

“Reflective Professionals Building Learning Communities”

COURSE TITLE

COUN 432 Counseling Couples

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name
Office
Phone number
Email

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide students with knowledge and understanding of the principal theoretical frameworks, and the existing clinical approaches to counseling couples derived from the theoretical frameworks. The course will also expose students to a variety of clinical issues a counselor is most likely to encounter in clinical work with couples.

PREREQUISITES

COUN 420 and graduate standing

REQUIRED TEXTS

Jacobsen, N.S., & Gurman, A.S. (2002). *Clinical handbook of couple therapy* (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Gottman, J.M. (1994). *What predicts divorce?: The relationship between marital processes and marital outcomes*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.

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

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

This class will utilize a combination of seminar, lecture, and group discussion. Students in this class agree to participate in group exercises and role-playing. A variety of videos will be available for the course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to fulfill the program objectives for the Department of Counselor Education (DCE), and to support the designated learning outcomes for the College of Education (COE). The course also meets the Marital, Couple and Family Counseling Foundations objectives for the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The DCE, COE, and CACREP objectives are included in the Appendix.

The objectives of this course are:

1. to understand the concepts, terms, and methods employed by the various couples counseling approaches as applied to the specific issues examined in the course;
2. to understand the warning signs of distress in couples and to assess the level of functioning of the couple;
3. to understand how interventions work and to be able to select appropriate interventions depending on the particular presenting problem or clinical issues;
4. to learn the basic concepts of the developmental couple life-cycle;
5. to identify ethical issues in counseling couples;
6. to identify multicultural competencies of a couples' counselor; and
7. to identify basic countertransference reactions elicited by counseling couples in distress.

COURSE CONTENT

The means by which the course objectives will be attained include a process of gaining knowledge of theoretical orientation for counseling couples, gaining skills for effective counseling of couples and developing self-awareness of countertransferential issues common to counseling couples in distress.

Evaluation and requirements: The course will cover four content areas which will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. History and professional issues pertaining to counseling couples
 - a. History of couples counseling
 - b. Ethical issues in couples therapy
2. Skills relevant to counseling couples
 - a. Assessment of couples
 - b. Understanding of the marriage life-cycle
 - c. Current research on marital/couple satisfaction and/or dissolution
3. Theoretical approaches to couple counseling
 - a. Gottman Model
 - b. IBCT and cognitive approaches
 - c. Emotionally focused couples counseling
 - d. Ego-analytic and psychoanalytic couples counseling
 - e. Bowenian approaches
 - f. Problem and solution-focused approaches
 - g. Gendered/feminist approaches to couples counseling
 - h. Integrative approaches
4. Topics relevant to counseling couples
 - a. Violence in couples
 - b. Infidelity
 - c. Counseling same sex couples
 - d. Multicultural issues in counseling couples
 - e. Sex therapy
 - f. Divorce/remarriage
 - g. Premarital counseling
 - h. Couples counseling and alcoholism/substance abuse

REQUIRED PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES

1. Students are expected to read the required weekly material and be prepared to engage in small group discussions, seminars and/or role playing activities.
2. Students will submit 7 assessment questionnaires. The questionnaires capture the theoretical model discussed in the previous week. Students are to submit a one page typed assessment of couples' functioning questionnaire based on the theoretical model. The assessment may take the form of scales, open ended questions, choice questions, etc. The assessment questionnaire must:
 - a. identify key constructs of the model
 - b. distinguish distressed couples from those functioning well
 - c. identify areas of clinical intervention
 - d. highlight areas of ethical concern

The materials from which to draw information are the required readings, class presentations (lecture, videos) and group discussions. The seven assessment questionnaires are based on the following seven models:

- Gottman model
 - IBCT and cognitive therapy
 - Emotionally focused approach
 - Psychoanalytic and/or ego-analytic
 - Bowenian approach
 - Problem and/or solution focused
 - Gendered aspects/feminist critiques
3. Journal reactions papers. Students are to write reaction papers to the videotapes watched or role-plays done in class. Typewritten one page long. The reaction papers should reflect students' personal reactions to the video or the role play.
 4. Final Project. Students prepare a 15 minute videotaped role-play of a session with a couple, where the student is the clinician representing one of the theoretical orientations covered in class. Two students will role-play the couple, having received a brief case summary. The videotape must be accompanied by a written report on the case.

