UNIVERSITY OF OREGON/COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
SPECIALIZATION IN COUPLES AND FAMILY THERAPY
SEMINAR IN COUPLES THERAPY (CFT 629; CRN 46063)
Class Time: Tuesdays 9-11:50a
Summer, 2015

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description
Seminar in Couples Therapy (CFT 629) examines several key issues associated with effective couples therapy. This will include a discussion of research findings, assessment, the questioning process, motivation, change, content and process, ethics, and social/macro considerations.

Course Learning Outcomes
1. To more completely develop a conceptual connection between systems theory, communication theory and the practice of couples therapy.
2. To become increasingly familiar with the empirical process and outcome literature associated with couples therapy.
3. To develop a comprehensive understanding of assessment considerations when working with couples.
4. To enhance conceptual, perceptual and executive skills (Tomm & Wright, 1979) and their application when working with couples.
5. To develop a more complete understanding of the practice complexities associated with couples therapy.
6. To enhance participants’ understanding of key components of change and their application in working with couples.
7. To further develop participants’ theory of practice, especially as related to working with couples.

Text/Readings

Note: Additional blackboard readings listed weekly.

COAMFTE Core Competencies
This course will address the following AAMFT core competencies
http://www.aamft.org/imis15/Documents/MFT_Core_Competencies.pdf:

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3.2</td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>Determine who should attend therapy and in what configuration (e.g., individual, couple, family, extrafamilial resources).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3.3</td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>Facilitate therapeutic involvement of all necessary participants in treatment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3.9</td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>Manage session interactions with individuals, couples, families, and groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>Perceptual</td>
<td>Assess each clients' engagement in the change process.</td>
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<td>2.2.3</td>
<td>Perceptual</td>
<td>Develop hypotheses regarding relationship patterns, their bearing on the presenting problem, and the influence of extra-therapeutic factors on client systems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3.1 Executive</td>
<td>Diagnose and assess client behavioral and relational health problems systemically and contextually.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3.3 Executive</td>
<td>Apply effective and systemic interviewing techniques and strategies.</td>
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<td>2.3.9 Executive</td>
<td>Elucidate presenting problem from the perspective of each member of the therapeutic system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4.5 Professional</td>
<td>Monitor personal reactions to clients and treatment process, especially in terms of therapeutic behavior, relationship with clients, process for explaining procedures, and outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5.4 Professional</td>
<td>Utilize time management skills in therapy sessions and other professional meetings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1.1 Conceptual</td>
<td>Comprehend a variety of individual and systemic therapeutic models and their application, including evidence-based therapies and culturally sensitive approaches.</td>
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<td>4.1.2 Conceptual</td>
<td>Recognize strengths, limitations, and contraindications of specific therapy models, including the risk of harm associated with models that incorporate assumptions of family dysfunction, pathogenesis, or cultural deficit.</td>
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<td>4.2.2 Perceptual</td>
<td>Distinguish differences between content and process issues, their role in therapy, and their potential impact on therapeutic outcomes.</td>
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<td>4.3.2 Executive</td>
<td>Deliver interventions in a way that is sensitive to special needs of clients (e.g., gender, age, socioeconomic status, culture/race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, personal history, larger systems issues of the client).</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.3.3 Executive</td>
<td>Reframe problems and recursive interaction patterns.</td>
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<td>4.3.4 Executive</td>
<td>Generate relational questions and reflexive comments in the therapy room.</td>
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<td>4.3.5 Executive</td>
<td>Engage each family member in the treatment process as appropriate.</td>
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<td>4.3.7 Executive</td>
<td>Defuse intense and chaotic situations to enhance the safety of all participants.</td>
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<td>4.4.2 Evaluative</td>
<td>Evaluate treatment outcomes as treatment progresses.</td>
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<td>4.4.4 Evaluative</td>
<td>Evaluate clients' reactions or responses to interventions.</td>
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<td>4.5.2 Professional</td>
<td>Set appropriate boundaries, manage issues of triangulation, and develop collaborative working relationships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.5.3 Professional</td>
<td>Articulate rationales for interventions related to treatment goals and plan, assessment information, and systemic understanding of clients' context and dynamics.</td>
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<td>5.2.2 Perceptual</td>
<td>Recognize ethical dilemmas in practice setting.</td>
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<td>5.3.5 Executive</td>
<td>Take appropriate action when ethical and legal dilemmas emerge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.4.2 Evaluative</td>
<td>Monitor attitudes, personal well-being, personal issues, and personal problems to insure they do not impact the therapy process adversely or create vulnerability for misconduct.</td>
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**POLICIES**

