

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number:	393R15	Instructor:	Allyson Jervey, LCSW
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Semester:	Fall 2012	Phone:	(512) 663-5870
Meeting Time:	Mondays 8:30-11:30AM	Office:	SSW 3.104A
Meeting Place:	SSW 2.112	Office Hours:	By appointment

COUPLES COUNSELING

I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed as a seminar for students in the clinical concentration and will cover intervention approaches used in couples therapy. It will be taught from a systems perspective and will include an overview of models and methods drawn from evidence based research. The primary focus of this course will be to blend theory and application. This course will require the student to participate in both theory based and experiential learning and will incorporate simulations and case presentations to elucidate the approaches discussed.

II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to compare and contrast theory-based interventions which incorporate intrapsychic and interpersonal theory including an understanding of emotions, physiology and communication.
2. Demonstrate the ability to explore and resolve social work values and ethical dilemmas in selecting and implementing interventions for couples.
3. Understand the importance of awareness of self as a parallel process to the application of interventions with couples.
4. Identify the implications of race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, substance abuse and domestic violence on assessment and intervention with couples.

5. Understand and integrate theory using empirical, evidence-based best practice research.

6. Demonstrate the ability to review the elements of a treatment approach assess the effectiveness and elicit clinical input that heightens awareness and examines interventions in light of cultural perspective and desired outcome.

III. TEACHING METHODS

This course will include a variety of teaching methodologies designed to achieve the beginning mastery of theoretically-grounded advanced practice skill competencies with couples. Learning activities will include reading, writing, discussion, lectures, videos, simulations and experiential exercises. Students will video-tape simulations as a tool for learning assessment and intervention skills. Students will present a case and solicit feedback from other students in order to identify strategies to improve their effectiveness in intervening with couples. Students will also be encouraged to develop insights into “the use of self” through observations and self reflection. Simulations will be monitored to facilitate the assessment of skill competencies.

IV. REQUIRED TEXTS

Gurman, A.S.(Ed.) 2008 Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy. New York; The Guilford Press.

Gottman, J. S. (2004). The Marriage Clinic Casebook. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Atkinson, B., (2005) Emotional Intelligence in Couples Therapy; Advances from Neurobiology and the Science of Intimate Relationship New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Gottman, J., (1999). The Marriage Clinic. New York: WW. Norton & Company, Inc.

Jacobson, N., Gottman, J (1998). When Men Batter Women, New Insights into Ending Abusive Relationships New York: Simon & Schuster.

Johnson, S.M. (2004). The Practice of Emotionally Focused Marital Therapy: Creating Connection. New York: Bruner / Routledge. - Second Edition of 1996 book.

P. Peluso (Ed.), Infidelity: A Practitioner’s Guide to Working With Couples in Crisis, New York: Routledge.

S.M. Johnson, Brent Bradley, J Furrow, A Lee, G Palmer, D Tilley & S Woolley (2005) Becoming an Emotionally Focused Couples Therapist : A Work Book. N.Y. Brunner Routledge.

Tatkin, Stan & Hendrix, Harville (2011). Wired for Love: How Understanding Your Partner's Brain and Attachment Style Can Help You Defuse Conflict and Build a Secure Relationship. California: New Harbinger Publications

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The following course requirements will be completed during the semester, points are assigned for each course requirement. The final grade will be based on the total points accrued by the end of the semester. Description of the assignments and the grading criteria are posted on the assignment link of Blackboard. Points listed on assignment descriptions are maximum points given for excellence in detail, relevance and thoroughness. Please turn in papers electronically through Blackboard. Consult with the Blackboard help line prior to your first assignment due date if you are unfamiliar with this technology.

1. Journal

Students are expected to write a weekly journal. A grade will be given based on completion of minimal weekly entries of no less than a half a page single spaced. Content may include personal thoughts, opinions, agreements, or disagreements you have with the readings, class interactions or simulations. The journals will be kept confidential. This assignment is designed to provide an outlet for personal reactions to class material.

15 points maximum

2. History and Assessment

Students will be divided into pairs and will create history and background for a “simulation couple” they will play this semester. To prepare for the simulations students will construct an assessment package.

The narrative will include:

- A description of the presenting problem,
- The strengths and challenges of the relationship,
- Summary of Gottman’s Seven Questions as they relate to your couple (Gottman Chapter 4)
- One or two issues over which the couple is gridlocked (Atkinson, Chapter 5, Gottman Chapter 4)
- A relationship history using the Oral History Interview (Gottman, 398-99), Adapt questions to fit your couple, for example, if they are not married change questions referring to marriage; i.e. change “how is your marriage different than when you first got married?” to “how is your relationship different than when you first got together?”
- The Meta-Emotion Interview (Gottman, 402).
- A brief family history

The interviews may be written like a process recording however that is not a requirement. One copy should be turned in to the professor electronically and one paper copy made for the co-therapists.

60 points maximum

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3. Simulation - In-Class

Two class periods will be devoted to couples therapy simulations. At the end of both simulations a short paper (approximately 1 – 1.5 pages) will be turned in. This paper will include discussion and answers to the questions posted on Blackboard. Blackboard questions should be reviewed and may be partially answered prior to class. 15 minutes

will be allowed at the end of class to complete answers.

