

School of Theology and Ministry  
Seattle University  
901 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, PO Box 222000  
Seattle, WA 98122-1090

Fall Quarter 2013

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**STMC 553 Couples Therapy**

Mondays, 9:00am-11:50am  
Classroom: HUNT 110  
Prerequisites:

**INSTRUCTOR**

**Christie Eppler PhD, LMFT**

Office: HUNT 221  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Office Phone: 206-269-6975  
SU Email: epplerc@seattleu.edu

**Texts and Materials**

***Required Texts:***

- Gottman, J. M., & Silver, N. (1999). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Gurman, A. S. (Ed.). (2010). *Clinical casebook of couple therapy*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Hertlein, K. M., & Viers, D. (2005). *The couple and family therapist's notebook: Homework, handouts, and activities for use in marital and family therapy*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Johnson, S. M. (2004). *The practice of emotionally focused couples therapy*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.

***Required Online Resources:***

Discernment:

<http://www.couplesconference.com/CC2011/download/CC11%20-%20William%20Doherty/william-doherty-WS14.pdf>

Intimate Partner Violence:

[http://www.medicine.uiowa.edu/uploadedFiles/Departments/FamilyMedicine/Content/Research/Research\\_Projects/partner.pdf](http://www.medicine.uiowa.edu/uploadedFiles/Departments/FamilyMedicine/Content/Research/Research_Projects/partner.pdf)

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/riskprotectivefactors.html>

<http://www.healthcaresaboutipv.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/3/files/2012/09/Compendium-Final.pdf>

[http://www.resourcehouse.info/WIN211/keyword\\_search.aspx](http://www.resourcehouse.info/WIN211/keyword_search.aspx)

Special Topics: You will be asked to bring in as peer-reviewed article: <http://libguides.seattleu.edu/databases>

***Recommended Texts:***

Gurman, A. S. (2008). *Clinical handbook of couple therapy*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. New York: Guilford Press.

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

## Course Description

- Official course number and description as listed in the *Seattle University Catalog* available here: <http://catalog.seattleu.edu/content.php?catoid=18&navoid=1314>.  
In this course, students examine relationships between couples as a crucible of human spiritual development. Basic theories of, and skills for, marriage counseling are introduced. Majors only.
  
- Course Goals and Objectives.  
Students will:
  - Apply key systems therapy theories to couples. Specifically, students will gain an in-depth knowledge of a leading, evidenced-based, best practice model.
  - Understand the role of a relationship and pastoral therapist in the treatment of couples.
  - Develop generic and participle skills in the practice of couples therapy
  - Will acquire specialized knowledge regarding family violence and intimate partner violence, including safety planning.
  - Be aware of treatment issues related to current issues and trends that couples face in today's complex world.
  - Have an increased knowledge of religion and spirituality in couple's therapy.
  - Gain skills in clinical practice, oral presentations, and critical reading of current research related to couples therapy.
  
- Learning Outcomes: MARPT
  - Develop an identity of a relationship and pastoral therapist.
    - Reflect on self-as-a-therapist, committing to ongoing growth, implementing self-awareness, and use of self in clinical practice.
  - Learn skills and theory necessary for competent, effective practice as a relationship and pastoral therapist.
    - Demonstrate ability to produce written documentation and oral presentation for purpose of clinical practice, adhering to APA written guidelines where assigned.
  - Demonstrate intention to approach relationship and pastoral therapy with openness to the presence of diversity.
  - Integrate theological education, psychological and systems theories, and spiritual formation with supervised clinical experience.
    - Understand and reflect on clients' spiritual/faith assumptions and practices, and balance knowledge of relationship and pastoral therapy within client/system's spiritual dimensions.

