

**COURSE NAME; NUMBER; SEMESTER; MEETING DAYS, TIMES, AND PLACE.**

11:776:225

Horticultural Therapy: Concepts and Skills

3 Credits

Spring 2026

Prerequisite: 11:776:201 People-Plant Relationships is recommended as a prerequisite

Class Hours: Asynchronous Web-Based Course

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Instructor(s): Gary L. Altman, MS, LAC, CRC, CVE, HTR

Office Location: Foran Hall, Rm 184

Phone: (848) 932-6321 Email: [gla32@sebs.rutgers.edu](mailto:gla32@sebs.rutgers.edu)

Office Hours: By e-mail appointment

**COURSE WEBSITE, RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

**Web Based Course Requirements**

To access this course on our Rutgers Canvas site, go to <https://canvas.rutgers.edu> and enter your NetID username and password credentials. After you are logged in to Canvas, you will see course options on your dashboard.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Simson, S.P., & Straus, M.C. (1998). Horticulture as therapy. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press (ISBN: 978-1-56022-279-8)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is an introductory course that focuses on the developing the skills and knowledge pertaining to the professional practice of Horticultural Therapy (HT). A brief history of the profession will be discussed, and background theories of HT will be explained. Students will learn about services, settings, and populations pertaining to HT, and learn various horticultural therapy techniques to achieve specific goals within treatment, rehabilitation, or vocational plans.

This course fulfills the requirements for the undergraduate Holistic Wellness minor and Disability Studies Minor. The Holistic Wellness minor prepares students to promote wellness in any career path. For more information or to apply for the minor, please visit <https://sebs.rutgers.edu/minors/holistic-wellness>. The Disability Studies minor prepares students for careers in diverse fields such as health care, advocacy, policy, and public health by providing a broad understanding of disability as a social, cultural, and political construct, encouraging students to challenge ableist norms and fostering skills to advocate for inclusion and social justice. For more information or to apply for the minor, please visit <https://bloustein.rutgers.edu/undergraduate/disabilitystudies/>.

**Web Based Instruction Description**

This course is delivered via an online Learning Management System (LMS) called Canvas. The mode of instruction is directed study. Directed study is an active learning method that emphasizes what the learner does, not the teacher. In this method, you engage the content via structured assignments and activities, i.e., you learn by doing the reading and assignments. Many students find that they do far more reading for online courses,

since they cannot rely on listening in class to learn the information. You should be prepared to spend a minimum of 7 to 9 hours per week on this course. This is consistent with Rutgers' established standards, which state that 3 or more hours of study per credit hour is expected. The instructor's role is to (1) design the assignments and activities to ensure active learning, (2) prepare you for and direct you in assignment completion, (3) provide you with feedback on your achievement and progress and (4) promote collaboration among all students via structured discussion.

This course is designed to have the same content and structure as the traditional face-to-face instructional format. The only adaptation made to this course is that the lectures are provided through the Kaltura video application rather than the in-person classroom. This is an asynchronous course, meaning you will have the ability to complete the assignments at your own pace as long as you are in adherence with posted due dates and online video chat sessions.

To best communicate with the course instructor, please post all course specific questions to the related "Ask the Class for Help" discussion forums associated with each assignment. You may also contact your instructor through the email function within the canvas learning management system. Course related questions that are sent to the instructors direct email address are at risk for being missed or overlooked, and other classmates may have the same or similar questions and would benefit from viewing the question and answer as well.

## LEARNING GOALS

### Rutgers SEBS Plant Biology Learning Goals Addressed in this course

1. Describe basic knowledge about plant structure and function, fundamentals of plant growth and physiology, and principles of horticulture [technical proficiency]
2. Communicate, in writing and oral forms, plant science knowledge to peers and others in society [communication]
3. Critically formulate hypotheses, interpret data, and apply basic principles of plant science to solve fundamental and practical problems [critical thinking]

### Course Goals & Learning Objectives

The primary goal for this course is to provide the background and theory of practice of horticultural therapy as a professional practice. Topics which will receive special attention in this course include:

- Characteristics and behaviors that influence the helping process including age, gender, and ethnic differences, verbal and nonverbal behaviors and personal characteristics, orientations, and skills;
- Demonstrate essential interviewing and communication skills to develop and maintain a therapeutic relationship;
- Increasing self-awareness to promote therapeutic therapist-client relationships and maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- Ethical considerations in horticultural therapy.

