

STMC 553 COUPLES THERAPY
Fall Quarter, 2008

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY
School of Theology and Ministry
Pastoral Counseling /Mental Health Programs (PC/MHC)

The PC/MHC Programs' Organizing Theme

Preparing students for high quality work in multiple setting by providing solid theological, psychological, and clinical education/training.

Room: Hunthausen 110
3 credits
Thursdays, Sept. 25 – Dec. 4, 2008
9:00 am – 11:50 am
Office Hours: by appointment

Faculty: William K .Collins, Ph. D., M. S.
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Required Texts

Gurman, A.S. and Jacobsen, N.S. (2008) Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy 4th Edition. NY: Guilford ISBN 978-1-59385-821-6

Course Description and Objectives

This course provides a basic foundation for counseling couples by offering a broad overview of contemporary couples counseling theories and associated techniques. This course will include a variety of instructional strategies and techniques including, discussion of readings and questions, lecture, role plays, video tape presentations and student presentations with peer response. Other strategies may be introduced as appropriate. Feedback to the instructor is requested all through the quarter.

- To apply key family therapy theories to couples.
- To develop generic and particular skills in the practice of couples therapy.
- To acquire specialized knowledge in a variety of common couple's complaints.
- To integrate multi-cultural and gender issues into the theory and practice of couples therapy.
- To have an increase knowledge of spirituality and couples therapy.
- To have added to skills of writing, oral presentation, and the critical reading of current literature in couples therapy.

Course requirements designed to meet objectives

1. Reading and written assignments must be completed before class on the day indicated. The final grade will reflect your ability to understand and integrate concepts from all the assigned readings.
2. Discussion Points Papers (See Assignment 1 below)
3. Completion of case write-up (see Assignment 2 below)
4. Resource Guide (See Assignment 3 below)
5. Class attendance and participations

ASSIGNMENT 1: Discussion Points Papers: (20%) To stimulate critical reading and discussion, students will be required to prepare a “discussion points” paper for Class 1 through Class 8. This paper will be one-half to one full page (may be single spaced), and it may include any or all of the following:

1. Questions that the student needs answered in order to understand better the concepts covered in the reading
2. Points of connection between the reading and the student’s prior learning or experience
3. Points of evaluation or critique of the ideas or procedures being discussed
4. Any relevant real-world controversies or issues that seem to illuminate or involve the ideas being discussed.

This paper should also include two questions related to the week’s reading that you would like to discuss during the class period. These questions will be used to generate discussion in class. Students are required to email each paper to the instructor by 7 pm Tuesdays before the Thursday class meeting. Example for the class on Sept. 25th, email by 7 pm Sept. 23rd.

ASSIGNMENT 2: Case write-up: (50%). There are two options:

2A. Select a case study from film or book and do a case write-up. This is an individual assignment. Due Nov. 20th Examples would be “War of the Roses,” “When a Man Loves a Woman,” Scenes from a Marriage,” “Mr. Holland’s Opus.”

The WRITE-UP (6 -8 pages) needs to include:

- A General Assessment Plan (see below)
- A Treatment Focus Plan (see below)
- Selection of a particular couples therapy theory to use in the case. Outline the theory and how you would use it for this couple, including setting treatment goals and specifying appropriate interventions. Use specific examples from the movie/book to illustrate. Include a discussion of how your work would seek to integrate spirituality within the therapy.
- A brief discussion of an alternate theory you might have used with the case if you hadn’t chosen the one you did.
- A bibliography of articles and book references pertaining to the theory selected for the case (minimum: 6 references to be read)

OR

2B. Verbatim write-up. This is an individual assignment. Due Nov. 20.

Transcribe 20 minutes of a couples’ therapy session that you do. Besides your transcription, create a 4-6 page write-up that includes:

- A General Assessment Plan (see below)
- A Treatment focus and Plan (see below)
- Find examples of attempted “interventions” that you are attempting to use from the transcription
- Identify how “successful or unsuccessful” the interventions were for the couple.
- If not described above, address how you might include issues of spirituality for this couple.
- A bibliography of articles and book references pertaining to the theory selected for the case (minimum: 2 references)

ASSIGNMENT 3: Resource Guide: a small group assignment: (30%) Due last two class sessions by schedule

In a small group (TBA), compose a 1-3 page handout for each member of the class regarding a specific couple issue (topics TBA) that has not been covered well in class. Give a summary of key ideas to remember, recommended readings and research. Do a brief “role-play” illustrating one key concept from your guide

Reading and Lecture Schedule:

