

COUPLES THERAPY
CPSY 560
Lewis and Clark College
Spring, 2008

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"Love takes off masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within."
James Baldwin

Catalogue Description: Systems theory therapies and practices relative to assessment, research, and treatment of couples. Explores cognitive, affective, interactional, and systemic theories of human behavior and change as related to couples.

"Marriage is our last, best chance to grow up."
Joseph Barth

Course Description: This course will focus on the treatment of problems typically encountered by couples. While several different theories of couples therapy will be reviewed, we will concentrate on emotionally focused couple therapy, the sole evidence based approach to couples work. This is a practice class and a significant portion of each class session will be devoted to the practice of couples counseling skills. There will be a great deal of reading for this class, and students will need to come to class prepared to discuss the readings for each week.

*"The concerts you enjoy together
Neighbors you annoy together
Children you destroy together
That make marriage a joy"*
Stephen Sondheim

Course Objectives:

1. Students will be able to apply systems and attachment theories to work with couples.
2. Students will be aware of issues of oppression and marginalization as they apply to gay, lesbian, and other non-traditional couples.
3. Students will have a thorough knowledge and beginning skills in emotionally focused couple therapy.
4. Students will have knowledge of the prevailing approaches for working with couples.
5. Students will develop awareness of the dynamics of romantic love and adult attachment.
6. Students will develop skills for eliciting problematic interactional patterns and intervening to create new patterns.

“We marry to find safe harbor in a roiling, roaring sea. We marry to avoid gray loneliness in a small room with only a hot plate and a thin cat. We divorce to find ourselves, and free ourselves of self-defeating templates of childhood misery. The chasm that separates us from a partner terrifies us; the prospect of intimacy does too.”

Amy Bloom

Related Authorizations

Successful completion of this course is necessary for fulfillment of degree requirements for the Marriage and Family Therapy specialty in the Counseling Psychology Department. This course is also necessary for gaining access to licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

Instructional Methods

This class will combine lecture, skills practice, role plays, demonstrations, guest speakers, video presentations, and will rely heavily on class discussions.

“Sympathy constitutes friendship; but in love there is a sort of antipathy, or opposing passion. Each strives to be the other, and both together make up one whole.”

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Required Texts

Gottman, J. (2000). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. New York, Three Rivers Press.

Johnson, S. (2004). *The practice of emotionally focused couples therapy*, 2nd ed. New York, Brunner-Routledge.

Real, T. (2002). *How can I get through to you?* New York, Simon and Schuster.

Schnarch, D. (1998). *Passionate marriage*. New York, Owl Books.

Additional required readings will be available on Moodle.

Recommended:

Bloom, A (ed) (1999). *Here lies my heart*. Boston: Beacon.

Lewis, T., Amini, F., & Lannon, R. (2000). *A general theory of love*. New York: Vintage.

“Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength; loving someone deeply gives you courage.”

Lao-Tzu

“When all is said and done it is, of course, always about sex. What else could it be about?”

David Mamet

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on the following class requirements:

1. Active participation in class discussion - 20 points
 2. Show and tell – 10 points
 3. Reading journals – 30 points
 4. Final project and presentation. - 40 points
- Total possible - 100 points

Grading scale: 93-100 = A
90-92 = A-
87-89 = B+
83-86 = B
80-82 = B-
77-79 = C+
73-76 = C

"The value of marriage is not that adults produce children but that children produce adults."
Peter De Vries

Assignment One: Show and Tell. During the term, each student will need to share with the class at least one discovery that provides insight into the workings of couples. This can be a book (fiction or non-fiction), a song, a movie, a TV show, a journal or magazine article, a cartoon or anything else that strikes you as capturing some truth about couples. We will start each class with show and tell and you may choose to share your discovery at any point in the term. When presenting your discovery you will discuss its relevance to the class and its significance to you. If too many people want to share on any given week we may have to postpone someone to the following week.

