San José State University
Department of Psychology
PSYC 208, Family/Couples Assessment and Therapy
Spring 2017

Instructor: Annabel Prins, PhD
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Office Hours: Thursday 9-11 or by appointment
Class Days/Time: Thursday 12:00-2:45
Classroom: DMH 308
Prerequisites: Enrollment in MS Clinical Program

Course Description

This graduate level MS clinical psychology class covers the assessment and treatment of couples and families. The first half of the semester will focus on approaches to couple therapy and special issues facing couples. For the second half of the semester, students will be introduced to the classic schools of family therapy, including assumptions about family dysfunction as well as theory specific assessments and therapy techniques. Empirical support for family and couples therapy will be reviewed, including the utilization of family and couples therapy to treat child, adolescent and adult psychopathology.

Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes:
Through this course, students will:
CLO1: learn different approaches to family and couples therapy.
CLO2: understand the role of context (demographic and sociocultural variables) in defining family and couple functioning.
CLO 3: identify and interpret assessments for evaluating family and couple functioning.
CLO4: identify and understand the therapeutic mechanisms associated with empirically supported treatments for families and couples
CLO5: develop and utilize critical thinking to integrate relevant clinical and contextual information to conceptualize and treat a family or couple seeking psychological services.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of the MS in Clinical Psychology:

PLO1.1 – Students will demonstrate breadth of knowledge of a variety of psychotherapy theories and in-depth knowledge of one chosen theory of intervention.
PLO1.2 – Students will demonstrate knowledge of empirically supported clinical interventions and evidence ability to select treatments for individual clients given this literature.
PL02.1 – Students will demonstrate effective integration and communication of clinical case material.
PL02.2 – Students will demonstrate the ability to synthesize contextual and cultural variables into presentations of client materials.
PL02.3 – Students will effectively respond to queries about clinical material and engage in discussions about their clients with supervisors and peers.
PL02.4 – Students will be able to think and discuss cases other than their own, applying theories, principles, and relevant empirical findings to those cases.
PL03.1 – Student will demonstrate understanding of different assessment devices and strategies for assessing child outcome over the course of treatment including standardized nomothetic and idiographic approaches.
PL04.1 – Students will demonstrate depth and breadth of understanding in areas including, but not limited to, psychotherapy theory, service delivery, ethics, assessment, research methods, family therapy, cultural diversity, psychopharmacology, and issues relevant to adult and child clinical populations. Students will be able to apply this knowledge to clinical cases.
PL05.1 – Students will demonstrate fulfillment of coursework and other pre-degree licensing requirements outlined by the Board of Behavioral Sciences.

This course meets PLOs 1.2, 2.1, 2.2., 2.4, 3.1, 4.1, and 5.1

Licensing Learning Objectives (LLO)

Licensing requirements for academic coursework toward the LPCC and MFT will be met by this course in the following ways:

LLO1: For the LPCC requirements, this course fulfills required course work in Counseling and Psychotherapeutic Theories and Techniques (as it pertains to families and couples), as well as Assessment, Appraisal and Testing (of families and couples). Because family and couples therapy cannot be conducted without consideration to
sociocultural context, this course also addresses Multicultural Counseling Theories and Techniques.
LLO2: For the MFT, this course fulfills requirements specified in BPC Section 4980.36 (d) (1) (A). More specifically, this course contributes 3 semester units to the theories, principles and methods used in marriage and family therapy. This course also addresses BPC Section 4980.36 (d) (2) (C) and BPC Section 4980.36(d)(2)(D) requiring instruction and cultural competency in working with families and couples from diverse backgrounds.

**Required Texts/Readings**

**Textbook**


**Suggested Self-Help Readings (Couples)**


**Other Readings**

Additional required readings will be distributed in class or via email.

**Other equipment / material requirements**

Students will be required to watch several videos/movies, including *Men, Women and Children*, *Ordinary People*, and topic specific documentaries.

**Definition of a Credit Hour**

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

As an example, the expectation of work for a 3-credit course is 150-minutes of direct faculty instruction and six hours of out-of-class student work each week.
Classroom Protocol

Communication

Please remember that you are in professional training. All written and oral communication must be delivered with respect to others and the field. Keep your professional goals in mind as you work through the material.

As your professor, I am open to any questions and discussions about the class and your professional development. I understand that personal issues may arise, and I want to understand their impact on you and your performance. That being said, I will always be aware of my professional boundaries and legal/ethical obligations. I will never invite or encourage you to participate in therapy with me. I am fortunate to know many great therapists on campus and in the community, and I will gladly facilitate referrals.

You are encouraged to develop your style of professional communication with faculty, staff, and other students. This is especially important when it comes to email. Here are some important considerations when it comes to communicating via email. These tips will serve you well in future professional exchanges.

- Please have an email address that includes your name.
- Use the subject line to specify the nature of your communication. Avoid vague subject tags like “update”, “question”, etc.
- Make sure to keep the greeting professional (Dr., Ms., Professor) and keep the tone polite and respectful.
- Be sure to correct grammar and spelling in your message. Use complete sentences and use both upper and lower case letters.
- Be clear and concise in your communication. Email is different from texting. Clarity is more important than efficiency and speed.
- Consider your message/request before you make it. If you are emotionally or physically compromised (e.g., angry or tired), you may want to wait to send the email.
- Email is not the place for receiving extensive help. If a discussion is needed, please see me during office hours or make an appointment.
- If you need a reply, please make this request clearly. If you do not hear back from me within 48 hours, then resend the original message with a gentle reminder.

