

**LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
EXEMPLAR SYLLABUS**

Course Title: Social Work Practice with Couples
Course Number: SOWK 611

Course Prerequisite(s): All 500 level courses and SOWK 612 must be completed prior to taking this course or approval of the instructor

Semester/Year:

Class Time: TBA by Section

Class Location: TBA by Section

Instructor: TBA by Section

Office Location: TBA by Section

Office Hours: TBA by Section

Phone: TBA by Section

Email: TBA by Section

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This practice elective focuses on engagement, assessment, intervention and termination with couples. Various theoretical orientations (i.e. communications, cognitive behavioral, family of origin, object relations, and narrative/postmodern) of couples practice are covered. This course also addresses special issues that arise in working with couples such as substance abuse, violence, sexual dysfunction, incest survivors, infidelity, separation, divorce counseling and mediation services. Also covered in this course are special considerations in working with issues of social class, race, ethnicity, physical disability, culture, gender issues and sexual orientation.

The values and principles of the liberal arts perspectives are reflected in this course through the use of short stories, novels, plays and movies as well as through the course's exploration of issues of diversity. This course utilizes "classic" and contemporary sources of literature in the couples therapy field. It is important for students to be exposed to original sources of practice literature rather than an exclusive reliance on newer synopsis of classic material.

This course will provide students specializing in either Families and Children or Health and Mental Health cluster, a broader and more in-depth understanding and skills related to assessing and intervening with couples. Acquiring such knowledge and skills will enable students to develop a more integrated approach to working with couples across many different levels of functioning and diverse contexts.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES

This course is a second year, second semester elective in the Child and Family concentration. All 500 level courses must be completed prior to taking this course. In addition, SOWK 612 must have been taken or be taken concurrently with this class. This course also can fulfill an elective for other concentrations.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES & EPAS RELATED COMPETENCIES¹

Through course materials and assignments, students are expected to demonstrate mastery of the following objectives, all of which are at the advanced practice level. At the conclusion of this course, each student shall demonstrate competency in:

2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgements.

Advanced PB: Demonstrate critical thinking by communicating their professional judgment using oral and written communication as appropriate to the practice setting.

Assignments: Couple Assessment Assignment, Class Role Play, and Article Analysis or Case Presentation

2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice

Advanced PB: Engage client systems in diverse settings to challenge oppression, discrimination, and privilege at the societal, institutional, and personal level.

Assignments: Couple Assessment Assignment, Class Role Play, and Article Analysis or Case Presentation

2.1.10 Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

2.1.10a Engagement

Advanced PB: Demonstrate sensitivity to the interpersonal dynamics and cultural/contextual factors that can both strengthen and potentially threaten a therapeutic alliance.

2.1.10b Assessment

Advanced PB: Select and modify social work interventions based on ongoing assessment with their clients.

2.1.10c Intervention

Advanced PB: Demonstrate the use of specific and appropriate techniques for a range of presenting problems they have identified in their psychosocial assessment of the client.

2.1.10d Evaluation

Advanced PB: Evaluate the outcomes of their interventions and use this information to calibrate and modify their further work with their clients.

Assignments: Couple Assessment Assignment, Class Role Play, and Article Analysis or Case Presentation

¹ The identified EPAS/PBs for the course may not be varied among sections for the same course. Assignments attached to specific EPAS/PBs are considered the standard assignments across all sections of the same course. Section Instructors may *add* additional topics/materials/assignments to their section, but they may not change the basic course topics/materials/assignments.

CRITERIA FOR GRADING

Grades are based upon criterion-referenced grading. The Description of Assignments section of this document reviews the specific points for each assignment. In general, letter grades are assigned using the criteria below:

Letter Grade	Description	Grades and Values
A	Overall performance is Exceptional	A 4.00 96-100% A- 3.67 92-95%
B	Overall performance is Good	B+ 3.33 88-91% B 3.0 84-87% B- 2.67 80-83%
C	Overall performance is Acceptable . Work meets basic expectations set by Instructor. A grade of C- requires that BSW and MSW students retake the course.	C+ 2.33 76-79% C 2.0 72-75% C- 1.67 68-71%
D	Overall performance is Poor - student must retake course.	D+ 1.33 64-67% D 1.0 60-63%
F	Overall performance is Unsatisfactory - student fails course. See Student Handbook.	F 0 Below 60%
I	At the discretion of the section Instructor a temporary grade of Incomplete may be assigned to a student who, for a reason beyond the student's control, has been unable to complete the required work in a course on time. The request signed by the student and the faculty member must be on approved and on file with the BSW or MSW Program Director when grades are submitted. See Student Handbook.	