"I first learned the concepts of non-violence in my marriage".
-Mahatma Gandhi

Assignment Two: Reading Journals: Throughout the term you will turn in 6 one to two page reading journals. These papers should reflect your reactions to one of the books, chapters or articles we have read for that week. There will be a total of 6 reading journals due during the term. Each is worth 5 points.

*'Tis not love's going hurts my days,
But that it went in little ways.*
-- Edna St. Vincent Millay

Assignment Three: Final Project and presentation (Due starting on April 1): Each student will prepare a final project. The final project may be a research paper or a work of art. If you choose to do a paper it should be 14-16 pages (double-spaced, 12 point font, one-inch margins), with a minimum of five citations, on a relevant topic of your choice. If you choose to do a work of art it should reflect the equivalent amount of work as a 14-16 page research paper. You may write a short story, song, or one-act play, make a short film, produce a piece of visual art or use any other medium you choose. During

the final three class periods, students will present their projects to the class. These presentations should be 10-15 minutes long. If you do a paper, you will present a summary of your findings and conclusions. If you produce a work of art you will present it or perform it for the class

The project must demonstrate insight into course material and application of course content. Students will be graded less on aesthetics and more on demonstrated understanding of theoretical concepts.

A lady of forty-seven who had been married twenty-seven years and has six children knows what love really is and once described it for me like this: 'Love is what you've been through with somebody.'

-- James Thurber

Class Schedule

There will be no chapter assignments for the Schnarch, Real, or Gottman books. You may read them at your own pace as long as they are completed by the deadlines indicated below.

January 8: Introduction, course overview.

January 15: Johnson, Chapter 1
Reading Packet: Mikulincer, M., *Attachment, caregiving and sex within romantic relationships*.

January 22: Johnson, Chapter 2
Reading Packet: Markowitz, *Understanding the differences: Demystifying gay and lesbian sex*.
Green, Robert-Jay, *Gay and lesbian couples in therapy: A social justice perspective*.

January 29: **Finish Reading Real**
Reading Packet: Cherlin, A., *The deinstitutionalization of American marriage*.
Hazan, C., *The essential nature of couple relationships*.

February 5: Johnson, Chapter 4
Reading Packet: Hazan, C., Campa, M. & Gur-Yaish, N., *What is adult attachment*.
Schachner, D., Shaver, P. & Mikulincer, M, *Adult attachment theory, psychodynamics and couple relationships*.

February 12: Johnson, Chapter 5
Reading Packet: Simpson, J., Campbell, L. & Weisberg, Y, *Daily perceptions of conflict and support in romantic relationships*.

- February 19: Johnson, Chapter 6
Reading Packet: Doherty, W., *Bad couples therapy*.
- February 26: **Finish Reading Schnarch**
Johnson, Chapter 7
- March 4: Johnson, Chapter 8
Reading Packet: Levy, K., Kelly, K. & Jack, E., *Sex differences in jealousy*.
Finzi, S., *Cosi fan tutte*.
Gottlieb, D., *My cheatin' heart*.
Brown, E., *Getting the message*.
- March 11: Johnson, Chapter 9
Reading Packet: Ventura, M., *A dance for your life in the marriage zone*.
- March 18: **Finish Reading Gottman**
Johnson, Chapter 10
- March 25: **Spring Break – no class**
- April 1: Johnson, Chapter 11
Reading Packet: Diamond, L., *How do I love thee?*
Josephson, G., *Using an attachment-based intervention with same-sex couples*.
- April 8: Johnson, Chapters 12
Reading Packet: Berscheid, E., *Seasons of the heart*.
- April 15: Johnson, Chapter 13 & 14

Love consists in this, that two solitudes protect and touch and greet each other.
-- Rainer Maria Rilke

Disclaimer: *The instructor reserves the right to alter this syllabus as the class evolves. Readings may be added or subtracted to reflect the emerging interests of the class.*