40 points maximum (20 points for each simulation paper)

4. Couple Therapy Simulation and Analysis

Simulations - Students will alternate playing a couple and co-therapist with another dyad. Students will need to schedule a room in the LRC to tape simulations. (**The LRC rooms must be scheduled early in the semester to avoid schedule conflicts.**) Each session will be at least 30 minutes in duration. The students will tape two sessions as cotherapists and two sessions as a couple during the semester. The co-therapists will use a variety of theories in their approach including, but not necessarily limited to, the ones discussed in class and covered by the readings. To receive full credit for the taped interventions a copy of the video of the simulation and an analysis must be turned in.

Analysis – After each session view and critique the video using the critique guide provided on Blackboard in the assignments section. Dyads may work on this assignment together but each student should turn in an analysis. Each student’s work will be graded separately. Each analysis will have different requirements; review the guides before taping your simulations.

80 points maximum, (40 points for each simulation)

5. Diversity Review and Discussion

Dyads will identify a social identity, community or population they would like to explore in regards to views of, and approaches to, relationships. Individuals normally identify with a variety of populations and yet for this assignment we will be putting a primary focus on only one aspect of an identity. Students will have an opportunity to discuss their insights. Students may choose to incorporate what they have learned into their role play but are not required to.

This assignment has three parts

1) Gather information from; online sources, journal articles, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, educational slides or personal interviews, as a mechanism for highlighting considerations for the therapeutic alliance and effective interventions. Identify strengths, needs, values, biases, stereotypes, traditions and attitudes that may be considered in working with couples who identify as such. This should result in a two to three page summary of the findings. **The goal of this assignment is to raise awareness and encourage thoughtful discussion and cannot be comprehensive. It is in no way is meant to imply homogeneity within a population and in fact may actually provide examples of a vast array of differing perspectives.** (25 points)

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2) Identify couple or family therapy approaches whose effectiveness have been **examined** as it applies to this population. It will be difficult to find articles with empirical evidence. Students are not required to find “evidence based” approaches and in some cases may not be able to find an approach but rather “considerations”. Include evidence based approaches if found if not include approaches or “considerations” for treatment. Use scholarly methods such as academic databases, to conduct the search and locate 3 articles for this assignment. Prepare an annotated bibliography of the articles and post it to Blackboard as a reference for other students in the class. In addition provide a one page paper summarizing the approaches taken to locate the articles, to what

degree the approaches found were evaluated and a critical discussion of the usefulness of each of the articles. (30 points)

3) Dyads will participate in a class discussion of their findings. If the dyad chooses to incorporate characteristics or views of this population into their role play they should process observations and insights during this class discussion (5 points)

Grading criteria is posted on Blackboard.

60 points total maximum

6. Case Consult

Each dyad will schedule a time for a case consult which will be delivered after the completion of their second simulation. The presentation should include:

- * background summary,
- * presenting problem,
- * treatment approach and interventions,
- * treatment challenge – a question about treating this couple that could improve your effectiveness as a therapist.

At the end of the presentation the dyad will ask questions that illicit input regarding the treatment challenge or dilemma and request for input from the rest of the class. The dyad will facilitate a discussion.

The entire presentation should take approximately 20 minutes.

Grading criteria have been posted to Blackboard in the assignments section.

30 points maximum

7. Class Discussions and Participation

Discussions in class will be used as a tool to increase your understanding, application and critical analysis of the text. Ongoing professional growth and development is reliant on an **active** pursuit of information by the clinician. Therefore, students will be expected to come to class regularly and on-time, prepared with questions and comments about the content and application of the text in order to maximize mastery of the material. In order to get participation points you will need to actively participate in class, **if you know that this is a challenge for you please contact me to discuss.**

15 points maximum

Grades are assigned based on the following criteria:

A grade of “A” is given for outstanding work that engages course materials with original thought and creativity, or a mastery of technical skills.

A grade of “B” is given for doing all of the work well.

A grade of “C” is given for meeting all course requirements.

To obtain a high grade, students must find the time to complete assignments in a way that **integrates and extends** readings, lectures, classroom discussions, and your own critical perspective on the topic.

GRADING SCALE

100 – 94 = A (282-300)

93 – 90 = A-	(270-281)
89 – 87 = B+	(261-269)
86 – 84 = B	(252-260)
83 – 80 = B-	(240-251)
79 – 77 = C+	(231-239)
76 – 74 = C	(222-230)
73 – 74 = C-	(219-221)
72 – 67 = D+	(201-218)
66 – 64 = D	(192-200)
63 – 60 = D-	(180-191)
59 and below = F	(179 and below)

Graduate students must earn a minimum grade of C in the course for credit; also, graduate students must maintain an overall B average.

