

COUPLES THERAPY
CPSY 560
Lewis and Clark College
Spring, 2007

Steve Berman
Office: 503-238-5899
Email: berman@lclark.edu
Office hours by appointment.

"Of all the profound questions in the universe, none is more puzzling, more compelling, or more mysterious than what happens between a man and a woman."
Albert Einstein

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 have a thorough knowledge and beginning skills in emotionally focused couple therapy.
3. Students will have knowledge of the prevailing approaches for working with couples.
4. Students will develop awareness of the dynamics of romantic love and adult attachment.
5. Students will develop skills for eliciting problematic interactional patterns and intervening to create new patterns.

*"Love and marriage ,love and marriage
Go together like a horse and carriage".
Sammy Cahn*

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.

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

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.

Hendrix, H. (1988). Getting the love you want. New York, Owl Books.

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.

There will be a reading packet available in the CPSY office.

*"Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength; loving someone deeply gives you courage."
Lao-Tzu*

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on the following class requirements:

1. Active participation in class discussion - 30 points
 2. Couple description - 10 points
 3. Show and tell – 10 points
 4. Final project and presentation. - 50 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: Couple description and role play (Due Jan. 23). On January 23 each of you will turn in a 2-3 page description based of a real or fictional couple. The couple may be one with whom you are acquainted or have been a part of, or may be one found in fiction or film. If you use a real couple, make sure you disguise names to protect confidentiality. Include information about how they met, how long they've been married, number of children, description of their communication patterns, power dynamics and an explanation of why they are seeking therapy. We will be using these couples for in-class skills practice.

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

Assignment Two: 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. 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 Three: Final Project and presentation (Due April 3): 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

weeks of class, 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, Hendrix, or Gottman books. You may read them at your own pace as long as they are completed by the deadlines indicated below.

January 9: Introduction, course overview.

January 16: Johnson, Chapter 1
Reading Packet: Mikulincer, M., *Attachment, caregiving and sex within romantic relationships*.

January 23: **Couple Description Due**
Johnson, Chapter 2
Reading Packet: Hazan, C., *The essential nature of couple relationships*.

January 30: **Finish reading Gottman**
Johnson, Chapter 3
Reading Packet: Cherlin, A., *The deinstitutionalization of American marriage*.

February 6: 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 13: Johnson, Chapter 5
Reading Packet: Simpson, J., Campbell, L. & Weisberg, Y, *Daily perceptions of conflict and support in romantic relationships*.

February 20: Johnson, Chapter 6
Reading Packet: Doherty, W., *Bad couples therapy*.

- February 27: Johnson, Chapter 7
Finish reading Schnarch
- March 6: 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*.
- March 13: Johnson, Chapter 9
Reading Packet: Ventura, M., *A dance for your life in the marriage zone*.
- March 20: Johnson, Chapter 10
Finish reading Real
- March 27: **Spring Break – no class**
- April 3: Johnson, Chapter 11
Reading Packet: Diamond, L., *How do I love thee?*
Josephson, G., *Using an attachment-based intervention with same-sex couples*.
- April 10: Johnson, Chapters 12
Reading Packet: Berscheid, E., *Seasons of the heart*.
- April 17: **Finish reading Hendrix**
Johnson, Chapter 13 & 14

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