NURS 6917 - Differential Diagnosis

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section A08, CRN 43493,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Wendy Thomas

Email: wmthomas@ysu.edu

Vincent Mikula

Email: vmikula@ysu.edu

Public Instructor Information

Professor: Vincent Mikula, MSN, APRN-CNP

Professional Qualifications:
Master's, Nursing, FNP, Youngstown State University, 2019
Bachelor's, Nursing, Ohio University, 2013

Office: Cushwa 3315

Phone: 330-941-2639

Email: vmikula@ysu.edu

Preferred Contact Method: Email

Student Support Hours: By Appointment

Communication Expectations: See "Communication" section

How to refer to me: Vince

Contact Information

Professor: Wendy Thomas, DNP, CNS, FNP

Professional Qualifications:
DNP, Nursing Leadership, Carlow University, 2024

Post Master's Certificate Family Nurse Practitioner Track, 2016
Master's, of Science in Nursing, Youngstown State University, 2012
Bachelor's, Nursing, Youngstown State University, 1994

Office: Cushwa Hall 3313

Phone: 330-941-2638

Email: wmthomas@ysu.edu

Preferred Contact Method: Email

How to refer to me: Dr. Thomas

Course Description

6917. Differential Diagnosis. Developing diagnostic reasoning skill through comprehensive analysis of present and past histories, physical findings, and diagnostic studies that contribute to differential diagnoses of major health problems across the lifespan. The client is assessed from a holistic advanced practice perspective with consideration of individual culture, social, family, and community environments. Prereq.: NURS 6902 with a grade of B or better.

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	Formulating a Differential DIagnosis for the Advanced Practice Provider (3rd ed)	Rhodes, J., Penick Julie C.	0826144667

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
8/24	Begin Reading Course Introduction in your textbook. Review the Welcome tab and Readings and media Start Module 1 course readings, assignments and tests. Read the Preface and Introduction to Differential Diagnosis of Common Problems. Review and listen to the 2 PowerPoints provided: Formulating a Differential Diagnosis and Soap note formation and explanation. Watch: Soap Notes How to get a Patient History	First week of the course Review all of the content located in: Getting Started Blackboard Orientation and Requirements	Acknowledge the Syllabus Due by Sunday of the first week by 11:59PM. Complete the Practice Test located in Module 1 by Sunday 11:59PM Complete Case Study Worksheet: Building a Differential Diagnosis By Sunday of the first week no later than 11:59pm. There are no peer responses required the first week.
8/31	• Read: Introduction to differential Diagnosis and Diagnosis of common problems. • • Confusion (351), Depression/Depressed Mood (543), Difficulty Speaking (367), Dizziness (137, Headache (51), Memory Loss (381), Panic (555), Pain (skin pain 469), Tremors (389) (MO2,3,4) • Worksheet for SOAP Note podcast (MO 2, 3, 4) • Worksheet for Altered Mental Status Podcast (MO 2, 3, 4) • Video (Strong Medicine) on Differential diagnosis • Building a Differential in 5 easy steps • Video Phone apps you may like (FYI) • SOAP Note (progress Note) Podcast • Altered Mental Status (AMS) Podcast	Developing a Differential Diagnosis	• Initial Discussion Post: Developing Differential Diagnoses by Wednesday 11:59PM. Respond to 2 peers by no later than Sunday of each week by 11:59 PM Complete Quiz #3 by Sunday at 11:59pm
9/7	• Review cases beginning on pages: Pages are indicated as: (3rd Ed textbook): • Confusion (351), Depression/Depressed Mood (543), Difficulty Speaking (367), Dizziness (137), Headache (51) Memory Loss (381), Panic/Panic Episodes (555), Skin Pain (469), Tremors (489) Watch: • Headache Podcast: • The HINTS Exam (8:04) • How to approach the patient with vertigo (5:32)	Neurologic System	• Discussion Post on Case study located in Module 3, by Wednesday 11:59PM. •Respond to 2 peers by no later than Sunday of each week by 11:59 PM Complete Quiz #3 by Sunday at 11:59pm

9/14	Read: • Anxiety/Anxious Mood (537), Chest Pain (123), Coughing up Blood (83), Fainting (145), Fatigue (501), Lower Extremity Edema (155), Weight Gain (171) Shortness of Breath (91) • Worksheet for Chest Pain Video and Podcast • Worksheet for Shortness of Breath Watch: • 5 most lethal causes of chest pain • Chest Pain podcast • Shortness of Breath podcast	Pulmonary System	• Discussion Post on Case study located in Module 4 by Wednesday 11:59PM. • Respond to 2 peers by no later than Sunday of each week by 11:59 PM Complete Quiz #4 by Sunday at 11:59pm
9/21	• Review cases: Blood in Urine (243), Incontinence (259), Painful Urination (267), Rectal Bleeding (219), Flank Pain (253), Scrotal Pain (281), • Double Vision/Diplopia (375), Ear Discharge (15), Enlarged Lymph Nodes (23), Hoarseness (59), Congestion (9), Ear Pain/Earache (E-Version/Optional), Eye Pain (37), Eye Redness (E-Version/ Optional) Mouth Lesion (65), Runny Nose ((E-Version/Optional), Sore Throat (E-version/Optional) Watch: • Painful Urination • Ear Pain	Genitourinary system Focus will be on HEENT	• Discussion Post on Case study located in Module 5, by • Wednesday 11:59PM. Respond to 2 peers by no later than Sunday of each week by 11:59 PM Complete Quiz #5 by Sunday at 11:59pm
9/28	• Review cases Pages are indicated as: (• Abdominal Pain (183), • Bloating (191), Dysphagia/Difficulty Swallowing (197), Heartburn (203), Rectal Pain (219),, Rectal Pain (237), Vomiting Blood (233). Additional online resources/optional: Weight Loss (Digital Diarrhea (Digital), Constipation/ Difficulty Achieving Bowel Movements (Digital) • Worksheet for abdominal pain Watch: • Abdominal Pain Video • Heartburn	Gastrointestinal System	• Discussion Post on Case study located in Module 6, by Wednesday 11:59PM. • Respond to 2 peers by no later than Sunday of each week by 11:59 PM Complete Quiz #5 by Sunday at 11:59pm
10/5	Skin Rash (473) Hives (463), Vesicular Eruptions (485) (Optional: Skin Lesion (Digital), Itchiness of Skin (Digital) • Fever (43), Foot Pain (289), Hip Pain (295), Knee pain (303) Muscle Pain (313), Muscle Weakness (321), Shoulder Pain (329), Wrist Pain (339) • Optional Chapters: Ankle Pain (15, Digital), Elbow Pain (141, Digital), , Low Back Pain (291, Digital), Hand Pain (209, Digital) • Dermatological History & Diagnosis (PDF) Watch: • Skin Rash • Muscle Weakness MO	Musculoskeletal System (focus) Also reviewing Integumentary system	• Discussion Post on Case study located in Module 7, by Wednesday 11:59PM. • Respond to 2 peers by no later than Saturday of the last week by 11:59 PM Complete Quiz #7 by Saturday at 11:59pm

The course schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better learning.