EPSY 590: Special Topics in Family Counseling: Sexuality, Violence, and Trauma
Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Instructor:

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND CONTENT AREA
This course covers special topics in the field of couple and family counseling, including issues related to human sexuality, family violence, and trauma. Human sexuality includes physiological, psychological, developmental, social, and relational issues as they relate to the conceptualization and treatment of clinical issues in couples counseling. Family violence issues include physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of children, elders, and intimate partners. In addition, the course provides an overview of theories and application of crisis intervention strategies for individuals and family members experiencing a crisis or trauma. This course is designed to prepare counselors-in-training to work effectively with couples and families who may be dealing with issues related to sexuality, violence, and trauma, and to address relevant professional, legal, and ethical issues surrounding clinical work in these areas.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION
This is a seminar course and will be taught as such. Weekly readings will be discussed in a seminar format. Students are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings, prepared to challenge one another with thoughtful discussion. This course consists of group and individual experiential learning exercises, lectures, group discussions, audiovisual presentations, and written assignments.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
This course provides the student with an overview of a family-oriented theoretical approach to understanding and treating clinical issues related to human sexuality, family violence, and crisis/trauma. The specific objectives of the course are as follows:

Course Objectives Related to Sexuality:
1. To explore the intersection of physiological, psychological, developmental, social, and relational issues as they relate to sexuality counseling.
2. To assist students in examining their personal biases, values, and beliefs about human sexuality and the potential impact of these beliefs on their clinical work.
3. To enhance students’ personal comfort levels related to talking about sexuality issues with the individuals, couples, and families they treat in counseling.
4. To increase students’ understanding of healthy, positive sexuality and sexual relationships, including strategies for counseling clients toward positive sexual development.
5. To provide students with the knowledge needed to assess and diagnose sexual problems, dysfunction, and disorders. In addition, students will learn counseling strategies for addressing these issues.
6. To enhance students’ knowledge of professional identity issues related to sexuality counseling. These issues include ethical practices, professional organizations, resources for scholarly and general populations, and the role of interdisciplinary service providers.
7. To facilitate students’ ability to translate scholarly research evidence to understanding
ways to work with couples and families in sexuality counseling.

**Course Objectives Related to Family Violence:**
1. To help students develop an understanding of the various types of family violence they may encounter in their clinical work.
2. To introduce students to major theories of family violence, as well as research-based approaches to explaining and intervening with family violence issues.
3. To increase students’ understanding of the dynamics of family violence issues through various experiential and didactic learning modalities, including guest speakers, experiential exercises, course assignments, audio and visual presentations, and class discussions.
4. To provide students with information related to various community organizations dedicated to working with family violence issues, in order to enhance future collaboration with these agencies.
5. To assist students in examining their personal biases, reactions, and assumptions regarding family violence issues.
6. To familiarize students with connections among family violence issues and multicultural diversity, substance abuse, sexuality, psychopathology, risk factors, the media, and gender role dynamics.
7. To introduce students to relevant professional, legal, and ethical issues surrounding clinical work with family violence issues.

**Course Objectives Related to Trauma / Crisis Intervention:**
1. To introduce students to types of crises and various theories of crisis intervention.
2. To explore the effects of developmental, emotional, and environmental crises and traumas on individuals and families.
3. To increase students’ understanding of skills and strategies appropriate for crisis situations.
4. To increase students’ understanding of the counseling professional’s role in crisis situations.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**


Additional readings as assigned.

**SUGGESTED READING LIST**

Guilford Press.


**CRISIS COUNSELING TRAINING**

Crisis counseling experience can be obtained at the Clinical Center. On-call volunteers are needed for all periods the Clinical Center is open, including vacation and semester breaks. Contact Dr. Brenda Gilbert (453-2361) if you are interested.

**DISABILITY STATEMENT**

If you have any type of special need(s) or disability for which you require accommodations to promote your learning in this class, please contact me as soon as possible. The office of Disability Support Services (DDS) offers various support services and can help you with special accommodations. You may wish to contact DDS at 453-5738 or go to Room 150 at Woody Hall to verify your eligibility and options for accommodations related to your special need(s) or disability.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Submitting the work of others as your own, submitting prior work for present assignments without written permission of the instructor, plagiarism in any form, intentionally using unauthorized materials in an academic exercise, or intentionally helping another to commit an act of academic dishonesty will result in penalties ranging from a failing grade on an assignment to expulsion from the university depending on the severity of the offense. Refer to SIU Student Handbook for further clarification. Review [http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/what_is_citation.html](http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/what_is_citation.html) for a brief overview of plagiarism and the importance of accurate citations within your work.

