CPSY 561-01: MARITAL AND FAMILY ASSESSMENT
SPRING, 2008

Time & Day: Thursday 1:00-4:00 p.m.
Instructor: Marisol Garcia
Office: Rogers Hall/ Office hours TBA

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Examination of the theoretical assumptions, values, and cultural frameworks underlying individual, couple and family assessment approaches. Specific assessment techniques and tools are discussed, evaluated, and practiced. Preventative interventions such as pre-marital counseling and parent education are also explored and critiqued from a critical multicultural perspective.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course includes an overview of marital and family assessment approaches and techniques. This course will focus on theoretical underpinnings and corresponding values and biases. The goal of this course is to ensure a firm grasp of how to assess the family and couple through a deep understanding of contextual and systemic dynamics as well as extensive knowledge of approaches and techniques available.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The following objectives are taken from AAMFT List of Core Competencies (corecompetencies@aamft.org)

Students in this course will:

1. Understand the current models for assessment of relational functioning.
2. Comprehend individual, couple, and family assessment instruments appropriate to presenting problem, practice setting, and theoretical approach.
3. Systematically integrate client reports, observations of client behaviors, client relationship patterns, reports from other professionals, results from testing procedures, and interactions with client to guide the assessment process.
4. Understand the limitations of the models of assessment and diagnosis, especially as they relate to different cultural, economic, and ethnic groups
5. Recognize contextual and systemic dynamics (e.g., gender, age, socioeconomic status, culture/race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, spirituality, larger systems, social context).
6. Develop hypotheses regarding relationship patterns, their bearing on the presenting problem, and the influence of extra-therapeutic factors on client systems.
7. Apply effective and systemic interviewing techniques and strategies.
8. Administer and interpret results of assessment instruments.
9. Screen and develop adequate safety plans for substance abuse, child and elder maltreatment, domestic violence, physical violence, suicide potential, and dangerousness to self and others.

10. Assess biopsychosocial-economic history and using a genogram and other assessment instruments to identify clients’ strengths, resilience, and resources.

11. Elucidate presenting problem from the perspective of each member of the therapeutic system.

12. Communicate diagnostic information so clients understand its relationship to treatment goals and outcomes.

13. Evaluate assessment methods for relevance to clients’ needs and therapist-client agreement of therapeutic goals and diagnosis.

**PARTICIPATION IN THE LEARNING COMMUNITY**

Students are required to attend and actively participate in all scheduled class meetings. This includes being on time, being prepared, following through on group projects, and otherwise engaging with colleagues as fellow professionals. Becoming a family therapist involves looking closely at ourselves, our values, beliefs, and biases. This can be a very personal, and sometimes emotional, process. Treating colleagues with respect, listening deeply to their experiences, and being open to diverse world views encourages a collaborative milieu of care in which we can all challenge ourselves and each other to critically examine and develop our skills and perspectives. In order to prepare for each class, students should carefully read and study all assigned materials to be ready to discuss, debate, and apply the content of readings. Class discussion and interaction with colleagues are fundamental to the process of learning to be a therapist and all sessions include necessary information. Therefore, if you must miss a class, fellow students and the instructor may ask you to contribute to learning community in another way. For example, you may be asked to write a brief summary about, and personal reactions to, the required readings and/or provide abstracts from additional related readings for course participants. According to the Lewis & Clark Counseling Psychology attendance policy, missed class periods may result in lowered final grades and students who miss two class periods may be failed.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY/SPECIAL ASSISTANCE**

Lewis & Clark College adheres to a nondiscriminatory policy with respect to employment, enrollment, and program. The College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap or disability, sexual orientation, or marital status and has a firm commitment to promote the letter and spirit of all equal opportunity and civil rights laws.

**SPECIAL ASSISTANCE**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability and/or you have emergency medical information to share please make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible.

