

Couples Therapy: Theory and Practice
DM 3033
January 14th – 18th 2019

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8:30am - 5:00pm
Schlegel Hall 122

Description

This one week seminar provides theological, theoretical and practical foundations for the practice of couple therapy. In this course, students will explore the development of couple therapy, foundations for assessment of couple problems, and the practical application of current evidence-based methods for assessing and treating couple problems. Readings, lectures and practical applications will be framed within a family systemic context and grounded within reflective theological understandings of the human person in relationship. Students will have the opportunity to experience a variety of intervention methods and begin the process of formulating a theological and personally integrated model of marital/couple therapy.

Definition

The terms “couple” and “marital” are used interchangeably in this course to describe relationships in which people have formed a covenant of exclusive commitment to each other. This definition does not rely on legal or religious affirmation of such a covenant, and is intended to be inclusive of heterosexual and same-sex couples. The course will be sensitive to a broad spectrum of couple, racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

Course Objectives

- Understand and demonstrate the ability to use evidence-based approaches to couples therapy.
- Demonstrate awareness and ability to assess of couple diversity (same sex, culturally diverse, etc.) and its impact on assessment, treatment and therapeutic processes
- Articulate a theological or spiritual framework that supports therapy with diverse couples and is useful in addressing religious issues that arise in couples therapy

Method

This class will be a combination of lecture, participant presentation, theoretical discussion, and case demonstration. Through an integrative approach to the theoretical, theological and clinical material, participants will be exposed to a variety of couple’s therapy understandings, while being afforded the opportunity to explore one or two systems of change and therapy. Class time will be divided roughly equally between theoretical and practical concerns.

Requirements

All assignments must be turned in by email unless otherwise specified.

Due Date Summary:

Theological Integration Paper: January 7, 2019

Prepare/Enrich: January 14, 2019

Final Paper Due: February 7, 2019

1. *Course Attendance and Engagement*

Each student is expected to complete required readings and trainings and engage in classroom discussion and engagement. Assignments are expected to be turned in complete and on time in the format required.

2. *Life Innovations: Prepare-Enrich training*

Training for pre-marital and marital counseling certification through Life Innovations for use of Prepare-Enrich is part of the Couples Therapy course content. Prepare/Enrich training through Life Innovations is to be completed independently by students online. Completion of the training, including passing required quizzes will be evidenced by a certificate provided to the student by Life Innovations. Cost of \$75 is *payable directly to Life Innovations online by debit or credit card*. You must use the log-in code **LPTS – PREPARE – TRAIN** to receive the discounted rate of \$75. Training is to be completed online by each individual student using the following link: <https://www.prepare-enrich.com/training>. **The student must provide a copy of the certificate of completion to the course professor by January 7, 2019.** For students who have completed the

3. *Theological Integration Paper: A working theology of couple/marital problems*

Maximum: 7 double-spaced pages

Be sure to integrate your study in other theological courses. **Your papers are not to be “fill-in-the-blank” or short answer responses to the questions posed. Use the questions below to formulate an essay reflecting your stands. Use citations where appropriate. Since these are short papers, you must write well.**

In order to provide good pastoral counseling to couples, we must use our theological understanding of marriage, couple-ness, relationship dysfunction, and sexuality to ground our understanding of marital/couple problems and recovery. I am asking you in this paper to articulate:

1. What causes marital/couple problems: Couples work requires that we have a theory/theology of why couples have problems that need treatment. In this assignment, I am asking you to move beyond what any one MFT theory says about marital dysfunction and look to our Christian understandings of creation, the human person, and couple-ness to provide a grounding context for relating pastorally and theologically to clients. I am asking you to think theologically about such questions as:

- Why do married people have problems (what gets —broken or disrupted)? What is there in the nature of human persons that seems to assure marriages will be troubled? Why are some marriages more troubled than others? How, theologically, do you understand marital failure? Are there ways that this relates to your understanding of couple-ness and creation? Be sure to consider what you have learned about theological anthropology in other classes. Consider also issues of theodicy, or why evil exists in a world God created good.

- How do theories of couple therapy influence your theological understanding? Do you think that these theories are a —source of revelation in some way that informs theology? How do you see this happening in your own work?
- How does your theological understanding of marital problems guide or influence your approach to couples therapy?

2. What needs to be changed or healed in couples seeking treatment?

Think theologically. Relate this to what you stated above.