By the end of this course, students will be able to (Course Learning Goals):

1. View all lectures, and participate in all discussion posts
2. Identify AHTA policy and procedures for registration for HTR credentials and identify code of conduct for professional practice
3. Identify the key theories that support horticultural therapy as a professional practice

4. Describe the horticulture therapy service models and settings, assess, and identify and develop service plans to appropriately service clients within each model and setting.
5. Demonstrate communication skills essential to helping individuals achieve desired goals and valued roles
6. Identify stages of a successful therapy group, and identify ways to manage difficult behavior in horticultural therapy groups

## ASSIGNMENTS/RESPONSIBILITIES, GRADING & ASSESSMENT

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

MAPs Project	5%
Audio Recording Assignment 1	15%
Audio Recording Assignment 2	15%
Audio Recording Assignment 3	15%
Audio Recording Assignment 4	15%
Task Analysis & Bx Measurement Paper	20%
Elevator Speech	5%
Class Participation/Discussions	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### GRADE INTERPRETATION

Grades will be classified based upon the Rutgers University approved system: A, B+, B, C+, C, D, and F.

Grade	Numerical Range
A	90.0-100
B+	87.0-89.9
B	80.0-86.9
C+	77.0-79.9
C	70.0-76.9
D	63.0-69.9
F	Less than 63

#### Assessment Plan

Student achievement will be based on:

1. Successfully completing the 8 course requirements
2. Weekly discussion post participation

Course Projects: There are a total of 7 requirements assigned throughout the course. Please see the course requirements section above. For a description of the course projects, please refer to the assignments section of this syllabus.

Weekly Discussion Posts: Each week students will be provided 1 or two

discussion questions to which they must post a response. Students are expected to respond to at least two peers and offer new and additional information to peer's posts to cultivate an active learning environment. Please see the discussion post rubric below.

#### Grading Rubric for Course Learning Goals:

Learning Goal/Grade Assignment:	OUTSTANDING (A)	GOOD (B)	SATISFACTORY (C)	UNSATISFACTORY (D/F)

View all lectures, and participate in all discussion posts and Big Blue Button sessions	Student viewed all learning materials and participated in all discussion posts and Big Blue Button sessions and was able to clearly and effectively recall, explain and apply content in responses	Student viewed all learning materials and participated in all discussion posts and Big Blue Button sessions and clearly and fully recalls, explains and applies most concepts in responses.	Student viewed most learning materials and participated in most discussion posts and Big Blue Button sessions, recalls, explains and applies some concepts in responses. (Demonstrates incomplete understanding)	Student has viewed less than half of the learning materials, participated in less than half of discussion posts and Big Blue Button sessions and fails to recall, explain and apply concepts in responses.
Identify AHTA policy and procedures for registration for HTR credentials and identify code of conduct for professional practice	Clearly and effectively recalls, explains and applies AHTA policy and procedures and code of ethics with high degree of specificity.	Clearly and fully recalls, explains and applies AHTA policy and procedures and code of ethics	Recalls, explains and applies some basic policy and procedures and code of ethics (Demonstrates incomplete understanding)	Fails to recall, explain and apply policy and procedures and code of ethics.
Identify the key theories that support horticultural therapy as a professional practice	Clearly and effectively recalls, explains and applies theories that support horticultural therapy as a professional practice with high degree of specificity.	Clearly and fully recalls, explains and applies theories that support horticultural therapy as a professional practice	Recalls, explains and applies some concepts of theories that support horticultural therapy as a professional practice (Demonstrates incomplete understanding)	Fails to recall, explain and apply theories that support horticultural therapy as a professional practice.
Describe the horticulture therapy service models and settings, assess, and identify and develop service plans to appropriately service clients within each model and setting.	Clearly and effectively recalls, explains and applies concepts in service models, settings, assessment, and service planning with high degree of specificity.	Clearly and fully recalls, explains and applies concepts in service models, settings, assessment, and service planning.	Recalls, explains and applies some concepts in service models, settings, assessment and service planning (Demonstrates incomplete understanding)	Fails to recall, explain and apply basic concepts in service models, settings, assessment, and service planning (Demonstrates incomplete understanding).
Demonstrate communication skills essential to helping individuals achieve desired goals and valued roles.	Clearly and effectively recalls, explains and applies communication skills essential to helping individuals achieve desired goals and valued roles with high degree of specificity.	Clearly and fully recalls, explains and applies concepts of communication skills essential to helping individuals achieve desired goals and valued roles.	Recalls, explains and applies some concepts of communication skills essential to helping individuals achieve desired goals and valued roles. (Demonstrates incomplete understanding)	Fails to recall, explain and apply basic concepts of communication skills essential to helping individuals achieve desired goals and valued roles. (Demonstrates incomplete understanding)
Identify stages of a successful therapy group, and identify ways to manage difficult behavior in groups	Clearly and effectively recalls, explains, and applies concepts of stages of a successful therapy group, and identifies ways to manage difficult behavior in groups with high degree of specificity.	Clearly and fully recalls, explains and applies concepts of stages of a successful therapy group, and identifies ways to manage difficult behavior in groups.	Recalls, explains and applies some concepts of stages of a successful therapy group, and identifies some ways to manage difficult behavior in groups. (Demonstrates incomplete understanding)	Fails to recall, explain and apply basic concepts of stages of a successful therapy group, and fails to identify ways to manage difficult behavior in groups. (Demonstrates incomplete understanding)
	<b>5/5 correct</b>	<b>4/5 correct</b>	<b>3/5 correct</b>	<b>0-2/5 correct</b>