Assignment due date

September 12 Assessments

September 19 In Class Simulation

October 3 First Simulation Video Analysis

October 17-24 Diversity Review and Discussion

October 31 Case Consults

November 7 Case Consults

November 14 Case Consults

November 21 Second Video Analysis

November 28 In Class Simulation

VII. CLASS POLICIES

1. **Professional Conduct in Class:** Social work practitioners respect others, and the classroom offers students an opportunity to practice interacting with a professional demeanor and mutual respect. This behavior includes exchanges with the professor—in person, by e-mail or telephone; arriving to class on time; being prepared to participate in the class discussion; and showing respect for one another's opinions. We share the class as a time to learn in a safe and nonjudgmental environment. Here, we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and we will not always, nor should we, agree with the ideas expressed by others. Differences in values, opinions, and feelings of class members and guest speakers will be respected. Disrespect toward others is not tolerated and will be handled directly and in the context in which it occurs.
2. **Late Assignments/Incompletes:** Assignments are to be handed in at the beginning of class on the designated due date. If a due date presents a problem, see me *in advance*, and I will consider negotiating a different due date. Otherwise, assignments turned in after class starts will be considered late. Three (3) points per day (including weekends)

will be deducted for late assignments except in the case of extreme emergencies and only with the instructor's permission. Incompletes for the course will only be given in the event of circumstances beyond the student's control.

3. **Writing Assignments:** The ability to write in a professional manner is very important for social workers, particularly in settings where they work as members of interdisciplinary teams. Written work must be typed, edited for grammatical, spelling and typographical errors. Work will be graded based on the American Psychological Association (APA-6th edition) guidelines for references and citations.
4. **Course evaluation:** A mid-semester and end of semester course evaluation will be conducted and input considered for course adjustments. Student feedback is important and welcome. Students are encouraged to be assertive, function as team members, and provide feedback about the course. This can be done during office hours, by phone, by email or by appointment as may be convenient and comfortable for the student.
5. **Class performance:** If you are concerned about your grade in this class, I am willing to work with you to help improve your course grade prior to the end of the semester. Final grades assigned in the course are not negotiable.
6. **Confidentiality:** Learning about grief counseling can raise emotional issues and sometimes involves self-disclosure. The instructor and classmates have the ethical responsibility to see that differences in values, opinions, and feelings of class members and guest speakers will be respected and that an emotionally safe class environment is maintained. Complete confidentiality is expected. All NASW Code of Ethics values will be upheld.
7. **Special Accommodations for Students with a Disability:** Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. Present this letter to the instructor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.
8. **Policy on Religious Holy Days:** A student who is absent from a class or examination for the observance of a religious holy day may complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence, if proper notice has been given. Notice of the dates the student will be absent must be given at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, notice should be given on the first day of the semester.
9. **The University of Texas Honor Code:** The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.
10. **Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty:** Students are encouraged to study and work together; however, all independent work is expected to reflect your own work and to conform to rules of scholastic honesty as described in the General Information Bulletin of The University of Texas at Austin. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in

the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, students may refer to the web site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs>).

11. **Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students:** Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible for keeping the university informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.
12. **Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL):** If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.
13. **Emergency Evacuation Policy:** Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

VIII. COURSE OUTLINE (TENTATIVE)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>REQUIRED READING</u>
09/10/12 Introductions/Class and Syllabus Overview Assessment	Gottman Chapter 4 Atkinson Chapter 5 – Blackboard
9/17/12 Gottman Overview Gottman Video	Gurman, Chapter 5 Schwartz Gottman Chapter 1
Assessments due	

Sign up for diversity review

9/24/12 Attachment Overview

Johnson and Whiffen Chapter 1, 2 and 6 –
Blackboard
Gurman Chapter 4

In class assessment simulation

10/01/12 Emotion Focused Therapy for Couples and PETC Overview

Atkinson Chapter 2 and 4 Blackboard

1st Johnson Video

Sign up for case consult date and intervention

10/08/12 EFT and Gottman Technique

Gurman Chapter 6 & 8
Schwartz Gottman Chapter 2

First video/analysis and journal due

10/15/12 Gottman and EFT Techniques

Schwartz Gottman chapter 6
Gurman chapter 24-25

Gottman DVD

10/22/12 Diversity Issues

Johnson and Whiffen Chapter 15 (e-reserves)
Sullivan and Cottone Culturally Based Couple
Therapy and Intercultural Relationships: A Review
of the Literature-Blackboard

Diversity Discussions Diversity Paper due

10/29/12 Evidence Based Interventions

Gurman chapter 2-3

Diversity Discussions continue

11/05/12 Case Consults

Schwartz Gottman Chapter 7-8
Gurman Chapter 9-10

11/12/12 Case Consults

Schwartz Gottman Chapters 10
Atkinson Chapter 6

Gurman Chapter 21

11/19/12 Case Consults

Gurman Chapter 13
Schwartz Gottman Chapter 3-5

11/26/12 Special Considerations: Substance Abuse, Infidelity, Domestic Violence, SES, Previous Trauma

Jacobson and Gottman Chapter 2 - Blackboard
Gurman chapter 14 & 18
Peluso Chapter 5 - Blackboard

Second video/critique due

12/03/12 Termination Issues

Gurman 15
Schwartz Gottman Chapter 14 Journal due

Final simulations – in class