COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will review and critically analyze contemporary models of couples and family intervention in terms of their empirical and theoretical bases. Directions for research and evaluation in couples and family therapy will be emphasized throughout. Special consideration will be given to ethical issues in couples and family therapy research. Attention will also be directed to issues of culture, age, gender, and sexual orientation. In addition, emphasis will be placed on specific clinical research issues such as divorce and family violence.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, student will:

1. identify the key ethical issues involved in conducting couples and family intervention research.

2. analyze culture, age, gender, and sexual orientation in relation to couples and family research.

3. describe some of the major theoretical approaches in couples and family intervention.

4. critique the empirical literature in this field and develop expertise in one area of couples and family research.

MAJOR TEXTS (both texts are on reserve)


A coursepack of readings is available through Dollar Bill Copying, 611 Church Street.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Leading Class Discussions (10% of Grade)**

   Each student will lead class discussions based upon the coursepack readings. Written questions should be distributed at the beginning of the discussion.

2. **Class Participation (10% of Grade)**

   Each student should actively contribute to the class discussion of assigned readings. Also, students are expected to provide questions and feedback to each other during the Concept and Proposal Presentations.

3. **Proposal Concept Presentation and Paper (20% of Grade)**

   Students will present preliminary ideas on a research project relevant to marital or family interventions. Presentations should include a brief description of the research plan: Research Aims, Background & Significance, Preliminary Studies, and Design and Methods. Each presentation will be followed by feedback from the class participants.

   Presentations will be given on **October 30th** and followed by a Concept Paper (6-7 pages, double-spaced) that summarizes the preliminary proposal presentation and incorporates feedback provided by the class (**due November 6th**).

4. **Research Proposal (50% of Grade)**

   Each student will develop their Concept Paper into a Research Proposal that includes an abstract, research plan, and bibliography (using NIMH guidelines). The proposal is due on **December 11th**.

5. **Final Proposal Presentation (10% of Grade)**

   Students will present their final Research Proposals to the class at the end of the term. Visual aids (e.g., PowerPoint, charts and graphs) are a helpful adjunct to oral presentations.
COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

September 11  Introduction and Overview

September 18 & 25  Critical Considerations I:  Ethical and Clinical Research Issues

**Texts**
- Jacobson & Gurman:  Chapter 1  (“Therapy with Couples: A Coming of Age”)
- Nichols & Schwartz:  Chapter 1  (“The Foundations of Family Therapy”)
  
  Chapter 2  (“The Evolution of Family Therapy”)
  
  Chapter 14 (“Comparative Analysis”)
  
  Chapter 15 (“Research”)

**Coursepack**

October 2  Critical Considerations II:  Culture, Age, Gender and Sexual Orientation Issues

**Texts**
- Jacobson & Gurman:  Chapter 11 (“Cross-Cultural Marriages”)
  
  Chapter 12 (“Redefining the Past, Present and Future: Therapy with Long-Term Marriages at Midlife”).
  
  Chapter 13 (“Gendered Aspects of Marital Therapy”)
  
  Chapter 14 (“Therapy with Same-Sex Couples”)


Coursepack


October 9  Theoretical Foundations of Interventions

Texts
Jacobson & Gurman:  Chapter 5 (“The Ego-Analytic Approach to Couple Therapy”)

Chapter 6 (“The Emotionally Focused Approach to Problems in Adult Attachment”)

Chapter 8 (“Psychoanalytical Marital Therapy”)

Nichols & Schwartz:  Chapter 3 (“Early Models and Basic Techniques”)

Chapter 4 (“The Fundamental Concepts of Family Therapy”)

Coursepack


October 16  Intervention Research: Bowenian Approach

Texts
Jacobson & Gurman:  Chapter 2 (“Bowen Family Systems and Marriage”)

Nichols & Schwartz:  Chapter 5 (“Bowen Family Systems Therapy”)

Coursepack

October 23  

**Intervention Research: Behavioral/Cognitive Approach**

**Texts**

Jacobson & Gurman: Chapter 3 (“Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy”)

Chapter 4 (“Cognitive Aspects of Cognitive-Behavioral Marital Therapy”)

Chapter 19 “Anxiety Disorders: The Role of Marital Therapy”

Nichols & Schwartz: Chapter 9 (“Cognitive-Behavioral Family Therapy”)

**Coursepack**


October 30  

**Preliminary Proposal Presentation**

November 6  

**Intervention Research: Structural/Strategic/Systemic Approaches**

**Texts**

Nichols & Schwartz: Chapter 8 (“Structural Family Therapy”)

Chapter 11 (“From Strategic to Solution-Focused”)

**Coursepack**


November 13  Intervention Research: Solution-Focused and Narrative Approaches

Texts
Jacobson & Gurman:  Chapter 7 (“Problem- and Solution-Focused Couple Therapies”)

Nichols & Schwartz:  Chapter 10 (“Family Therapy into the Twenty-first Century”)

Chapter 12 (“Narrative Therapy”)

Coursepack


November 20  Clinical Research Topics: Marriage and Divorce

Text
Jacobson & Gurman:  Chapter 17 (“Facilitating Healthy Divorce Processes”)

Coursepack


November 27  Clinical Research Topics: Family Violence

Text
Jacobson & Gurman:  Chapter 16 (“The Assessment and Treatment of Marital Violence”)

Chapter 18 (“Anxiety Disorders: The Role of Marital Therapy”)

Chapter 21 (“A Marital/Family Discord Model of Depression: Implications of Therapist Intervention”)

Coursepack


December 4  
Clinical Research Topics: Spirituality and Forgiveness

Text  
Jacobson & Gurman:  Chapter 15 (“Crises of Infidelity”)
Chapter 10 (“Preventive Intervention and Relationship Enhancement”)

Coursepack  


December 11  
Proposal Presentations