COUN 432 Course Objectives	DCE Program Objectives	COE Learning Outcomes	CACREP Standards	Means of Assessment
1.to understand the concepts, terms, and methods employed by the various couples counseling approaches as applied to the specific issues examined in the course	1d. introduce students to major theories of counseling/psychotherapy, develop understanding between theory and practice, formulate own theory of counseling	2. Human Development: understand how children and adults learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support intellectual, social, and personal development	c1. family systems theories, other relevant theories, applications in working with couples and families	texts, videos
2. to understand the warning signs of distress in couples and to assess the level of functioning of the couple	1e. understand role of counselor in counselor-client relationship, stages of counseling by representative counseling models, counseling strategies and interventions	9. Assessment: understand and use formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous cognitive, affective, social, and physical development of the learner	c2. interviewing, assessment, and case management skills for working with individuals, couples, families, and other systems	
3. to understand how interventions work and to be able to select appropriate interventions depending on the particular presenting problem or clinical issues	1d. introduce students to major theories of counseling/psychotherapy, develop understanding between theory and practice, formulate own theory of counseling	9. Assessment: understand and use formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous cognitive, affective, social, and physical development of the learner	c2. interviewing, assessment, and case management skills for working with individuals, couples, families, and other systems	
4. to learn the basic concepts of the	1b. developmental context to basic theories,	2. Human Development:	b1.;marital, couple, and family life cycle	

developmental couple life-cycle	concepts, and principles of normal and abnormal human development	understand how children and adults learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support intellectual, social, and personal development	dynamics, family functioning and structures, development in a multicultural society, intergenerational influences	
5. to identify ethical issues in counseling couples	1a. nature of professional counseling and professional orientation to roles, standards, credentialing processes of the field	1. Foundations: demonstrate, articulate, and apply in practice knowledge of the socio-historical, psychological, and philosophical nature of teaching and learning, and are able to both articulate a personal philosophy of teaching and learning, and demonstrate its application in practice	a3. ethical, legal considerations related to the practice of marital, couple and family counseling	
6. to identify multicultural competencies of a couples' counselor	1c. social and cultural change within a pluralistic society	1. Foundations: demonstrate, articulate, and apply in practice knowledge of the socio-historical, psychological, and philosophical nature of teaching and learning, and are able to both articulate a personal philosophy of	a6. racial, ethnic, cultural heritage, nationality, socioeconomic status, family structure, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious, spiritual beliefs, equity issues in marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy b1.;marital, couple, and family life cycle dynamics, family	

		teaching and learning, and demonstrate its application in practice	functioning and structures, development in a multicultural society, intergenerational influences	
7. to identify basic countertransference reactions elicited by counseling couples in distress	1a. nature of professional counseling and professional orientation to roles, standards, credentialing processes of the field 2a. self-assessment assignments, group process, case studies, individual projects	10. Professional development: continually evaluate effects of choices and actions on others and actively seek out opportunities to grow	a3. ethical, legal considerations specifically related to the practice of marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy	

GRADING POLICY

Assessment Questionnaires	25%
Journal Reaction Papers	25%
Final Project	25%
Participation and Timeliness, Attention to Guidelines	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

Grading Scale: 93-100 A; 85-92 B; 75-84 C; 66-74 D; Below 65 F

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK LOOP

Student work will be assessed as to the extent to which it meets criteria standards. Results will be used to make changes in the course. As changes are made, further assessments will be done to determine the successfulness of these changes. In addition, students will be provided with feedback on their work, and given an opportunity to reflect on this feedback as a way to continue their own growth.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is mandatory. Students should refer to the course catalogue for the official attendance policy.

STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Northeastern Illinois University does not discriminate against employees or students on the basis of disability. In addition, the university provides reasonable accommodations for both employees and students with disability. Students seeking reasonable accommodations in the classroom should contact the Accessibility Center/HELP, A-118 (phone 773/442-5495, 5496, or 5497; TDD 773/442-5499).

The University Policy on Services for Students with Disabilities may be found at: <http://www.neiu.edu/%7EDeanSt/survival/disabilities.pdf>.

Students should feel free to meet with the instructor, in confidence, at any time to discuss any reasonable accommodations or removal of barriers that may hinder full inclusion and participation in the course and their learning experience.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Assignment
Week 1	Introduction History of Couples Counseling Clinical Schools of Couples Counseling What Constitutes a Couple?	
Week 2	Introduction to Ethical Issues in Couples Counseling Gottman's Assessment of Couples The Marriage Life-Cycle	Gottman Handout
Week 3	Communication in Couples IBCT and Cognitive Approaches	Handbook Chapter --- Gottman Assessment Due
Week 4	Emotionally Focused Couples Counseling Video	Handbook Chapter – IBCT Assessment Due
Week 5	Ego-Analytic and Psychoanalytic Countertransference Issues in Couples Counseling	Handbook Chapter – Emotionally Based Assessment Due
Week 6	Bowenian Approaches Video	Handbook Chapter – Ego-Analytic Assessment Due
Week 7	Solution-Focused Approach Video	Ziegler & Hiller Handout Bowen Assessment Due
Week 8	Gendered/Feminist Approaches Violence in Couples Video	Handbook Chapter – Solution Assessment Due
Week 9	Crisis of Infidelity Premarital Counseling	Handbook Chapter – Feminist Assessment Due
Week 10	Counseling Same Sex Couples Divorce and Remarriage Issues	Handbook Chapter – Gottman Handout
Week 11	Multicultural Issues Couples and Alcoholism	Handbook Chapter --
Week 12	Sex Therapy Crisis Intervention	Handbook Chapter --
Week 13	Ethical Issues in Counseling Couples	
Week 14	Integrative Approaches to Counseling Couples Anxiety and Depression in Couples Counseling	Pinsof Handout Handbook Chapter --
Week 15/16	Video Reaction Journals are due after video	Final Project Due

