

CTSP 590-03: Couples Counseling (Fall 2023)

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Course Information

In-Person Dates: Saturdays (10/28/2023 & 12/2/2023)
Time: 9 AM — 5:30 PM
Location: York Graduate Center (Room 105)
Credits: 1
Credit Hour Breakdown: 15 hours

Prerequisites for Students: None.

Course Catalog Description

“Content: Special topics in counseling, therapy and school psychology. Students may obtain a course description from the department office or website.”

Extended Course Description

This course includes an overview of the basic models of relationship counseling, also known as couples or marriage counseling. Our learning will be lecture-oriented (lessons, videos, presentations), experiential (demonstrations, role playing, group presentations, panels, discussions), and self-guided (readings, podcasts, videos, articles).

Together, we will focus on understanding and assessing relationship-systems as an interacting system; treatment planning; developing and maintaining therapeutic balance; and acquiring and practicing specific skills and frameworks for systemic intervention.

We will also learn about the clinical indications and contraindications to providing relationship counseling (recognizing when it is appropriate and inappropriate to provide relationship counseling) to recognize the appropriateness. Students will have the opportunity to identify their own strengths and skills, and contemplate their self-as-the-therapist in conjoint treatment.

Course Objectives

- Define relationship counseling as a unique theoretical and practiced model of counseling.
- Provide a basic understanding of several theories and frameworks used as a foundation for conceptualizing treatment and practicing relationship counseling.
- Recognize common concerns, factors, considerations and issues in relationship counseling.
- Experience the practice of relationship counseling through role-plays within the classroom setting.
- Expand awareness around the student’s sense of self, personal worldview and biases—including power, privilege and oppression—in order to do the following: **(1)** Create a foundation of accountability when considering the impact of treatment with clients; **(2)** Support the student in facilitating effective therapeutic interactions; and **(3)** Support the student in conceptualizing and practicing intentional and ongoing self-care (self maintenance or self-preservation).

Course Books (Required):

- **Attachment Theory in Practice: Emotionally Focused Therapy with Individuals, Couples, & Families.** (2019). Johnson, Susan. The Guilford Press. ISBN: 9781462538249.
- **Polysecure: Attachment, Trauma and Consensual Nonmonogamy.** (2020). Fern, Jessica. Thorntree Press. ISBN: 9781944934989.
- **10 Principles For Doing Effective Couples Therapy.** (2015). Gottman, Julie, & Gottman, John. Norton & Company. ISBN: 9780393708356.

Course Books (Recommended):

- **All About Love: New Visions.** (2018). Hooks, Bell. William Morrow Paperbacks. ISBN: 9780060959470.
- **Creating Connection: A Relational-Cultural Approach with Couples.** (2013). Jordan, Judith, & Carlson, Jon. Routledge. ISBN: 9780415817585.
- **Polyamory: A Clinical Toolkit for Therapists (and Their Clients).** (2020). Kauppi, Martha. Rowman & Littlefield. ISBN: 9781538129890.
- **Love's Not Color Blind: Race and Representation in Polyamorous and Other Alternative Communities.** Patterson, Kevin. Thorntree Press. 9781944934460.
- **Attached: The New Science of Adult Attachment and How It Can Help You Find—and Keep—Love.** (2012). Levine, Amir, & Heller, Rachel. Tarcher Perigee. ISBN: 9781585429134.
- **Polyvagal Theory in Therapy: Engaging the Rhythm of Regulation.** (2018) Dana, Deb. Norton & Company. ISBN: 9780393712377.
- **Love, Always: Partners of Trans People on Intimacy, Challenge and Resilience.** (2015). Johnson, Jordon. Transgress Press. ISBN: 9780986084409.
- **Helping Couples on the Brink of Divorce: Discernment Counseling for Troubled Relationships.** (2017). Doherty, William. American Psychological Association. ISBN: 9781433827501.

Course Policies

Email Policy

I try my best to respond to emails from students within one business day. I encourage you to reach out at any time, and I will respond as my schedule allows.

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 (10%) 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 may be seen as an absence that requires make-up work.”