	Date	Topic	Reading
Week 1	9/25/2008	Systemic Work with Couples Context and Culture	Gurman, Ch. 1, 23 Karpel:: pp 5-56 [CP]
Week 2	10/2/2008	Cognitive-Behavioral Marital Therapy <i>Mass of the Holy Spirit 11:00 -1:00</i>	Gurman, Ch. 2, 5 Buber: pp 9 – 14 & 36-41 [CP]
Week 3	10/9/2008	Solution-Focused Couples Therapy	Gurman, Ch. 9 Patterson et al.: Ch 8 [CP]
Week 4	10/16/2008	Narrative Couples Therapy	Gurman, Ch. 8 Berry: Ch 5 [CP]
Week 5	10/19/2008	Trans-generational/Psychodynamic Ideas	Gurman, Ch. 7
Week 6	10/26/2008	Emotion Focused Couples Therapy	Gurman, Ch. 4 Johnson, Dattilio: Ch. 19 [CP]
Week 7	11/6/2008	Mediation and Divorce	Gurman, Ch. 15 Mace: Ch. 18, 19 [CP]
Week 8	11/13/2008	Integration of Spirituality and Behavioral Science approaches	Fischer Hart & Hart Ch. 3 [CP]; Anderson [CP]; Wade [CP], Weingarten [CP]
Week 9	11/20/2008	Special Topics. Presentations by small groups	
	11/27/2008	Thanksgiving	No Class
Week 10	12/4/2008	Special Topics. Presentations by small groups	

Class attendance and class participation are essential to develop the competency and skills required of a counselor. Please notify the instructor of anticipated absences. In the event of a missed class session, the student is solely responsible for obtaining class materials. More than one absence may negatively impact your final grade, except in emergency situations.

Grading:

96 - 100	A	Superior performance
90 - 95	A-	Performance well above requirements
87 - 89	B+	
84 - 86	B	

Academic integrity: Students are expected to follow standards of academic behavior as described in Seattle University guidelines. In addition, graduate students are expected to abide by professional ethical standards of counselors. Violations of academic integrity (e.g. any form of academic dishonesty, plagiarism) will be subject to consequences that may include, but are not limited to grade reduction or course failure.

Student disabilities: If you have a specific disability that qualifies you for academic accommodations, please let your instructor know so that the appropriate accommodations can be made in accordance with Seattle University policy.

General Assessment Plan

1. Conduct initial assessment.
 - Explore presenting problems.
 - Assess for attempted solutions.
 - Assess for crisis and stressful life events.

2. Rule out potential issues of harm.
 - Assess for suicide.
 - Assess for family violence and abuse.
 - Assess for sexual abuse.
 - Assess for duty-to-warn issues.

3. Rule out possible substance abuse.

4. Rule out possible biological problems.

5. Conduct general psychosocial assessment.
 - Assess affect, behavior, and cognitions.
 - Assess meaning system
 - Assess spirituality.
 - Assess the couple and family system.
 - Assess social systems outside the family.
 - Assess families within the larger social context.

Developing an Initial Treatment Plan

Step 1: Select a problem list.

Step 2: Examine history of problems and previous/current treatment

Step 3: Conceptualize the case and make a diagnosis using a DSM-IV multi-axial assessment.

Step 4: Establish long term goals.

Step 5: Select treatment modality, objectives and interventions.

Step 6: Determine length and frequency of treatment.

Step 7: Consider referrals to outside resources.

Readings included in the Coursepack:

- Karpel, M. (1994) Evaluating Couples: A Handbook for Practitioners. Chapter 1: The Arc of Attachment, pp. 5 – 14, Chapter 2: Facts of Life: Culture, Gender, and Time, pp. 15-28, and Chapter 3: Relational Challenges pp. 29-56, NY: WW Norton
- Buber, M. (1998) The Way of Man According to the Teaching of Hassidism. Chapter 1; Heart-Searching, pp. 9 – 14, and Chapter 2: Here Where One Stands, pp. 36 – 41, Secaucus, NJ: Carol Publishing
- Patterson, J., Williams, L., Grauf-Grounds, C., Chamow, L., (1998) Essential Skills in Family Therapy. Chapter 8: Working with Couples, pp. 147 – 168, NY: Guilford.
- Berry, W. (1983) Standing by Words. Chapter 5: Poetry and Marriage: The Use of Old Forms, pp. 92 – 105, Washington, D. C.: Shoemaker and Hoard
- Johnson, S., Dattilio, F., Ed. (1998) Case Studies in Couple and Family Therapy, Chapter 19: Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy, pp. 450 – 472, NY: Guilford
- Mace, D. (1983) Close Companions: The Marriage Enrichment Handbook, Chapter 18: Growth-Oriented Marriage Counseling? pp. 177 – 185, and Chapter 19: Can We Educate for Marriage? pp. 186 – 195, NY: Continuum International
- Fischer Hart, K. and Hart, T. (1983) The First Two Years of Marriage: Foundations for a Life Together, Chapter 3: Dealing with differences, pp. 31 – 43, Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press
- Anderson, D. (2002) Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling, Pastoral 56 (1), Counseling as an Echoing Process: a Transformative Therapy Hour, pp. 3- 9
- Wade, A. (1997), Contemporary Family Therapy, 19(1) Small Acts of Living: Everyday Resistance to Violence and Other Forms of Oppression, pp.
- Weingarten, K., Walsh, F., Ed. (1999) Spiritual Resources in Family Therapy, Chapter 14: Stretching to Meet What's Given, in, pp. 240 – 255, NY: Guilford