



**TYNDALE**  
Seminary

## **Course Syllabus**

### **COUPLE THERAPY: AN INTEGRATED PERSPECTIVE COUN 0773**

**FALL 2009  
TUESDAY, 1 – 4:30 PM**

#### **INSTRUCTOR: SUSAN ELLFELDT**

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8:30am-4:30pm by appointment

## **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Couple Therapy: An Integrated Perspective is one of the courses offered as part of the Marriage and Family Therapy selection of courses required for clinical membership in the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. This advanced level course provides an integrative therapeutic perspective incorporating cognitive-behavioural, solution-focused, and an integrative systemic therapeutic orientation for couple counselling. It is the intent of this course that the students are able to develop their own informed approach to couple counselling based on reflective consideration of the major systemic therapies and their own personal interactional style.

Prerequisites: COUN 0601. Open only to Counselling majors or with permission of instructor. Students should have some experience in couple counseling.

## **II. LEARNING OUTCOMES**

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Critically examine one's personal philosophy and biases about couple life
- Demonstrate understanding of the stages of couple life
- Demonstrate understanding of the critical points in couple life and issues that precipitate therapeutic intervention
- Demonstrate competence in couple therapy assessment

- Demonstrate awareness of several therapeutic approaches in counselling couples and critically evaluate these approaches
- Demonstrate competence in applying specific therapeutic interventions
- Demonstrate competence in evaluating the outcome of interventions with couples

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Dattilio, F. (Ed.) (1998). *Case Studies in couple and family therapy: Systemic and cognitive perspectives*. New York: Guilford Press (ISBN 1 57230 696 3)
2. Choice of one book from the Selected Bibliography for oral presentation

#### B. SUPPLEMENTARY/RECOMMENDED READINGS

Papp, P. (2001). [\*Couples on the Fault Line\*](#). New York: Guilford Press. ISBN 1572307056

#### C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. **Book Report:** Due on November 3, 2009; 20% of final grade.

Selecting a **book** from the Supplemental/Recommended Reading List, prepare a commentary on the book addressing the following questions:

1. What were the main themes or concepts presented in this book?
2. What was the most significant learning for you personally in this book?
3. What influence will this book have on your couple counselling practice?

4-6 double-spaced, typed pages

2. **Class Presentation:** Due dates vary from November 3 to December 1, 2009; 10% of final grade.

Each student will also prepare an oral presentation of his/her assignment to the class, either individually or as part of a group of students who have selected the same book. The schedule of presentations will be available the second week of classes. The purpose of the book review presentation is to share with other class participants your overview of the book and how you have found it helpful in developing your counselling skills. The presentation should be no more than 15 to 20 minutes and address the questions found above.

**3. Class Final Paper:** Due on December 18, 2009; 50% of total grade.

**Instructions for Final Paper (10-12 double-spaced pages):**

Select one of the following topics for discussion. This paper should sufficiently develop the theme chosen and demonstrate knowledge of the relevant literature. A list of references is to be included. The identity of any cases used for discussion should be protected. The following three question options are open to you:

- 1) **Any model, your couple.** Choose one of your current couple's cases or one from past experience. Tell which model you would choose for this couple and why. If you choose a model not discussed in class, be sure to thoroughly outline the theory, assessment, treatment goals, and interventions typical of this model. Include any limitations in working with this model with these clients. Describe how you would assess within the context of this model, what you found in the assessment, and what goals will be set. Also discuss what you might need to add to this assessment because of limitations of the model. Describe how you would use this model to treat this couple (strategic steps, specific interventions and what change you might expect those interventions to effect, etc.). Describe what therapeutic models and interventions you might need to add from outside this model because of limitations and how you would use these interventions. Describe how you would know when it is time to terminate with this couple and how you would assess the success of therapy. Use examples from literature to validate your treatment choices.
- 2) **Any model, several of your couple clients.** Choose a particular treatment problem (eg. an affair) and choose the model you prefer to use for that particular problem. Describe the model thoroughly, particularly if it is not a model discussed in class. Outline the theory, assessment, typical assessment findings that you will address in treatment, treatment goals, and interventions typical of this model. Also discuss its limitations and what you might add due to limitations. Describe the treatment process at various stages of treatment, and demonstrate the use of interventions using a number of your present or past clients in the examples. This demonstration should be quite specific and detailed. Use examples from literature to validate your treatment choices. Discuss how you would evaluate the effectiveness of the therapy.
- 3) **One of the models given in class and fictional couple.** Choose one of the models of couple counselling discussed in this course. Apply this model to a fictional couple you have made up or have read about in literature. Be sure to create a realistic couple. Thoroughly outline the theory, assessment, and interventions you would use in treating this couple by this model. Specifically identify the results of assessment with

