your closing paragraph should be seeking action: an interview. Politely request a meeting and give suggestions as to your availability. State what is attached to the letter (like your resume, application, etc.) Be sure and thank the reader for the reader's time and consideration, indicating that you are looking forward to hearing from them.

## WRITING A THANK YOU LETTER

A prompt thank you is appropriate following an interview! A recent "Career Builder survey showed that 22% of employers are less likely to hire a candidate who does not send a thank you, and 91% like being thanked" ([http://www.job-hunt.org/job\\_interviews/job-interview-thank-you.shtml](http://www.job-hunt.org/job_interviews/job-interview-thank-you.shtml))

Thank You letters demonstrate the following:

- ❖ Your appreciation –for the interviewers time and consideration
- ❖ Keeps you in the interviewers mind
- ❖ You have the ability to follow-through
- ❖ You understand professional courtesy
- ❖ Says that you are interested in the position
- ❖ Offers you the opportunity to say something you didn't in the interview and/or lets you clarify information
- ❖ Demonstrates your writing skill
- ❖ Meets your competition (in case the competition also sent a thank you) or beats your competition if they didn't!

Thank You letters can be hand-written on specific "thank you" cards, formally typed or emailed—if you are seeking a job that is a computer position. For most nursing jobs, either a handwritten or formally typed letter is most appropriate. (For the student assignment, either a hand written or a typed letter is required).



[Sometimes an email thank you is sent immediately after the interview, followed up by a formal Thank You letter. This is acceptable. If you do send an email thank you, do NOT send a group email if you were interviewed by a group. This makes you look lazy; send an individual email to each person!]

If you were in a group interview, you need to send each member of the group a thank you—you never know how much influence each member has on the hiring process, so thank each one!

- (1) Write the Thank you within 24 hours of the interview! A quick decision might be made and you need to have your name uppermost in the interviewer's mind!
- (2) Highlight what the potential employer liked about you from the interview.
- (3) State any positive information you wish you had said in the interview
- (4) Express your skill in any area of expressed concern, detailing how you would learn or prepare for that area
- (5) Keep the letter short; not more than one page and just a few paragraphs
- (6) Proof read it carefully!

DO NOT:

- Send a "canned" or generic thank you letter
- Claim experience or education you don't have
- Hand a thank you letter to the interviewer at the end of the interview

## WRITING A RESIGNATION LETTER

There are many reasons nurses leave positions, but whatever the reason, the nurse should always leave as a professional! This means that the nurse always submits a letter of resignation and always gives an appropriate notice. (A good way to gage notice is to determine how many weeks of vacation the position earns: if the position has two weeks of vacation, two weeks-notice should be given; if the position has four weeks-vacation, four weeks-notice should be given). Most standard nursing jobs expect a two weeks-notice.

A Resignation Letter should

- ❖ Be simple, brief and focused
- ❖ Be positive
- ❖ Include information on when you are leaving
- ❖ Should show appreciation for opportunities you have had in the position

Resignation emails or text messages are inappropriate! So is airing your grievances about the facility or your co-workers. This letter will be part of your permanent file, so you always want a professional representation in your file.

- (1) Keep the letter to one page
- (2) Address the letter to your immediate supervision (even if you don't like the immediate supervisor—remember the chain of command. Some management positions may require that all people in the chain above you receive a letter)
- (3) Use an appropriate salutation
- (4) In the first paragraph, state that you are resigning and give the date your resignation is effective. It should be at least two weeks from the date of the letter if you are required to give two weeks-notice.
- (5) In the second paragraph, you can state why you are leaving, as long as you are not complaining or whining. Be positive.
- (6) In the third paragraph, thank the manager/facility for opportunities you have had in the position, pointing out positive experiences or people—what you liked about the job.
- (7) Offer your help in the transition time if possible.



- (8) If you need a letter of recommendation or reference, request it in another paragraph.  
(9) Formally close the letter and be sure that you sign the document.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTRACT

Print Name:

I have read the syllabus for VNSG 1219 Professional Development.

I understand the course requirements, grading and student behavior. I understand that to exit the course, I must have the following:

- a 75 or better grade average
- the examination policy
- completion of all required work, even if I have missed the deadline and receive a grade of “0” for the late work
- submission of my certificate that I have passed the Texas Jurisprudence Exam
- attendance and tardy policy and the consequences of my choices

I understand that as a senior vocational nursing student, I am responsible and accountable for my own actions and decisions. I agree that if I attend class, I will be fully prepared and fully engaged in the course.

I have had the opportunity to have my questions answered and I agree to the terms of the course as found in the syllabus.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



