



**LEWIS & CLARK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF  
EDUCATION AND COUNSELING  
MCFT 563 Relational Justice in Couple Therapy  
SPRING 2015**

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<b>Time &amp; Day:</b>	Tuesdays 5:30-8:30 1/13/15 – 2/10/15
<b>Place:</b>	Rogers 220
<b>Instructor:</b>	Carmen Knudson-Martin, PhD
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesdays 1:00-3:00; Thursdays 4:30-6:30 and by arrangement (please schedule appointments in advance)
<b>E-Mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:carmen@lclark.edu">carmen@lclark.edu</a>
<b>Phone:</b>	503-768-6065 (office)      909-262-7725 (cell)

### **CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

Therapists often inadvertently reinforce existing power disparities. This class explores why power imbalances between intimate partners are detrimental and how therapists can address them using an approach that links emotion, societal context, and couple interaction. The class draws on research regarding the moment-by-moment process in couple therapy. Students will learn to identify power dynamics in couple relationships and practice clinical competencies that empower couples to create an equitable foundation based on four elements of mutual support: mutual attunement, mutual vulnerability, mutual influence, and shared relational responsibility.

**Prerequisite:** None

**Credit:** 1 semester hour

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course promotes the following student learning outcomes:

SLO1: Students will demonstrate integrity, compassion and commitment to working with diverse groups.

SLO 2: Students will demonstrate excellent therapeutic skills with individuals, couples, and families.

SLO 3: Students will demonstrate dedication to social justice and global citizenship.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The following objectives are in keeping with the AAMFT Core Competencies. At the end of this course, students are expected to:

1. Recognize how inequities in larger systems create destructive power imbalances in couple relationships (e.g., gender, age, socioeconomic status, culture/race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, spirituality, religion, larger systems, social context) (TS 1.04; KS 45, 53; CC 1.2.1)

2. Recognize the confluence of emotion, societal context, and couple interaction in the moment by moment of couple therapy. (TS 1.04; KS 45, 53; CC 1.2.1)
3. Learn a research-based clinical model for couple therapy that promotes relational justice and mutual support. (CC 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.3.2)
4. Practice clinical competencies that empower couples to create an equitable foundation for their relationship. (TS 1.04; KS 45, 53)

## TEXT/READINGS

### Required Book (prepublication manuscript provided by instructor)

Knudson-Martin, C., Wells, M. A., & Samman, S. K. (2015). *Socio-emotional relationship therapy: Bridging emotion, societal context, and couple interaction*. New York: Springer

#### Contents

Chapter One	Bridging Emotion, Societal Discourse, and Couple Interaction in Clinical Practice .....### Carmen Knudson-Martin and Douglas Huenergardt
Chapter Two	When Therapy Challenges Patriarchy: Undoing Gendered Power in Heterosexual Couple Relationships.....### Carmen Knudson-Martin
Chapter Three	Toward Relational Empowerment: Interpersonal Neurobiology, Couples, and the Societal Context.....### Mona DeKoven Fishbane and Melissa A. Wells
Chapter Four	How Gender Discourses Hijack Couple Therapy—and How to Avoid It .....### Jessica L. ChenFeng and Aimee Galick
Chapter Five	Expanding the Lens: How SERT Therapists Develop Interventions That Address Larger Context .....### Julie Estrella, Veronica P. Kuhn, Cassidy J. Freitas, and Melissa A. Wells
Chapter Six	SERT Therapists’ Experience of Practicing Sociocultural Attunement .....### Mayuri (Mia) Pandit, Jessica L. ChenFeng, and Young Joo Kang
Chapter Seven	Relational Engagement in Heterosexual Couple Therapy: Helping Men Move from “I” to “We”.....### Sarah K. Samman and Carmen Knudson-Martin
Chapter Eight	Building a Circle of Care in Same-Sex Couple Relationships: A Socio-Emotional Relational Approach .....### Jason C. Richards, Naveen Jonathan, and Lana Kim
Chapter Nine	Couple Therapy with Adult Survivors of Child Abuse: Gender, Power, and Trust.....### Melissa Wells and Veronica P. Kuhn

