



**LEWIS & CLARK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
EDUCATION AND COUNSELING
MCFT 563/CPSY 590 Relational Justice in Couple Therapy
1 unit
FALL 2015**

Time & Day:	Fraturdays Sept 11, 25, Oct 2, 16, & 23
Place:	York 117
Instructor:	Carmen Knudson-Martin, PhD
Office Hours:	Tuesdays 1:00-3:00; Wednesdays 4:30-6:30 and by arrangement (please schedule appointments in advance)
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CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Therapists often inadvertently reinforce existing power disparities. This class explores why power imbalances between intimate partners are detrimental and how therapists can address them using an approach that links emotion, societal context, and couple interaction. The class draws on research regarding the moment-by-moment process in couple therapy. Students will learn to identify power dynamics in couple relationships and practice clinical competencies that empower couples to create an equitable foundation based on four elements of mutual support: mutual attunement, mutual vulnerability, mutual influence, and shared relational responsibility.

Prerequisite: None

Credit: 1 semester hour

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course promotes the following student learning outcomes:

SLO1: Students will demonstrate integrity, compassion and commitment to working with diverse groups.

SLO 2: Students will demonstrate excellent therapeutic skills with individuals, couples, and families.

SLO 3: Students will demonstrate dedication to social justice and global citizenship.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are in keeping with the AAMFT Core Competencies. At the end of this course, students are expected to:

1. Recognize how inequities in larger systems create destructive power imbalances in couple relationships (e.g., gender, age, socioeconomic status, culture/race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, spirituality, religion, larger systems, social context) (TS 1.04; KS 45, 53; CC 1.2.1)

2. Recognize the confluence of emotion, societal context, and couple interaction in the moment by moment of couple therapy. (TS 1.04; KS 45, 53; CC 1.2.1)
3. Learn a research-based clinical model for couple therapy that promotes relational justice and mutual support. (CC 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.3.2)
4. Practice clinical competencies that empower couples to create an equitable foundation for their relationship. (TS 1.04; KS 45, 53)

TEXT/READINGS

Required Book (electronic copy available free through the library; hard copy must be purchased)

Knudson-Martin, C., Wells, M. A., & Samman, S. K. (2015). *Socio-emotional relationship therapy: Bridging emotion, societal context, and couple interaction*. New York: Springer

Contents

Chapter One	Bridging Emotion, Societal Discourse, and Couple Interaction in Clinical Practice### Carmen Knudson-Martin and Douglas Huenergardt
Chapter Two	When Therapy Challenges Patriarchy: Undoing Gendered Power in Heterosexual Couple Relationships.....### Carmen Knudson-Martin
Chapter Three	Toward Relational Empowerment: Interpersonal Neurobiology, Couples, and the Societal Context.....### Mona DeKoven Fishbane and Melissa A. Wells
Chapter Four	How Gender Discourses Hijack Couple Therapy—and How to Avoid It### Jessica L. ChenFeng and Aimee Galick
Chapter Five	Expanding the Lens: How SERT Therapists Develop Interventions That Address Larger Context### Julie Estrella, Veronica P. Kuhn, Cassidy J. Freitas, and Melissa A. Wells
Chapter Six	SERT Therapists’ Experience of Practicing Sociocultural Attunement### Mayuri (Mia) Pandit, Jessica L. ChenFeng, and Young Joo Kang
Chapter Seven	Relational Engagement in Heterosexual Couple Therapy: Helping Men Move from “I” to “We”.....### Sarah K. Samman and Carmen Knudson-Martin
Chapter Eight	Building a Circle of Care in Same-Sex Couple Relationships: A Socio-Emotional Relational Approach### Jason C. Richards, Naveen Jonathan, and Lana Kim

Chapter Nine	Couple Therapy with Adult Survivors of Child Abuse: Gender, Power, and Trust.....### Melissa Wells and Veronica P. Kuhn
Chapter Ten	Relational Justice: Addressing Gender and Power in Clinical Practices for Infidelity### Kirstee Williams and Lana Kim
Chapter Eleven	Relational Spirituality, Gender, and Power: Applications to Couple Therapy### Elisabeth Esmiol Wilson
Chapter Twelve	Engaging Power, Emotion, and Context in Couple Therapy: Lessons Learned### Carmen Knudson-Martin, Melissa A. Wells, & Sarah K. Samman

Recommended Book

Knudson-Martin, C. & Mahoney, A. R., (2009). Couple, gender, and power: Creating change in intimate relationships. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Participation** (20 points)

This course emphasizes shared engagement with the assigned readings and clinical competencies. Toward this end, you are expected to:

- Attend and participate in **all** class meetings. In the event of illness or other emergency, please email the instructor in advance of class. Missed classes will be made up by written reflections on the required readings for the day.
- Come to class prepared (having read the assignment for the day).
- Give attention to the instructor and/or other students when they are speaking or making a presentation. No electronic devices may be used, except to access readings or make notes.
- Contribute to in-class discussion based on the topics of discusses and the readings assigned. Contributions may include how you feel about the material but merely articulating your feelings is not sufficient. You are expected to put those feelings in context of your thoughts and analysis of the material.
- Engage in group discussions and role plays.
- Ask questions of the instructor and/or other students regarding the material examined in that class.
- Deal with other students and/or the instructor in a respectful fashion.

