



“We are a community that commits itself to diversity
and sustainability as dimensions of a just society”

- *Mission Statement, Lewis & Clark College*

MCFT 563-51 TREATMENT ISSUES IN DIVORCE & STEPPARENTING SUMMER 2021

Time & Day:	Wednesdays May 12 to June 9 from 11am-2pm
Place:	Zoom; online
Instructor:	Marcia Michaels, PhD
Office Hours:	by appointment
E-Mail:	marcia@lclark.edu
Phone:	714-856-4534 (cell); texting available

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Applications of systems/relational approaches to treatment of clinical issues. Course offerings address a variety of topics. Each course includes an emphasis on clinical case conceptualization, treatment planning, and intervention.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will address the clinical, ethical, and legal issues unique to couples, with children, who are either contemplating or have already divorced/separated, and those who may be forming new, blended families. Focus is on helping students become more competent when working with this complex family form, including becoming more aware of their own values, beliefs, and biases that may influence their clinical work.

Prerequisite: None

Credit: 1 semester unit (15 contact hours via Zoom)

MCFT STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course promotes the following student learning outcomes:

SLO 1.3: Students will apply systems/relational theories to clinical case conceptualization.

SLO 2.1: Students will self-reflect on the implications of own and others' social location in clinical practice.

SLO 2.2: Students' clinical practice demonstrates attention to social justice and cultural democracy.

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

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, students are expected to:

1. Develop knowledge or skills that expand ability to apply a systems approach to treatment of a particular clinical issue.
2. Apply course content to case conceptualization, treatment planning, and intervention. In this section, these include:
 - a. Apply systemic models addressed in class to conceptualizing the relational nature of change.
 - b. Develop strategies for guiding clinical conversations that help clients overcome oppressive dominant discourses and expand possibilities.
 - c. Increase ability to manage the power of the therapist in relation to both dominant societal discourses and client agency.

A note about the nature of this course: This course will involve considerable role play. For your learning to be effective, this will require that you take on the experience of the clients and the ways they construct their identities. Other times, you may be asked to bring your own personal experience into the role of client. At such times, students should determine which experience they wish to process. Be aware that when the role plays work well, hidden or “unthickened” stories of self and/or other may emerge.

TEXT/READINGS

Required Texts

Doherty, W. J. & Harris, S. M (2017). *Helping couples on the brink of divorce: Discernment counseling for troubled relationships*. Washington, DC: APA.

Hawkins, A. J., Fackrell, T., & Harris, S. M. (2013). *Should I try to work it out: A guidebook for individuals and couples at the crossroads of divorce*. Provo, UT: Authors.

Note: Hawkins et al., can be viewed free on Kindle, and purchased for a nominal fee from Amazon.

Journal Articles (Free public access to JMF decade review; feel free to review any of the other articles you think are relevant and helpful in this volume)

https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/17413737/2020/82/1?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Zippy+News%3A+5+Things+to+Know+About+Conference+Proposals&utm_campaign=Zippy+News+-+2%2F12%2F2020

Palmer, G. (2017). Emotionally focused family therapy for stepfamilies: Building security for children in the face of complexity and change. In J. Fitzgeralds (Ed.), *Foundations for couple therapy: Research for the real world* (pp. 395-403). NY: Routledge.

Papernow, P. L. (2018). Clinical guidelines for working with stepfamilies: What family, couple, individual, and child therapists need to know. *Family Process*, 57(1), 25-51.

Raley, R. K., & Sweeney, M. M. (2020). Divorce, repartnering, and stepfamilies: A decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82, 81-99.

Sassler, S., & Lichter, D. T. (2020). Cohabitation and marriage: Complexity and diversity in union-formation patterns. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82, 35-61.

Shalay, N., & Brownlee, K. (2007). Narrative family therapy with blended families. *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, 18(2), 17-30.

Smock, P. J., & Schwartz, C. R. (2020). The demography of families: A review of patterns and change. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82, 9-34.

Movies

The Squid & The Whale (2005) – in the L&C library; you are able to stream it

What Maisie Knew (2013) – in the L&C library; you are able to stream it

Websites/Resources

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy: <https://www.aamft.org>

AAMFT Code of Ethics: https://www.aamft.org/Legal_Ethics/Code_of_Ethics.aspx

American Counseling Association: <https://www.counseling.org/>

Oregon Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (OBLPCT) Home Page:

<http://www.oregon.gov/oblpc/Pages/index.aspx>

COURSE OBJECTIVES, STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES, AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Course Objective	MCFT Student Learning Outcomes	AAMFT Core Competencies & AMFTRB task statements	Evaluated by
1. Develop knowledge or skills that expand ability to apply a systems approach to treatment of a particular clinical issue.	SLO 1.3	CC 1.1.1 CC 1.1.2 CC 2.2.3 CC 4.1.1 CC 4.5.3 TS 01.01 TS 01.02	Prep questions/comnt Journal reflections Participation in course discussion & role play
2a. Apply systemic models addressed in class to conceptualizing the relational nature of change.	SLO 1.3	CC 2.2.3 CC 2.1.6 CC 4.1.1 CC 4.5.3	Prep questions/comnt Journal reflections