Participation: Your attendance and participation are essential for the structure and integrity of this course. I expect the students joining this course to fully participate throughout our time together. This will not only enrich your learning, but the learning of your classmates as well. Classroom participation helps you to complete your assignments, and demonstrates respect to classmates, the instructor, and classroom guests. Classroom discussions are an opportunity to bring up questions about the assigned readings, deepen your understanding of work with relationship-systems, and integrate course material with your own personal and professional experience. Furthermore, the material we will explore in this course might be emotionally and mentally impactful. I encourage you to find ways to support yourself both in-and-out of the classroom. Please let me know, in advance, if there are impactful elements of your current life that I should be aware of in support of your learning.

Assignment Format: All written assignments must be: **Double-Spaced** and in **Size 12 Times New Roman** font.

Assignment Submission: All presentations and written assignments must be submitted through **Moodle**.

Late Assignment Policy: Assignments submitted past the assigned deadline will not be accepted, and will be marked as incomplete. If you need an extension on an assignment, please contact the instructor (myself) beforehand to request an extension and we can work together.

Classroom and Professional Values

Safety and respect are prioritized in our classroom space. All students will need to work together with me and with one another to uphold the inherent right of each student to feel safe and to be respected. Our interactions will challenge you to practice self-awareness, practice cultural humility, honor the diverse nature of the classroom community, and consider ethical principles. During our time together, we will examine the nature of both privilege and marginalization. These systems underline all clinical interactions. Students will have the opportunity to respectfully and earnestly learn how to recognize, name and begin to challenge and even dismantle systems of power and oppression that replicate themselves in the counseling field, within the therapeutic alliance, and within relationship-systems themselves. Please be aware that your classmates may have marginalized identities, and they are not enrolled in this course to experience further marginalization. If a classmate requests that you, or we as a group, use or not use specific terms to describe them or their family, please respect this.

Confidentiality and Ethical Guidelines

“It is expected that students will follow the ethical guidelines as defined by the [American Counselors Associations \(ACA\)](#). Guidelines, parameters, and boundaries are implemented into assignments and class discussions, and it is expected that anything presented by students during class presentations, assignments and discussions will remain confidential. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in failure of the class. Some of our topics may bring up personal opinions on politics, religion, bodies, gender, and more. Your final course grade will also be determined by how you conduct yourself in class, how you engage with others, and how you manage challenges.”

Lewis & Clark COVID-19 Response

“Lewis & Clark is committed to providing in-person education and support to students in a close-knit campus community. We are also committed to the health of our community, and will take necessary steps to promote public health and protect members of our community whenever possible. Although no college campus can guarantee a COVID-free environment, we can greatly minimize the risks of COVID with appropriate mitigation measures, such as widespread vaccination. Our approach to COVID is based on [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) guidance to colleges and universities, as well as guidance from the Oregon Health Authority and county public health officials. As the pandemic continues to evolve, and relevant guidance changes, we will update these policies and provide necessary information to the campus community.”

Lewis & Clark guidelines up-to-date details about our COVID-19 response: lclark.edu/news/covid-19-response

Classroom COVID-19 Policy

To better protect both the instructor (myself) and the students in the classroom during class time, the students, instructors and guests present in the classroom will be required to wear masks. I will have a supply of KN95 masks available during each lecture. Due to this protective guideline, students are free to take a brief break from the room if they wish to remove their mask temporarily. If you are exempt from wearing a mask, please discuss this with the instructor (myself) further before the course begins.

Students with Disabilities Policy

Lewis & Clark College is committed to serving the needs of its students with disabilities. Professional staff in the office of Student Support Services ensure that disabled students receive all of the benefits of a comprehensive selection of services, and a formal Student Disability Grievance Procedure provides prompt and equitable resolution of any complaints arising out the College's responsibilities under the ADA Amendments Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other pertinent federal, state, and local disability anti-discrimination laws. If you have a disability that may impact your academic performance, you may request accommodations by submitting documentation to the **Student Support Services Office**. 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.