READING ASSIGNMENTS

All reading assignments are listed in the "Course Schedule." It is expected that students will come to class having read the materials and are prepared to discuss them. Students are encouraged to explore other resources if certain concepts are not understood. Supplemental readings may also be listed so students may explore the topic further.

Required Text

Gurman, A.S. Editor. (2008). *Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy*, 4th Ed. New York: New York.

Weeks, G. R., Odell, M., & Methven, S. (2005). *If Only I Had Known: Mistakes in Couples Therapy*. New York City, NY: Norton.

Recommended Texts

Friel, J. C., & Friel, L. D. (2002). *The Seven Best Things (Happy) Couples Do*. Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc.

Gottman, J. M., & Silver, N. (1999). *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.

Lerner, H. (2012). *Marriage Rules: A Manual for the Married and the Coupled Up*. London, English: Gotham Books/Penguin Group.

Real, T. (2007). *The New Rules of Marriage: A Breakthrough Program for 21st Century Relationship: What you need to know to make love work*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.

SUPPLEMENTAL VIDEOS

Available through the Library Database “C” – Counseling and Therapy in Video: Volumes II and III

- Working With Remarried Couples (www.DrBillDoherty.org) 158:32 minutes
- Couples and Infertility: Moving Beyond Loss (Psychotherapy.net) 40:36 minutes
- Cultural Competency in the Treatment of African-American Couples. (Microtraining Associates, 2005), 56:26 minutes
- Counseling the Multiracial Population: Couples, Individuals, Families (Microtraining Associates) 75:05 minutes
- Gender Differences in Depression: A Marital Therapy Approach. (Psychotherapy.net, 2006), 37:15 minutes
- Clinical Dilemmas in Marriage: The Search for Equal Partnership (Microtraining Associates) 44:58 minutes
- How Experienced Therapists Hurt Marriage (www.DrBillDoherty.org) 103:19 minutes
- Anger Management in Relationships (Growth Central) 78:02 minutes
- The Angry Couple directed by Holland, John (Psychotherapy.net) 73:17 minutes

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments must be submitted prior to/or on the date indicated on the course syllabus. All assignments have mandatory due dates. Students may request a one week extension under extenuating circumstances. After one week if the assignment is not received, zero points will be assigned. Assignments submitted after those dates may receive an appropriate reduction in grade.

Students must submit all assignments using the assignment links in the online learning system for each assignment. Weighting of class assignments is as follows. Please note: weighting of assignments depends on assignments chosen by the instructor. Each instructor chooses between assignments:

Attendance and Participation	5 Points	
Couple Assessment	45 Points	Must be used with Class Role Play
Class Role Play	25 Points	Must be used with Couple Assessment
Article Analysis	25 Points	
Class Presentation of Case	45 Points	Replaces Couple Assessment and Role Play if used

These assignments provide opportunities to sit with a couple and engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate the circumstances. Most students have few opportunities to work with couples within their field placements. The assignments are intended to provide experiential learning in addition to the academic requirements.

Assignment One: Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to have read the material required for every class period and to be ready to engage in discussion. Students are also expected to attend and participate in other student presentations. It is considered a serious misconduct if a student does not attend when other students are presenting.

Assignment Two: Couple Assessment

(Must be used with Assignment Three; Used in lieu of Assignment 5)

45 Points

Students will choose a case of a couple in therapy and asked to assess couple interaction and relationships patterns and develop a plan of intervention and evaluation. This may include the utilization of instruments. See Sakai for questionnaires. Address unique features of the couple (e.g., gender issues, race, ethnicity, culture, social class, age, sexual orientation, etc.). Students are expected to identify and apply concepts, theories and therapy models learned in class, thus far, to the case vignette. Integrative models of therapy may be used.

Assignment Three: Class Role Play

(Must be used with Assignment Two; Used in lieu of Assignment 5)

25 Points

Students are to role play the social work practitioner working with the couple from the previous paper. Class mates are to portray the couple. Ask in advance and prepare 'couple' on the issues, personalities, etc., of the couple. **DO NOT PREPARE A SCRIPT.** Distribute a 1-page description of the family and the theory (theories/models) that you plan to use to the instructor and class, prior to class. Points will be deleted from the assignment if this description is distributed in class. The class will provide written constructive comments on engagement, therapeutic alliance gestures, assessment, intervention or the application of theory, interventions relevant to specific theory, evaluation of progress, and ending.

