

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to introduce students to the theory, philosophy, and methods of working with clients, using the couple as the primary client. The role of the clinician and strategies of intervention will be emphasized. During this course students review the fundamentals of assessment and intervention with couples and how this differs from psychotherapy with individuals, groups, and families. Teaching strategies for this course will include lectures, demonstrations, discussions, role plays, and student-lead discussions.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS**

1. Gurman, A.S., & Jacobson, N. S. (2002). Clinical handbook of couples therapy (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York, Guilford Press.
2. Dattilio, F. M. (ed). (2001). Case Studies in couple and family therapy: Systemic and cognitive perspectives. New York, Guilford Press.
3. Reserve readings as assigned by the instructor

### **RECOMMENDED READING**

1. Prager, K. (1995). The psychology of intimacy. New York, Guilford Press.

### **PREREQUISITE**

MCPY665- Theories of Family Therapy

### **COURSE OUTCOMES**

1. Know how to conduct an initial interview procedure to gather information for the purpose of assessing the relationship dynamics, demonstrable psychopathology and complicating factors.
2. Conduct an initial intake interview with a couple to assess relationship dynamics.
3. Integrate information from the initial intake interview to formulate a treatment plan.
4. Develop strategies consistent with a theoretical model of couple counseling to facilitate treatment.
5. Demonstrate awareness of cultural and gender issues as they impact the dyad and the therapeutic relationship.
6. Be familiar with research on marital success and failure, and outcome studies on the success of models of couple therapy.
7. Be able to develop a treatment plan based on the theoretical modalities of couple counseling.
8. Know the interventions associated with a theoretical model of couple counseling.
9. Understand the ethical issues of working with couples.
10. Apply therapeutic techniques in role-play that are consistent with a specific theoretical orientation of couple therapy.

### **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

Assignments must be completed before or by 6 pm on the dates they are due. Late work will be marked down one letter grade per week. Students should be ready ahead of time for class participation and/or discussion. There will be additional readings assigned as they are appropriate. Late work will be marked down one letter grade.

1. Group Presentation of Theoretical Orientation: Students will form groups based on interest in one of the theoretical orientations presented in Gurman & Jacobson. They will present their understanding of the orientation to the class. Specifics of the class presentation will be covered the first night of class.
2. Journal: Students will keep a weekly journal with reactions to assigned readings and classroom activities. Journal entries including reactions to the previous week's readings and activities should be e-mailed to the instructor by noon the Monday of the following class so that we may discuss common themes that emerge. Entries should be at least one page typed, paragraph spacing 1 ½ and 10-point font.
3. Presentation on popular self-help book: Many people come to therapy having read one or more self-help books. We will use each others as resources to have a cursory understanding of many of these books. Select a book from the list provided. Prepare a detailed outline of the book (I will hand out an example the first night) to hand out in class. Prepare a 20 minute presentation on the book. Specifics of presentation will be covered the first night of class.
4. Video Tape: Each student will have the opportunity to provide psychotherapy to a role-play "couple". A 30 minute session will be videotaped, and students will hand in a 5 page reaction paper the week following their interview. Some students will role play intake sessions while others will role-play sessions in different stages of therapy. Details of reaction paper will be covered the first night of class.
5. Literature Review: Students will complete a scholarly literature review (7-10 pages) based on existing research pertaining to an area of personal interest in couple therapy. Completed research papers must adhere to APA style guidelines. Papers must be of sufficient length to adequately cover the material researched.

**GRADED ASSIGNMENTS**

	<u>Grade%</u>	<u>Due Dates</u>
Group Presentation	15%	TBD
Journal	10%	Weekly
Self Help Book Presentation & Outline	15%	Weeks 3 & 4
Role Play	10%	Weeks 5 & 6
Role Play Reaction Paper	15%	Weeks 6 & 7
Research Paper	20%	Week 8
Class Participation	15%	

Please keep in mind that being late to class may cause disruption; so, please be on time, and be prepared to participate and/or lead class discussions. **Any absences and/or tardiness will affect the final grade (unless you have instructor's approval).**

## ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend each class meeting, on time, and prepared to engage in discussions of the assigned readings and class experiential activities. Attendance and participation is an important part of each student's grade. Absences will affect the student's final grade regardless of the reason. Students should notify the instructor in advance, if possible, if an absence is necessary. Students are responsible for all material covered on any missed class meetings. Students who miss more than one class will be graded down one letter grade on their final grade and students who miss more than two classes will be administratively dropped from the course.

