

**AMBERTON UNIVERSITY**  
**e-COURSE SYLLABUS**

**CSL6890.E1 Establishing a Private Practice  
Spring 2026**

**PROFESSOR INFORMATION:**

Professor: Stacia' Alexander, PhD, LPC-S  
Amberton Extension: 972-279-6511 ext. 246  
Amberton Email: **SAlexander@amberton.edu**

**COURSE INFORMATION:**

CSL6890.E1 Establishing a Private Practice  
Level: Graduate  
Beginning Date of Session: Saturday, September 12, 2026  
Ending Date of Session: Thursday, November 19, 2026

**Student access available to the Student Portal: Saturday, September 12, 2026.**

**Virtual Meeting via Zoom: Refer to the course dashboard for virtual meeting dates**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87806943985?pwd=beWpsibaS2qjrigLXyKYGpMQEubeFC.1>

Students enrolled in distance learning courses are not assessed any additional fees for security or identity verification.

**PREREQUISITES:**

None

**TEXTBOOK(S) AND REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

Title: Establishing a Private Practice  
Author: Dr. Stacia' Alexander, LPC-S  
Publisher: Self-published  
Year Published: 2026  
Edition: 1st  
ISBN: 979-8248682942  
Price: Available at <https://a.co/d/08ibGqWQ>

Students should verify enrollment in course before purchasing textbooks. Textbook information and ordering options are available through the Amberton Virtual Bookstore. Since no books are sold on campus, students should plan accordingly and purchase their books in advance of the first day of class, allowing time for shipping.

**LINKS TO COUNSELING HANDBOOKS**

**MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling**

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/12TkeFe1RRw-xr\\_RN7b4\\_ebUWyOcUy71z/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/12TkeFe1RRw-xr_RN7b4_ebUWyOcUy71z/view?usp=sharing)

**MA in Marriage and Family Therapy**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nuvRJRFUv7Rzsos1jYD-ri9hMSWAgDjc/view?usp=sharing>

## **MA in School Counseling**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TmJBUTpPoRR1CYe02fqK1Z7zG93ly7HZ/view?usp=sharing>

### **APA REQUIREMENT:**

APA (American Psychological Association) style is most commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences. This resource, revised according to the 7<sup>th</sup> edition, offers examples for the general format of APA research papers, in-text citations, endnotes/footnotes, and the reference page. For more information, please consult the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). All coursework at Amberton University will comply with the standards contained in the APA Publication Manual.

### **COURSE COMPETENCIES:**

This course provides graduate Counseling students with a comprehensive guide to establishing and sustaining a successful private practice. It addresses the practical, ethical, legal, and financial components often overlooked in traditional clinical training. Through structured modules, students will learn how to develop a business plan, create effective marketing strategies, and manage the day-to-day operations of a counseling business with integrity and sustainability in mind.

With an emphasis on real-world application, the course integrates technology, telehealth tools, and cultural competence to meet the demands of modern practice. Students will leave the course equipped not only to open a practice but also to grow one that reflects their clinical strengths and personal values while honoring professional standards and client care.

### **UPON COMPLETION OF THE COURSE, THE STUDENT WILL BE COMPETENT IN:**

1. Developing a comprehensive business plan for a private practice.
2. Understanding the legal and regulatory requirements for private practice, including licensing, liability, and ethical guidelines.
3. Identifying and implementing effective marketing and branding strategies.
4. Managing financial aspects, including budgeting, pricing, and diversifying revenue streams.
5. Utilizing telehealth and practice management technology for efficiency and accessibility.
6. Establishing strategies for long-term client engagement and retention.
7. Recognizing personal and professional boundaries to prevent burnout and maintain work-life balance.
8. Evaluating and selecting appropriate practice management systems and client intake workflows.
9. Analyzing and interpreting business metrics to assess practice growth and client outcomes.
10. Understanding the integration of cultural competence in practice marketing and service delivery.
11. Applying principles of ethical decision-making to real-world business and clinical scenarios.
12. Demonstrating effective communication skills in both client and professional interactions.
13. Planning for scalability and sustainability in private practice operations.
14. Reflecting on one's clinical identity and aligning business practices with personal and professional values.
15. Utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) in analyzing and discovering issues and challenges within clinical private practice.