this couple and the goals that would be set. Discuss the steps your therapy would take with this couple and describe treatment interventions for each of those steps or stages of treatment. Tell what change you would expect each intervention to produce. Describe limitations of this approach and what you might need to do to deal with these limitations. Use examples from literature to validate your treatment choices. Follow this with a discussion of how you would evaluate the work done. **Be careful with this option.** The couple needs to be realistic, and this cannot be a replication of someone else's thoughts or work in presenting this model of treatment. This must be your own thinking about application of this model in working with this couple.

#### **4. Final Exam:** Date TBD; 20% of final grade.

A comprehensive final will be given covering materials from the lectures primarily.

### **D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK**

**Title Page and Documentation:** The title page should include the name of the course, name of the instructor, title of the paper/assignment, student's name, and the date due. Students are expected to honestly reflect use of materials other than their own. Tyndale does not tolerate plagiarism in any form. Any sources used in the paper should be properly documented using the format provided by the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

**Papers** must be typed, double spaced, and written using inclusive language. Students are required to retain a copy of all assignments in hard copy or electronic form. Graduate level spelling, grammar and style are expected. Students should consult the current *Academic Calendar* for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System. The Academic Calendar is posted at [www.tyndale.ca/seminary/calendar](http://www.tyndale.ca/seminary/calendar). An excerpt is attached with this syllabus for easy reference.

**Class policy on late assignment:** For each day late, the grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade. Extensions will be considered if the circumstances are extreme. No final assignments or examinations will be accepted later than 5:00 p.m. on December 18<sup>th</sup>. Requests for an extension of the due date must be submitted to the course instructor prior to the due date for the assignment.

In addition to class time, an additional 81 hours of reading, research, reflection and writing is expected. **Assignments may be handed in at the course session or left in the instructor's mailbox in the Seminary Office.**

## E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Class Presentation	10 %
Critical Book Review	20 %
A Final Paper	50 %
Examination	20 %
Total Grade	100 %

Given the nature of this course, the class will consist partly of lecture and partly of demonstration and skills practice. Each student is expected to practice in the roles of counsellor and client in the small group and large group practice sessions. Therefore attendance is required.

## IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT, AND REQUIRED READINGS

### SESSION I September 15

- Overview of course and assignments, explanation of book presentation groups
- Why study couple therapy?
- The changing look of couple life (the issues which currently affect couple life) (**reference: Papp text**)
- Discussion about the definition of a healthy relationship. What is the meaning of intimacy in a couple relationship? Are Christian marriages different? What are our personal beliefs and biases? What are relationship killers and what are the ingredients of mature love?
- How couples change (**reference: The Process of Change in Couples Therapy, *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 24(2) 1998, 177-188**)
- Beliefs about change – Brainstorm
- Steps toward change – Brainstorm
- Inhibitors of change
- Introduce the major therapeutic approaches focused on in this course: Solution-Focused, Cognitive-Behavioral and Integrative, and the reasons for these choices & and the differing change perspectives

### SESSION 2 September 22

- Assessment – how do we know if this couple is ready to make changes in their relationship?
- What level of change is necessary for this couple? For you as the therapist?
- What do you do with the complexities of behavior? About the need to refer?
- Review the counselling process: bonding with the clients, assessment objectives, contract, goals, evaluation

- Assessment measures – introduce several and discuss how the choice of assessment tools is affected by the model of therapy chosen

### **SESSION 3    September 29**

- Introduce Solution-Focused Therapy (**reference Chapter 9 in Dattilio text**)
- **Video Presentation – Solution Focused**
- Role play Solution Focused model
- Form book presentation groups

### **SESSION 4    October 6**

- Solution Focused Therapy: review of major tenets, goals, approaches
- **Video Presentation, Solution Focused**
- Class discussion and practice, using student cases, role-play
- Solution Focused Therapy – tool kit

### **SESSION 5    October 13**

- Book presentations: Solution Focused Therapy models
- Behavioral Therapy: philosophy, concepts, assessment, and goals (**reference Chapters 1-3, Dattilio text**)
- Video: Stuart: Behavior Therapy with Richard Stuart

### **SESSION 6    October 20**

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: assessment, contract, goals and tools (**reference Chapters 1-3, Dattilio text**)
- Conflict and communication training
- **Video: Stuart: Behavioral Therapy**
- Role Play

