



“We are a community that commits itself to diversity and sustainability as dimensions of a just society”
- *Mission Statement, Lewis & Clark College*

MCFT 563-01 Relational Justice in Couple Therapy
SUMMER 2017

Time & Day: Mondays 8:45 am-12:30 pm May 8-June 5
Place: L&C Community Counseling Center, Classroom D (second floor)
Instructor: Carmen Knudson-Martin, PhD
Office Hours: By arrangement (please email instructor)
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Phone: 503-768-6090 (office) 909-262-7725 (cell)

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Applications of family systems approach to treatment of families in crisis and transition. Topics include issues such as substance abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse, trauma and loss, poverty, and chronic illness. A portion of this course emphasizes clinical case conceptualization and treatment planning.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Therapists often inadvertently reinforce societal 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 apply Socio-Emotional Relationship Therapy competencies to work with populations or issues of particular interest to them.

Prerequisite: None

Credit: 1 semester hour (15 contact hours)

MCFT STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course promotes the following student learning outcomes:

SLO1.1: Students recognize the impact of power on individuals, families, and communities.

SLO1.2: Students recognize the interconnections among biological, psychological, social systems in people’s lived experience.

SLO1.3: Students apply systems/relational theories to clinical case conceptualization

SLO 2.2: Students' clinical practice demonstrates attention to social justice and cultural democra

SLO 3.2 Students draw on the research literature relevant to family therapy in case planning.

SLO: 4.3 Students demonstrate integration of family therapy theory, equity, and social location issues in clinical practice.

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

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 ContextJulie 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 ApproachJason 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

- ChenFeng, J., Kim, L., Knudson-Martin, C., & Wu, Y. (2016). Application of socio-emotional relationship therapy with couples of Asian heritage: Addressing issues of culture, gender, and power. *Family Process*. Advanced online publication. doi: 10.1111/famp.12251
- Knudson-Martin, C., & Huenergardt, D. (2010). A socio-emotional approach to couple therapy: Linking social context and couple interaction. *Family Process*, 49, 369–386.
- Wells, M. A., Lobo, E., Galick, A., Knudson-Martin, C., Huenergardt, D., & Schaepper, J. (2017). Fostering trust through relational safety: Applying SERT’s focus on gender and power with adult-survivor couples. *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 16, 122-145
- Williams, K. (2011). A socio-emotional relational framework for infidelity: The relational justice approach. *Family Process*, 50(4), 516-528.

Recommended Articles

- Jonathan, N. (2009). Carrying equal weight: Relational responsibility and attunement among same-sex couples. In C. Knudson-Martin & A. R. Mahoney (Eds.), *Couples, gender and power: Creating change in intimate relationships*. (pp. 79-104). New York, NY: Springer.
- 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., Lafontant, K., Bishop, L., Schaepper, J., & Wells, M. (2014). Competencies for addressing gender and power in couple therapy: A socio-emotional approach. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 2014, 205-220.

Loscocco, K., & Walzer, S. (2013). Gender and the culture of heterosexual marriage in the United States. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 5, 1-14.

Williams, K., Galick, A., Knudson-Martin, C., & Huenergardt, D. (2013). Toward mutual support: A task analysis of the relational justice approach to infidelity. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 39(3), 285-298.

Williams, K., & Knudson-Martin, C. (2013). Do therapists address gender and power in infidelity? A feminist analysis of the treatment literature. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 39(3), 271–284.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Participation** (20 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) and contribute to in-class discussion/activities based on the topics of discusses and the readings assigned.
- Respectfully engage with other students and/or the instructor in a spirit of openness and curiosity

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.	5	
Prepares for class by immersing self in course readings and reflecting on their application to practice.	5	
Engages in course activities with a spirit of openness and curiosity.	5	
Helps to create an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect among all class members.	5	
TOTAL	20	

2) Case Presentation -- in pairs (40 points)

Select a population or issue that interests you. Examples might be LGBTQ couples, couples representing a particular race, ethnicity or religion, couples dealing with loss, depression, parenting, infidelity, substance abuse, history of abuse, etc. Any topic that interests you is appropriate. ***Your presentation will provide a springboard for class discussion of treatment planning for this case.***

Prepare a 15-20 minute presentation with the following components:

A. Summarize socio-contextual issues unique to this group of couples and how these issues are likely to affect relationship power dynamics. Draw on additional readings outside those assigned for the class to the extent they are helpful. (7-10 minutes)

B. Create a description of a fictional or real case that illustrates the identified issues. It can be based on a movie, book, a composite of people you know, a case that you are working with, or totally made up based on your readings. The description should include the following information (7-10 minutes)

- 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.)
- Summary of guiding lens questions at the top of Figure 6.1 (Chapter 6, Pandit et al) and how these affect the ways they approach the relationship
- How power and socio-contextual issues will be important to the therapy process.

