

Lewis & Clark
Graduate School of
Education and Counseling



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

**MCFT 560: COUPLES THERAPY IN MCFT
SUMMER 2023**

Time & Day: Friday 9-12/5p Friday 1-4p

Place:

Instructor: Lori Henry, LMFT
Office Hours: By appointment
Phone: 971-808-3312
E-Mail: lhenry@lclark.edu

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Systems/relational therapies and practices relative to assessment, research, and treatment of couples, with an emphasis on promoting relational justice through addressing power/privilege and the links between neurobiology, emotion, societal context, and couple interaction. Students develop competencies to work with a wide range of couples across the lifespan and diverse sociocultural contexts, with attention to issues such as intimacy, conflict, co-parenting, spirituality, infidelity, divorce, loss, and illness. Couple therapy for the treatment of trauma and mental health disorders will also be addressed.

CREDITS: 3 semester units

MCFT 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 democracy

SLO 3.2 Students draw on the research literature relevant to family therapy cases.

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

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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 at least one 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)
5. Apply systems/relational theories and practices to therapy with couples with a range of sociocultural contexts and presenting issues. (CC 1.2.1, 4.3.7)

PLEASE NOTE: Coursework should be secondary to the health and safety of you and your loved ones. My aim is to prepare you for the gratifying and challenging work of doing couple therapy which can only be successful if you are able to be present and mindful. If you are finding yourself overwhelmed or undermotivated, please prioritize our class time. My hope is that the experiential nature of our work together will go a long way in preparing you for your work as a therapist in the future.

Required TEXTS:

Buckley, Geoffrey. *Narrative Systems in Psychotherapy: An Integrative Approach to Individual, Couple, and Family Therapy*. Cognella, Inc., 2019.

Gottman, J. S., & Gottman, J. M. (2015). *Ten principles for doing effective couples therapy*. New York, NY: Norton.

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

Phoenix, L. (2022). *The Anxious Person's Guide to Non-Monogamy: Your Guide to Open Relationships, Polyamory and Letting Go*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Pera, G., & Robin, A. L. (Eds.). (2016). *Adult ADHD-focused couple therapy: Clinical interventions*. Routledge.

Highly Recommended Texts: *(these will be used in class for discussions and are great to have in your library as tools and guides)*

Chen, A. (2020). *Ace: What asexuality reveals about desire, society, and the meaning of sex*. Beacon Press.

Beattie, M. (1992). *Codependent no more: How to stop controlling others and start caring for yourself*. Hazelden Publishing.

Levine, A., & Heller, R. (2010). *Attached: the new science of adult attachment and how it can help you find--and keep--love*. Penguin.

McGoldrick, M. (2016). *The genogram casebook: A clinical companion to genograms: Assessment and intervention*. WW Norton & Company.

Gehart, Diane R., and Amy R. Tuttle. *Theory-Based Treatment Planning for Marriage and Family Therapists: Integrating Theory and Practice*. Thomson/Brooks/Cole, 2003.

Recommended Texts:

Johnson, S. M. (2008). *Hold me tight: Seven conversations for a lifetime of love*. New York, NY: Little Brown.

Rastogi, M. & Thomas, V. (2009). *Multicultural couple therapy*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. **AVAILABLE ONLINE**

Glass, Shirley (2003). *Not Just Friends: Rebuilding Trust and Recovering Your Sanity After Infidelity*. New York: Free Press.

Greenberg, Leslie S., and Goldman, Rhonda N. *Emotion-focused Couples Therapy: The Dynamics of Emotion, Love, and Power*. 1st ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2008. Print.

Gottman, John Mordechai., and Silver, Nan. *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert*. New York, NY: Three Rivers, 1999. Print.

Johnson, Susan M. *Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy with Trauma Survivors: Strengthening Attachment Bonds*. New York: Guilford, 2002. Print. Guilford Family Therapy Ser.

Johnson, Susan M. *The Practice of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.

Lockman, Darcy. *All the Rage: Mothers, Fathers, and the Myth of Equal Partnership*. First ed. New York, NY: Harper, an Imprint of HarperCollins, 2019. Print.