### **SESSION 7    October 27**

- Cognitive and Behavioral Therapy: Book Presentations
- Working with couples when violence has been present in the relationship (**Goldner article and Chapter 7, Papp**)
- Types of offenders
- Theories of treatment

### **SESSION 8    November 3**

- **Assignment 1 due – Book Review**
- Introduction of Integrative Couple's Therapy (**reference Chapter 10, Dattilio text**)

- Consideration of different levels of complexity and models utilized
- Life cycle implications
- Therapist role
- Treatment focus
- Book presentations

**SESSION 9 November 10**

- Object Relations
- Transgenerational therapy
- Behaviorism
- Book Presentations

**SESSION 10 November 17**

- Integrative Couple Therapy – assessment, interview and treatment examples
- **Video: Susan Heitler; Vignettes**
- **Assessment/Practice**
- Book presentations

**SESSION 11 November 24**

- Affairs: reasons for infidelity and management techniques in couple therapy
- Class discussion: personal responses to affairs and separation
- Book Presentation: “After the Affair”
- Special concerns: Internet relationships (**reference Chapter 3, Papp text**), sexual addictions, etc.

**SESSION 12 December 1**

- Cross cultural understanding and examples of couple work
- Cross cultural biases
- Book presentations

**SESSION 13 December 8**

- Review
- Special interest questions
- **Assignment 2 Due – Final Paper**

**FINAL December 15**

**No assignments accepted after 5pm, December 18th.**

## V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Beck, A. (1989). *Love is never enough*. New York: Harper Perennial. ISBN 0 06 015956 1
- Burns, D. (1999). *Feeling good: The new mood therapy*. New York: Penguin Books. ISBN 0380810336
- Eron, J. & Lund, T. (1996). [\*Narrative solutions in Brief Therapy\*](#). New York: Guilford Publications. ISBN 1 57230 126 0
- Gottman, J. (1999). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. New York: Crown Publishers. ISBN 0 609 60104 0
- Hendrix, H. (1990). *Getting the love you want*. New York: Harper Perennial. ISBN 0 06097292 0
- Heitler, Susan M. (1990). [\*From Conflict to Resolution: Skills and Strategies for Individual, Couple, and Family Therapy\*](#). New York: W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN 0-393-31093-0
- Hudson, P. & O'Hanlon, W. (1993). [\*Rewriting love stories: Brief marital therapy\*](#). New York: W.W. Norton. ISBN 0 393 31094 9
- Johnson, S. (2004). *The practice of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy*. New York: Routledge. ISBN 0415945682 [[1996 edition online](#)]
- O'Hanlon, W. (1996). [\*Stop blaming, start loving: A solution-oriented approach to improving your relationship\*](#). New York: W.W. Norton. ISBN 0393314618
- O'Hanlon, W. & Hudson, P. (1995). [\*Love is a verb: How to stop analyzing your relationship and start making it great\*](#). New York: W.W. Norton. ISBN 0 393 03734 7
- Olsen, D. & Olsen, A. (2000). *Empowering couples: Building on your strengths*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Life Innovations Inc. ISBN 0 9671983 2 1
- Spring, J. & Spring, M. (1997). *After the affair: Healing the pain and rebuilding trust when a partner has been unfaithful*. New York: Harper. ISBN 0060928174
- Weiner-Davis, M. (1992). *Divorce busting: A revolutionary and rapid program for staying together*. New York: Simon and Schuster. ISBN 0 671 79725 5



## Journal Articles

- Vatcher, C. & Bogo, M. (2001). The Feminist/Emotionally Focused Therapy practice model: An integrated approach for couple therapy. [\*Journal of Marital and Family Therapy\*, 27\(1\), 69-83.](#)
- Fishbane, M. & DeKoven (1998). I, thou and we: A dialogical approach to couples therapy. [\*Journal of Marital and Family Therapy\*, 41-58.](#)
- Goldner, V. (1992). Making room for both/and. *Family Therapy Networker*, 16(2), 55-62.
- Christians, Russell, Miller, & Peterson (1998). [The process of change in couples therapy: A qualitative investigation.](#) *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 24(2), 177-188.
- Excerpt from Franklin, C. & C. Jordan, C. (2001). [Guidelines for Conducting Family Therapy.](#) In A. Roberts and G. Greene (Eds.). *Social Workers Desk Reference* (pp. 256-263). New York: Oxford University Press (a course handout).
- Daneshpour, M. (1998). Muslim families and family therapy. [\*Journal of Marital and Family Therapy\*, 24\(32\), 355-368.](#)