### **ACQUIRED SKILLS:**

Business Planning  
Ethical and Legal Navigation  
Financial Management  
Marketing and Branding  
Technology Integration

## **COURSE POLICIES:**

**Read the entire syllabus carefully.** All graded activities and tests will be administered through the Moodle learning management system, and access to course materials will be available on the first day of class. As a graduate student in an online course, the professor expects you to be able to meet submission deadlines listed in the course calendar, syllabus, and Moodle activities. All assignments must be submitted as specified in the Assignment Detailed Instructions (ADI) document, including file naming convention, file type, due date, or other noted detail. Points may be lost for failure to follow instructions.

Assignments may only be submitted during announced windows, and no late work or resubmissions are accepted without prior approval by the professor. All deadlines and class events are posted in Central Time Zone (US). All classwork must be completed and submitted fully no later than **Tuesday, November 17, 2026, at 11:59 pm (CST)**. If an emergency arises that prevents the student from submitting or meeting course requirements, the professor should be contacted promptly and may extend grace at their discretion.

Additional helpful forms and documents are available on the Moodle page for the course, most notably in the folder labeled Course Documents. Other helpful documents and resources will be posted in the weekly activity layout on the Moodle course page.

## **STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES:**

This syllabus contains information, policies, and procedures for a specific course. By enrolling, the student agrees to read, understand, and abide by the policies, rules, regulations, and ethical standards of Amberton University as contained in the current university catalog and schedule of classes.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Regular and punctual class attendance and engagement is expected at Amberton University. In case of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the professor as soon as possible. If a student intends on withdrawing from a course, it is the student's responsibility to follow the university's policy on formally withdrawing from a course. **Ceasing to attend classes does not constitute an official withdrawal.**

Attendance in a lecture course is defined as punctual arrival to, and engagement in, a full lecture session. A Student in a lecture course missing more than 20% (two class periods for weekday classes or one class period for Saturday classes) of the class meetings may be assigned a grade of an "F" or withdrawn at the discretion of Amberton University.

Attendance in a distance learning course is defined as active participation in the weekly online class sessions. "Active participation" can be defined as: submitting an academic assignment, taking an exam, engaging in an interactive tutorial, participating in an online discussion forum (or chat session), or initiating (or responding to) a communication with a faculty member about an academic assignment or the subject matter of the course. A student not meeting these requirements may be assigned a grade of an "F" or withdrawn at the discretion of Amberton University.

## **PLAGIARISM POLICY:**

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as though it were your own. If you use another person's words, ideas, or information; or if you use material from an outside source – whether a book, magazine, newspaper, business publication, broadcast, speech, or electronic media – you must acknowledge that source. Plagiarism is a violation of the University's code of student ethical conduct and is one that is taken seriously. Amberton University operates on an honor system; therefore, honesty and integrity are essential characteristics of all who are associated with the institution. All Amberton students are expected to abide by the honor system and maintain academic integrity in all their work. Amberton University and its instructors monitor student work for plagiarism and reserve the right to submit such work to technology-based plagiarism detection services and applications at any time.

Self-plagiarism means reusing work that you have already published or submitted for a class. It can involve:

- Resubmitting an entire paper
- Copying or paraphrasing passages from your previous work

Self-plagiarism misleads your readers by presenting previous work as completely new and original. Students may not submit the same paper in substance in two or more classes without prior written permission of the instructors involved.

Amberton University students who use Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated content must adhere to the following policies:

**Originality:** Students must avoid presenting AI generated content as their own original work. It is essential to acknowledge the involvement of AI in the content creation process in order to maintain academic and ethical standards.

**Paraphrasing:** When using AI generated content, students must rephrase and/or modify the generated text. Paraphrased AI generated content should also be properly cited.

**Acknowledgement:** When using AI generated content in any assignment, proper credit must be given to the AI system that generated the content. <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

Students agree that by taking this course, all required assignments may be subject to submission for a textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism and self-plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in future papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com website.

Turnitin is a writing improvement and plagiarism prevention tool which uses special algorithms, to compare text-based student submissions to the Turnitin database and other online sources. Turnitin produces a detailed **similarity report** that can be customized and viewed by instructors and students.

