“We are a community that commits itself to diversity and sustainability as dimensions of a just society”
- Mission Statement, Lewis & Clark College

MCFT 563-01 Relational Justice in Couple Therapy
SUMMER 2017

Time & Day: Mondays 8:45 am-12:30 pm May 8-June 5
Place: L&C Community Counseling Center, Classroom D (second floor)
Instructor: Carmen Knudson-Martin, PhD
Office Hours: By arrangement (please email instructor)
E-Mail: carmen@lclark.edu
Phone: 503-768-6090 (office) 909-262-7725 (cell)

CATALOG DESCRIPTION
Applications of family systems approach to treatment of families in crisis and transition. Topics include issues such as substance abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse, trauma and loss, poverty, and chronic illness. A portion of this course emphasizes clinical case conceptualization and treatment planning.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Therapists often inadvertently reinforce societal 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 apply Socio-Emotional Relationship Therapy competencies to work with populations or issues of particular interest to them.

Prerequisite: None
Credit: 1 semester hour (15 contact hours)

MCFT STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
This course promotes the following student learning outcomes:

SLO1.1: Students recognize the impact of power on individuals, families, and communities.

SLO1.2: Students recognize the interconnections among biological, psychological, social systems in people’s lived experience.

SLO1.3: Students apply systems/relational theories to clinical case conceptualization
SLO 2.2: Students’ clinical practice demonstrates attention to social justice and cultural democra

SLO 3.2 Students draw on the research literature relevant to family therapy in case planning.

SLO: 4.3 Students demonstrate integration of family therapy theory, equity, and social location issues in clinical practice.

**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Six</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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  

Chapter Eleven  
Relational Spirituality, Gender, and Power: Applications to Couple Therapy Elisabeth Esmiol Wilson

Chapter Twelve  

Required Articles


Recommended Articles


**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) and contribute to in-class discussion/activities based on the topics of discusses and the readings assigned.
   - Respectfully engage with other students and/or the instructor in a spirit of openness and curiosity

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS PARTICIPATION COMPETENCIES</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
<th>Points demonstrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prompt and dependable presence in the class.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepares for class by immersing self in course readings and reflecting on their application to practice.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engages in course activities with a spirit of openness and curiosity.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps to create an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect among all class members.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2) Case Presentation -- in pairs (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 presentation will provide a springboard for class discussion of treatment planning for this case.

Prepare a 15-20 minute presentation with the following components:

A. Summarize socio-contextual issues unique to this group of couples and how these issues are likely to affect relationship power dynamics. Draw on additional readings outside those assigned for the class to the extent they are helpful. (7-10 minutes)

B. Create a description of a fictional or real case that illustrates the identified issues. 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. The description should include the following information (7-10 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.)
- Summary of guiding lens questions at the top of Figure 6.1 (Chapter 6, Pandit et al) and how these affect the ways they approach the relationship
- How power and socio-contextual issues will be important to the therapy process.

Your presentation will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIOCULTURAL ATTUNEMENT COMPETENCIES</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
<th>Points demonstrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summarizes key socio-contextual issues related to population or history and connects them to likely power dynamics</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identities key social contextual/demographic information, very brief history, and reason for seeing therapy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses the sociocultural guiding lens questions from Pandit et al (chap 6) to contextualize the self/identity of each partner and how these affect the ways they approach the relationship</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies power and larger context issues that will be important to the process of therapy for this couple</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3) **Case Conceptualization and Treatment Plan** (*40 points*). Due Friday June 9 via email. Using the case you presented, write a 3-5 page case conceptualization and treatment plan based on principles of relational justice and mutual support. Draw on the class discussion and readings to help you apply the SERT model to your case. Presentation partners may consult with each other as much as you wish; however, each person should write a separate treatment plan.

a. Provide a brief overview of the partners involved, the reason for therapy, and influence of the sociocultural context (from presentation).

b. 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.

c. Identify overall treatment goals, including a focus on relational justice/mutual support

d. Outline a plan detailing strategies you will use to help the couple attain the treatment goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TREATMENT PLANNING COMPETENCIES</th>
<th>Possible points</th>
<th>Points demonstrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides an overview of the partners involved, the reason for therapy, and influence of the sociocultural context.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptualization includes attention to power dynamics and the four elements of mutual support (Circle of Care)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment goals include attention to relational justice and mutual support.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment plan details how goals will be accomplished.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.

DISABILITY SERVICES STATEMENT
If you have a disability that may impact your academic performance, you may request
accommodations by submitting documentation to the Student Support Services Office in the
Albany Quadrangle (503-768-7192). After you have submitted documentation and filled out
paperwork there for the current semester requesting accommodations, staff in that office will
notify me of the accommodations for which you are eligible.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Presentation</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Plan</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Class 1 | Overview: Power, emotion, & social context in couple therapy  
        | Phase I Positioning  
        | Sociocultural attunement  
        | Knudson-Martin & Huenergardt (2010)  
        | SERT text: chap 1, 4, & 6  
        | ChenFeng et al  
        | **Suggested**  
        | Knudson-Martin (2013)  
        | Loscocco & Waltzer (2013) (suggested) | |
| Class 2 | Undoing gendered power  
        | Phase II Interrupting the flow of power  
        | SERT text: Chap 2, 7, 9 and 12  
        | Wells (2017) et al | |
| Class 3 | Power in same-sex/queer relationships  
        | Phase III Practicing mutuality  
        | SERT text: chap 8  
        | **Suggested**  
        | Jonathan 2009  
        | Presentation ____________________  
        | Presentation ____________________  
        | Presentation ____________________ | |
| Class 4 | Special Treatment issues: infidelity & spirituality | SERT text: Chap 10 & 11  
        | Williams (2011)  
        | **Suggested**  
        | Williams et al (2013)  
        | Williams &K-M (2013)  
        | Presentation ____________________  
        | Presentation ____________________  
        | Presentation ____________________ | |

Case conceptualization & Treatment plan due via e-mail by Friday June 9.
Additional Suggested Readings