**Grading Rubric for Discussion Posts:**
**Original Posting(s) = 7 points total**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
Punctuality	First post occurs each week no later than Saturday.	1	
Accuracy	Responds to the question(s) posted by instructor or a fellow student, depending on that week's assignment.	1	
Frequency	Posts a minimum of three total contributions to the posted discussion question (1 initial post & 2 replies).	1	
Relevant	Mentions at least 2 points from the week's readings.	1	
Personalized	Relates content to own personal experiences as relevant.	1	
Critical Analysis	The post analyzes content, not just summarizes content.	1	
Clarity	The post is grammatically correct, proofread for spelling errors and cites sources if necessary.	1	

**Posted Responses to other students = 3 points total**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
Frequency		1	
Politeness		1	
Comprehensive		1	
<b>Total Points for Discussion = 10 points</b>			

**Lateness Policy**

Any assignments turned in past the due date will be docked 5 points per day that they are late. In other words, after one day late 100% becomes 95%, 2 days 90% and so on. No assignments will be accepted after 5 days

from the assignment due date, accept in cases of emergency that have been discussed and approved by the instructor.

### ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Please follow the procedures outlined at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/getting-registered>. Full policies and procedures are at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

You must make formal application through the Disability Coordinator for the accommodations you wish to receive. Students needing accommodations are encouraged to contact the Disability Coordinator as early as possible to start this process.

### ABSENCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

See Attached

### FINAL EXAM/PAPER DATE AND TIME

Online Final exam Schedule: <http://finalexams.rutgers.edu/>

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The university's policy on Academic Integrity is available at

<https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/current.pdf>. The principles of academic integrity require that a student:

- properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others.
- properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work.
- make sure that all work submitted as his or her own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of impermissible materials or impermissible collaboration.
- obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with his or her interpretation or conclusions.
- treat all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress.
- uphold the canons of the ethical or professional code of the profession for which he or she is preparing.

Adherence to these principles is necessary in order to ensure that

- everyone is given proper credit for his or her ideas, words, results, and other scholarly accomplishments.
- all student work is fairly evaluated, and no student has an inappropriate advantage over others.
- the academic and ethical development of all students is fostered.

- the reputation of the University for integrity in its teaching, research, and scholarship is maintained and enhanced.

Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the University and the value of the degrees awarded to its students. Every member of the University community therefore bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld.

## SEBS DEI STATEMENT

It is our intention that students of all backgrounds will be well served by this course. We will work to create an environment of inclusion which respects and affirms the inherent dignity, value, and uniqueness of all individuals, communities and perspectives. We are lucky to have a diverse university. Diverse voices and life experiences enhance the learning process, and we welcome students to share their personal experiences. We will not tolerate disrespectful language or behavior against any individual or group. If you feel as though you have been disrespected or treated unfairly by the instructors or any other individual, please let us know. You may speak with the instructors in person, over email or report anonymously via the Office of Academic Programs.

In addition, you may also report bias to the Rutgers Diversity and Inclusion initiative using this link: <http://inclusion.rutgers.edu/report-bias-incident/>.

## STUDENT WELLNESS SERVICES

### Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / [www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/](http://www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/)

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professionals within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

### Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / [www.vpva.rutgers.edu/](http://www.vpva.rutgers.edu/)

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

**DoSomething** button through Rutgers Dean of Students office:

<http://health.rutgers.edu/do-something-to-help/>

**Wellness Coaching** through Rutgers HOPE:

<http://health.rutgers.edu/education/hope/wellness-coaching/>

**Self-Help Apps** found on the Rutgers Student Health website:

<http://health.rutgers.edu/education/self-help/self-help-apps/>

**NJ Hopeline - (1-855-654-6735) | National Suicide Hotline - (1-800-273-8255)**

### **BASIC NEEDS RESOURCES**

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, is urged to contact the Rutgers Student Food Pantry and/or the Dean of Students (details below). Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable doing so, as they may be able to provide additional support.

#### **Rutgers Student Food Pantry**

848-932-5500 / College Ave Student Center, Room 115 (126 College Ave) /

<http://ruoffcampus.rutgers.edu/food/>

Check their website for hours and additional locations. The Rutgers Student Food Pantry is dedicated to helping all Rutgers students in need of food, no questions asked. Students will be provided with groceries that typically last about one week.

#### **Dean of Students Office**

848-932-2300 / 88 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / <https://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu/>

Mon-Fri, 8:30am-5:00pm

The Dean of Students Office at Rutgers University-New Brunswick provides solutions, services, and support to help students navigate Rutgers University. The Office serves as a student support network by providing advocacy, problem resolution, and critical incident intervention for those times when additional assistance is needed. Please call to schedule an appointment to meet with a representative from the Dean's office.