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- Jacobson, N., & Gottman, J. (1998). *When men batter women: New insights into ending abusive relationships*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
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Tentative List of Videotapes

Sue Johnson: “Emotionally focused approach to marital therapy”

James Framo: “Marital therapy”

Solution focused: “Scaling a marriage”

Betty Carter: “Search for equal partnership”

Appendix A: Department of Counselor Education Program Objectives

The professional counselor works from an integrated understanding that combines theory and practice. For instructional purposes, however, this program is conceived in terms of a knowledge base and a range of counseling proficiencies. The objectives of the program are therefore presented in these two categories. The knowledge objectives are formulated in reference to eight common-core areas: human growth and development, social and cultural foundation, helping relationships, group work, lifestyle and career development, appraisal, research, and evaluation and professional orientation. The counseling objectives reflect the CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs) criteria as well as the conviction of this faculty that a program that aims to prepare effective counseling professionals must have a strong clinical orientation.

1. Knowledge-based objectives

In reference to the knowledge base of the program, the objectives are

- a. to orient students to the nature of professional counseling by 1) introducing them to the history, goals, professional roles, ethical and legal standards, preparation standards, professional organizations, and credentialing processes of the field and 2) helping them to measure their own strengths and limitations against the demands of the profession;
- b. to help students to see the individual within a developmental context by introducing them to the basic theories, concepts, and principles that comprise the body of knowledge about normal and abnormal human development;
- c. to acquaint students with the nature of social and cultural change within a pluralistic society and to prepare them to deal with the ramifications of on-going change in their work as professional counselors;
- d. to introduce students to the major theories of counseling/psychotherapy, to help them to develop a working understanding of the relation between theory and practice in their work as counselors, and to guide them as they formulate their own personal theory of counseling- - an initial formulation that will be revised, modified, and reformulated as they grow and develop professionally;
- e. to help students to understand the role of the counselor in terms of the counselor client relationship, the stages of counseling as defined by representative counseling models, and the counseling strategies and interventions that help to facilitate change in the client;
- f. to introduce students to the principles of group dynamics, theories of group counseling, alternative leadership styles, and ethical considerations that comprise the body of knowledge about group counseling;

- g. to help students to understand the processes and counseling implications of lifestyle and career development by introducing them to the theories, informational systems, planning models, assessment instruments, and placement and evaluation strategies that characterize this area;
- h. to acquaint students with the principles, theories, and methodologies of educational and psychological appraisal (including psychometric statistics and computer-assisted approaches) that are appropriate to their work as professional counselors;
- i. to introduce students to a theoretical framework for meeting the counseling needs of target populations in a programmatic fashion by focusing on the processes of population identification, need assessment, goal formulation, intervention design, and program evaluation; and
- j. to help students to understand social scientific research as a means of problem-solving within the counseling field and require them to demonstrate their knowledge by reviewing, designing, and conceptualizing a relevant research project.

2. Counseling proficiency objectives

In reference to counseling proficiency, the objectives of the program are

- a. to involve students in the application of learning to practical situations by requiring within all didactic courses a range of self-assessment assignments, group process activities, case studies, and individual projects;
- b. to help students to acquire, through supervised laboratory practice, the verbal and non-verbal interaction skills that are basic to the helping process, including appropriate physical orientation to the client; careful listening; communication of empathy through reflection of feelings and paraphrases; effective use of open and indirect questions, probing statements, summarization, and self-disclosure; and appropriate use of a range of challenging techniques;
- c. to involve students in a range of group counseling activities by means of supervised counseling sessions in which they function as both group members and group leaders;
- d. to require students to complete a minimum of 100 hours of closely supervised laboratory and practicum experiences in appropriate settings, in which they engage in on-going counseling activities with both individuals and groups, using a

range of counseling models, interpretive frameworks, and intervention strategies;
and

- e. to require students to complete, under both university and site supervision, a 600 hour post-practicum internship in which they demonstrate their readiness for the professional counseling role by performing all of the activities that a counselor employed in that setting would be required to perform.

