

Charles Dickerman, LMFT, MAC, CADC I

Adjunct Professor of Counseling Psychology

Professional Mental Health Counseling Faculty

Phone: 503-567-8562

Email: charles@lclark.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment Only

COURSE INFORMATION

Time: Monday, 8:30AM - 11:30AM

Dates: 10/2, 10/16, 10/30, 11/13, 11/27.

Location: York Graduate Center, Room 107

Credits: 1 credit hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class includes a “quick and dirty” overview of couples counseling, a smattering of theories and techniques. The main focus of learning will be on how to apply skills and techniques used in counseling interventions with couples (+). Learning will be experienced and demonstrated through lecture, readings, class discussions and role plays, which will happen both as a larger group and in small groups. Most importantly, this class is intended to help students to identify their own strengths and skills, recognize when it is (in)appropriate to offer couples counseling and to contemplate the role of self-as-therapist in the work that we do, especially with more than one person in the room.

COURSE POLICIES

Email Policy

I maintain a 72-hour response policy for all email communications not including weekends. If you receive an email from me during the weekend, it is the exception and not the rule. You are free to email me at any time and I will do my best to get back to you as my schedule allows. If you have a question, by all means ask.

Participation and Attendance

Participation: Participation in this course is the main measure of success with regard to grading. It will consist of discussions and role plays, the latter of which is a consistent focus for the material and to demonstrate a willingness to explore therapy with couples from both sides of the couch, so to speak. One hundred (100) points of the grade is determined through instructor evaluation of class participation, contribution, and engagement via Moodle. You will be required to login to Moodle on a regular basis to download the readings. Optional to this is to participate in broader discussions with the class forum, post articles you feel relates to the course or otherwise contribute to the learning of others. For more information, please go to <https://moodle.lclark.edu/>. I am glad to provide basic assistance with Moodle but cannot help you troubleshoot issues with your computer or phone.

Attendance: Class attendance is expected and required. Any missed class time will be made up by completing extra assignments designed by instructor. Missing more than ten percent of class time may result in failure to complete the class. This would be 1.5 hours for a 15 hour class (1 credits). What this means, of course, is that the graduate school is generally not in support of you missing a class (or arriving late) for a short format course. In the event that someone has something extremely pressing, I can create a special make-up assignment, but it's not my preference to do so as it disrupts the activities of the groups and ongoing analysis. 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. While you may find the meeting schedule of this class to be unorthodox, it is my personal attempt to bypass the song and dance of seminar courses, which come and go with little fanfare and often fewer memories.

"And what would humans be without love?"

RARE, said Death.

- Sourcery by Terry Pratchett

ROLE PLAYS AS THERAPEUTIC TOOLS

In many classes, role plays are a haphazard component that exists to match technique against application, sort of a “rubber meets the road” for theories. While I am not always a strong proponent of them in other courses I have taught, I am a firm believer that they are necessary to utilize them in learning the basics of couples counseling. For this class, we will be looking at several different couples (+) and playing different assigned roles to examine both the experience of the therapist and the clients. The information for these couples will be provided throughout the term and updated to reflect some of the kinds of developments that are present with clients on an ongoing basis, as we rarely have all of the information at hand when people first arrive for session.

I challenge you to invest yourself in this part of the course, as it will be an opportunity to use a different part of your brain in seeing the perspectives of others, as well as the insight you may find when looking from a client’s eyes. As with all exercises of this nature, it is possible that you may experience a wide range of emotions when playing a particular client from their vignette and this can be a normal response. If you find that there is a particular person that you believe would be a personal challenge to deal with in session, I encourage you to take on that role in class. Role plays of this nature can be good experiences for building empathy and for getting outside of ourselves, as best we can.

ASSIGNMENTS (DUE BY EMAIL)

Reading Responses (50 points): You will submit 4 reading responses during the term, selecting one of the assigned reading articles that interested you and send it to me via e-mail before each class. We will have an ongoing discussion about the readings and you should come prepared to discuss them. Each reading response should be about one page long, double-spaced and contain your thoughts and perspective on the topic. For the math savvy, you will recognize that each one of these assignments is worth 12.5 points. Try not to dwell on it.

Self as Therapist / Self as Client Paper (50 points): Paralleling the process of keeping up with role plays in class, I will ask you to write a paper that captures your experiences on both sides of the couch, as a therapist dealing with a particular couple and as a client or dyad. The paper itself is meant to be something which captures your insights, thoughts and feelings pertaining to this process and is not intended to be scholarly (unless that floats your boat, in which case, who am I to say no?). The paper itself is expected to be a minimum of five pages, preferably less than ten, double spaced. Successful completion of this assignment is based on how well you can relate your experiences during the term and reflect what you’ve learned in the process. More information on this assignment will be handed out on 10/16 to allay the anxieties of anyone who wants to have a bullet pointed list of assignment stuff.

EVALUATION METHODS

<u>Item</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Participation / Moodle Engagement	100 points (20/class)	Calculated throughout term and at end
Reading Responses	50 points (12.5/each)	Before each class, starting 10/16
Self as Therapist / Self as Client Paper	50 points	12/11 by midnight
Total	200 points	