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURE**

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on BERT’s website at [www.bert.siu.edu](http://www.bert.siu.edu), Department of Safety’s website [www.dps.siu.edu](http://www.dps.siu.edu) (disaster drop down) and in Emergency Response Guideline pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. **It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency.** The Building
Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

CACREP STANDARDS:
Students who are preparing to work as marriage, couple, and family counselors are expected to possess the knowledge, skills, and practices necessary to address a wide variety of issues in the context of relationships and families. In addition to the common core curricular experiences outlined in Section II.G, programs must provide evidence that student learning has occurred in areas specific to marriage, couple, and family counseling (Section III). Assignments are designed to provide student learning opportunities as outlined by CACREP; relevant standards are listed below.

1. **Attendance and Participation (100 points)**
   Students are expected to attend and actively participate in all class activities. The attendance and participation grade includes timeliness, which means being on time to class and turning in all assignments on time. This grade also includes appropriate attention to professional behavior, such as turning off cell phones during class. Due to the large volume of reading required in this course, some readings will be split between students. On these weeks, each student will be responsible for serving as the discussion leader for their assigned chapter and providing a summary handout for their classmates.

2. **Reflection Journals (75 points)**
   You will turn in a total of 3 journals throughout the semester, one for each section of the course (sexuality, violence, and trauma). Due dates are included in the course schedule. Each journal is worth 25 points. Journals should be 2-4 pages long, typed and double-spaced. To protect confidentiality, journals should be submitted with a title page. Certain class material is likely to evoke a powerful response in students. Your journals provide the opportunity to reflect on these reactions. Topics for each journal will be provided. However, you are invited to use your creativity in deciding what you will write about, as long as the content is relevant to course material.

   | Designed to assess student learning outcomes relevant to the following CACREP standards:  III.A. 7; III.C.2,3; III.E.4 |

3. **Sex and Values Worksheet (25 points)**
   a. Each student is required to complete the Sex and Values Worksheet included in Appendix A of this syllabus. This worksheet is designed to provide students with a structured opportunity to examine their beliefs about a variety of value-laden issues related to sexuality.

   b. This worksheet does not ask students to describe personal experiences with the issues presented. Rather, students are encouraged to consider their personal values as they may impact their work with clients.

   c. Worksheets should be typed (using the template in Appendix A), single-spaced, and submitted with a title page. See course schedule for due date.

   | Designed to assess student learning outcomes relevant to the following CACREP standards:  III.E.4 |
4. **Sexuality Interview Report (100 points)**
   a. Students will work in pairs for this assignment. See course schedule for due date.
   b. Students will take turns interviewing their partner, using selected questions from the interview sheet contained in Appendix B. Each interview should last 30 to 60 minutes. **DO NOT** record these interviews using either audio or video taping!!!!
   c. The purposes of this assignment are (a) to provide students with an opportunity to reflect on the lessons they have learned about sex from a variety of sources throughout their lifetimes, (b) to provide students with an opportunity to practice asking another person about sexuality issues, and (c) to provide students with an opportunity to experience what it is like to be asked about sexuality issues, in an effort to increase empathy for clients in that context.
   d. **The student interviewee may choose not to answer any question that s/he does not want to answer.** It is expected that the interviewer and observer will accept and respect an interviewee’s decision not to answer any questions as s/he desires. The questions asked in each interview will vary, as will the amount of time that is spent on each question during each interview.
   e. Please conduct your interviews in a location that both agree is private, safe, and comfortable. In accordance with professional ethics, group members must treat information discussed during this interview as confidential, private information.
   f. Each student will submit a 2-3 page report of what the experience of being involved in this interview was like, focusing on the questions below:
      i. What was it like for you to ask the questions you asked as an interviewer?
      ii. What was it like for you to be asked the questions you were asked as an interviewee?
      iii. In what ways did this interview experience help you to develop your competency in providing sexuality counseling?
      iv. What was the most challenging aspect of participating in this interview process for you?
   g. **Students are not to reveal any personal information about their group members in their reports.** Please make every effort possible to disguise the identity of your group members, as well as disguise the details of any experiences that a group member may have shared through this interview. For additional guarantees of privacy, please also do not reveal any personal details about any of your own experiences that you may have discussed during this interview. **Remember, your interview reports are to focus on your reactions to the process of participating in this project, and not the content of the interview.**