Assignment Four: Article Critique

25 Points

Choose one article from one week of the semester. You may want to choose an article for the week you will be conducting the Role Play. Analyze the article, including a brief summary. Distribute to instructor and colleagues prior to class. Points will be deleted from the assignment if this analysis is distributed in class

Assignment Five: Class Presentation of Case

(Must be used if not using Assignments 2 and 3)

45 Points

Class presentation with required handouts—PPT outline of presentation, case illustration and application of major concepts, theories, techniques, and models of intervention are primary focus of presentation. Presentations may include role plays, vignettes, short video clips, de-identified cases from your field placement, etc. Students are asked to develop class presentation in which they will select a special topic of interest. Topics may come from the topics identified for the final four weeks of class, or from additional topics suggested by the instructor or from

your own interests. Please double check your topic with the instructor before you begin your work.

- **Possible Topics**

- Separation, Divorce, and Divorce Mediation
- Substance abuse
- Violence (domestic violence, child abuse, child sexual abuse)
- Sexual dysfunction
- Same sex couples
- Transgendered couples
- Gender issues in couple therapy
- Incest survivors
- Remarried partners
- Blended families
- Depression
- Mental illness
- Work with interracial, interfaith, elderly, poor or ethnically diverse couples; immigrant couples; legal and/or ethical issues.

Please Note: The special issues impacting couples will be covered in Weeks 11-13 student presentations, as well as integrated through the course via case examples, role plays, videos, and lecture.

Videos that may be used for Role Plays and Papers:

- You, Me, & Dupree
- The Notebook
- Accidental Traveler
- The Kids are All Right
- Something's Got to Give
- Annie Hall
- The Family Stone
- Mi Familia
- The Birdcage
- My Beautiful Laundrette

COURSE SCHEDULE

PART ONE: General Clinical Issues – Unique to Couples Therapy

Week One	Introduction to Couples Therapy
Date	
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and course overview • Class expectations and requirements • Review of family therapy models and their relation to couple therapy • History of couples counseling and therapy • Legal and ethical issues • What's in a name? Marriage counseling? Martial therapy? Same-sex couples therapy? Couples therapy? Co-habiting couples? Partner therapy?
Readings	<p>Esmiol, E. E., Knudson-Martin, C., & Delgado, S. (2012). Developing a contextual consciousness: Learning to address gender, societal power, and culture in clinical practice. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i> 38(4), 573-588.</p> <p>Gottlieb, M. C., Lasser, J., & Simpson, G. L. (2008). Legal & Ethical Issues, pp.698-717. In A. S. Gurman (Ed.). <i>Clinical Handbook of Couples Therapy</i>, 4th Ed. New York: Guilford Press.</p> <p>Gurman, A. S. (2008). A Framework for the comparative study of couple therapy: History, Models, and Applications, (pp.1-31). In A. S. Gurman (Ed.). <i>Clinical Handbook of Couples Therapy</i>, 4th Ed. New York: Guilford Press.</p> <p>Johnson, S., & Lebow, J. (2000). The “coming of age” of couple therapy: A Decade review. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i>, 26, 23-38.</p>
Video	Couples Therapy: An Introduction (Psychotherapy.net) 42:49 minutes, Dan Wile, Ph.D.

Week Two	Assessment of a Couple – Past and Present Factors Affecting Functioning
Date	
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counseling and couple compatibility issues • Clinical indications for couple therapy • Moving from individual or family work to couples therapy • Assessment considerations • Common mistakes
Readings	<p>Bradford, K. (2012). Assessing readiness for couple therapy: The Stages of Relationship Change Questionnaire. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i> 38(3), 486-501.</p> <p>Carrere, S., Buehlman, K. T., Gottman, J.M., Coan, J. A., & Ruckstuhl, L. (2000). Predicting marital stability and divorce in newlywed couples. <i>Journal of Family Psychology</i> 14(1), 42-58.</p> <p>Rosenberg, A. (2011). Relationships. <i>Psychology Today</i>, 66-71.</p> <p>Weeks, G. R., Odell, M., & Methven, S. (2005). Introduction: Mistakes? What Mistakes? Pp. 1-21; Therapists issues that may interfere with treatment, pp.115-118. <i>If Only I Had Known... Avoiding Common Mistakes in Couples Therapy</i>. New York, New York: Norton.</p>