Chapter Ten	Relational Justice: Addressing Gender and Power in Clinical Practices for Infidelity .....### Kirstee Williams and Lana Kim
Chapter Eleven	Relational Spirituality, Gender, and Power: Applications to Couple Therapy .....### Elisabeth Esmiol Wilson
Chapter Twelve	Engaging Power, Emotion, and Context in Couple Therapy: Lessons Learned .....### Carmen Knudson-Martin, Melissa A. Wells, & Sarah K. Samman

### Required Articles

Knudson-Martin, C. (2013). Why power matters: Creating a foundation of mutual support in couple relationships. *Family Process*, 52, 5-18.

Knudson-Martin, C., & Huenergardt, D. (2010). A socio-emotional approach to couple therapy: Linking social context and couple interaction. *Family Process*, 49, 369–386.

### CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

#### 1. **Participation** (40 points)

This course emphasizes shared engagement with the assigned readings and clinical competencies. Toward this end, you are expected to:

- Attend and participate in **all** class meetings. In the event of illness or other emergency, please email the instructor in advance of class. Missed classes will be made up by written reflections on the required readings for the day.
- Come to class prepared (having read the assignment for the day).
- Give attention to the instructor and/or other students when they are speaking or making a presentation. No electronic devices may be used, except to access readings or make notes.
- Contribute to in-class discussion based on the topics of discusses and the readings assigned. Contributions may include how you feel about the material but merely articulating your feelings is not sufficient. You are expected to put those feelings in context of your thoughts and analysis of the material.
- Engage in group discussions and role plays.
- Ask questions of the instructor and/or other students regarding the material examined in that class.
- Deal with other students and/or the instructor in a respectful fashion.

Your participation in class activities will be evaluated according to the following rubric:

CLASS PARTICIPATION COMPETENCIES	Possible points	Points demonstrated
Prompt and dependable presence in the class.	10	
Prepares for class by immersing self in course readings and reflecting on their application to practice.	10	
Engages in course activities with a spirit of openness and curiosity.	10	
Helps to create an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect among all class members.	10	
TOTAL	40	

**2) Case Assessment and Treatment Plan: Part 1 Sociocultural Attunement (30 points)**

Create a sociocultural description of a fictional or real case. It can be based on a movie, book, a composite of people you know, or a case that you are working with. Change any identifying information so that the people you are using would not recognize themselves. The description should include the following information:

- Demographic information describing the couple's social location (age, gender identification, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, culture, religion, education and socio-economic status, disabilities, etc.)
- The reason the couple is seeking therapy.
- Brief summary of relevant background information (i.e., significant life transitions such as divorce/deaths and family history, special concerns, etc.)
- Answers to 7 guiding lens questions at the top of Figure 6.1 (Chapter 6, Pandit et al).

Paper should be 2-3 pages (may be single spaced).

SOCIOCULTURAL ATTUNEMENT COMPETENCIES	Possible points	Points demonstrated
Identifies key social contextual/demographic information.	5	
Provides brief summary of the reason the couple is seeking therapy and relevant background	5	
Thoughtfully reflects on each of the 7 sociocultural guiding lens questions in order to contextual the self/identity of each partner.	20	
TOTAL	30	

### 3) Case Conceptualization and Treatment Plan—Part II (30 points)

Using the case described in the first paper, provide a case assessment and treatment plan based on principles of relational justice and mutual support.

- Conceptualize the relational patterns in terms of the Circle of Care and power dynamics and how they relate to the presenting concerns and relationship distress.
- Identify overall treatment goals, including a focus on relational justice/mutual support
- Outline a plan detailing the strategies you will use to help the couple attain the treatment goals.

Add Part II to Part I and turn in as a whole. Part II should be 2-3 pages (may be single spaced). Total plan will be 4-6 pages.

Part II will be evaluated according to the following rubric .

