San José State University  
Department of Psychology  
PSYC 208, Family/Couples Assessment and Therapy  
Spring 2020

Instructor: Annabel Prins, PhD  
Office Location: DMH 323  
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Email: Annabel.Prins@sjsu.edu  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 4-6 or by appointment  
Class Days/Time: Thursday 9:00-11:45  
Classroom: DMH 308  
Prerequisites: Enrollment in MS Clinical Program

Course Description

This graduate level MS clinical psychology class covers the assessment and treatment of families and couples. 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 family and couples therapy
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.

PLO2.1 – Students will demonstrate effective integration and communication of clinical case material.

PLO2.2 – Students will demonstrate the ability to synthesize contextual and cultural variables into presentations of client materials.

PLO2.3 – Students will effectively respond to queries about clinical material and engage in discussions about their clients with supervisors and peers.

PLO2.4 – Students will be able to think and discuss cases other than their own, applying theories, principles, and relevant empirical findings to those cases.

PLO3.1 – 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.

PLO4.1 – 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.

PLO5.1 – 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 (selected chapters from)**


**Other Readings**

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

**Highly recommended:**


**Other equipment / material requirements**

Students will be required to watch several videos/movies posted on YouTube or available on Netflix or Amazon.

**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. 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 publicly 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 quizzes or discussion questions, two class presentation, one movie review, and a critical analysis of a popular self-help book for couples.

Discussion questions:
Each week you will be assigned the following discussion question:

*Identify a few of the most important components/principles from the reading (feel free to use bullets, or tables). Next, describe how you might utilize these components or principles in your current or future work with families or couples.*

The purpose of this assignment 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. Each discussion question will be worth 5% of your grade; you must complete at least 10 DQ’s (50% of your grade). Two of the DQ’s will focus on Gottman and his approach to couple’s therapy. One of those DQ’s will be on Gottman’s self-help book. The discussion questions will be addressed in each class. CLO1-CLO4.

Discussion Leaders:
Each of you will be co-presenters on an assigned school of family therapy AND couple therapy (see class schedule). You will be required to organize and summarize the assigned reading into a powerpoint presentation and to present your summary during class along with discussion questions. I am confident that these summaries will be very useful for the licensing exam. I will cover additional or supplemental information relevant to the topic (video demonstrations, assessment tools, outcome studies). Each presentation will be worth 15% of your grade for a total of 30%. CLO1-CLO4

“Clinical” Applications paper

At the conclusion of the semester, you will be required to watch (re-watch) the movies, *Ordinary People,* and *Mi Familie.* *Ordinary People* is about an upper-class family in the 1970’s who loses a son to a boating accident. The movie won several Academy Awards and it can be emotionally upsetting to watch (but that’s ok, you will encounter plenty of that in your clinical work with families). *Mi Familie,* is a touching portrait of a multi-generational Mexican-American family living in East Los Angeles. It too can be upsetting but also heartwarming. Made in the 1990’s, the family experiences multiple traumatic events, including the traumatic death of a son.

After watching the movies, you will be required to describe the family (or a couple within the family) from a theoretical perspective covered in your text books. In addition to describing the family/couple, you will need to identify appropriate assessments and therapeutic goals for the family/couple 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 seven pages and it is worth 20% of your grade.
University Policies

Academic integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The U niversit y’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 Accessible Education Center (AEC).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Psy208: Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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</table>
| 1    | 1/30   | Designing a course  
Discussion: *Ordinary People*  
Goldenberg: Chapter 1 and 4  
DQ1                                               |
| 2    | 2/6    | Context of Family Therapy  
Goldenberg et al: Chapter 3  
Movie Discussion: *Men, Women, and Children and Mi Familie*  
DQ2                                               |
| 3    | 2/8    | Classic Schools of Family Therapy: Psychodynamic, Transgenerational and Experiential  
Goldenberg et al: 7 and 8 and 9  
DQ3  
Co-presenters (3):                              |
| 4    | 2/13   | Classic Schools of Family Therapy: Structural, Strategic and CBT Models  
Goldenberg et al: 10 and 11 and 12  
DQ4  
Co-presenters (3):                              |
| 5    | 2/20   | Social Construction models: Solution focused, Narrative and Population Based  
Goldenberg et al: 13 and 14 and 15  
DQ5  
Co-presenters (3):                              |
| 6    | 2/27   | No class                                                                                                                     |
| 6    | 3/5    | Narrative Therapy with families  
Other readings to be assigned by Dr. Vicki Dickerson  
Guest speaker: Dr. Dickerson                                                                 |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>EBP’s and Comparative Goldenberg et al: 16 and 17 Co-Presenters (2): Perspectives from the field Guest Speaker: Daniela Anaya</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3/19</td>
<td>Couples Therapy: Overview, Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy (2) Gurman et al: 1 and 3 Co-Presenters (3): DQ6</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3/26</td>
<td>Couple Therapy: Emotion-focused (2) and Narrative Gurman et al: 4 and 10 Co-presenters (3): DQ7</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4/2</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4/16</td>
<td>Couple Therapy: Couple therapy and PTSD/substance abuse Gurman et al: 20 and 21 Co-Presenters (2):</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/23</td>
<td>Gottman – Part 1 (DQ9) DVDs</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4/30</td>
<td>Gottman – Part 2 (DQ 9) DVDs</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5/7</td>
<td>Gottman – Part 3 (DQ10) DVD’s Read self-help book</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5/19</td>
<td>“FINAL” scheduled – Paper due</td>
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