Turnitin “Draft Coach” is a Google based add-on to Turnitin which supports students in developing high-quality academic writing; and serves as an integrity coach. Draft Coach helps address errors and improve the quality of student’s writing by highlighting grammar mistakes, identifying incorrectly cited sources, and scanning for similarity across several databases. By providing formative feedback on how to address citation issues, incorrect grammar, and matches with the Turnitin database, Draft Coach provides explanations to help students become more confident writers, capable of producing higher quality work both in academics and in the workplace.

## **COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR:**

| Week                      | Topic                                                                                                                                                                              | Assignment                  | Competencies Covered | Due Date                                                                     |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WEEK 1<br>9/12/26-9/18/26 | <b>I. Introduction to Private Practice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Benefits and challenges of private practice.</li><li>• Self-assessment for readiness.</li></ul> | Discussion Post on Module I | 11, 14               | Discussion Post and Colleague engagement due by Friday of this week at 11:59 |

|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                             |      |                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical considerations in launching a practice.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                             |      |                                                                              |
| <b>WEEK 2</b><br><b>9/19/26-9/25/26</b> | <b>II. Business Planning for Private Practice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a business model and mission statement.</li> <li>• Identifying a target market and defining niche services.</li> <li>• Financial planning: budgeting, pricing strategies, and revenue streams.</li> </ul> | Discussion Post on Module 2 | 1,13 | Discussion Post and Colleague engagement due by Friday of this week at 11:59 |
| <b>WEEK 3</b><br><b>9/26/26-10/3/26</b> | <b>III. Legal and Regulatory Considerations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensing, liability, and compliance.</li> <li>• HIPAA and confidentiality in private practice.</li> <li>• Risk management and ethical business practices.</li> </ul>                                                  | Discussion Post on Module 3 | 2    | Discussion Post and Colleague engagement due by Friday of this week at 11:59 |
| <b>WEEK 4</b><br><b>10/3/26-10/9/26</b> | <b>IV. Marketing and Branding Strategies</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Discussion Post on Module 4 | 3    | Discussion Post and Colleague engagement due by                              |

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                             |       |                                                                              |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a professional brand identity.</li> <li>• Online presence: website development and SEO.</li> <li>• Networking and referral building.</li> <li>• Content marketing and client engagement techniques.</li> </ul>                               |                             |       | Friday of this week at 11:59                                                 |
| WEEK 5<br>10/10/26-10/16/26  | <b>V. Financial Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding operational costs and financial forecasting.</li> <li>• Diversifying income: telehealth, workshops, consulting, and product sales.</li> <li>• Managing cash flow, taxes, and insurance billing.</li> </ul> | Discussion Post on Module 5 | 4     | Discussion Post and Colleague engagement due by Friday of this week at 11:59 |
| WEEK 6<br>10/17/26-10/23/226 | <b>VI. Client Engagement and Retention</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies for strong therapeutic alliances.</li> <li>• Using technology for client</li> </ul>                                                                                                               | Discussion Post on Module 6 | 6, 11 | Discussion Post and Colleague engagement due by Friday of this week at 11:59 |

|                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                    |          |                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                     | <p>management and scheduling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical considerations in client retention and professional boundaries.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                      |                                    |          |                                                                                     |
| <p>WEEK 7<br/>10/24/26-10/30/26</p> | <p><b>VII. Technology and Telehealth in Private Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring telehealth platforms and ethical considerations.</li> <li>• Using electronic health records and secure communication.</li> <li>• Integrating digital tools for practice efficiency.</li> </ul> | <p>Discussion Post on Module 7</p> | <p>5</p> | <p>Discussion Post and Colleague engagement due by Friday of this week at 11:59</p> |
| <p>WEEK 8<br/>10/31/26-11/6/26</p>  | <p><b>VIII. Self-Care and Burnout Prevention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying signs of burnout in private practitioners.</li> <li>• Strategies for maintaining work-life balance.</li> <li>• Ethical responsibility to maintain personal wellness.</li> </ul>                          | <p>Discussion Post on Module 8</p> | <p>7</p> | <p>Discussion Post and Colleague engagement due by Friday of this week at 11:59</p> |

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                             |      |                                                                              |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WEEK 9<br>11/7/26-11/13/26   | <b>IX. The Future of Private Practice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trends in counseling business models.</li> <li>• The impact of artificial intelligence and automation.</li> <li>• Continued professional development and business scaling.</li> </ul>             | Discussion Post on Module 9 | 15   | Discussion Post and Colleague engagement due by Friday of this week at 11:59 |
| WEEK 10<br>11/14/26-11/19/26 | <b>X. Integration and Final Project Presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthesizing key concepts from all course modules.</li> <li>• Peer review and feedback on business plans.</li> <li>• Presentation of comprehensive private practice models.</li> </ul> | Final Project               | 1-15 | Due Tuesday, November 17, 2026 by 11:59 pm                                   |