TREATMENT PLANNING COMPETENCIES	Possible points	Points demonstrated
Conceptualization includes attention to power dynamics and the four elements of mutual support (Circle of Care)	10	
Treatment goals include attention to relational justice and mutual support.	10	
Treatment plan details how goals will be accomplished.	10	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY/SPECIAL ASSISTANCE**

Lewis & Clark College adheres to a nondiscriminatory policy with respect to employment, enrollment, and program. The College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap or disability, sexual orientation, or marital status and has a firm commitment to promote the letter and spirit of all equal opportunity and civil rights laws.

### **PARTICIPATION IN THE LEARNING COMMUNITY**

Students are required to attend and actively participate in all scheduled class meetings. This includes being on time, being prepared, following through on group projects, and otherwise engaging with colleagues as fellow professionals. Becoming a therapist involves looking closely at ourselves, our values, beliefs, and biases. This can be a very personal, and sometimes emotional, process. Treating colleagues with respect, listening deeply to their experiences, and being open to diverse world views encourages a collaborative milieu of care in which we can all challenge ourselves and each other to critically examine and develop our skills and perspectives. In order to prepare for each class, students should carefully read and study all assigned materials

to be ready to discuss, debate, and apply the content of readings. Class discussion and interaction with colleagues are fundamental to the process of learning to be a therapist and all sessions include necessary information. Therefore, if you must miss a class, fellow students and the instructor may ask you to contribute to learning community in another way. According to the Lewis & Clark Counseling Psychology attendance policy, missing 3 or more hours of a 1 credit course may result in a failing grade. For this course, any absence of more than one hour requires a makeup assignment. If you must be absent or late, please email the instructor at least several hours prior to class.

### **SPECIAL ASSISTANCE**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability and/or you have emergency medical information to share please make an appointment with the instructors as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of the student to make his or her disability and needs known in a timely fashion and to provide appropriate documentation and evaluations to support the accommodations the student requests. Requests for accommodations should be routed through the Student Support Services office in Albany 206. Please review the L&C policy at:

[http://www.lclark.edu/offices/student\\_support\\_services/rights/disability\\_policy/](http://www.lclark.edu/offices/student_support_services/rights/disability_policy/)

### **CPSY DEPARTMENTAL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Class attendance is expected and required. Any missed class time will be made up by completing extra assignments designed by the instructor. Missing more than ten percent of class time may result in failure to complete the class. This would be 4.5 hours of a 45 hour class (3 credits), 3.0 hours for a 30 hour class (2 credits) or 1.5 hours for a 15 hour class (1 credit.) In case of extreme hardship and also at the discretion of the instructor, a grade of incomplete may be given for an assignment or the entire course. In such cases, the work to be submitted in order to remove the incomplete must be documented appropriately and stated deadlines met. Students are expected to be on time to class and tardiness maybe seen as an absence that requires make-up work.

### **EVALUATION & GRADING**

Participation	40 pts
Sociocultural Attunement (Paper I)	30 pts
Case Assessment and Treatment Plan (Paper II)	30 pts

93-100 = A    90-92.5 = A-    88-89.5 = B+  
 83-87.5 = B    80-82.5 = B-    78-79 = C+  
 73-77.5 = C    70-72 = C-

“A” grades will be reserved for particularly outstanding work.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings due</b>	<b>Assignment/ Activity due</b>
Week 1 Jan 13	Power, Emotion, & social context of couple interaction	KM & H (2010) KM (2013) chap 1, 2, & 4	
Week 2 Jan 20	Socio-Emotional attunement	Chap 3 & 6	
Week 3 Jan 27	Phase I: Creating an equitable context for therapy	Chap 5, 7, 12	Case description (Paper I) due at beginning of class. .
Week 4 Feb 3	Phase II: Interrupting the flow of power	Chap 8 & 9	
Week 5 Feb 10	Phase III: Facilitate alternative experience	Chap 10 & 11	Case conceptualization and treatment plan due Feb 12 by 6pm