



## EFOP 2089: Frontline Supervision Skills

SPRING 2026 | Office Hours by Appointment | Asynchronous

January 6, 2026

### Instructor

**Rosa Maria Acevedo, PhD** (she, her)

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*Instructor Communication:* My goal is to respond to messages within 48 hours, Monday through Friday.

*Office Hours:* My office hours are by appointment. If you need to discuss something related to the course with me, I am happy to arrange meetings. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

### Course Description

This thematic course develops the essential skills required for effective frontline supervision in higher education and related professional contexts. The course emphasizes practical leadership competencies, including supervision, conflict management, team development, and equity-informed decision-making. Participants explore strategies for motivating and managing teams, resolving interpersonal challenges, and fostering inclusive, high-performing work environments.

### Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain core theories, concepts, and responsibilities associated with frontline supervision in higher education.
- Analyze how identity, equity, and justice, including sexual identity and disability, shape supervisory relationships, power dynamics, and institutional practices.
- Interpret supervisory experiences shared by higher education professionals to identify patterns related to learning, teaching, accountability, and care.
- Examine how professional background, functional area, and institutional context influence supervisory perspectives and practices.
- Compare supervisory challenges across contexts, including graduate student supervision, performance management, staff development, and periods of change or uncertainty.
- Assess the conceptual role of emotional labor, boundaries, and well-being in supervision within higher education workplaces.
- Synthesize insights from course readings, practitioner interviews, and peer dialogue to develop a contextualized understanding of supervision as relational and equity-informed work.

### REQUIRED MATERIALS

[Nasser, R. \(Ed.\). \(2023\). \*Identity in supervision: Understanding who works for you and who you work for in\*](#)

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Attendance and Course Engagement**

This course is delivered asynchronously and is grounded in intentional reflection as a primary mode of learning. While there are no required real-time class meetings, students are expected to engage consistently and thoughtfully with course materials, reflective activities, and peer dialogue throughout the term.

As graduate students, learners are expected to approach the course with curiosity, critical thinking, and a willingness to reflect deeply on readings, experiences, and ideas. Each module will include structured opportunities for reflection, which may take the form of discussion posts and other forms of reflective activities. These reflections are central to the course and are not supplemental; they are the primary way students demonstrate engagement, learning, and growth. Given the reflective (personal and practical) nature of the course,

### **Deadlines**

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due electronically via Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on the assigned date.

### **Equity and Justice Statement**

This course will challenge you to consider and advance equity and justice in higher education. While you will be challenged, I also believe in providing support. If you are having any challenges with the readings or in the course, please reach out to me so I can provide additional resources. My goal is to create a learning environment where everyone, including myself, is challenged and supported to grow and learn.

### **Basic Needs Security Statement**

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact The Care and Resource Support Team (412-624-5756 or [PittCares@pitt.edu](mailto:PittCares@pitt.edu)). Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable her to provide any resources that she may possess.

### **Grades**

This course uses a complete/incomplete (credit/no credit) approach for individual assignments and learning activities. Assignments are evaluated based on whether they are completed fully, thoughtfully, and in alignment with the stated expectations.

#### **Complete (Full Credit):**

An assignment receives full credit when it is submitted on time and demonstrates genuine, wholehearted engagement with the task. This includes responding to all components of the prompt, engaging meaningfully with course materials, and offering reflective, critical, or applied thinking appropriate to graduate-level work. Perfection is not required; authentic effort, depth of reflection, and care are.

#### **Incomplete (No Credit):**

An assignment receives no credit if it is not submitted, submitted late without prior approval, or submitted in a way that clearly reflects minimal effort, partial completion, or superficial engagement (e.g., missing components, overly brief responses, or work that does not meaningfully address the prompt).

Because this course centers on reflection and cumulative learning, partial credit is not awarded. Assignments are designed as essential learning experiences rather than optional or supplemental tasks. Completing them fully and on time is critical to your learning and to the integrity of the course.

Students are expected to engage with all assignments earnestly and consistently. Submitting work simply to “check a box” does not meet the expectations of this course. Instead, students should approach each assignment as an opportunity for reflection, growth, and contribution to the learning community.

If illness or significant life circumstances interfere with your ability to complete assignments as expected, you must contact the instructor in advance whenever possible. Extensions or alternative arrangements may be considered on a case-by-case basis, but they are not automatic and require communication.

