

COUN 562 Syllabus Counseling Couples

Course Description

The treatment of couples, including overview of current theories, assessment, goal-setting, interventions, ethical and diversity issues. Assessment and treatment of spousal abuse. Study of sexual dysfunctions and sex therapy.

Course Objectives

- A. Explain the major, evidence-based models of couples counseling
- B. Demonstrate an ability to utilize generic couples counseling interventions, including conducting an initial session, maintaining balance, containing conflict, using reframes, and using empathy to reflect and heighten partners' emotional experiences
- C. Demonstrate an ability to utilize specific couples counseling interventions, based on different models, including communication skills training, systems theory, The Gottman Method, Emotionally-focused Couple Therapy, and Imago Therapy
- D. Assess couple dysfunctions, conceptualize couple dynamics, and develop treatment plans
- E. Recognize and identify various relationship phenomena that occur between partners in a couples session (including, systemic interactions, communication styles, attachment positions and needs, and projections)
- F. Assess for intimate partner violence and respond appropriately
- G. Demonstrate an ability to conceptualize the sources of sexual dysfunctions, and develop a treatment plan when dysfunctions are not organically-based.
- H. Apply ethical and legal principles of couples counseling to hypothetical ethical/legal dilemmas, with emphasis on confidentiality issues.
- I. Demonstrate an ability to take into account diversity and the impact of systemic racism when counseling couples.

Pre-Requisites

Counseling 527

Student Learning Outcome Language

As you know, the Counseling department tracks aspects of student learning (known as Student Learning Objectives or SLOs) and Dispositions (Professionalism and Fitness for the Profession) in numerous classes as part of the CACREP accreditation requirements. This helps as a source of feedback on our teaching and lets us know how students are doing on average and individually. In some classes, the SLO's are assessed in the form of a rubric and in other classes it is simply a score from a paper or exam. There is nothing you need to do, but be aware that the information will be used to track and evaluate your progress in the program and will be part of your student record. Please see detailed information in your Student Handbook, as well as the form for Dispositions (which can be assessed at any time, but is always assessed in Coun 511, 530, and 584). There are at least three times when a student's individual progress is formally examined by the faculty: (1) after they have completed their first semester; (2) at advancement to practicum (the semester prior to starting practicum); and (3) at advancement to research project (the semester prior to Final Project). At these points in time, all the assessment information (including

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any of the SLO assessments conducted, as well as information from advisement, course grades, and professor input) will be examined. The spirit of this is to make sure that you are on track, and if you are not, then our goal is to offer support and guidance so that you can get back on track. If there are serious concerns, this may involve a remediation process or, in rare cases, dismissal from the program. All of this information is outlined in your Student Handbook.

COUN 562 is not one of the classes where Clinical Skills and Dispositions are automatically assessed. Clinical Skills are not assessed in any form, as the intention of the class is to try new skills the student is not expected to have mastered. The Dispositions form will be used by the instructor in the event a student demonstrates lapses of professionalism, which, in the view of the instructor, need to be documented in the student file.

Calendar

Week 1	Introduction: Creating a couple exercise. The joys and challenges of couples counseling. Introduction to the philosophical and intervention differences between behavioral and empathy-based models.
Week 2	<p>Initiating treatment – how to conduct the first session and set goals. Role-Play demonstration by instructor of first session.</p> <p><i>Read for class: (Weeks & Fife, Section, “Don’ts and Do’s”)</i></p> <p>Couple Write-Ups Due: Email prior to class time.</p>
Week 3	<p>Assessment of couple’s functioning. How to maintain balance in a session. Role-Play practice of first session.</p> <p><i>Read for class: (Weeks & Fife Chpt 5)</i></p>
Week 4	<p>Communication Skills Training: How to teach couples communication skills <i>Instructor demonstration of Communication Skills Training</i></p> <p><i>Read for class: (Weeks & Fife, Chpt 12; Engaging Men, Chpt 6)</i></p>
Week 5	<p>Assessing communication dysfunctions. The work of John Gottman. Role-Play practice using Communication Skills Training</p> <p><i>Read for class: (Weeks & Fife, Chpt 6. Engaging Men, Chpt 9; Canvas Readings).</i></p>

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	<p><i>View for class: Making Marriage Work: YouTube Speech by John Gottman. 47 minutes.</i></p>
Week 6	<p>Anger and intense affect;; in-class, video, <i>The Angry Couple</i> Role-Play practice using Communication Skills Training</p> <p><i>Read for class: (Weeks & Fife, Chpts. 7,13)</i></p>
Week 7	<p>Thinking about infidelity. Role-Play practice using Communication Skills Training</p> <p><i>Read for class: (Canvas: Readings on infidelity)</i></p> <p><i>Weeks & Fife, Chpt 18; Engaging Men, Chpt 12).</i></p>
Week 8	<p>Conceptualizing the couple as a system – the pursue-withdraw cycle. <i>Instructor demonstration of empathy-based counseling.</i></p> <p><i>Read for Class: (Weeks & Fife, Chpt 4)</i></p> <p>Communication Paper Due</p>
Week 9	<p>The Art of Translating and Re-Framing. Working with LGBTQ+ couples and BIPOC Couples,</p> <p>Student Role-Play Practice Using Empathy-Based Models</p> <p><i>Read for class: (Weeks & Fife, Chpt 11. Engaging Men, Chpt 13, Canvas Readings)</i></p> <p>Film Assignment for next class Screen video, <i>Emotionally-focused Couple Therapy in Action</i>. Link to streaming video will be on Canvas</p>
Week 10	<p>EFT- Attachment theory-based couples counseling. Role-Play Practice Using Empathy-Based Models</p> <p><i>Read for Class: (Engaging Men, Chpt 7 Canvas Readings)</i></p>

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	Self-Reflection Paper on EFT due
Week 11	<p>Psychodynamic conceptualization using Imago Theory Role-Play Practice Using Empathy-Based Models</p> <p><i>Read for class: (Hendrix, Part I)</i></p>
Week 12	<p>Intimate Partner Violence Presentation.</p> <p>Attendance is mandatory: required by BBS</p>
Week 13	<p>Sex Therapy I (Treatment from a systemic, intimacy-based perspective <i>Attendance required – class counts towards BBS educational requirements</i> Role-Play Practice Using Empathy-Based Models Mandatory Class</p> <p><i>Read for class: (Canvas Readings.)</i></p> <p>Systems or Psychodynamic Paper due</p>
Week 14	<p>Sex Therapy II: The history of sex therapy <i>Attendance required – class counts towards BBS educational requirements.</i> Role-Play Practice Using Empathy-Based Models Mandatory Class</p> <p><i>Read for Class: (Canvas Readings)</i></p>
Week 15	<p>Optional In-Class Final Exam. Laptops or Blue Book are acceptable. No notes on your computer or presence of readings are allowed. Timed exam: 1 hour, 50 minutes. Email me as attachment when completed or turn in Blue Book.</p>