**Documented Disability & Request for Accommodations:**
Appropriate accommodations will be provided for students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability and require accommodation, arrange to meet with the course instructor within the first two weeks of the term. The documentation of your disability must come in writing from the Accessible Education Center in the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services. Disabilities may include (but are not limited to) neurological impairment, orthopedic impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, chronic medical conditions,
emotional/psychological disabilities, hearing impairment, and learning disabilities. For more information on Accessible Education Center, please see [http://aec.uoregon.edu](http://aec.uoregon.edu)

**Course Incomplete Policy:**
Students are expected to be familiar with university policy regarding grades of “incomplete” and the time line for completion. For details on the policy and procedures regarding incompletes, Please see: [https://education.uoregon.edu/academics/incompletes-courses](https://education.uoregon.edu/academics/incompletes-courses)

**Academic Misconduct Policy:**
All students are subject to the regulations stipulated in the UO Student Conduct Code [http://conduct.uoregon.edu](http://conduct.uoregon.edu). This code represents a compilation of important regulations, policies, and procedures pertaining to student life. It is intended to inform students of their rights and responsibilities during their association with this institution, and to provide general guidance for enforcing those regulations and policies essential to the educational and research missions of the University.

**Respect for Diversity:**
It is the policy of the University of Oregon and the Couples & Family Therapy Program to support and value diversity. To do so requires that we:

- respect the dignity and essential worth of all individuals.
- promote a culture of respect throughout the University community.
- respect the privacy, property, and freedom of others.
- reject bigotry, discrimination, violence, or intimidation of any kind.
- practice personal and academic integrity and expect it from others.
- promote the diversity of opinions, ideas and backgrounds which is the lifeblood of the university.

The CFT program embraces a culture of respect and inclusion with a commitment to honoring diversity in all aspects of our program. The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect in understanding that each individual is unique. Diversity includes, but is not limited to race, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender, gender-expression/identity, socioeconomic status, disabilities, and spiritual/religious affiliations. We aim to honor and value diverse ways of learning, knowing, and experiencing. We also hope to create a forum where dialogues can take place that foster individual as well as collective self-awareness and growth. In keeping with our commitment to these values, we ask that everyone (students, faculty, staff and supervisors) partner in a shared responsibility to build inclusion, equity, and respect of diversity across the CFT program. This can only happen if we continue to reflect on how our cultural backgrounds and diverse life experiences influence our work with clients. Thus, while we each bring unique perspectives to our professional work, as a program we expect that our students, faculty and staff, as human service professionals, will strive toward competency in meeting our clients’ diverse needs and respecting all people.

**Disclosure of Personal Information:**
The Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) requires the program to have “established policies for informing applicants and students regarding disclosure of their personal information” (COAMFTE Standard 140.02, 2003). With this standard in mind, we would like to highlight that in this course personal disclosures may occur. Each student should decide for him/herself what information to disclose. Students are advised to be prudent when making self disclosures. The program cannot guarantee confidentiality of student disclosures given the group environment, although personal comments should be considered private and confidential – and remain only in the classroom – unless an exception to confidentiality applies.
The AAMFT Code of Ethics states in standard 4.7 (2001) that *Marriage and family therapists do not disclose supervisee confidences except by written authorization or waiver, or when mandated or permitted by law. In educational or training settings where there are multiple supervisors, disclosures are permitted only to other professional colleagues, administrators, or employers who share responsibility for training of the supervisee. Verbal authorization will not be sufficient except in emergency situations, unless prohibited by law.* With this in mind, the program would like to highlight that clinical supervisors who share responsibility for supervisees will share relevant information without a written waiver in an effort to provide a quality standard of supervision, maintain coherent training throughout the program, and ensure client care.

**Mandatory Reporting (UO Policy):**
UO employees, including faculty, staff, and GTFs, are mandatory reporters of child abuse and prohibited discrimination. This statement is to advise you that that your disclosure of information about child abuse or prohibited discrimination to a UO employee may trigger the UO employee’s duty to report that information to the designated authorities. Please refer to the following links for detailed information about mandatory reporting:
https://hr.uoregon.edu/policies-leaves/general-information/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect/presidents-message
http://around.uoregon.edu/mandatoryreporting

**Conflict Resolution:**
Several options, both informal and formal, are available to resolve conflicts for students who believe they have been subjected to or have witnesses bias, unfairness, or other improper treatment.

It is important to exhaust the administrative remedies available to you including discussing the conflict with the specific individual, contacting the Department Head, or within the College of Education, you can contact Angie Whalen, Assistant Dean for Academic Programs and Student Services, at 346-2898 or awhalen@uoregon.edu; Lauren Lindstrom, Associate Dean for Research and Academics, at 346-1399 or lindstrm@uoregon.edu; or Surendra Subramani, Diversity Coordinator, at 346-1472 or surendra@uoregon.edu.