## GRADING

Grades in the MACP program reflect those listed in the Regis University Bulletin. In addition, refer to the following considerations:

### **A: Outstanding scholarship**

1. Fulfills all course objectives in an outstanding fashion displaying independent, analytic and synthetic thinking.
2. Reflects high degree of personal initiative and creativity in the thoroughness, depth and overall quality of the work.
3. Displays relevant, fluent, and well-organized writing. Supports clearly reasoned ideas and arguments with cogent resources. Is virtually free from errors in mechanics, usage, spelling and documentation.

### **A-: Also displays outstanding scholarship**

1. May contain a few minor errors in writing, documentation or reasoning.

### **B+: Very Good**

1. Adequately fulfills all course objectives. Displays a good understanding of basic concepts and uses them in constructing ideas and arguments.
2. Displays organized and well structured writing, although may contain some minor flaws in construction of paragraphs.
3. Shows less fluid integration and creativity in resources and thinking.

### **B: Satisfactory**

1. Reflects adequate work which is acceptable and meets the course objectives. Conveys an understanding of basic concepts that show a basic level of support for ideas and arguments.
2. Has writing that is organized but lacks transitions and syntactic variety. Is without major errors in grammar, sentence structure or documentation.

### **B-: Limited**

1. Shows some analysis and presentation of basic concepts. Has limited organization or integration of ideas.
1. Contains occasional major errors in writing or frequent errors in grammar and mechanics. Has documentation, but may be imprecise.
2. Has logical and/or analytical problems in arguments. Utilizes limited resources.

### **C: Unsatisfactory**

1. Fails to show an adequate understanding of major concepts. Does not present ideas and arguments in a logical fashion.
2. Has writing which contains numerous errors in grammar, usage and mechanics.
3. Displays inadequate documentation of use of resources.
4. Does not adequately meet course objectives.
5. C+ or C- may be assigned for work that is somewhat better or worse than the criteria listed above.

### **F: Unscorable**

1. Fails to understand and present major concepts. Contains arguments that are illogical or irrelevant.
2. Has writing that is incoherent or seriously flawed.
3. Fails to meet course objectives.
4. Is illegible or obviously not written on the assigned topic.

## PLAGIARISM POLICY

Plagiarism is defined as presenting as one's own the ideas, words or products of another. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references. This includes copying and pasting from online media or from any website. By placing one's name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. Evidence of plagiarism will result in a student review.

Sanctions for plagiarism may include:

- A failing grade on an assignment
- Failure of the course

- Expulsion of the student from the University

Student Appeal Process:

- The student may appeal any plagiarism accusation or sanction given in Graduate Programs. The appeal is made to the Associate Academic Dean of Graduate Programs, or the Dean's designee, whose decision is final.

### **ETHICS AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

An integral part of SPS Counseling Psychology Program courses is student and instructor self-disclosure and the use of personal experiences for the purpose of facilitating coursework and learning. Each student is expected to honor confidentiality as it pertains to student self-disclosure. No shared information, comments, or opinions expressed by other students or instructor in the educational setting should ever be used in a manner which is intended to humiliate, embarrass, harass, damage, or otherwise injure the student in her/her personal, public or business life. In addition, confidentiality must be upheld by not disclosing any information that would identify a particular individual or organization.

An additional integral component of higher education is challenging one's own perceptions and beliefs regarding the course content and integrating information as well as understanding opposing perceptions and beliefs. Thus, students have the right to choose how much they will disclose and must also accept the responsibility of respecting disclosure of other students and instructors.

### **DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

Because counselors work with clients having diverse lifestyles, beliefs and values, the Counseling Program exposes students to a wide range of social, relational and cross-cultural contexts. The Counseling faculty provides open and supportive learning environments where students are invited to engage in personal and reflective processes about their own and other's experiences, beliefs, and values. We seek to train counselors who can approach clients with integrity, respect and sensitivity for differences in beliefs, values and lifestyles.

Regis University supports an exploration of diverse views of faculty and students in the statement of academic freedom written by President Father Sheeran:

"A discussion of opposing intellectual positions is often germane to courses. When handling such an intellectual position in our atmosphere of academic freedom conducted with respectful, open dialogue, Regis University faculty present the tenants of any intellectual tradition with integrity" (*On the Teaching of Intellectual Positions in an Atmosphere of Academic Freedom at a Jesuit Catholic University. Draft 1/26/04. Machael J. Sheeran*)

## **Pre-Assignment**

1. Read Gurman & Jacobson Ch 1-5
  - a. These topics were covered in MCPY 665, so you should be able to skim them
2. Select popular self-help book to present (see list at end of syllabus and explanation of assignment on page 2 of syllabus)

## **Week 1:**

**In Class:** Discuss Syllabus, Assignments  
History of couple therapy  
Difference between couple therapy and other modalities  
Select topics for group presentations