Attendance

Attendance is required because participation in graded. You are expected to be on time to class and from breaks during the class. If you need to miss a class, let me know by email as soon as possible. Missing more than one class during the semester is a significant problem. Due dates cannot be changed except for medical reasons.
Classroom structure and etiquette

You are responsible for keeping current on any deviations/modifications to the class schedule, particularly changes in reading and due dates. Participation in class discussion is expected and contributions must reflect a basic understanding of the reading. Participation makes the class more engaging and allows you to develop your oral communication skills. Questions and personal experiences are welcomed although careful consideration of timing, tone, and applicability is expected.

You will not be able to use your cell phone during class. (If you need to receive an emergency call, let me know about it in advance). If you use your laptop, it is imperative that you are not multi-tasking. This class, like clinical work, will require you to focus and concentrate. You will be given an overview at the beginning of class to organize your thoughts and notes. These outlines or slides will be available electronically before class starts.

Please do not carry on conversations with others during the class. If you have questions or points to make, please say it so the class can hear. During class and discussions be polite and respectful of others. Be patient, wait your turn, refrain from language that may be prejudicial or hurtful to others.

Recording of Class Lectures

Common courtesy and professional behavior dictates that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. This permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.

Please state your request to record the class BEFORE class begins. Because student participation is a part of each class, permission must be granted by everyone in the class. Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. Your may not publically share or upload instructor-generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without the instructor’s consent.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester’s Catalog Policies section at http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic calendar web page located at http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/. The Late Drop Policy is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/.
Assignments and Grading Policy

Students will be graded based on their performance on the following assignments:
Weekly class preparation/participation, formal class presentations, one movie review, and a critical analysis of two popular self-help books for couples.

Discussion questions and weekly participation

For 10 out of the 14 classes, you will be given two to four questions to guide your understanding of the required readings. The purpose of these questions is to encourage you to read thoughtfully and critically, and to reflect on why the reading might be important to your professional development and training. The questions will be addressed in the next class and your contribution to the discussion will be graded (pass/fail for each class). I will collect your responses at the end of class which will allow you to elaborate on your responses during class. You will NOT be graded on writing but on content and reflection. You can use outlines, bullets, diagrams, basically anything that will help you to answer (or process) the discussion question. So, ten percent of your final grade will come from your oral participation (1% for each class) and the other 10% will come from your responses to the discussion questions (1% for each class); total percent of your grade is 20%. CLO1-CLO4.

Oral Presentations

Each of you will be a co-presenter on two assigned topics related to couples/family therapy (e.g., infidelity, separation, LGBT issues) and an empirically supported couples/family treatment for a DSM-5 disorder. You will be required to identify and summarize readings for the topic and give a 30-45 minute powerpoint presentation during class. I will review (and approve) your assigned readings and you and your co-presenter will need to share your powerpoint presentation with me before class. Each presentation is worth 20% of you final grade (40% total). CLO1-CLO4

“Clinical” Applications

At the conclusion of the family therapy unit, you will be required to watch the movie, Ordinary People, one more time. After watching the movie, you will be required to describe the family from a well-established family therapy perspective. In addition to describing the family, you will need to identify appropriate assessments and therapeutic goals for the family based on your selected perspective. The treatment you select should include description of specific techniques and if possible, empirical support for its effectiveness. The papers should not exceed 5 pages and it is worth 20% of your grade

Self-Help Book Review

The self-help market is huge, and it seems especially large when it comes to offering relationship help. As evidence-based therapists, however, you will need to know what approaches have the greatest empirical support. Both the Gottman book and the Christensen book are based on well-established, evidence-based treatments for couple
distress. Other self-help books of possible interest might focus on families of children with autism spectrum disorder, or another disorder. For this assignment, please read one self-help book and write a review. In the review, please point out what you liked (i.e., will use in the future) and didn’t like (i.e., will not use in the future). This paper should not exceed 5 pages; this is your “final exam” due on the final exam day. This assignment is worth 20% of your grade. CLO5.

University Policies

Academic integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University’s Academic Integrity policy, located at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/ to establish a record of their disability.
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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| 1    | 1/26/2017 | Overview of Course  
|      |         | Discussion of Movie: *Men, Women and Children* |
| 2    | 2/2/2017   | No Class  
|      |         | Gurman et al: Chapter 1  
|      |         | Gurman: chapter associated with presentation  
|      |         | Presentation preparation (meet with co-presenters, identify responsibilities and additional readings) |
| 3    | 2/9/2017   | Couples assessment (Prins)  
|      |         | Gurman: Behavioral approaches (2,3)  
|      |         | Presentation: LGBT issues in Couple Therapy (18) |
| 4    | 2/16/2017  | Gurman: Emotion-focused couple therapy (4,5)  
|      |         | Presentation: Couple therapy and partner aggression (14) |
| 5    | 2/23/2017  | Gurman: Functional Analytic Couple Therapy and Object Relations Couple Therapy (7,8)  
|      |         | Presentation: Couple therapy for separation and divorce (16) and/or step families (17) |
| 6    | 3/2/2017   | Gurman: Social constructionist approaches (10,11)  
|      |         | Dr. Vicky Dickerson presentation (?)  
|      |         | Dickerson, V.V. (2010). Positioning oneself with an epistemology.  
|      |         | Dickerson, V.V. (2014). The advance of postructuralims and its influence on Family Therapy. |
| 7    | 3/9/2017   | Gurman: Systemic approaches (12,13)  
|      |         | Presentation: Couple therapy and inter-cultural relationships (19) |
| 8    | 3/16/2017  | Comparative couple’s therapy (Prins)  
|      |         | Movie: TBD  
|      |         | Presentation: Treatment of affairs (15) |
| 9    | 3/23/2017  | Introduction to Family Therapy  
|      |         | Assessments in Family Therapy (Genograms)  
|      |         | Readings: TBD |
| 10   | 3/30/2017  | Spring Break |