

Lewis & Clark College
CPSY 590-01 Gender, Culture & Power in Couples Therapy
Summer 2007

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Appointments by arrangement

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Differences in interpersonal and social power maintain and exacerbate problems in couple relationships. This course focuses on how sociopolitical contexts of couple relationships such as gender, race and ethnicity, culture and religion, and legal and economic statuses intersect to impact couple relationships. The premise of the course is that transforming power is critical to clinical change in couple therapy. A contextual model for case assessment and intervention will be provided. Students will critique traditional approaches to gender and couples work in marital and family therapy and consider how to apply course content in their on-going cases.

The course will be interactive with an emphasis on analysis of role plays and videotapes of couple therapy sessions. Students will be expected to come to each class prepared to engage in discussion of the issues involved, to share videos of their work (if available), and to participate in role plays and/or other class activities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

As a result of this course students will:

1. Recognize the sociopolitical aspects underlying presenting issues in couple therapy.
2. Become familiar with research on gender and power in couple relationships and identify the clinical implications of this work.
3. Critique traditional approaches to gender and couples therapy and take a position on this topic.
3. Apply a contextual assessment framework to identify sociopolitical issues (i.e, gender, culture, power, etc.) in specific couple cases and develop a plan to address them.
4. Learn a three stage model for working with gender, culture, and power in couples therapy and show how they could integrate it with their current model for clinical practice.
5. Consider their parts in perpetuating or challenging societal inequalities surrounding gender and power in couples relationships and the ethical issues involved when addressing issues that may be invisible to the clients themselves.

TEXTS:

Knudson-Martin, C. & Mahoney, A. (in preparation). *Transforming Power: How Couples Move from Gender Legacy to Gender Equality*. New York: Springer.

Larson, R. and Richards, M. (1995). *Divergent Realities: The Emotional Lives of Mothers, Fathers, and Adolescents*. New York: Basic Books.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Class Participation. (20 points). Students are expected to demonstrate commitment to the class by attendance, punctuality, and preparation for class
2. Reflection and Application papers. (4 papers, 20 points each). Each week students are expected to turn in a 3-4 page paper (double-spaced) that includes (a) personal reflection in response to assigned readings for the day and prior course discussion, (b) implications for case assessment, and (c) how you will integrate course concepts into your clinical work.

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

There are 100 potential points in this course.

A 100-94.5	C+ 82-79.5
A- 94-91.5	C 79-76.5
B+ 91-88.5	C- 76-73.5
B 88-85.5	D 73-67.5
B- 85-82.5	F 67 and below

Participation points will be evaluated as follows:

20-19 (A). Student has taken a role in the class of supporting and encouraging others in their learning and has raised issues and questions that have furthered the group's learning; engaged in course activities with openness to multiple perspectives and new and unfamiliar ideas; and demonstrated commitment to the class by attendance, punctuality, and preparation for class.

18-17 (B) Student has taken a role in the class of supporting and encouraging others in their learning, engaged in course activities with openness to new and unfamiliar ideas, and demonstrated commitment to the class by attendance, punctuality, and preparation for class

16-15 (C) Student did not take on a role of supporting and encouraging others in their learning, demonstrated limited commitment to the class in attendance, punctuality, and preparation for class, and did not engage in course activities with openness to new and unfamiliar ideas.

Reflection and Application papers will be evaluated as follows:

20-19 (A). Writing demonstrates a compelling grasp of the topics/ideas/questions raised through an engaging use of self reflection and creative application of course concepts to practice. Writing is distinguished in its creativity and original thought with few syntactical or grammatical errors.

18-17 (B). Good understanding of the topics/ideas/questions raised is demonstrated through self reflection and application of course concepts to practice. Writing is fluent with very few syntactical or grammatical errors.

16-15 (C). Minimal understanding of the topics/ideas/questions raised; examples or illustrations of concepts are lacking in depth with minimal evidence of self reflection or creative application. Writing lacks fluency and has substantial errors in syntax and grammatical structure.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Each class will begin with a discussion of readings on the topics listed below and then apply content to particular cases. A Reflection and Application paper is due at the beginning of each class, beginning June 11.

Class One (June 4): The Socio-political Context of Couples Therapy

- How gender intersects with other socio-political contexts
- Review of research on gender, equality, power, and intimacy in couple relationships
- Introduction to the contextual framework for assessing couple relationships

Read the following chapters from *Transforming Power* in advance of class:

Transforming Power: Introduction

Framing the Issue of Gender Equality

Framing the Social Context of Gendered Power

Framing the Research Process

Relational Orientations: A Contextual Framework for Assessment and Practice

Class Two (June 11): A Three-stage Model for Transforming Power in Couple Relationships

- Attending to the ways gender and power influence emotion in couple relationships
- Creating structural change in gender inequality
- Developing new scripts and skills in couple relationships

Read in Advance of Class

A Model of Postgender Practice

Language and Processes in the Construction of Equality in New Marriages (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney)

Moving Beyond Gender: Processes that Create Relationship Equality

Class Three (June 18): Family and Work Issues

- How gender structures work and family life
- Identifying hidden power in work and family decisions
- Connections between emotional experience and gender in family life

Read the following chapters from *Transforming Power* in advance of class:

Motherhood: Tasks, Relational Connection, and Gender Equality

Father Responsivity: Couple Processes and the Coconstruction of fatherhood

Divergent Realities (especially chapters three and four)

Class Four (June 25): Application of Couple and Power to Specific Clinical Issues

- Depression and other DSM symptoms
- Chronic illness

Read the following chapters from *Transforming Power* in advance of class:

Diabetes Care: An Unequal Burden

Suffering in Silence: Gender and Power in Postpartum Depression

How to Address Gender and Power in the Treatment of Mental Health and Relationship Problems

Class Five (July 2): Gender and Power in Diverse Contexts

- Issues when working with traditional/collectivist cultures
- Issues when working with Black, Asian, & Hispanic couples
- Issues when working with same sex couples

Read the following chapter from *Transforming Power* in advance of class:

Equality among Dual-Career Newlyweds in Collectivist Culture

Reflection paper for this week should draw ideas from all the classes to show how you will integrate gender, culture, and couple issues into your work.