



**LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND
COUNSELING**

**CPSY 590/MCFT 563: The Plant-human bond and counseling
Summer 2023**

When: 06/02 & 06/03/23- 09:00AM - 05:30PM
Where: York 107
Instructor: Pilar Hernández-Wolfe, Ph.D.
Office Hours: By appointment
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CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This course provides an opportunity for students to do in-depth exploration of specialized topics or practices related to ecopsychology and to gain experience in various roles such as counselor, therapist, educator, activist, consultant, or researcher. Course focus and format varies given year and instructor. Topics have included human animal bond, environmental justice, and creative interventions.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course takes as its departure point the embeddedness of our lives and the lives of all other beings on the planet. Relational therapies care about the well-being of human and other beings, engage in advocacy and activism, and constructively imagine how pathways for healing can occur in relation to other than human beings. We will examine how culture's origin stories impact their relationship with nature and wellbeing; South American Andean perspectives of reciprocity; the role of symbols, stories/myths, songs, dance and rituals; and specific relationships with plants. In addition, we will examine ways in which therapists can incorporate working with plant beings in their clinical practice from a perspective that fosters reciprocity.

Program Objectives:

SLO 1.2: Students recognize the interconnections among biological, psychological, social systems in people's lived experience.

SLO 1.3: Students apply systems/relational theories to clinical case conceptualization

OBJECTIVES:

1. Understand the meaning of the plant human bond at the level of larger ecological and social systems and family dynamics.
2. Distinguish between western and Indigenous worldviews and ways of relating to other than human beings.
3. Examine the use of human-nature assessment instruments in clinical practice.
4. Identify specific therapeutic techniques that incorporate the plant-human bond.

TEACHING METHODS

A variety of teaching methods will be utilized during this course in order to achieve the above objectives. Among those methods will be assigned readings, class discussions, experiential activities, and lectures.

READINGS:

Students are expected to be prepared to discuss the ideas and concepts discussed in the readings. The textbook should be read in its entirety by the end of the course.

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.

ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Participation (40 pts)

Students are required to attend and actively participate in all scheduled class meetings. This includes being on time, reading all of the assigned material and discussing it, and otherwise engaging with colleagues as fellow professionals. Class discussions require active participation from students.

2. **Reaction paper #1 – 30 pts – Due on 06/02/23 bring a print copy to class (max 10 pages, single or double space).** Identify your name and year in the program at the top of the first page, do not include a title page/name page.

We all have a relationship with plants. This reflective exercise seeks to examine your relationship with them. The absence and/or presence of plants in your life says something about your relationship with them. Reflect on your relationships with plants using the following questions.

1. Have you ever tried to grow a plant? What happened? What did the flourishing or withering mean to you? (did they grow well, poorly, did they not survive?) What did you learn about being in relationship with a plant(s)? (describe the ways in which the relationship was enacted or not).
 2. What is absent from your life due to a lack of close relationships with plants?
 3. Did anyone in your family have close relationships with plants? What was modeled for you about relationships with plants? How was this modeling similar and different from relationships with other beings (e.g. domestic and/or wild animals; humans).
 4. How does your relationship with plants impact your other relationships?
3. **Reaction paper 2 – 30 pts – Due 06/08/23. Send PDF to pilarhw@lclark.edu (max 5 pages, single or double space).**

Use the vignette provided at the end of the syllabus to create a clinical intervention involving the plant-human bond. You may use any of the materials, examples, and illustrations provided in the lectures in your write up.

4. **APA format.**

All papers should be typed APA style with all references appropriately cited, must be edited and checked for correct grammar.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Carvalho, D. & Platt, J. (2019). Indigenous healing: Mental health and the path of the condor. In M.L. Twist. & T. Laszloffy (Eds.), *Eco-Informed Practice: Family Therapy in an Age of Ecological Peril*. Springer Briefs.

Laszloffy, L. (2019). Evaluating how mental health, physical and relational health are tied to ecological issues. In M.L. Twist. & T. Laszloffy (Eds.), *Eco-Informed Practice: Family Therapy in an Age of Ecological Peril*. Springer Briefs.

Hernandez-Wolfe, P. (2018). Ecoinformed couple and family therapy, systems thinking, and social Justice, *Ecopsychology*, 10(3), 151-157. <https://doi.org/10.1089/eco.2018.0009>

Herlein, K.M. & Hecther, S. (2019). Clinical applications of an ecoinformed approach to therapy: A systemic perspective. In M.L. Twist. & T. Laszloffy (Eds.), *Eco-Informed Practice: Family Therapy in an Age of Ecological Peril*. Springer Briefs.

Wall Kirmmerer, R. (2013). *Braiding sweetgrass*. Canada: Milkweed Editions.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Brown, A.M. (2017). *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. CA: A.K. Press

Ferdinand, M. (2022). *Decolonial Ecology: Thinking from the Caribbean World* (Critical South). Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press.

FINAL GRADING

A = 93-100

A- = 90-92

B+ = 88-89

B = 83-87

B- = 80-82

C+ = 78-79

C = 73-77

C- = 70-72

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.

SPECIAL NEEDS/ ACCOMMODATIONS

Please see me individually at the beginning of the semester if you require any special accommodations as a result of a documented disability.

DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

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.

Assignment #2. Case Study.

Alli is a 36-year-old Asian American Cis Hetero is partnered with a White cis hetero male who is devoted most of his energy to his business. The couple decided early in their marriage that they would not have children. Alli was trained as a social worker and worked for 4 years before meeting her partner and getting married. Alli spent her time doing volunteer work at a hospital. Alli usually confined her drinking to social occasions but began drinking more as she began to feel increasingly lonely and empty. Later in the day, after her volunteer work or shopping, she frequently stopped at a local restaurant with friends and had a few cocktails before going home. Her husband often worked late so she had two or more drinks while preparing dinner for herself. On the days he was away her drinking increased substantially in the evenings.