Your presentation will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

SOCIOCULTURAL ATTUNEMENT COMPETENCIES	Possible Points	Points demonstrated
Summarizes key socio-contextual issues related to population or history and connects them to likely power dynamics	10	
Identifies key social contextual/demographic information, very brief history, and reason for seeing therapy	10	
Uses the sociocultural guiding lens questions from Pandit et al (chap 6) to contextualize the self/identity of each partner and how these affect the ways they approach the relationship	10	
Identifies power and larger context issues that will be important to the process of therapy for this couple	10	
TOTAL	40	

3) Case Conceptualization and Treatment Plan (40 points). Due Friday June 9 via email. Using the case you presented, write a 3-5 page case conceptualization and treatment plan based on principles of relational justice and mutual support. Draw on the class discussion and readings to help you apply the SERT model to your case. Presentation partners may consult with each other as much as you wish; however, each person should write a separate treatment plan.

- a. Provide a brief overview of the partners involved, the reason for therapy, and influence of the sociocultural context (from presentation).
- b. 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.
- c. Identify overall treatment goals, including a focus on relational justice/mutual support
- d. Outline a plan detailing strategies you will use to help the couple attain the treatment goals.

TREATMENT PLANNING COMPETENCIES	Possible points	Points demonstrated
Provides an overview of the partners involved, the reason for therapy, and influence of the sociocultural context.	10	
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	
TOTAL	40	

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.

DISABILITY SERVICES STATEMENT

If you have a disability that may impact your academic performance, you may request accommodations by submitting documentation to the Student Support Services Office in the Albany Quadrangle (503-768-7192). After you have submitted documentation and filled out paperwork there for the current semester requesting accommodations, staff in that office will notify me of the accommodations for which you are eligible.

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	20 pts
Case Presentation	40 pts
Treatment Plan	40 pts
Total	100 pts

94-100 = A 90-93.5 = A- 88-89.5 = B+
 83-87.5 = B 80-82.5 = B- 78-79 = C+
 73-77.5 = C 70-72 = C-

COURSE SCHEDULE

	Topics	Readings & Assignments
Class 1 May 8	Overview: Power, emotion, & social context in couple therapy Phase I Positioning Sociocultural attunement	Knudson-Martin & Huenergardt (2010) SERT text: chap 1, 4, & 6 ChenFeng et al <u>Suggested</u> Knudson-Martin (2013) Loscocco & Waltzer (2013) (suggested)
Class 2 May 15	Undoing gendered power Phase II Interrupting the flow of power	SERT text: Chap 2, 7, 9 and 12 Wells (2017) et al
Class 3 May 22	Power in same-sex/queer relationships Phase III Practicing mutuality	SERT text: chap 8 <u>Suggested</u> Jonathan 2009 Presentation _____ Presentation _____ Presentation _____
Class 4 June 5	Special Treatment issues: infidelity & spirituality	SERT text: Chap 10 & 11 Williams (2011) <u>Suggested</u> Williams et al (2013) Williams &K-M (2013) Presentation _____ Presentation _____ Presentation _____

Case conceptualization & Treatment plan due via e-mail by Friday June 9.

Additional Suggested Readings

- Gottman, J. M. (2011). *The science of trust: Emotional attunement for couples*. New York: Guilford.
- Jonathan, N. (2009). Carrying equal weight: Relational responsibility and attunement among same-sex couples. In C. Knudson-Martin & A. R. Mahoney (Eds.), *Couples, gender and power: Creating change in intimate relationships*. (pp. 79-104). New York, NY: Springer.
- Jonathan, N., & Knudson-Martin, C. (2012). Building connection: Attunement and gender equality in heterosexual relationships. *Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy, 11*, 95-111.
- Knudson-Martin, C., & Mahoney, A. R. (2009). *Couples, gender, and power: Creating change in intimate relationships*. New York: Springer Publishing Co.
- Komter, A. (1989). Hidden power in marriage. *Gender and Society, 3*, 187-216.
- Mirgain, S. A. & Cordova, J. V. (2007). Emotion skills and marital health: The association between observed and self-reported emotion skills, intimacy, and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology, 26*, 983-1009.
- Moghadam, S., Knudson-Martin, C., & Mahoney, A. (2009). Gendered power in cultural contexts part III: Couple relationships in Iran. *Family Process, 48*, 41-54
- Shechory, M. & Ziv, R. (2007). Relationships between gender role attitudes, role division, and perception of equity
- Steil, J. (1997). *Marital equality: Its relationship to the well-being of husbands and wives*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications
- Tichenor, V. J. (2005). *Earning more and getting less: Why successful wives can't buy equality*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press
- Winslade, J. (2009). Tracing lines of flight: Implications of the work of Gilles Deleuze. *Family Process, 48*, 332-346.