Your participation in class activities will be evaluated according to the following rubric:

CLASS PARTICIPATION COMPETENCIES	Possible points	Points demonstrated
Prompt and dependable presence in the class.	5	
Prepares for class by immersing self in course readings and reflecting on their application to practice.	5	
Engages in course activities with a spirit of openness and curiosity.	5	
Helps to create an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect among all class members.	5	
TOTAL	20	

2) Case Presentation (40 points)

Select a population or issue that interests you. Examples might be LGBTQ couples, couples representing a particular race, ethnicity or religion, couples dealing with loss, depression, parenting, infidelity, substance abuse, history of abuse, etc. Any topic that interests you is appropriate. Your focus will be on how power and larger sociocultural issues are part of the clinical issues and process of couple therapy.

Prepare a 25-30 minute presentation with the following components:

A. A summary of how power and social context issues are likely to affect the experience of couples in this circumstance. You are encouraged to draw on additional readings outside those assigned for the class to the extent that they are helpful and appropriate. The required and recommended texts and the references in them may also be helpful to you. (8-10 minutes)

B. Create a description of a fictional or real case that illustrates this. It can be based on a movie, book, a composite of people you know, a case that you are working with, or totally made up based on your readings. Change any identifying information so that the people you are using would not recognize themselves. The description should include the following information (8-10 minutes):

- Demographic information describing the couple's social location (age, gender identification, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, culture, religion, education and socio-economic status, disabilities, etc.)
- The reason the couple is seeking therapy.
- Brief summary of relevant background information (i.e., significant life transitions such as divorce/deaths and family history, special concerns, etc.)
- Answers to 7 guiding lens questions at the top of Figure 6.1 (Chapter 6, Pandit et al).

C. Discuss how power and socio-contextual issues will be important to the therapy process (8-10 minutes).

Following your presentation, the class will discuss how to proceed in the case.

Turn in a 2-4 page outline of your presentation.

Your presentation will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

_SOCIOCULTURAL ATTUNEMENT COMPETENCIES	Possible points	Points demonstrated
Summarizes key power and social context issues related to population or history	10	
Identifies key social contextual/demographic information, very brief history, and reason for seeing therapy	10	
Thoughtfully reflects on each of the 7 sociocultural guiding lens questions in order to contextualize the self/identity of each partner.	10	
Addresses how power and larger context issues will be important to the process of therapy	10	
TOTAL	40	

3) Case Conceptualization and Treatment Plan (40 points)

Using the case you presented, provide a 3-5 page case assessment and treatment plan based on principles of relational justice and mutual support.

- Conceptualize the relational patterns in terms of the Circle of Care and power dynamics and how they relate to the presenting concerns and relationship distress.
- Identify overall treatment goals, including a focus on relational justice/mutual support
- Outline a plan detailing the strategies you will use to help the couple attain the treatment goals.

The case conceptualization and treatment plan will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

TREATMENT PLANNING COMPETENCIES	Possible points	Points demonstrated
Conceptualization includes attention to power dynamics and the four elements of mutual support (Circle of Care)	10	
Treatment goals include attention to relational justice and mutual support.	10	
Treatment plan details how goals will be accomplished.	10	
TOTAL	30	

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.

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 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. According to the Lewis & Clark Counseling Psychology attendance policy, missing 3 or more hours of a 1 credit course may result in a failing grade. For this course, any absence of more than one hour requires a makeup assignment. If you must be absent or late, please email the instructor at least several hours prior to class.

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 instructors as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of the student to make his or her disability and needs known in a timely fashion and to provide appropriate documentation and evaluations to support the accommodations the student requests. Requests for accommodations should be routed through the Student Support Services office in Albany 206. Please review the L&C policy at:

http://www.lclark.edu/offices/student_support_services/rights/disability_policy/

CPSY DEPARTMENTAL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Class attendance is expected and required. Any missed class time will be made up by completing extra assignments designed by the instructor. Missing more than ten percent of class time may result in failure to complete the class. This would be 4.5 hours of a 45 hour class (3 credits), 3.0 hours for a 30 hour class (2 credits) or 1.5 hours for a 15 hour class (1 credit.) In case of extreme hardship and also at the discretion of the instructor, a grade of incomplete may

be given for an assignment or the entire course. In such cases, the work to be submitted in order to remove the incomplete must be documented appropriately and stated deadlines met. Students are expected to be on time to class and tardiness maybe seen as an absence that requires make-up work.

EVALUATION & GRADING

Participation	20 pts
Sociocultural Attunement (Paper I)	40 pts
Case Assessment and Treatment Plan (Paper II)	40 pts
Total	100 pts

94-100 = A 90-93.5 = A- 88-89.5 = B+
83-87.5 = B 80-82.5 = B- 78-79 = C+
73-77.5 = C 70-72 = C-

COURSE SCHEDULE

	Topics	Readings and Assignments (all readings from the SERT book)
Class 1 Sept 11	Overview: Power, emotion, & social context in couple therapy	chap 1-2
Class 2 Sept 25	Socio-Emotional attunement	Chap 3-6 and 12
Class 3 Oct 2	Undoing gendered and ungendered power	Chap 7-8 Presentation _____ Presentation _____
Class 4 Oct 16	Special Treatment issues: adult survivors and infidelity	Chap 9-10 Presentation _____ Presentation _____
Class 5 Oct 23	Special treatment issues: spirituality, culture	Chap 11 Presentation _____ Presentation _____ Presentation _____

Final Case Assessment & Treatment plan due via e-mail by 4:00 Wednesday October 28.