Nagoski, Emily. 2015. *Come as You Are*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Neff, K., & Germer, C. (2018). *The mindful self-compassion workbook: A proven way to accept yourself, build inner strength, and thrive*. Guilford Publications.

Mates-Youngman, Ma Katheen. *Couples Therapy Workbook: 30 Guided Conversations to Re-Connect Relationships*. PESI Publishing & Media, 2014.

Required Journal Articles

1. 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.
2. Knudson-Martin, C. (2013). Why power matters: Creating a foundation of mutual support in couple relationships. *Family Process*, 52, 5-18.
3. Knudson-Martin, C. and Mahoney, A.R. (2005), Moving Beyond Gender: Processes that create relationship equality. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 31: 235-258. doi:10.1111/j.1752-0606.2005.tb01557.x
4. Knudson-Martin, C., & Mahoney, A. (1998). Language and Processes in the Construction of Equality in New Marriages. *Family Relations*, 47 (1), 81-91. doi:10.2307/584854
5. Papernow, P. (2018). Clinical guidelines for working with stepfamilies: What family, couple, individual, and child therapists need to know. *Family Process*, 57, 25-51.
6. 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.

Potential & Suggested Journal Articles (*Read these only if they peak your interest. They may or may not be assigned/discussed in the course of our class.*)

Kim, L. & Esmiol Wilson, E. (2018). Finding a way through: Spirituality and sociocultural meaning in the face of infertility and perinatal loss. In *Socially just religious and spiritual interventions: Ethical uses of therapeutic power* (pp. 87-97). New York, NY: Springer.

Lebow, J., Chambers, A. L., Christensen, A., & Johnson, S. M. (2012). Research on the treatment of couple distress. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 38, 145-168.

Moors, A., Ryan, W., & Chopik, W. (2019). Multiple loves: The effects of attachment with multiple concurrent romantic partners on relational functioning. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 147, 102-110. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2019.04.023

Spencer, B. & Brown, J. (2007). Fusion or internalized homophobia? A pilot study of Bowen's differentiation of self hypothesis with lesbian couples. *Family Process*, 46, 257-268

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Participation** (20 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. | 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 groups of 3 (20 points). We will agree on the date you present. **June 16/23**

Please provide me with a very brief presentation conceptualization a week before you present. This can be in informal email format.

Please include 1: What population or issue is your focus? 2: What couple will you be basing your presentation on? If it is a movie or book please provide that. If you are making it up, let me know that. 3: Please provide the social location of the individuals involved and the presenting problem they bring to therapy. 4: What model or lens will guide treatment? (note: you will not need to create a treatment plan for the presentation, but class discussion or exercises may help to guide the treatment plan you will need to write up for your final paper.

Select a population or issue that interests you. Examples might be LGBTQ couples, couples representing a particular race, ethnicity, socio-economic status or religion, people in

polyamorous relationships, couples dealing with loss, depression, any type of parenting, infidelity, substance abuse, illness, aging, history of abuse, trauma, etc. Any topic that interests you is appropriate. ***Your presentation will provide a springboard for class discussion of treatment planning for this case.*** Please provide us with the lens or model you imagine would be effective and prepare an idea for a role play exercise that we may opt to engage in the day of your presentation.

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.)
- 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 | 5 | |
| Identifies key social contextual/demographic information, very brief history, and reason for seeing therapy | 5 | |
| Use a sociocultural guiding lens to contextualize the self/identity of each partner and how this affects 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 | 20 | |

3. Relationship Schema Reflection Paper: (20 points). DUE May 26 . This paper is an opportunity for you to reflect on your own relationship schema through the lenses of sociocultural attunement and attachment theory. You are expected to reflect on what you have internalized about relationships, particularly intimate ones; how this affects your relationships; and how your relational schema will affect your practice of therapy. The paper is to be a maximum of 8 pages, double-spaced, and referenced using APA style.