## **SCHOOL OF EDUCATION POLICIES**

### **Departmental Grievance Procedures**

The purpose of grievance procedures is to ensure the rights and responsibilities of faculty and students in their relationships with each other. When a student in EFOP believes that a faculty member has not met his or her obligations (as an instructor or in another capacity) as described in the Academic Integrity Guidelines, the student should follow the procedure described in the Guidelines by (1) first trying to resolve the matter with the faculty member directly; (2) then, if needed, attempting to resolve the matter through conversations with the chair/associate chair of the department; (3) if needed, next talking to the associate dean of the school; and (4) if needed, filing a written statement of charges with the school-level academic integrity officer.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

### **Disability Services**

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and Disability Resources and Services no later than the second week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call (412) 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Disability Resources and Services office is located at 140 William Pitt Union on the Oakland campus.

### **Statement on Classroom Recording**

To ensure free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures,

discussions, and/or activities without the instructor's advance written permission. Any such recording approved in advance may be used solely for the student's private use.

### Student Opinion of Teaching Surveys

Students in this class will be asked to complete a Student Opinion of Teaching Survey toward the end of the term. Responses are confidential, and I do not see the results until after final grades are posted. Please take time to thoughtfully respond; your feedback is important to me.

### Assignment Overview

Video Introduction	January 18, 2026	10
Discussion/Video Reflection 1	January 25, 2026	10
Discussion/Video Reflection 2	February 1, 2026	10
Team Interview / Podcast Assignment	On the assigned date	35
Five Word Response	February 15, 2026	10
Reactive meme, a discussion or video response	March 22, 2026	10
Vision Board	April 5, 2026	10
Vision Board Peer Response on Canva Whiteboard	April 12, 2026	10
Final 3-4 Page Reflection	May 1, 2026	20
Discussion/Video Overall Engagement with Peers	Throughout Semester	20
	<b>Total Points</b>	<b>145</b>

\*All instructions for video/discussion boards are in Canvas.

**All other assignments are included here:**

#### Team Interview / Podcast Assignment: Exploring Supervision in Context

Teams: 2 students (one team will have three)

Format: Video or audio podcast (20–30 minutes)

Due: Assigned week (see course schedule)

#### *Assignment Purpose*

This assignment invites you to collaboratively explore supervision in higher education through dialogue with a practicing supervisor. By centering practitioner narratives, the assignment deepens understanding of supervision to surface meaning, tensions, and insight through conversation and reflection. Each team will select a topic related to supervision, conduct an interview or podcast-style conversation with a supervisor of your choice, and create reflection prompts to guide peer engagement. Sign up for your team, assigned date, and topic [here](#).

#### *Topic Selection*

Teams may choose from the following topics or propose an alternative aligned with course themes:

- Learning and teaching supervision
- Equity and justice in supervision
- Sexual identity and supervision
- Recognizing disability in supervision
- Supervising graduate students

Performance management and staff development

*Alternative topics* (with instructor approval):

Supervising through change and uncertainty

Boundaries and burnout prevention

Supervisor as coach

Difficult conversations and conflict resolution

Emotional labor and supervisor well-being

Propose your own\*

*Assignment Components*

## **1. Interview / Podcast Preparation**

Each team will:

- Identify and invite a supervisor working in higher education (or a closely related professional context) for a conversation based on your selected topic.
- Develop an interview or podcast script (approximately 8–12 questions) that:
  - Engages the selected topic conceptually
  - Invites reflection on identity, context, and experience
  - Encourages narrative rather than prescriptive advice
  - Allows for freedom to insert questions that you may think of in conversation with the practitioner
- Upload the podcast or video to the [Google Drive](#) by the due date
- Upload your interview script by the due date, along with (1–2 paragraphs) reflecting on why you chose this topic and how your own identities or professional experiences shape the questions you asked.
- Upload 4 reflection questions for student engagement (see below for additional instructions)

## **2. Recording the Interview / Podcast**

- Teams will record a 20-30-minute video or audio conversation that:
- Centers the supervisor's perspective and lived experience
- Reflects intentional, respectful, and thoughtful questioning
- Engages course concepts implicitly or explicitly
- Is accessible (clear audio; captions or transcript encouraged if using video)

The final recording will be shared with the class in the assigned module.

## **3. Reflection Questions for Peer Engagement**

Each team will develop 4 reflection questions to accompany their interview/podcast. These questions should:

- Invite synthesis across the interview, course readings, and prior discussions
- Prompt critical reflection rather than summary
- Encourage peers to consider implications for their own understanding of supervision

These questions will be used by the assigned peer response group.

#### **4. Peer Engagement**

Assigned teams will watch or listen to the interview/podcast and respond to the reflection questions through a discussion post, video response, or other creative engagement.

This assignment will be assessed based on:

- Conceptual alignment with course themes
- Thoughtfulness and coherence of interview questions
- Depth of engagement with the selected topic
- Quality of reflection questions and their ability to prompt meaningful dialogue
- Evidence of collaboration and shared intellectual labor

This assignment is not evaluated on production quality or performance skills, but on intentionality, insight, and conceptual engagement.