- Outside the College, you can contact:
- UO Bias Response Team: 346-1139 or http://bias.uoregon.edu/whatbrt.htm
- Conflict Resolution Services 346 -0617 or http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/SupportandEducation/ConflictResolutionServices/tabid/134/Default.aspx
- Affirmative action and Equal Opportunity: 346-3123 or http://aaeo.uoregon.edu/

**Grievance Policy:**
A student or group of students of the College of Education may appeal decisions or actions pertaining to admissions, programs, evaluation of performance and program retention and completion. Students who decide to file a grievance should follow the student grievance procedure, or alternative ways to file a grievance outlined in the Student Grievance Policy (https://education.uoregon.edu/academics/student-grievance) or enter search: student grievance.

**Inclement Weather Policy:**
In the event the University operates on a curtailed schedule or closes, UO media relations will notify the Eugene-Springfield area radio and television stations as quickly as possible. In addition, a notice regarding the university’s schedule will be posted on the UO main home page (in the "News"
If an individual class must be canceled due to inclement weather, illness, or other reason, a notice will be posted on Blackboard or via email. During periods of inclement weather, please check Blackboard and your email rather than contact department personnel. Due to unsafe travel conditions, departmental staff may be limited and unable to handle the volume of calls from you and others.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

Below is a list of assignments that link to the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO). For example, “SLO1” may be listed. Please refer to the back page of the syllabus for all Educational Outcomes, including a list of SLOs.

We have designed the assignments based on previous collaboration with students and with the course and overall program goals and objectives in mind. Our goal is that each assignment is substantive, meaningful and a very important part of the course. If the assignments are not well designed for you, please contact us and suggest an alternative. We will work with you on an individual basis or as a group to adjust the assignment. We will work with you so that each assignment meets a high standard and supports your learning. If an assignment deadline is not workable for you, please notify us as soon as is possible. We want to work with you proactively to adjust the deadline.

**(1) Attendance (SLO1)**
We encourage each of you to take a very active role in the course, including sharing your thoughts, raising questions, supporting each other’s learning, completing the readings, and arriving at each class prepared to contribute to the discussion.

*A Note about Arriving on Time:* We will begin right at 9:00 each class period. Please be ready to begin at that time. It is important to us that our work together is focused and very active. Beginning on time and using our time well is one important part of creating that environment. Each of us has an important role toward that end.

**(2) Reading (SLO2)**
The readings, including the internet assignments, have been carefully selected to contribute substantive material to the course. That is, the readings are not supplemental to the course, they are central. We have included readings that we believe will be instrumental in helping you develop key competencies and a working understanding of couples therapy literature. To meaningfully understand course material, it is important to read the materials as negotiated and assigned. This will contribute to your own learning and significantly enhance the learning of all participants. Therefore, prior to each class, significant preparation is necessary. We will work together to adapt the assigned readings across the term whenever it seems useful to do so.

For each reading assignment, come prepared to class with the following:
- Your agreement and disagreement with the author(s).
- The salient exclusions in each article.
- Questions the article raises for you.
- What was particularly instructive about the article for you?

Preparing in this way will help to focus our discussion and highlight central features of the readings.
(3) Couple Intervention Assignment: Find or create a couple intervention and share it! (SLO 3, 4, 5)
With a classmate, research interventions in a particular topic area pertaining to couples therapy. Use an existing one or create your own after examining existing ones. Come prepared to the last two classes ready to share your intervention with your classmates. You will want to address the following: (a) theoretical assumptions of the intervention, (b) how the intervention fits with an overall strategy, (c) timing of the intervention, (d) target populations/presenting concerns, and (e) best ways to deliver intervention. Please be prepared to demonstrate delivery of the intervention. Prepare a one page handout with this information on it to share with your colleagues. You will be graded on your presentation of the intervention and your one page handout. Due date: 8/5 or 8/12.