### **Assignments**

1. Read Gurman & Jacobson 6-9
2. Read Datillo Ch 2, 18
3. Journal entry

## **Week 2:**

**In Class:** Discuss reactions to readings  
Lecture: Traditional Approaches, Assessment: intake interview

### **Assignments**

1. Read Gurman & Jacobson Ch 10-15 (11 & 12 were covered in MCPY665)
2. Read Datillo Ch 17, 19
3. Journal entry
4. review assessment inventory packets

## **Week 3:**

**In Class:** Discuss reactions to class and readings  
Lecture: Integrative approaches, Assessment: assessment inventories  
Self-help book presentations  
Video TBA

### **Assignments**

1. Read Gurman & Jacobson Ch 16-19
2. Read Datillo Ch 9, 13, 15, 16
3. Reading TBA covering feminist couple therapy
4. Journal entry

## **Week 4:**

**In Class:** Discuss reactions to class and readings  
Lecture: Post-modern approaches, feminist couple therapy  
Self-help book presentations

**Assignments**

1. Read Gurman & Jacobson Ch 20-22, Datillo Ch 12, 17
2. Reading TBA covering pre-marital counseling
3. Submit topic for research paper
4. Journal entry

**Week 5:**

**In Class:** Discuss reactions to previous class and readings  
Lecture: psychoeducational and preventative approaches, and violence, trauma, infidelity, and divorce  
Guest Lecturer: Sexuality  
Videotape role plays

**Assignments**

1. Read Gurman & Jacobson Ch TWO of 23-27, be prepared to discuss in small groups  
Role-play reaction paper
2. Submit list of references for research paper
3. Journal entry

**Week 6:**

**In Class:** Discuss reactions to previous class and readings  
Lecture: Violence, trauma, infidelity and divorce: Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race and Culture  
Guest Lecturer: Working with homosexual couples  
Videotape role plays

**Assignments**

1. Read Gurman & Jacobson:
2. Role-play reaction paper
3. Journal entry
4. work on research papers

**Week 7:**

**In Class:** Discuss reactions to previous class and readings  
Answer questions regarding research papers  
Small group discussions of psychiatric disorders, followed by class discussion  
Video TBA

**Assignment**

1. Complete research paper
2. Journal entry

**Week 8:**

**In Class:** Discuss reactions to previous class and readings  
Discuss research papers  
Video TBA  
Unfinished business

### **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED READINGS**

1. Bograd, M. (1992). Values in conflict: Challenges to family therapists' thinking. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 18*, 245-256.
2. Gottman, J.M. (1999). *The marriage clinic*. New York: Norton.
3. Hansen, M., & Harway, M. (Eds.). (1993). *Battering and family therapy*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
4. Hare-Mustin, R.T. (1989). The problem of gender in family therapy theory. In M. McGoldrick, C.M. Anderson, & F. Walsh (Eds.), *Women in families: A framework for family therapy* (pp/ 61-77). New York: Norton.
5. Hudson, R. O., & O'Hanlon, W. H. (1991). *Re-writing love stories: Brief marital therapy*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
6. Johnson, S.M. (2004). *The practice of emotionally focused couple therapy* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Taylor & Francis.
7. O'Hanlon, W., & Weiner-Davis, M. (1989). *In search of solutions: A new direction in psychotherapy*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co..
8. Rabin, C. (1996). *Equal partners-good friends: Empowering couples through therapy*. New York: Routledge.
9. Schwartz, P. & Rutter, V. (). *The gender of sexuality*. Pine Forge Press.

### **SELF-HELP BOOK LIST**

1. Bancroft, L. (2002) *Why does he do that?: Inside the minds of angry and controlling men*. New York: Berkeley Publishing
2. Christensen, A., & Jacobson, N. S. (2000). *Reconcilable differences*. New York: Guilford Press.
3. Gottman, J. M., & Silver, N. (1999). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. New York: Crown.
4. Gottman, J. M., & DeClaire, J. (2001). *The relationship cure*. New York: Crown.
5. Hendrix, H. (1988). *Getting the love you want: A guide for couples*. Henry Holt.
6. Heyn, D. (). *Marriage shock*. Dell Publishing.
7. Lerner, H. *The dance of: intimacy, anger, connection*. Harper Collins.
8. McGraw, P. (2000). *Relationship rescue: A 7-step strategy for reconnecting with your partner*. New York, Hyperion.
9. Spring, J. A., & Spring, M. (1996). *After the affair*. New York: Harper

Collins Publishers.

10. Weiner-Davis, M. (2001). Divorce remedy: The proven seven step program for saving your marriage. New York, Fireside.