## Course Requirements

### Course Outline (Tentative, Based on Needs)

Date	Topic	Reading	Due	Faith Traditions (hand in rubric before present)	Role Play Teams (only present due )
9/30	Syllabus review Introduction to Couples Therapy Role of Relationship and Pastoral Therapist in Couples Therapy Deciding on Special Topics; Faith Tradition Assign;				
10/7	Beginning Couple's Treatment Discernment	Discernment Link; Gurman: 1, 13, 19			
10/14	Gottman Strength & Resilience in Couple Therapy Couples Assessment	Gurman: 2, 4, 12 Be reading/working on Gottman (read 1-3 for this class)		1 2	1
10/21	Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT)	Johnson: 1-5		3 4	2
10/28	EFT Clinical Practice Religion & Spirituality	Johnson: 6-14		5 6	3
11/4	EFT Clinical Practice Religion & Spirituality		Gottman Due (with rubric); hardcopy in class	7 8 9	4
11/11	Veteran's Day: NO CLASS				
11/18	Theories in Couples Therapy	Gurman: 3, 6, 8	Role Play Paper Due (with rubric); hardcopy in class	10 11 12	5
11/25	Theories (cont) Intimate Partner Violence	Gurman: 9-12; 17-18 Review Partner Violence Links		13 14 15	6
12/2	Special Topics- TBD	Gurman: 5 *find and read peer reviewed article/bring to class	Self Eval Due; hardcopy in class	16 17 18	7

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1.	Class interaction	10 points
2.	Role Play (Therapist Notebook/Verbatim)	30 points
3.	Gottman Reflections	30 points
4.	<u>Ecumenical and Interreligious Traditions</u>	<u>20 points</u>
	Total	100 points

**100-95% A; 94-90% A-; 89-87 B+; 86-84 B; 83-80 B-; 79-77 C+; 76-74 C; 74-70 C**

### Please Note:

- A 5% deduction per day is assessed to late work. Please talk to the instructor *before* an assignment is due if you think you may qualify for an extension.
- No work will be accepted after the 10<sup>th</sup> class session.
- An incomplete grade will be assigned only in the case of a health emergency.
- I may submit grades before the day/time indicated by registrar as “grades due”.

### COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Attendance & Class Interaction, 10 points

Prepare for each class, attend, and regularly participate in class.

Please print and bring in the following chart **with a self-rating**; due on the day of the last class. Final responsibility for the engagement grade is determined by the instructor.

***In addition to the scale below, 6 points of the total 100 points for the course will be reduced for each unexcused absence. Two (2) points will be deducted for each time you arrive late or leave early.***

**10:** I was *fully* prepared (completed 95-100% of the readings) for each class meeting, and *regularly* participated in class activities, discussions, and small group work.

**9:** I was *mostly* prepared (did 90%+ of the readings) for each class meeting, and *regularly* participated in class activities, discussions, and small group work.

**7:** I was *minimally* prepared (did about 75%+ of the readings) for each class meeting, and *minimally* participated in class activities, discussions, and small group work.

**5:** I was *minimally* prepared (did 50%+ the readings) for each class meeting, and *minimally* participated in class activities, discussions, and small group work.

**1:** I basically checked out.

My self-rating:

Explanation:

## 2. Role Play (Therapist Notebook), 30 points

The class will be divided into teams consisting of three or four students. Each team will be assigned the same number of chapters from Hertlein & Viers (2005) as there are team members (if there are three team members then that team will receive three chapters). As a group, you will work on the write-up (below), and you will present ONE fifteen-minute case/verbatim in class as a role-play. You may choose to do a live role-play or show a videotape of your role-play. We will sign up for role-play slots/times; everyone's paper is due on the same day (see course outline). Please be prepared to receive feedback from the group on your role-play regarding the intervention and your pastoral care skills/systemic frame.

Please include all group members' names and attach the rubric (below). If you/group have any issues working together as a team (e.g., are concerned about a group grade, level of input), please contact the instructor directly before the assignment is due. I suggest that the members work together, and each member take the "lead" on one of the assigned chapters.

As a team, the group will write one case and then outline how the intervention from each of the assigned chapters can be used in this case. You will consider:

- Brief background of the couple (demographics, presenting problems, brief history).
- What was gained during an initial assessment (give specific data, you may wish to include an assessment tool)?
- What are one goal and one objective of the treatment?
- Is this early/middle/late stage of the treatment?
- How could the intervention from the chapter be used?
  - This is the main section of the assignment. You must use the voice of the counselor and clients (use dialogue, write this section like a verbatim).
- After the case studies and interventions, please include a one to two page(s) reflection:
  - How would you know it is a good fit to choose this intervention (if it weren't assigned)?
  - What are the cultural implications?
  - Would you change, if anything?

--Cont. (next page)

Please attach this rubric to your paper. Your packet should include: Case, verbatim, and reflection. You turn in only case/paper/rubric paper per group.