		TS 01.01 TS 01.02 TS 02.02 TS 02.30	Participation in course discussion & role play
2b. Develop strategies for guiding clinical conversations that help clients overcome oppressive dominant discourses and expand possibilities.	SLO 2.2 SLO 4.3	CC 1.2.1 CC 1.3.1 CC 2.3.1 CC 2.3.8 CC 4.1.2 CC 4.3.8 TS 01.04 TS 02.06 TS 03.11	Prep questions/comnt Journal reflections Participation in course discussion & role play
2c. Increase ability to manage the power of the therapist in relation to both dominant societal discourses and client agency.	SLO 2.1 SLO 4.3	CC 1.3.1 CC 2.3.8 CC 4.3.8 TS 01.04 TS 05.09	Prep questions/comnt Journal reflections Participation in course discussion & role play

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

A note about writing: All written submissions for this course should be typed. The ability to express yourself and think critically through writing is important to your professional development. Please proof read your writing and be coherent with your writing style.

1. **Participation** (45 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 expanded written reflections on the required readings for the day or other assignments that are appropriate to show that learning has occurred.
- Come to class prepared (having read the assignments, watched videos, and uploaded questions/comments that arose from the readings prior to class time).
- 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.
- Engage in group discussions and role plays.
- 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.	10	
Prepares for class by immersing self in course readings/videos and reflecting on their application to practice. <i>Prior to class, upload questions/comments that arose from readings so they can be shared with the class using the Moodle Forum discussion feature.</i>	15	
Engages in course activities with a spirit of openness and curiosity.	10	
Helps to create an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect among all class members.	10	
TOTAL	45	

2) Reflective Journal (55 points).

Throughout the course students are to create a journal that focuses on your personal responses to the following:

1. Specific practice strategies in the readings that are especially meaningful or inspiring to you and reflections on how they would work to create healthy family relationships.
2. Reflections on experience of applying identified strategies to case examples (i.e., in class role plays/observation, examples in readings/videos, or through creative imagination)
3. Conclusions about how you will apply course concepts/materials to your practice.

The journal should cover all assigned readings/videos in your reflections, but should focus on those aspects of particular interest to you. Integration across readings (rather than just taking them one at a time) is encouraged. Reflections are your conversation with yourself and do not need to be in the form of a paper; however, please use complete sentences and good grammar. They should be typed (single-spaced) and include approximately 1-2 pages for each week. Please separate your weekly journal entries in a way that is recognizable to the reader (e.g., dates, topic). Your journal will be uploaded to Moodle at the end of the course (due Fri 6/11, midnight).

Your journal will be evaluated according to the following criteria

REFLECTIONS ON CLINICAL STRATEGIES WITH DIVORCE AND STEPPARENTING	Possible points	Points demonstrated

Identifies specific practice strategies and consider how they work with individuals/couples/families who are dissolving or creating families.	10	
Applies identified strategies to case examples.	10	
Reflects upon own experience practicing, observing, or imagining how you might do this work (taking into account awareness of your social location and that of the clients)	10	
Draws conclusions about how you will apply course concepts/materials to your practice.	10	
Reflections integrate material across readings and represent your thinking as you engage with course concepts.	10	
Writing style is clear.	5	
TOTAL	55	

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.

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.

DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Each student should decide for him/herself what information to disclose. Students are advised to be prudent when making self-disclosures. The program cannot guarantee confidentiality of student disclosures given the group environment, although personal comments should be considered private and confidential – and remain only in the classroom – unless an exception to confidentiality applies.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones must be silenced and text messaging is not allowed during class time. If there is an emergency you may exit the class to use your cell.

EVALUATION & GRADING

Participation	45 pts
Journal	55 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-	

According to Graduate School policy, grades lower than B- may not apply to graduation. Students earning a C+ or lower will need to repeat the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

	Topics	Readings and Assignments
Class 1 May 12	Working with divorcing/divorced couples; legal/ethical issues; co-parenting	- Raley & Sweeney (2020) - Sassler & Lichter (2020) - Smock & Schwartz (2020) - AAMFT & ACA Code of Ethics
Class 2 May 19	Educational programs for divorcing/divorced couples w/children	-Should I Try to Work it Out: Guidebook (2013) -Watch The Squid & The Whale (2005) or -What Maisie Knew (2013)
Class 3 May 26	Working with blended/stepfamilies; co-parenting	-Palmer (2017) -Papernow, P. L. (2018) -Shalay & Brownlee (2007)
Class 4 June 2	Assessing for divorce and couples therapy – Discernment Counseling	-Helping Couples on the Brink of Divorce Doherty & Harris (2017) -Dyadic Adjustment Scale
Class 5 June 9	Assessing for divorce and couples therapy – Discernment Counseling	-Doherty & Harris (2017) cont. Submit Journal by midnight Fri 6/11