Office of Student Accessibility
Albany Quadrangle (Room 206)
615 S Palatine Hill Rd, MSC 112
Portland, OR 97219

Email: access@lclark.edu
Ph: (503) 768-7192 (Voice)
Fax: (503) 768-7197

Please see the Student Support Services website for more information:

http://www.lclark.edu/offices/student_support_services/rights/disability_policy/

Lewis & Clark Graduate School Essential Policies

This course adheres to the general policies outlined in the catalog and student handbook of the Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling. This includes full adherence to the following policies:

- Nondiscrimination: go.lclark.edu/gsec-nondiscrimination
- Standards for Professional Student Conduct and Academic Integrity: go.lclark.edu/gsec-conduct
- Sexual Misconduct: go.lclark.edu/titleIX

If you have any questions regarding these policies, please speak to your instructor (myself) for clarification.

Course Assignments (100 Points)

Attendance & Participation (40 Points)

Your attendance and participation is essential for the structure and integrity of this course. If circumstances arise that stop you from attending class, please let me know by email as soon as possible. In order to make up for the missed class time, you will interview two classmates on what happened during class and write a 1-page reflection paper.

Group Chapter Presentations (12 Points)

You will be placed into groups and assigned a chapter from *10 Principles*. You will work with your group members in creating a presentation (10 minutes) on the chapter assigned to you, and facilitate a class discussion around the assigned chapter. This presentation and class discussion can be done via PowerPoint, roundtable discussion, or another creative format. When you are sitting back and watching your other classmates present, you will still be responsible for reading the chapters assigned to other groups and participating in their class discussions.

Due Date: Saturday, December 2nd 2023 (In-Class)

Considerations Assignment (9 Points)

You will choose a theme from the several concerns, factors, considerations and issues that you have reviewed during this course. You will then write about why you have chosen this theme, how it would impact you to come across this theme in-treatment with relationship-systems, and your ideas for working with this theme.

Length of Paper: 1 — 2 pages

Due Date: Friday, December 1st 2023 (11:59PM)

Reading Assignments & Reading Log (7 points)

You will complete all assigned required readings, and create a reading log that confirms you read each required reading. Please include any additional recommended readings or indirect learning you completed for this course.

Reading Log: 1 page

Due Date: Wednesday, December 13th 2023 (11:59PM)

Role-Playing Experiential Sessions (12 points)

You will be assigned to a group to engage in role-playing sessions together. You and your group members will take turns being the clinician, being the clients, and being observers. Each group member will be the clinician for at least 2 10-minute sessions (1 per classroom meeting). You will then engage in a post-roleplay discussion with your group members and then write a reflection paper on what the role-playing experience was like for you.

Length of Paper: 1 — 2 pages

Due Date: Wednesday, December 13th 2023 (11:59PM)

Case Conceptualization Assignment (20 points)

You will choose one of the fictional relationship-systems illustrated in the case vignettes (1 — 5). You will then write a paper outlining your case conceptualization of the relationship-system, including clinical observations and wonderings about the individual partners and the relationship-system as a whole. You will also include a treatment pathway you would recommend and provide for the relationship-system. Finally, you will explore any self-as-the-therapist considerations and issues that may arise with treating your chosen relationship-system.

Length of Paper: 2 — 3 pages

Due Date: Wednesday, December 13th 2023 (11:59PM)

Point Breakdown

Class Attendance + Participation	40
Group Chapter Presentations	12
Considerations Assignment	9
Reading Assignments & Reading Log	7
Role-Playing Experiential Sessions	12
Case Conceptualization Assignment	20
Total	100

Grade Distribution

94 — 100	A
90 — 93	A-
85 — 89	B+
80 — 84	B
75 — 79	B-
70 — 74	C+
< 70	C

Assignment Format: All written assignments must be: **Double-Spaced** and in **Size 12 Times New Roman** font.

Assignment Submission: All presentations and written assignments must be submitted through **Moodle**.

Late Assignment Policy: Assignments submitted past the assigned deadline will not be accepted, and will be marked as incomplete. If you need an extension on an assignment, please contact the instructor (myself) beforehand to request an extension and we can work together.