Names:		A Range		B range		C range	
Creative, detailed case							
Specific assessment detail that draws on other classes							
Specific, concrete goal and observable objective							
Systemic view or couple and their "issue"							
Integrates material from this and other classes, could also add in peer reviewed literature							
Rich, descriptive verbatim							
Makes good use of the intervention							
Reflection: Thoughtful response to the content and process of using the intervention (justice, logistics, etc.)							

3. Gottman Reflections, 30 points

One of your assigned readings is Gottman (1999). As you read, please pay attention to the reading using multiple lenses:

1. Content: What does this tell me about how couples function? What do couples need to thrive?
2. Formation: What thoughts/emotions does this raise in me? How is this forming my self-of-the-therapist?
3. Professional Development: How may I use this for assessment? What interventions would I assign in and out of session?

There are many activities in the text. For the graded assignment, you will be working through SOME (not ALL) of the activities, and then you will reflect on the three domains listed above.

Please keep a typed or handwritten journal of the activities of your choosing. Please pick a handful (no assigned number) of activities and mark the answer either in your book or in a notebook. You do not have to do all the sections even within one activity (e.g., on page 70 of the paperback there are multiple questions, you may pick one of the history questions without answering them all). You may choose to use your own couple relationship and/or you may use a case study you create (or a hybrid).

In addition to your journal, please write a three to five page reflection paper regarding the content/formation/professional development (use prompts above). Also consider justice, race, and spirituality: What comments, arguments, illustrations come to mind? APA is not needed for this assignment, but please use academic tone (and I encourage you to visit the writing center).

Names:		A Range		B Range		C range	
Good intention regarding journaling							
Choosing the important points from the text according to personal theory, experiences, etc.							
Self-of-the therapist awareness							
Rich, detailed description of future use of activities							
Academic tone							
Flow and Creativity							

4. Ecumenical and Interreligious Traditions, 20 points

Students will reflect on the meaning of “couplehood” from their own faith tradition (either from family of origin or current experience), and learn about a tradition other than their own (ecumenical or interreligious).

Consider the following questions (below). You will want to consult academic literature and use personal communication to gather information.

- a. How does the faith tradition define “couples”? Has this changed?
- b. What is the purpose for people to couple?
- c. What are written or unwritten expectations for couples?
- d. What are rituals that form and/or maintain the meaning of being coupled?
- e. Are there any metaphors that represent “couples”?

Please make two Powerpoint slides (one of your faith tradition and one of one that you choose—we will choose in class so many traditions are represented, you may not get your first choice). Please use words and/or pictures to address the points above. You may also want to show a very short clip of a video, play part of a song, or use any other multimedia. You will have 10 minutes (total: both traditions included) to present, so please prepare about a 7-minute presentation and we will have time for one or two questions. You do not need to hand in anything other than the rubric below.

Name:		A Range		B range		C range	
Tradition 1							
Brief, relevant information of tradition							
Highlighting meaning/ritual							
Tradition 2							
Brief, relevant information of tradition							
Highlighting meaning/ritual							
Creativity							
Professionalism & In command of brief presentation							
Time Limit							

## STYLE MANUALS AND WRITING EXPECTATIONS

APA (6<sup>th</sup> Edition):

<http://www.apastyle.org/>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Seattle University Writing Center <http://www.seattleu.edu/writingcenter>



### Policies

- Academic Honesty (including plagiarism): The School of Theology and Ministry strictly adheres to the academic policy regarding Academic Integrity as indicated on the Seattle University Registrar website, as noted in the box below.
- Disability: If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an 'invisible disability' such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, please see related note in the box below.

#### University Resources and Policies

##### Academic Resources

- Library and Learning Commons (<http://www.seattleu.edu/learningcommons/>)
  - *(This includes: Learning Assistance Programs, Research [Library] Services, Writing Center, Math Lab)*
- Academic Integrity Tutorial *(found on Angel and SU Online)*

##### Academic Policies on Registrar website (<https://www.seattleu.edu/registrar/academics/performance/>)

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Academic Grading Grievance Policy
- Professional Conduct Policy *(only for those professional programs to which it applies)*

##### Notice for students concerning Disabilities

*If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an 'invisible disability' such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff located in Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process.*