**ASSIGNMENTS**
Papers should be professionally written, of 10-15 pages in length, double spaced, 12pt font, organized into sections with appropriate headings, and referenced according to APA 5 guidelines. The Lewis & Clark Writing Center has prepared a brief guide to APA referencing: http://www.lclark.edu/dept/wstudio/objects/apa_style.pdf

**Major Paper – Assessment Philosophy**
The object of this assignment is for students to develop a clear understanding of their approach to assessment based on their theoretical approach, personal and professional experiences, and values and beliefs. The content of this paper should include a summary of what therapeutic theories drive the assessment philosophy as well as how personal and professional experiences, values and beliefs are reflected in the philosophy. Students will also be asked to discuss the limitations of the philosophy. This paper should speak to issues discussed in class in regards to diversity and its placement within the socio-economic-political environment. This paper should include at least 5 additional references on each model beyond the course readings.

**Application of Philosophy**
Students will conduct a family interview using the assessment philosophy. Following the interview, students will write a 3-5 page paper on this experience in regards to their philosophical approach (what worked, what didn’t, how it will changed based on this experience). This paper should include references to the interview in the form of quotes or description of events occurring during the interview. This paper is worth 20 points.

**Contextual Mapping**
You will be asked to complete an analysis of your extended and intergenerational family relationships by completing a Critical Genogram and/or Social Capital Mapping. This analysis should be 3-5 pages in length. This paper is worth 20 points.

**Critique of Measures**
You will be asked to hand in critiques of measures presented in this class. The critique should include any limitations in regards to effectiveness and just assessment of couples and families. Particular attention should be made to issues of diversity. These critiques should be 2 paragraphs in length for each measure. They are worth 10 points.

**GRADING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“A” grades will be reserved for particularly outstanding work. Grades on the border may be determined by attendance and demonstration of completing readings prior to each class session.

**TEXT**

Additional Readings per Course Schedule Below: Most readings can be found full text on-line through the Lewis & Clark library. Methods for obtaining copies of book chapters and other readings not available on line will be discussed in class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 2 – January 15:  First things first – Crisis Assessment

Readings:


WEEK 3- January 22:  Assessment of Sexual Abuse

Readings:


**WEEK 4 – January 29: Who is the client? What is the problem? The importance of getting it right.**


**WEEK 5 – February 5: Framework for Assessment**

**Readings:**

Cierpka & Sprenkle, Chapter 2, 3, 5, 11.

Sperry, Chapter 2. Models and Issues in Couple and Family Assessment


WEEK 6: February 12: Couple Assessment

Readings:

Cierpka & Sprenkle, Chapter 4


*Long-Term Adjustment of Infertile Couples Following Unsuccessful Medical Intervention*, Daniluk, Judith C.; Tench, Elizabeth; *Journal of Counseling & Development*, Vol 85(1).

WEEK 7: February 19: Couple Assessment Continued

Readings:


*Measures*

Sperry, Chapter 5 & 7


**DUE: CRITIQUES**

| WEEK 8 – February 26: Assessment of multiple embedded systems – The Genogram and more… |
| Readings: |
| 2. Sprenkle, Chapter 7, 8, 9 |

| WEEK 9 – March 4: Family Assessment - Observation |
| Readings: |


Sperry, Chapter 3

Cierpka & Sprenkle, Chapter 3


**DUE: CONTEXTUAL MAPPING PAPER**

**WEEK 10 – March 11: Family Assessment - Interviewing**

**Readings:**


Cierpka & Sprenkle, Chapter 13

Main, M. Adult attachment interview protocol. Retrieved from [http://www.psychology.sunysb.edu/attachment/measures/content/aai_interview.pdf on 1/3/08](http://www.psychology.sunysb.edu/attachment/measures/content/aai_interview.pdf).

**WEEK 11 – March 18: Family Assessment – Self Report**

**Readings:**

Sperry, Chapter 8
Cierpka & Sprenkle, Chapter 8

WEEK 12 - March 25: Spring Break

Week 13: April 1: Theoretical Relevance: Bowen, Strategic, Structural, Experiential
Readings:


Week 14: April 8: Theoretical Relevance: Solution Focused, Narrative, Feminist
Readings:


WEEK 15 – April 15: Issues and Challenges in Assessment
Readings:


Due: Major paper