Week Three	Clinical Process Issues
Date	
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging the couple • Goals and contracting • Special issues in initial interviews • Structure • Secrets and other therapeutic positions • What do we mean when we say: ‘maintain neutrality’?
Readings	<p>Dattilio, F. M. (2002). Homework assignments in couple and family therapy. <i>Journal of Clinical Psychology</i>, 58(5), 535-547.</p> <p>Snyder, D. K., Castellani, A. M., & Whisman, M. A. (2006). Current status and future directions in couple therapy. <i>Annual Review of Psychology</i>, 37, 317-344.</p> <p>Symonds, D., & Horvath, A. O. (2004). Optimizing the alliance in couple therapy. <i>Family Process</i>, 43(4), 443-455.</p> <p>Weeks et al (2005). The “Battle for Structure” pp.22-51; Confidentiality Traps, pp. 51-70. <i>If Only I Had Known...</i></p>
Video	Imber-Black, Ph.D.,: Secrets in Families LUC Library web page

PART TWO: Couple Therapy Models

Week Four	Gottman Method Couples Therapy
Date	
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationship • Process of therapy • Concepts • Research • Case study
Readings	<p>Required</p> <p>Driver, J. L., & Gottman, J. M. (2004). Daily marital interactions and positive affect during marital conflict among newlywed couples. <i>Family Process</i> 43(3), 301-314.</p> <p>Gottman, J. M., Levenson, R. W., Gross, J., Frederickson, B. L., McCoy, K. Rosenthal, L., Ruef, A., & Yoshimoto, D. (2003). Correlates of gay and lesbian couples’ relationship satisfaction and relationship dissolution. <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i> 45 (1), 23-43.</p> <p>Gottman, J. M., & Gottman, J. S. (2008). Gottman Method, pp.138-166.</p> <p>Recommended</p> <p>Gottman, J. S. (2004). <i>The Marriage Clinic Casebook</i>. New York: Norton.</p> <p>Gottman, J. M., & Silver, N. (1999). <i>Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work</i>. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press. This is for clients; assign readings as relevant to practice.</p>

Week Five	Cognitive Behavioral and Solution-Focused Couples Therapy
Date	
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationship • Process of therapy • Concepts • Research • Case study
Readings	<p>Baucom, D. H., Epstein, N. B., LaTaillade, J. J., & Kirby, J. S. (2008). Cognitive-Behavioral couple therapy, pp.31-72.</p> <p>Dimidjian, S.K., Martell, C. R., & Christense, A. (2008). Integrative behavioral couple therapy, pp. 73-106.</p> <p>Hoyt, M. F. (2008). Solution-focused couples therapy, pp.259-298.</p> <p>Weeks, G. R., Odell, M., & Methven, S. (2005). Battling for structure. <i>In If Only I Had Known: Avoiding Common Mistakes in Couples Therapy</i> (pp.22-50). New York, NY: Norton.</p>
Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioral Couples Therapy (Psychotherapy.net) 115:51 minutes • Irreconcilable Differences (Psychotherapy.net) 90:43 minutes • Cognitive Therapy With Couples: Initial Phase of Treatment (Harper & Row) 55:04 minutes

Week Six	Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy
Date	
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationship • Process of therapy • Concepts • Research • Case study
Readings	<p>Furrow, J. L., Edwards, S. A., Choi, Y., & Bradley, B. (2012). Therapist presence in emotionally focused couple therapy blamer softening events: Promoting change through emotional experience. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i> 38(1), 39-49.</p> <p>Johnson, S. M. (2008). Emotionally focused couple therapy, pp.107-137.</p> <p>Johnson, S. M., & Wittenborn, A. K. (2012). New research findings on emotionally focused therapy: Introduction to special section. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i> 38(1), 18-22.</p>
Video	Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (Psychotherapy.net) 115:26 minutes

Week Seven	Bowen Couples Therapy
Date	
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationship • Process of therapy • Concepts • Research • Case study