Grading Rubric

Attendance & Participation	Possible Points
Demonstrates prompt and dependable presence in the class.	8
Prepares for class through completing assigned readings and reflecting on their application to personal practice.	8
Contributes to ongoing reflection and evaluation of own development of a critical contextual consciousness and awareness of equity in clinical practice.	8
Contributes to the development of other class members and the group as a whole.	8
Helps to create an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect among all class members.	8
Total	40
Group Chapter Presentations	Possible Points
Collaborates sincerely and equitably with other group members in the creation and completion of the group presentation.	5
Completes the group presentation as outlined in the course assignment section of the syllabus.	5
Engages and participates sincerely in other presentations through reading and discussion.	2
Total	12

Considerations Assignment	Possible Points
Completes paper as outlined in the course assignment section of the syllabus.	3
Demonstrates new insight and knowledge regarding your chosen theme through including a description how your chosen theme would impact you in-treatment with relationship-systems, along with your ideas for working with your chosen theme.	3
Demonstrates sincere reflection of personal and professional experience from learning about your chosen theme through including reflection in the paper.	3
Total	9
Reading Assignments & Reading Log	Possible Points
Completes all readings and reading log as outlined in the course assignment section of the syllabus.	7
Total	7
Role-Playing Experiential Sessions	Possible Points
Demonstrates sincere reflection of personal and professional experience from role-playing as a couples counselor in the assignment's reflection paper.	4
Demonstrates skills and knowledge in couples counseling while engaging in role plays.	4
Completes the reflection paper as outlined in the course assignment section of the syllabus.	4
Total	12
Case Conceptualization Assignment	Possible Points
Completes the paper as outlined in the course assignment section of the syllabus.	6
Demonstrates new insight and knowledge by including: Your case conceptualization of the relationship-system, including clinical observations and wonderings about the individual partners and the relationship-system as a whole; a treatment pathway you would recommend and provide for the relationship-system; and any self-as-the-therapist considerations and issues that may arise with treating your chosen relationship-system.	7
Demonstrates sincere reflection of personal and professional experience through including reflection in the paper.	7
Total	20

Course Schedule

Readings to be completed prior to Day I:

- Attachment Theory in Practice: Emotionally Focused Therapy with Individuals, Couples, & Families. (**Entire Book**)
- 10 Principles For Doing Effective Couples Therapy. (**Chapters 1 — 5**)

Assignments due prior to Day I: None.

Day I Agenda (Saturday, October 28th, 2023)

9:00 — 9:55 AM: Introductions Syllabus Review	1:00 — 1:55 PM: Break
10:00 — 10:55 AM: Theories and Frameworks	2:00 — 2:55 PM: Common Concerns, Factors, Considerations and Issues
11:00 — 11:55 AM: Theories and Frameworks Intake & Assessment	3:00 — 3:55 PM: Co-Regulation and the Nervous System Practicing Skills
12:00 — 1:00 PM: Intersectionality and Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	4:00 — 4:55 PM: Group Role Plays
	5:00 — 5:30 PM: Wrap-Up

Total In-Person Learning: 7.5 Hours

Readings to be completed prior to Day II:

- Polysecure: Attachment, Trauma and Consensual Nonmonogamy. (**Entire Book**)
- 10 Principles For Doing Effective Couples Therapy. (**Chapters 6 — 11**)

Assignments due Friday, December 1st 2023 (11:59PM):

- Considerations Assignment

Day II Agenda (Saturday, December 2nd, 2023)

9:00 — 9:55 AM: Check-In Chapter Presentations (10 Mins)	1:00 — 1:55 PM: Break
10:00 — 10:55 AM: Chapter Presentations (10 Mins) Treatment Pathways	2:00 — 2:55 PM: Therapist Panel
11:00 — 11:55 AM: Treatment Pathways	3:00 — 3:55 PM: Group Role Plays
11:55 — 1:00 PM: Ethics in Relationship Counseling	4:00 — 4:55 PM: Self-Care
	5:00 — 5:30 PM: Wrap-Up

Total In-Person Learning: 7.5 Hours

Assignments due Wednesday, December 13th 2023 (11:59PM):

- Reading Log
- Role-Playing Experiential Sessions Reflection Paper
- Case Conceptualization Assignment