



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

**MCFT 563: RELATIONAL JUSTICE IN COUPLES THERAPY
SUMMER 2018**

Time & Day: Section 1-- Tuesdays 8:30-1:30 May 8-22
Section 2—Wednesdays 8:30-1:30 May 9-23
Place: John R. Howard Hall, Room 259
Instructor: Carmen Knudson-Martin, PhD
Office Hours: by arrangement, Rogers Hall, Room 319
Phone: 503-768-6092
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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.

CREDITS: 1 semester unit

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)

TEXTS

Required

Knudson-Martin, C, Wells, M., Samman, S., (Eds.) (2015). *Socio-emotional relationship therapy: Bridging Emotion, Societal Context, and Couple Interaction*. New York: Springer International.

Recommended

Knudson-Martin, C. & Mahoney, A. R. (Eds.) (2009). *Couples, gender, and power: Creating change in intimate relationships*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Co.

Assigned journal 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, 56*. 558-573.

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.

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

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., 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

Additional Suggested Texts/Readings

- Addison, S., & Coolhart, D. (2015). Expanding the therapy paradigm with queer couples. *Family Process, 54*, 435-453.
- Biama, T. R. & Feldhousen, E. B. (2007). The heart of sexual trauma: Patriarch as a centrally organizing principle for couple therapy. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy, 19*, 13-36.
- Coontz, S. (2005). *Marriage, a history: From obedience to intimacy or how love conquered marriage*.
- Elias-Juarez, M. A., & Knudson-Martin, C. (2016). Cultural attunement in therapy with Mexican-heritage couples: A grounded theory study. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy, 43*, 100-114.
- Gottman, J. M. (2011). *The science of trust: Emotional attunement for couples*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Jordan, L. S., Grogan, C., Muruthi, B. & Bermúdez, J. M. (2017) Polyamory: Experiences of power from without, from within, and in between, *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy, 16*, 1-19,
- Quek, K. & Knudson-Martin, C., Rue, D., & Alabiso, C. (2009). Relational harmony: A new model of collectivism and gender equality among Chinese American couples. *Journal of Family Issues, 31*, 358-380

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Participation (25 points)

This course emphasizes shared engagement with the assigned readings and development clinical competencies through case discussions and role plays. 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 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.	10	
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	25	

2) Case Presentation -- in pairs (25 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 in the relationship and the circle of care	10	
Identifies key social contextual/demographic information, very brief history, and reason for seeing therapy	5	
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	5	
Identifies power and larger context issues that will be important to the process of therapy for this couple	5	
TOTAL	25	

3) **Case Conceptualization and Treatment Plan** (50 points). Due May 29 (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.

Your case conceptualization and treatment plan will be graded according to the following rubric.

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.	20	
TOTAL	50	

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.

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.

DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

The Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) requires the program to have “established policies for informing applicants and students regarding disclosure of their personal information” (COAMFTE Standard 140.02, 2003). Each student should decide for him/herself what information to disclose. Students are advised to be prudent when making self-disclosures. The program cannot guarantee confidentiality of student disclosures given the group environment, although personal comments should be considered private and confidential – and remain only in the classroom – unless an exception to confidentiality applies.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones must be silenced and text messaging is not allowed during class time. If there is an emergency you may exit the class to use your cell.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Grades for this course will be determined as follows:

Participation	25 pts
Case Presentation	25 pts
Treatment Plan	50 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 8/9	Overview: Power, emotion, & social context in couple therapy Phase I Positioning Sociocultural attunement	Knudson-Martin & Huenergardt (2010) SERT pp. 1-14, 41-52, 67-78 Knudson-Martin (2013) Loscocco & Waltzer (2013)
Class 2 May 15/16	Undoing gendered power Phase II Interrupting the flow of power	SERT pp 15-26, 79-93, 121-130; 145-153 Wells (2017) Williams (2013—2 articles)
Class 3 May 22/23	Power in same-sex/queer relationships Phase III Practicing mutuality Case Presentation _____ _____	SERT pp 93-105 ChenFeng et al <u>Suggested</u> K-M & M chap 4-6 Jordan et al (2017)
May 29/30		TREATMENT PLAN DUE via email