Readings	Roberto-Forman, L. (2008). Transgenerational couple therapy. In A. S. Gurman (Ed.). <i>Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy</i> (4 th Ed.). pp. 196-228). New York, NY: Guilford Press. Weeks, G. R., Odell, M., & Methven, S. (2005). Overemphasizing the past or the present, pp.86-96.
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Week Eight	Narrative Theory and Therapy
Date	
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationship • Process of therapy • Concepts • Research • Case study
Readings	Freedman, J., & Combs, G. (2008). Narrative couple Therapy, pp. 229-258. Matos, M., Santos, A., Goncalves, M., & Martins, C. (2009). Innovative moments and change in narrative therapy. <i>Psychotherapy Research</i> , 19(1), 68-60. Weeks et al. (2005). Lapses in careful listening, <i>In If Only I Had Known: Avoiding Common Mistakes in Couples Therapy</i> (pp.97-110). New York, NY: Norton.
Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative Skills. Practice Exercises for Developing Counseling Skills, Part 1: Developing Curiosity. (Alexander Street Press, 2011), 82:20 min. • Narrative Skills, Practice Exercises for Developing Counseling Skills, Part 2: Decision-Making and Externalizing. (Alexander Street Press, 2011), 67:06 min.

Week Nine	Feminist Theory and Therapy with Couples
Date	
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationship • Process of therapy • Concepts • Research • Case study
Readings	<p>Required</p> <p>Knudson-Martin, C., (2008). Gender Issues in the Practice of Couple Therapy, pp.641-661. Bruns, C. M., & Kaschak, E. (2011). Feminisms: Feminist therapies in the 21st Century. <i>Women & Therapy</i> 34: 1-5.</p> <p>Recommended</p> <p>EmpowerHER. (2012). Feminist Therapy: Is It Still Needed Today? See BB. GoodTherapy.org</p>
Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Therapy With the Experts: Feminist Family Therapy (Allyn and Bacon) 118:05 minutes • He Just Doesn't Get it (Or Does He?) (Alexander Street Press) 68 minutes

PART THREE: Special Issues in Couples Therapy

Week Eleven	Affairs, Separation, and Divorce
Date	
Topics	Student Role Plays
Readings	Gordon, K. C., Baucom, D. H., Snyder, D. K., & Dixon, L. J. (2008). Couple therapy and the treatment of affairs, pp. 429-458. Williams, K., & Knudson-Martin, C. (2012). Do therapists address gender and power in infidelity? A feminist analysis of the treatment literature. <i>Journal of Marital & Family Therapy</i> 38, 1-14. Lebow, J. (2008). Gurman: Separation and divorce issues in couple therapy, pp.459-477.

Week Twelve	Same Sex Couples
Date	
Topics	Student Role Plays
Readings	Green, R-J., & Mitchell, V., (2008). Gay and Lesbian Couples in therapy, pp.662-681. LaSala, M. C. (2002). Walls and Bridges: How couples gay men and lesbians manage their intergenerational relationships. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i> 28(3), 327-339.
Assignments	All papers due

Week Thirteen	Physical Aggression
Date	
Readings	Adams, P. J. (2012). Interventions with men who are violent to their partners: Strategies for early engagement. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i> 38(3), 458-470. Davies, J. (2008). When battered women stay...Advocacy beyond leaving. Building comprehensive solutions to domestic violence #20 http://www . Feld, S. L., & Felson, R. B. (2008). Gender norms and retaliatory violence against spouses and acquaintances. <i>Journal of Family Issues</i> , 29:692-703. O’Leary, K. D. (2008). Gurman: Couples therapy and physical aggression, pp.478-498. Stith, S. M., Rosen, K. H., & MdCollum, E. E. (2003). Effectiveness of couples treatment for spouse abuse. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i> 29(3), 407-426. (Stith has recently published a book: <i>Couples Therapy for Domestic Violence</i> , 2012) White, M. (2009). Gurman: Narrative practice and conflict dissolution in couples therapy, 37: 220-213.

PART FOUR: Consolidation

Week Fourteen	Consolidation – Couples Therapy
Date	
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion of the integration of models of couples therapy• Discussion of how to develop and continuously challenge our own working models• Discussion of your own current model for working with couples. Be prepared to talk about this.
Readings	<p>Required Gurman, A. S. (2008). Integrative couple therapy, pp.383-428.</p> <p>Recommended Gurman text (2008) All remaining Chapters in Parts II-not previously cited per topic chosen for presentation—although you are encouraged to read as much as you can.</p>