#### **Vision Board Creation (Canva)**

Format: Canva, Google Slides Deck, Audio, or written description

Due: April 5, 2026

Students will create a one-page digital vision board using [Canva](#) (the free version is sufficient). The vision board should be designed using a single-page layout, such as a poster, and should intentionally represent the student's ideal self as a supervisor.

The vision board must include supervisory qualities, expressed through images, words, or short phrases, that reflect how the student aspires to present themselves in a supervisory role. Visual representations, such as images, icons, shapes, or colors, should symbolize how they engage with others, the environment they aim to create for supervisees, and the balance they seek between support and challenge.

Students must clearly distinguish between qualities they already possess and qualities they are intentionally developing, including at least three of each. This distinction may be represented through labels, color coding, sections, or other intentional design elements.

Finally, students should include a personal element that reflects their identity or values as a supervisor, such as a meaningful quote, symbol, image, or short value statement. Be creative and have fun!

Upload your completed vision board into the shared [Google Slides deck](#) (one slide per student in no particular order).

On your slide, choose ONE of the following reflection options:

#### ***Option A: Audio Reflection***

Record a brief audio explanation (2–3 minutes) describing:

- Your ideal supervisory self
- Key qualities represented on your board
- How your “already me” and “becoming me” qualities show up or will show up in practice

OR

***Option B: Speaker Notes Reflection***

Include a written reflection in the speaker notes section on your slide, addressing:

- Your ideal supervisory self
- Key qualities represented on your board
- How your “already me” and “becoming me” qualities show up or will show up in practice

**Vision Board Peer Response**

Format: Canva

Due: April 12, 2026

Once all vision boards are submitted, you will review your peers’ work. Visit the shared Google Slides deck and carefully review at least three classmates’ slides, including their vision board visuals and associated audio or speaker notes.

You will go to our class [Canva whiteboard](#) and use the Elements tab on the left side of the whiteboard, leave a thoughtful comment or note (use graphics, have fun) for each vision board you review. Your feedback should respond to your peers’ vision boards by acknowledging meaningful elements, offering encouragement, and/or asking a reflective question that deepens their thinking about supervision.

After you have left notes for three peers, return to your own slide and review the comments you received from your classmates. This reciprocal reflection will help you give and receive insight into how your supervisory vision resonates with your peers.

**Final Reflection: Supervision as Relational, Contextual, and Equity-Informed Work**

Length: 3–4 pages (double-spaced, APA formatted)

Due: May 1, 2026

*Assignment Overview*

The purpose of this final reflection is to provide an opportunity for you to synthesize key insights from the course and articulate how your understanding of supervision in higher education has evolved. Throughout the semester, you have engaged with scholarly readings, practitioner interviews, your team-based supervisor interview, and peer dialogue that position supervision not as a set of neutral techniques, but as deeply relational, contextual, and shaped by equity and identity.

In this reflection, you are invited to step back from individual course activities and consider the broader understandings you are taking with you, whether you currently supervise others or anticipate doing so in the future.

### Reflection Focus

Your reflection should demonstrate thoughtful engagement with multiple course components, including course readings, recorded interviews, peer discussions, and your team interview experience. Rather than summarizing content week by week, aim to highlight patterns, tensions, and shifts in your perspective.

You may organize your reflection in a way that feels most coherent to you, but consider addressing the following guided prompts:

- How has your understanding of supervision in higher education changed or deepened over the course of the semester?
- What insights from the interviews with higher education professionals, including your team's interview, most influenced your thinking, and why?
- How did conducting and reflecting on your team interview shape your understanding of supervision in relation to the specific topic your group explored?
- In what ways did the course surface supervision as relational work, shaped by identity, power, care, and accountability?
- How did attention to context (e.g., functional area, professional experience, institutional environment) complicate or enrich your understanding of supervision?
- How has engaging with equity-informed perspectives challenged assumptions you previously held about supervision or leadership (or not)?
- As a current or aspiring supervisor, how do you now understand your responsibilities, tensions, and possibilities within supervisory roles?

### Expectations

A strong reflection will:

- Synthesize ideas across readings, practitioner interviews, the team interview assignment, and peer dialogue.
- Engage course concepts with depth and intentionality rather than description alone.
- Demonstrate reflexivity by situating yourself within the conversation about supervision.
- Attend to issues of equity, identity, and context as central, not peripheral, to supervision.