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Discussion Posts           | 84% |
| Professional Business Plan | 16% |

Graduate

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 92 – 100 | A |
| 82 – 91  | B |
| 72 – 81  | C |
| 62 – 71  | D |
| Below 62 | F |

**GRADE NOTIFICATION AND INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK:**

Students should review instructor feedback provided through Moodle or Amberton CampusWeb Portal. Final grades are processed approximately one week after the session and may be viewed through the student portal. Grades will not be released by phone or through unsecured channels. University instructors will not leave a message with comments or grades in any type of media that is not secure.

For questions regarding grades after the semester has ended, students should use their university email account and contact the instructor at the faculty email address as provided above in Professor Information area.

**INCOMPLETE GRADES:**

An "I" (Incomplete) grade is granted only at the professor's discretion for emergencies or illness.

Students have 30 days from the end of the session to complete the course requirements. If the conditions are not met within this 30-day window, the "I" automatically converts to an "F".

**HOW TO WITHDRAW FROM A COURSE:**

To be official, the class withdrawal must be in writing and signed by the student requesting the withdrawal; no withdrawal is accepted verbally. Please review the "Schedule of Classes" (online or in-print) for procedures for class changes or withdrawals and the refund policy and schedule.

**COURSE DELIVERY METHODOLOGY:**

This course is delivered through Moodle. Students are expected to have reliable internet access, basic computer skills, the ability to upload/download files, use Amberton email, and submit assignments in the required format. Students needing assistance should use the Amberton SSO support/ticket process.

**HOW TO ACCESS YOUR COURSE:****SINGLE SIGN-ON (SSO) INSTRUCTIONS FOR AMBERTON UNIVERSITY:**

Students should access Amberton systems through the Single Sign-On portal at <https://sso.amberton.edu>. After logging in, students can access Moodle, Amberton email, CampusWeb, and other assigned applications. Students who need help accessing SSO should submit a support request through the SSO support option or contact [support@amberton.edu](mailto:support@amberton.edu).

**MOODLE TUTORIAL:**

Upon successful log in and access to the Moodle learning platform, there is a Student Moodle Tutorial course available, to learn about the basics of Moodle. Simply click on the link for the Student Moodle Tutorial and read through the various learning topics: Navigating; Communicating; Assignments & Exams; Grades; and Student Resources.

**COURSE COMMUNICATIONS:**

Students will communicate with faculty through the Moodle Learning Platform or the Amberton University email system.

**EMAIL COMMUNICATION:**

Students are expected to use their Amberton email account and Moodle for course communications. Students must use their official university email account for all university related communication and should check their Amberton emails regularly for course and university notices.

Upon completion of a session, all communication and course specific information is removed from the Moodle system. If a student needs to maintain a record of communications or assignments, the student is strongly encouraged to print out or download these items to a disk for their own records.

**FORMAT AND SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS:**

Assignments must be submitted through the appropriate Moodle assignment link unless otherwise directed by the instructor. Students are responsible for submitting files in the format required by the instructor.

**INSTRUCTOR/COURSE EVALUATION:**

Students will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous course and instructor evaluation near the end of the session. Instructions and dates will be provided through Moodle and/or Amberton email.

**RESEARCH RESOURCES:**

The Amberton Library provides access to full-text articles, peer-reviewed databases, and research tools, with options like Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and TexShare for items outside its collection. For research assistance, students can connect with library staff during operating hours via email ([library@amberton.edu](mailto:library@amberton.edu)), phone (972-279-6511 ext. 185), "How-to" videos, live online chat, or in person at the Garland campus. The online library is available through Single Sign On (SSO).

**MICROSOFT OFFICE 365 EDUCATION:**

Amberton University students may access Microsoft 365 Education resources as provided by the university.

**GOOGLE WORKSPACE FOR EDUCATION:**

Amberton students are assigned a Google Workspace for Education account, including Amberton Gmail, Google Drive, Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides. Students should use their Amberton Google account for course-related work when required.