You may use the following questions to stimulate your reflections, as well as my relationship intake questions (to be provided):

- How does your experience in your family of origin, both past and current, affect your attachment style? What issues might bring you to therapy?
- How has your social location and sociocultural experience influenced your attachment experiences?
- What working models of relationships have you internalized? (for example, about trust in intimate relationships? About the possibility of resolving conflict? About what you expect to give and receive in intimate relationships?)
- What does your adult relationship history suggest about your relationship schema? How has this affected your experience with the Circle of Care?
- What behaviors do you currently exhibit that illustrate your attachment style? What are your coping mechanisms?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of your relationship schema? How has your attachment schema helped you or tripped you up?
- How does your relationship schema affect your conceptualization of the therapeutic relationship?
- How does it contribute to potential areas of reactivity?
- How does your attachment schema and sociocultural experience shape your view of what is a healthy couple relationship? Your belief that people can commit to each other and overcome problems?
- What blocks you from remaining present? What triggers you? When do you notice yourself exiting from emotion and what do you do when you exit? (withdraw? fix? solve? act like everything is okay?)
- How do you plan to address any problem areas you perceive?

| REFLECTIONS ON PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SCHEMA | Possible points | Points demonstrated |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|
| Reflections make connections between personal, familial, and sociocultural histories as they relate to the development of own relational schema. | 5 | |
| Reflections demonstrate awareness of self-in-relationship, such as attachment style and associated behaviors, areas of reactivity. | 5 | |
| Reflections demonstrate awareness of how own relationship schema may impact development and performance as a couple therapist. | 5 | |
| Reflections suggest that course concepts have been applied/integrated in the development of self-of-therapist. | 5 | |
| TOTAL | 20 | |

4) **Case Conceptualization and Treatment Plan** (20 points). **Due June 30**. 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 model of your choice 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.

Please make it clear what model /lens you're using and let it help you conceptualize the case and treatment plan.

| TREATMENT PLANNING COMPETENCIES | Possible points | Points demonstrated |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|
| Provides an overview of the partners involved, the reason for therapy, and influence of the sociocultural context. | 5 | |
| Conceptualization includes attention to power dynamics and the four elements of mutual support (Circle of Care) | 5 | |
| Treatment goals include attention to relational justice and mutual support. | 5 | |
| Treatment plan details how goals will be accomplished. | 5 | |
| TOTAL | 20 | |

5) **DV Video & Paper** (20 points). **Due August 4.**

Watch DV video series (8 hours). Write a 4 Page paper on your reflections of this training. In this paper include what you learned from the videos, why this is important for working with couples and individuals, tools you will take with you moving forward and anything else you think is important including any disagreements you have with the information.

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 20 pts
- Case Presentation 20 pts
- Treatment Plan 20 pts
- Relationship Schema Reflection 20 pts
- DV Video & Paper 20 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 |
|--------|--|---|
| May 12 | Pre-Marital Counseling Treatment Planning | <i>Theory-Based Treatment Planning</i> |
| May 19 | Narrative Couples Therapy | Narrative Book Ch. |
| May 26 | Emotion, Emotion, Emotion! How to stay with emotion and interrupt power all at the same time! Treatment Planning | Narrative Book Ch. <i>Theory-Based Treatment Planning</i> Relationship Schema Reflection Paper |

| | | |
|---------|---|-------------------------------------|
| June 2 | SERT- Dr. Kim Covering | Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 SERT book |
| June 9 | Genograms Genogram video Practice in groups | Genogram Book |
| June 16 | Presentations | |

| | | |
|-----------|--|--|
| June 23 | Presentations | |
| June 30 | Gottman approach Self of the therapist in couples work Neutral isn't necessary Practice in groups | Gottman Book Case Conceptualization & treatment planning Assignment due |
| July 7 | Attachment & codependency & ACE Practice in groups | Codependent No More & Attached & ACE |
| July 14 | Step Families, ADHD & Couples | Article 5 Adult ADHD-Focused Couple Therapy |
| July 21 | Catch up Practice in groups | |
| July 28 | Polyamory/ENM Case presentation: M&J | Anxious Persons Guide Book |
| August 4 | No Class | DV Assignment Due |
| August 11 | DV Conversation | *Remember to do course evaluations |