(4) Final Assignment: Paper – Working With Couples: Core Theoretical Assumptions & Motivational Readiness (40 points) (SLO’s 2-5)
This assignment is designed to further develop your theoretical orientation – though now specifically applied to couples therapy. It builds on previous coursework. Moreover, it directly prepares you for the Formal Client Presentation (spring term). With this assignment, liberally cite the literature. Demonstrate a clear and sophisticated command of your core assumptions guiding your work to date, described succinctly. Incorporate material from this course in your answers. Paper should be no longer than 10 pages and can be shorter. Due Date: 8/18 by 1p.

a. Describe the core systemic and communication theory assumptions, central to all systemic models, which guide your practice. Liberally cite the literature in your response. In addition, summarize the family therapy model(s) of your choice and its (their) core assumptions in this section. This section is designed to be a comprehensive, though concise summary that soundly integrates systems theory, communication theory, and your model(s) of choice.

b. Briefly summarize the core components of motivational readiness (transtheoretical model) and motivational interviewing. Tie these assumptions to your systemic framework (‘a,’ above). Describe how you have applied (or will apply) your knowledge of this literature in your work with a couple. Be specific, liberally cite the literature, and provide vivid examples.

Course Evaluation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Evaluation</th>
<th>Points (100)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Intervention assignment</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper assignment</td>
<td>40</td>
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Course Grading

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>D-</td>
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As described in the University of Oregon Graduate Bulleting, a course grade of C+ or lower is not accepted for graduate credit, even though it may be computed in the G.P.A.
## Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE/CLASS</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT DUE</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Class #1  
6/24 (Deanna) | Overview of Syllabus; Course objectives; Couples Therapy assumptions; Couples Therapy competencies | | |
| Class #2  
7/2 (Deanna) | Assessment & executive skills | Gottman, Ch’s 1-3; Blackboard | |
| Class #3  
7/9 (Jeff) | Assessment: IPV Universal screening; Therapist response | Gottman, ch’s 4 & 5; Blackboard | |
| Class #4  
7/15 (Deanna) | Separation and couple decision making; Divorce mediation; Coordinated parenting through divorce | Blackboard  
Gottman ch. 6 | |
| Class #5  
7/22 (Jeff) | Facilitating process, Motivational Interviewing | Blackboard | |
| Class #6  
7/29 (Deanna) | Couples intervention & infidelity | Gottman Chs. 7 & 8  
Blackboard  
http://aftertheaffair.net | |
| Class #7  
8/6 (Deanna) | Share couples interventions | Gottman Ch’s 9 & 10  
Blackboard | ½ Couple Intervention Assignments Due |
| Class #8  
8/13 (Jeff) | Couples and sexuality | Blackboard | ½ Couple Intervention Assignments Due |

****** Final Paper (Working with Couples) is due by 1:00 pm, 8/18. ******

### Recommended Readings & Websites


**Sexuality**

1. [http://www.sexualhealth.com](http://www.sexualhealth.com)

**Empirically-Supported Therapies**

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)  

National Registry of Effective Programs (NREP)  

American Psychological Association, Division 12 Society of Clinical Psychology  

National Institute of Mental Health  

National Institutes of Health Clinical Trials  

Treatment Manuals/NIDA  
University of Oregon CFT Educational Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes: As reflected in the CFT program’s mission statement and overall goal, students are expected to demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:

SLO1. Students will develop an understanding of professional conduct and ethical standards and will demonstrate an ability to effectively apply their knowledge in clinical practice.

SLO2. Students will develop an ability to critically evaluate the research literature and demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between research results and clinical decision making.

SLO3. Students will gain an understanding of the core theoretical assertions of couples and family therapy and will critically assess their own systems-oriented theory of change.

SLO4. Students will develop attitudes that value human diversity, will practice culturally-sensitive analysis and critical self-awareness when counseling diverse populations, and will demonstrate cultural competence in all professional activities.

SLO5. Students will develop an understanding of the unique systemically-oriented assessment and intervention competencies, will apply them effectively in practice, and will critically evaluate their own practice.

Faculty Outcomes: Based on the mission of the University of Oregon and the CFT program, in teaching, supervision, and interactions with students and community members, faculty are expected to:

FO1. CFT faculty will consistently receive high ratings for effective and culturally competent course instruction and clinical supervision.

FO2. CFT core faculty will meet high standards of scholarship including professional presentations, peer-reviewed publications, and the generation of knowledge through research.

FO3. CFT faculty will foster a rich learning environment that demonstrates inclusion, critical consciousness, self-exploration, sensitivity to diverse populations, and commitment to social justice.

Program Outcomes: The overall goal of the University of Oregon CFT program is to graduate systemically-minded, competent couples and family therapists. We value the creation of an inclusive learning environment that fosters socially-aware practitioners who, in partnership with their communities, promote social justice, systems change, and enhancement of individual well-being and community life. At the time of graduation and beyond, our program outcomes will be demonstrated in these ways:

PO1. Employers will report that CFT alumni are highly competent and well prepared for clinical practice.

PO2. Students will demonstrate critical analysis of culturally-competent, systemic practice.

PO3. Students will report high satisfaction with the CFT program, including cultural competency, high quality instruction, and career preparation.