5. **Special Population Presentation (100 points):**
   a. Each student will develop a presentation about family violence issues in a specific population. Students may work independently or in pairs for this project. The purpose of these presentations is to provide students with an opportunity to learn about and apply knowledge about the manner in which various elements of cultural diversity impact experiences of violence within couples and/or families.
   b. Presentations will be 30 to 45 minutes, and the format of these presentations...
should be experiential and informational.

c. Possible populations that may be addressed include the following: Immigrants, “Upscale” (high SES) families, Gay/Lesbian Relationships, Military Families, International Perspectives (select one country/region), and Rural families. Students may select topics other than those listed with prior approval by the instructor. All topics, however, must reflect a group that can be defined by unique cultural experiences as they relate to family violence.

d. Each student should prepare a handout for the other students in the course that includes the main points of his or her presentation. Each student/pair will also turn in to the instructor a list of references used for the presentation. Presentations should demonstrate that students have applied current scholarly literature related to theories, approaches, and client background characteristics relevant to working with couples and/or families in the selected cultural group.

e. Presentations should be creative, informative, and interesting. A variety of formats is acceptable for this presentation, and students should use creativity in deciding the most appropriate format for their topic. You may include class discussion, experiential activities, audio/visual presentations, role plays, case studies, etc. Consider how best to engage your classmates in your particular presentation.

f. Presentations should demonstrate outside research on the assigned topic. You may consult with the instructor about possible resources for your particular topic.

g. These presentations will be evaluated on the following criteria (see attached evaluation rubric):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content: Well-organized and informative</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Considerations</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk &amp; Resiliency Factors</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Scholarly Research</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate Reference list; Useful Handout</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Presentation skills</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity; Involved the class</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Designed to assess student learning outcomes relevant to the following CACREP standards: III.A.6; III.C.2; III.E.4; III.G.3

6. Annotated Bibliography (100 points)

Students will select a current topic in crisis intervention and provide an annotated bibliography of a minimum 5 articles from referred journals that are related to the issue. Each bibliography will consist of an APA format reference and a critique of the article, and should be ¾ to 1 page in length. Critiques should include your assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each article, as well as the article’s value as a resource for the specific topic. A 1-2 page summary that synthesizes the information gathered from articles and outlines 3 or 4 main points taken from the article critiques should be at the end of your bibliography. A list of possible subject areas will be provided. Students will present their findings to the class and provide a copy of the bibliography for each classmate.

This assignment will be graded according to the following criteria:

Reference accuracy = 10 points
Designed to assess student learning outcomes relevant to the following CACREP standards: III.A.7; III.C.2; III.G.3; III.I.1

STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

Students are expected to attend and actively participate in all activities. If you are unable to attend class, please notify me as soon as possible. Course requirements for a grade of “A” include, but are not limited to, a demonstration of extensive and consistent reading that is articulated and integrated into the class discussions, assignments, and presentations.

GRADING SCALE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Journals</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex and Values Worksheet</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality Interview Report</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Population Presentation (Violence)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography (Crisis)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>500</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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A    = 450 - 500
B    = 400 - 449
C    = 350 - 399
D    = 349 and below