Appendix B: College of Education Learning Outcomes

1. **FOUNDATIONS:** NEIU graduates demonstrate, articulate, and apply in practice knowledge of the socio-historical, psychological, and philosophical nature of teaching and learning, and are able to both articulate a personal philosophy of teaching and learning, and demonstrate its application in practice.
2. **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT:** NEIU graduates understand how children and adults learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.
3. **ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE:** NEIU graduates understand the context in which they are employed and are able to apply this knowledge as a learner advocate.
4. **LEARNING STYLES:** NEIU graduates understand how learners differ and specifically adapt their approaches to learning and creating learning opportunities to meet the needs of diverse learners.
5. **INSTRUCTION:** NEIU graduates understand and use a variety of strategies to encourage learners' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
6. **MOTIVATION:** NEIU graduates use an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interactions, active engagement in learning and self-motivation.
7. **COMMUNICATION/TECHNOLOGY:** NEIU graduates use knowledge of effective verbal communication techniques, including nonverbal, media and technology to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the instructional environment.
8. **CONTENT:** NEIU graduates plan learning experiences based upon in-depth knowledge of subject matter, learners, the community, the curriculum, educational goals, and best practice.
9. **ASSESSMENT:** NEIU graduates understand and use formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous cognitive, affective, social, and physical development of the learner.
10. **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** NEIU graduates are reflective practitioners who continually evaluate the effects of their choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and actively seek out opportunities to grow.

11. **COLLABORATION:** NEIU graduates foster positive relationships with colleagues, families, and agencies in the larger community to support learners' development and well-being.
12. **RESEARCH:** NEIU graduates understand the nature of social/scientific research, with particular reference to the research methods and statistical treatments that are appropriate to the study of problems related to education.
13. **DIVERSITY:** NEIU graduates understand the value of cultural diversity and individual differences and demonstrate the application of these values in their cultural practice.
14. **LEADERSHIP:** NEIU graduates take leadership roles in their profession and community.

Appendix C: Marital, Couple, and Family Counseling/Therapy Program Standards of the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educations Programs (CACREP)

A. Foundations of Marital, Couple, and Family Counseling/Therapy

1. history of marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy including philosophical and etiological premises that define the practice of marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy;
2. structure and operations of professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentialing bodies pertaining to the practice of marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy (e.g., the International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors);
3. ethical and legal considerations specifically related to the practice of marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy (e.g., the AMA and IAMFC Code of Ethics);”
4. implications of professional issues unique to marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy including recognition, reimbursement, and right to practice;
5. the role of marital, couple, and family counselors/therapists in a variety of practice settings and in relation to other helping professionals; and
6. the role of racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage, nationality, socioeconomic status, family structure, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and spiritual beliefs, occupation, physical and mental status, and equity issues in marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy.

B. Contextual Dimensions of Marital, Couple, and Family Counseling/Therapy

1. marital, couple, and family life cycle dynamics, healthy family functioning, family structures, and development in a multicultural society, family of origin and intergenerational influences, cultural heritage, socioeconomic status, and belief systems;
2. human sexuality issues and their impact on family and couple functioning, and strategies for their resolution; and
3. societal trends and treatment issues related to working with diverse family systems (e.g., families in transition, dual-career couples, and blended families).

C. Knowledge and Skill Requirements for Marital, Couple, and Family Counselor/Therapists

1. family systems theories and other relevant theories and their application in working with couples and families and other systems (e.g., legal, legislative, school and community systems) and with individuals;

2. interviewing, assessment, and case management skills for working with individuals, couples, families, and other systems; and implementing appropriate skill in systemic interventions;
3. preventive approaches for working with individuals, couples, families, and other systems such as pre-marital counseling, parenting skills training, and relationship enhancement;
4. specific problems that impede family functioning, including issues related to socioeconomic disadvantage, discrimination and bias, addictive behaviors, person abuse, and interventions for their resolution; and
5. research and technology applications in marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy.

D. Clinical Instruction

1. For the Marital, Couple, and Family Counseling/Therapy program, the 600 clock hour internship (Standard III.H) occurs in a counseling setting, under the clinical supervision of a site supervisor as defined by Section III, Standard C.1-2. the requirement includes a minimum of 240 direct service clock hours, defined as work with couples, families, and individuals from a systems perspective, with the majority of the direct service clock hours occurring with couples and family units. The program must clearly define and measure the outcomes expected of interns, using appropriate professional resources that address Standards A, B, and C (Marital, Couple, and Family Counseling/Therapy programs).