



CP 5103 Marriage and Family Counseling
Instructor: **Evan Sorensen, MS, LMFT**

October 24-28, 2011
Calgary Extension

SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will serve as an introduction to the theory and practice of marriage and family therapy. Classical and post-modern theoretical models of marriage and family therapy will be examined and provide students the foundation for developing the roots of their own clinical 'style'. Significant classroom attention will also be given to examining contemporary trends in research and treatment of divorce, ineffective communication patterns, extra-marital affairs, and low sex/ low desire marriages

COURSE OUTCOMES

By the completion of this course the student will:

- Understand and apply multiple theoretical approaches to marriage and family therapy
- Gain greater appreciation and objectivity in understanding how one's own personal family of origin and nuclear family influence his/her role as a therapist.
- Achieve increased knowledge, competency and clinical application in the following areas:
 - Intake and assessment for marital and family systems
 - Formulating treatment plans
 - Divorce counseling
 - Constructing intervention strategies to disrupt relational patterns inhibiting effective communication, conflict resolution and emotional intimacy.
 - Developing an integrative approach to treating sexual desire and sexual disorders

COURSE TEXTS

Gottman, John, M. (2011) *The Science of Trust; Emotional Attunement for Couples.* . W. W. Norton and Company Ltd

Wallin, David, J. (2007) *Attachment in Psychotherapy.* The Guilford Press

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

- Gottman, J. (1999). *Marriage Clinic: Scientifically-Based Marital Therapy*
Norton Professional Books
- Gottman, Declaire, & Schwartz (2007) *10 Lessons to Transform Your Marriage*.
Three Rivers Press
- Johnson, SM. (2004) *The Practice of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy, 2nd ed.* Routledge
- Kalter, N. (2006). *Growing up with Divorce: Helping Your Child Avoid Immediate and Later Emotional Problems*. Free Press
- Kerr & Bowen. (1988). *Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory*.
Norton, W.W. & Company
- McGoldrick, Gerson, & Petry. (2008). *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention, 3rd ed.*
Norton Professional Books
- Patterson, Williams, Grauf-Grounds, & Chamow. (1998). *Essential Skills in Family Therapy: From First Interview to Termination*.
New York University Press
- Quick, E. (2008). *Doing What Works in Brief Therapy: A Strategic Solution Focused Approach*. Matthews Medical Books
- Spring, JA & Spring M. (1996). *After the Affair: Healing the Pain and Rebuilding Trust When a Partner Has Been Unfaithful*. Harper Collins
- Wallerstein & Blakeslee. (2004). *Second Chances: Men, Women and Children a Decade After Divorce*. Houghton Mifflin Company
- Weiner-Davis, M. (2003) *The Sex-Starved Marriage: Boosting Your Marriage Libido*.
Simon & Schuster

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Class Attendance

Each student must attend all class sessions and actively participate in class discussions.

B. Classroom Presentations:

Working in small groups, students will be assigned a topic for study and classroom presentation. Be creative in the use of film scenes, art, music, in-class role play, etc as a way of enhancing audience learning and underscoring core points. Presentations are to be approximately 45 minutes in length. Remember that your classroom role reverses from student to that of 'teacher' in these presentations. View this assignment not as a course requirement for completion, but as an opportunity to broaden your knowledge and skills as a practicing clinician.

- Premarital counseling: proposed models of treatment and is it effective in reducing divorce
- Clinical treatment of sex addictions
- The use of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction and DBT principles in couples therapy
- Clinical understanding of resistance in couples therapy – when 1 partner wants in and the other wants out
- Treatment considerations for adolescents experiencing divorce

DUE DATE: Presentation starts on Tuesday, October 25, 2011

C. Course Readings and Reflections

1. Read the Gottman text and Wallin text in their entirety. For 1 of the 2 books, write a brief reflection (1-2 paragraphs) on each chapter. Use this as an opportunity to write a critique of the material, explore the utilization of the material in your clinical practice, or as avenue to personal and/or professional self-reflection.

DUE DATE: December 15, 2011

D. Post-Class Assignments

1. Genogram Assignment, Self Reflection

Complete a 3 generations genogram on **your** family of origin. This exercise is intended to expand the developing therapist's self-awareness and objectivity in their role as clinician. Understanding the influence of family of origin on the development of our belief systems is critical to avoiding subconscious counter-transference scenarios. After completing the genogram, write a 5 page paper examining how your family of origin influenced your belief system across such areas as:

- Power struggles, decision making and conflict management
- Allowing for personal differentiation / individuality in marriage and family

- Expression of affection (non-sexual intimacy)
- Expression of sexual intimacy
- Communication styles
- Tolerating anxiety and stress
- Addictions and mental illness
- Involvement of extended family and in-laws
- Parenting roles
- Other areas as identified by the student

DUE DATE: November 15, 2011

2. Self Directed Research

As an opportunity to expand the clinical specialties and professional development of the therapist in training, students will write a 5 page research paper on a topic of their choosing. The research paper is to include a minimum of 5 reference sources, and highlight the current trends in research findings and clinical treatment of the individual, marital and/or family system related to the given topic. Some examples of study are:

- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Infidelity
- Sexual Disorders
- Clergy / Lay counseling
- Divorce
- Step Families
- Adolescent therapy
- Pre-marital counseling

DUE DATE: December 8, 2011

3. Marital Intake Interview and Essay

Part I. Marital Inventory

Identify a couple from your clinical practice or social network. Over the course of two 'sessions' complete a marital assessment using the Gottman 17 Areas Scale, Meanings Interview and Oral History Interview. This is to be considered an 'information gathering course assignment' and not formal counseling. Should the couple indicate a need for counseling, professional referrals are to be made immediately available to them.

Part II. Marital Assessment

Using the above assessment tools, first provide an overview of what appear to be the couples strengths and potential areas of growth.

Next, evaluate the marital relationship on the following aspects: marital satisfaction/contentment, commitment, communication, conflict management, closeness/intimacy, and other factors clinically indicated in the assessment. Use the classroom material and the required texts of Gottman, and Wallin as well as any of the theories discussed in classroom presentations to develop an initial four-session treatment plan. Indicate the therapeutic concepts and interventions from these authors that you would apply to counseling the couple. Be specific about why you would apply a particular intervention and what the anticipated outcome would be. Total length of paper 5-7 pages, not inclusive of the marital inventory questionnaires.

DUE DATE: January 15, 2012

PLEASE NOTE:

- *All papers must follow the **APA format**, be free of grammatical and spelling errors, and reflect Masters-level scholarship*
- *Assignments must be e-mailed to marriageinstitute@comcast.net*