## EFOP 2056: PROGRAM ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Date & Topic	Readings and Assignments Due
<b>Week 1:</b> January 12-18  Course Overview and Introduction to Frontline Supervision	<b>Watch:</b> Dr. Nasser's (author of our book) Welcome Video Rosa's Welcome Video  <b>Assigned Readings:</b> Introduction Chapter uploaded to Canvas  <b>Assignment:</b> Post your own introduction video to the prompts located in Module 1 Watch your peers' responses

	Sign up for your team interview via the link located in Module 1
<b>Week 2:</b> January 19-25	<p><b>Watch:</b> Interview with <a href="#">Fred McCall</a>, Vice President for Student Engagement &amp; Transformation &amp; Dean of Students, Widener University, PA</p> <p><b>Assigned Readings:</b> Chapter One uploaded to Canvas</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Discussion or Video reflection on the prompts located in Module 2 Watch/Read your peers' responses</p>
<b>Week 3:</b> January 26- February 1	<p><b>Watch:</b> Interview with <a href="#">Andrea Guzman</a>, Vice President for Access and Community Engagement, University of Central Florida, FL</p> <p><b>Assigned Readings:</b> Chapter Two uploaded to Canvas</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Discussion or Video reflection on the prompts located in Module 3</p>
<b>Week 4:</b> February 2-8	<p><b>Watch:</b> Team One Interview Video</p> <p><b>Assigned Readings:</b> Chapter Three uploaded to Canvas</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Assigned Peer Group Team Interview Video Response</p>
<b>Week 5:</b> February 9-15	<p><b>Watch:</b> Interview with <a href="#">Martia Brawner King</a>, Director of Student Involvement in the Student Activities and Organizations Office, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN</p> <p><b>Assigned Readings:</b> Chapter Four uploaded to Canvas</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Challenge: Post a five-word response to the video</p>
<b>Week 6:</b> February 16-22	<p><b>Watch:</b> Team Two Interview Video</p> <p><b>Assigned Readings:</b> Chapter Five uploaded to Canvas</p>

	<p><b>Assignment:</b> Assigned Peer Group Team Interview Video Response</p>
<p><b>Week 7:</b> February 23- March 1</p>	<p><b>Watch:</b> Team Three Interview Video</p> <p><b>Assigned Readings:</b> Chapter Six uploaded to Canvas</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Assigned Peer Group Team Interview Video Response</p>
<p><b>Week 8:</b> March 2-8</p>	<p><b>Watch:</b> Team Four Interview Video</p> <p><b>Assigned Readings:</b> Chapter Seven uploaded to Canvas</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Assigned Peer Group Team Interview Video Response</p>
<p><b>Week 9:</b> March 9-15</p>	<p>SPRING BREAK – TAKE A BREATH</p>
<p><b>Week 10:</b> March 16-22</p>	<p><b>Watch:</b> Interview with Manal El Attir, Founder and President of the Womenomics Institute, Casablanca, Morocco</p> <p><b>Assigned Readings:</b> Chapter Eight uploaded to Canvas</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Post a reactive meme, a discussion response, or a video response (no more than 2 minutes). See Module 10 for more information.</p>
<p><b>Week 11:</b> March 23-29</p>	<p><b>Watch:</b> Team Five Interview Video</p> <p><b>Assigned Readings:</b> Chapter Nine uploaded to Canvas</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Assigned Peer Group Team Interview Video Response</p>
<p><b>Week 12:</b> March 30- April 5</p>	<p><b>Watch:</b> Video interview with <a href="#">James Hintz</a>, Vice President of Student Affairs, Michigan State University, MI</p> <p><b>Assigned Readings:</b></p>

	<p>Chapter Ten uploaded to Canvas</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Vision Board Assignment</p>
<p><b>Week 13:</b> April 6-12</p>	<p><b>Watch:</b> Video interview with <a href="#">Cristina Wayton Sanchez</a>, Associate Vice President, Undergraduate Admissions, Cleveland State University, OH</p> <p><b>Assigned Readings:</b> Chapter Eleven uploaded to Canvas</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Review Peer Vision Boards, audios, and speaker notes, and send 3 of your peers a note via this link</p>
<p><b>Week 14:</b> April 13-19</p>	<p><b>Watch:</b> Team Six Interview Video</p> <p><b>Assigned Readings:</b> Chapter Twelve uploaded to Canvas</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Assigned Peer Group Team Interview Video Response</p>
<p><b>Week 15:</b> April 20-26</p>	<p><b>Watch:</b> Team Seven Interview Video</p> <p><b>Assigned Readings:</b> Chapter Thirteen uploaded to Canvas</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Assigned Peer Group Team Interview Video Response</p>
<p><b>Week 16:</b> April 27-May 1 Final Week</p>	<p><b>Watch:</b> Team Eight Interview Video Rosa's Final Reflection Video</p> <p><b>Assigned Readings:</b> Chapter Fourteen uploaded to Canvas</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Assigned Peer Group Team Interview Video Response Submit your final reflection, see assignments, and Module 16 for more details.</p>