3. What is the role/function of the pastoral therapist is when working with such couples?

Consider the following:

- How does theory inform your theology and theology inform your theory?
- What are the —active ingredients necessary for counseling to be productive?
- What is the role of the pastoral therapist, and how does this relate to a Christian understanding ministry?
- What does the pastoral therapist actually *do*? How might this be different from what other therapists do?
- Given your theological stands, how do you interpret a couple's decision, in therapy, to divorce rather than stay married? How does this affect your theological commitments? Your understanding of yourself as pastoral therapist? Your assessment of your effectiveness as a couples' therapist?

4. Final Paper

Each student will be required to complete a 10 page final paper. This final paper will be focused on an issue of interest for the student that is related to course content and related to your current ministry context or DMIN project idea. Students will set up a time to talk with the instructor in advance to have their paper idea approved by telephone, online, or in person on or before **December 14, 2018**. Students are able to contact the professor to schedule via email or can schedule a time directly using the instructor's online calendar: <https://www.calendly.com/ahickswhite>. Once this meeting has occurred the student will submit an outline of their final paper idea to the instructor. **The final paper is due no later than February 1, 2019 @ 5:00pm**

Required Books:

- Buber, M. (1970). *I and thou*. Touchstone: 1st ISBN 13: 978-0684717258
- Coontz, S. (2006). *Marriage, a history: How love conquered marriage*. Penguin.
- Gottman, J. S., & Gottman, J. M. (2015). *10 Principles for Doing Effective Couples Therapy (Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology)*. WW Norton & Company.
- Reiter, M. D., & Chenail, R. J. (Eds.). (2017). *Constructivist, critical, and integrative approaches to couples counseling*. Taylor & Francis.

Supplemental (not required):

- Chapman, G. (2004). *The five love languages: How to express heartfelt commitment to your mate*. Chicago, IL: Northfield Publishing.
- Flemons, D., & Green, S. (2018). *Quickies: The handbook of brief sex therapy*. Third edition.

WW Norton & Company.

Ziegler, P., & Hiller, T. (2001). *Recreating partnership: A solution-oriented, collaborative approach to couples therapy*. WW Norton & Company.

Additional Required Readings on CAMS

Wachtel, E. F. (2017) *The Heart of Couple Therapy: Knowing What to Do and How to Do It*. New York: Guilford Press. Pp.18-30.

Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 52(3), 511.

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a7ed/78521d0d3a52b6ce532e89ce6ba185b355c3.pdf>

Fraley, R. C., & Shaver, P. R. (2000). Adult romantic attachment: Theoretical developments, emerging controversies, and unanswered questions. *Review of general psychology*, 4(2), 132.

Johnson, S. and Zuccarini, D. (2010). Integrating Sex and Attachment in Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*. 36(4), p.431-445.

Why Do Marriage Therapists Undertreat Sexual Problems?

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/resolution-not-conflict/201201/why-do-marriage-therapists-undertreat-sexual-problems>

Additional Resources

Gottman, J. (1999). *The marriage clinic: A scientifically-based marital therapy*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Gottman, J. (1999). *The seven principles for making marriage work: A practical guide from the country's foremost relationship expert*. New York: Crown.

Gottman, J. Ed. (2004). *The marriage clinic casebook*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Johnson, S. (2005). *Becoming an emotionally focused couples therapist: The workbook*. New York: Routledge.

Johnson, S. (2008). *Hold me tight: Seven conversations for a lifetime of love*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

Maltz, W. (2012). *The sexual healing journey: A guide for survivors of sexual abuse*, 3rd ed. New York: Wm Morrow.

O'Leary, K., Heyman, R., & Jongsma, A. (2015). *The couples psychotherapy treatment planner*, 2nd ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Ogden, G. (2008). *The return of desire: A guide to rediscovering your sexual passion*. Boston: Trumpeter.

Piercy, F. and D. Sprenkle. *The family therapy sourcebook*, 2nd ed. NY: Guilford, 1996.

Schnarch, D. (1997). *Passionate Marriage: Keeping love and intimacy alive in committed relationships*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Spring, J. (1997). *After the affair: Healing the pain and rebuilding trust when a partner has been unfaithful*. New York: Harper Collins.

Walsh, F. (2010). *Spiritual resources in family therapy*, 2nd ed. New York: Guilford Press.