SUGGESTED READING LIST


TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

(Subject to change as needed. Changes will be announced in class. If you are absent,
you are responsible for checking with the instructor to see if the schedule has changed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Course Overview</td>
<td>Syllabus Review Long, Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment &amp; Goal Setting</td>
<td>Long, Chapters 3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Female &amp; Male Sexuality</td>
<td>Long, Chapters 6-7 Sex &amp; Values Worksheet Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sexual Minorities</td>
<td>Long, Chapter 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aging, Disability, Chronic Illness</td>
<td>Long, Chapters 10 &amp; 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>STD’s &amp; Sexual Variations</td>
<td>Long, Chapters 8 &amp; 12 Sexuality Interview Reports Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Violence – History &amp; Definitions Child Neglect</td>
<td>Barnett, Chapters 1 &amp; 3 Reflection Journal #1 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>No Class</strong></td>
<td>Fall Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Child Physical &amp; Sexual Abuse</td>
<td>Barnett, Chapters 4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents &amp; College Students</td>
<td>Barnett, Chapters 6-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Abused &amp; Abusive Hetero Partners</td>
<td>Barnett, Chapters 8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Understudied, Elderly &amp; Disabled Violence Presentations</td>
<td>Barnett, Chapters 10 &amp; 12 Violence Presentations Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Counseling Survivors of Rape &amp; Childhood Abuse</td>
<td>Long, Chapters 13-14 Reflection Journal #2 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Crisis Intervention Overview and Skills</td>
<td>Jackson-Cherry &amp; Erford, Ch. 1-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Suicide/Homicide Grief/Loss</td>
<td>Jackson-Cherry &amp; Erford, Ch. 4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Crisis Presentations Wrap Up Course Evaluations</td>
<td>Crisis Bibliographies Due Reflection Journal #3 Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Appendix A  
Sex and Values Worksheet

1. I believe that same-sex relationships are…

2. I believe that sex outside of a marital relationship is…

3. I believe that infidelity is…

4. I believe that abortion is…

5. My comfort level in counseling a client with HIV or AIDS is/would be…

6. I believe that sexual relationships among elderly people are…

7. I believe that children should begin to learn about sex when…

8. I think that bisexual individuals are…

9. People who view pornographic materials are…

10. Some sexuality issues that would be difficult for me to work with as a counselor are…
Appendix B: Sexuality Interview Questions*

During your interview, you may select any of the following questions to ask. You may also modify these questions or add additional related questions. **However, at all times, you must respect the interviewee’s decision regarding whether or not to answer a particular question.** The interviewee may also bring up additional questions that s/he would like to answer or topics that s/he would like to discuss. You do not need to stick to the order of questions presented in this guide. **Please take time before each interview to discuss confidentiality issues with your partner, as well as to remind the interviewee of his/her right to not answer or ignore any question.**

- How did you first learn about sex? Who did you learn about sex from?
- What “rules” were there in your family about how children should learn about sex?
- How effective do you think your parents were in providing you helpful information about sex?
- Were there differences in the manners in which the different adults in your family talked with you about sex? If so, how?
- What kind of a feeling did your parents give you about sex?
- What kinds of questions did you have about sex while you were growing up? Who could you ask these questions to? How did they answer your questions?
- When you first learned about sex, did you learn about sex as it relates to reproduction or sex as it relates to pleasure?
- Were you aware of your parents as sexual beings?
- Were your parents open about their sexual relationships, or did they try to hide that from you?
- What feelings did you have about your parents’ sex life?
- What experiences of sexual play do you remember as a child?
- Did your parents ever “catch” you participating in exploratory sexual play? If so, how did they react? If not, how do you imagine they might have reacted?
- What feelings do you have now about any exploratory sexual play you may have engaged in as a child?
• How were the sexual roles and expectations of girls and boys defined by members of your family?
• What were your family members' attitudes toward masturbation?
• What are your feelings now about the messages you received from your family-of-origin about what it meant for you to be a boy or a girl?
• What were your family's attitudes toward the body? Was the body considered to be natural and admired, or was it considered to be provocative and kept hidden?
• When was it okay to be nude, and when was it not okay?
• What were your feelings about your body as you were growing up?
• What were your parents' attitudes toward your dating?
• How did your parents feel about your bringing dates home?
• What information did your parents give you about birth control?
• What did your parents tell you about the emotional aspects of sexual relationships?
• To what extent did you follow your parents' rules and advice about dating and sex?
• How satisfying were your first sexual experiences?
• Reflecting now upon your first sexual experiences, what emotions are related to those experiences?
• Did you discuss your first sexual experiences with any members of your family? If so, how did they respond?
• At what point in your development did you first come to view yourself as a sexual being?
• What types of messages from the media do you think you have internalized related to sexuality?
• How do you think your ideas and beliefs about sex were influenced by your peer group and friends as a child and adolescent?
• Looking back, what influences do you think have had the most impact on your current beliefs about your sexuality?
*Adapted from Dr. Peter Sherrard’s Sexuality and Mental Health course in the Department of Counselor Education at The University of Florida.