



**LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND COUNSELINGCPSY590/MCFT 563:**  
**Somatic Therapy**  
**Fall 2023**

---

When: 10/14/2023-10/15/2023 Lecture Saturday, Sunday 09:00AM - 05:30PM  
 Where: York 101  
 Instructor: Toren Volkmann, MA, LMFT  
 Office Hours: By appointment  
 E-Mail: [torenvolkmann@lclark.edu](mailto:torenvolkmann@lclark.edu)

### **CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

The field of family and couple therapy continues to evolve; working holistically and including body awareness has become more accepted in therapy. This paradigm shift from a focus on cognition, thoughts and feelings to including the entirety of one's body offers powerful tools to deeper healing and change in the therapeutic setting. This two-day course explores somatic approaches and basic skills to work with clients somatically. Topics covered include: 1) foundations of somatic therapy; 2) arch of a somatic therapy session and therapeutic relationship; 3) basic practice of tracking, applied mindfulness, contact statements and engagement with somatic principles; 4) exploration of ethics, application and implications of somatic therapy in a clinical setting.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

While Trauma (work with EMDR/PTSD), attachment work and many other types of therapy often (if not always) incorporate somatic elements in clinical work, this course will focus specifically on experiential and mindfulness-based somatic therapy. The following topics will be reviewed and discussed: basic skills and techniques of establishing a therapeutic relationship, working experientially, including applied mindfulness, as well as tracking, contacting and working with the body in a therapeutic setting. Consideration will be given to ethical challenges and clinical implications and imitations. This course will combine experiential learning, lectures and seminar discussions.

**COVID policies:**

<https://www.lclark.edu/news/covid-19-response/health-and-safety/>

<https://www.lclark.edu/news/covid-19-response/students/covid-19-communications/>

**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:**

Students will be able to:

1. Understand the importance and distinctions of somatic therapy as it pertains to working with the body and using the here and now experience
2. Understand basic skills of forming a therapeutic relationship, tracking, inducing mindfulness, and contacting and the role they play in somatic therapy
3. Examine ethical and clinical implications as well as limitations of applying somatic therapy in the counseling setting

**TEACHING METHODS**

A variety of teaching methods will be utilized during this course 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. There is a required textbook (see below), in addition to recommended readings.

**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 may be seen as an absence that requires make-up work.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Participation (30 pts)

- Full attendance to both days of class is required for a passing grade
- Giving attention to the instructor and/or other students when they are making a presentation.
- Demonstrating ability to recognize and use subtle non-verbal communication cues to assess your impact on your peers and participate in class.
- Demonstrating ability to be open about discussing the impact of your comments on your peers.
- Coming to class prepared (having read the assignment for the day)
- Contributing to in-class discussion based on the topics of discusses and the readings assigned. Contributions may include how you feel about the material but merely articulating your feelings is not sufficient. You are expected to put those feelings in context of your thoughts and analysis of the material.
- Engaging in group discussions with attention and energy.
- Asking questions of the instructor and/or other students regarding the material examined in that class.
- Providing examples to support or challenge the issues talked about in class.
- Making comments or giving observations about topics in the course, especially those that tie in the classroom material to "real world" problems or try to integrate the content of the course.
- Dealing with other students and/or the instructor in a respectful fashion.
- Active listening. Students will be asked questions related to the course's readings randomly in class by other students and by the instructor. Your participation in small group discussions is also required.

### 2. Reflection Paper – 30 pts – 3/4-pages due by Nov 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

This paper is meant to be a reflection on the material covered in class as well as your experiences engaging with, practicing and applying some of the foundational skills of somatic therapy.

Use the following questions as prompts to reflect on your experience in class:

- What skills did you find the most interesting to you?
- Which skills did you find more challenging to apply in practice? Why?
- What did you notice when you were tracking other people's bodies or their experiences?
- What was it like to have others see you, track you and notice your physical body?

- What role do you see mindfulness having in somatic therapy, in your own clinical work or even daily life?
  - What are some of the ways you see dirty pain manifesting in your own expression or those around you (ie; avoidance, denial, blame, etc)? Why do you (or we) gravitate to these patterns (ie. what is the benefit/payoff)?
  - In what ways do you see somatic therapy contributing to yourself, clients and the collective being able to move toward and metabolize clean pain?
3. **Somatic Therapy Research Paper – 50 pts – (5/6-pages, double space, due on Dec 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023)** Look into one somatic modality or author (& book) that you find interesting. Based on your research and reading, please **a)** describe in detail how the approach works, what some of the clinical applications demonstrate, and **b)** evaluate the approach relative to the following topics:
- a) What are some of the strengths and limitations of this model of somatic therapy?
  - b) What are some ethical considerations when engaging with this modality?
  - c) Who are the creators of the model and how do issues of gender, class, ability, and race shape this work and potentially impact those that receive somatic therapy, or vice versa?
  - d) Do you see yourself as someone who would like to pursue training in this approach, would you consider integrating some of it in your work? Why or why not?

#### 4. **APA format.**

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

#### **TEXTBOOKS:**

##### **Required Reading:**

Menakem, R. (2017). *My Grandmother's Hands*. Central Recovery Press

##### **Recommended Reading:**

Fisher, R. (2002). *Experiential Psychotherapy with Couples: a guide for the creative pragmatist*. Zeig, Tucker, & Theisen

Kurtz, R. (1990). *Body-Centered Psychotherapy: The Hakomi Method*. LifeRhythm

Ogden, P. (). *The Pocket Guide to Sensorimotor Psychotherapy in Context*. Norton

Levine, P. (1997). *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma*. North Atlantic Books

van der Kolk, B. (2014). *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. Viking

### **Recommended Articles:**

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>

### **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**

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.