

**SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY**  
CPSY 311 Psychology of Marital Counseling  
Spring 2014

**Instructor:** Jerrold Lee Shapiro, Ph.D., ABMP, CGP

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**Office Hours:** T 1:30 4:30 PM

**Class Meetings:** Tues. 5:30-8:30

Loyola: L 136

**TEXTS:** Gurman & Jacobson, *Clinical Casebook of Couple Therapy (2010)*.

Weeks, Odell, Methven: *If only I had known: Avoiding common mistakes in couples therapy*

Shapiro: *The Measure of a Man* (Available online or in Class)

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** This course is designed to present an overview of couple therapy. At the conclusion of the course, the student is expected to demonstrate novice theoretical understanding and skill with a variety of schema for diagnosing and treating primary relationship difficulties.

Relationship, courtship, varied forms of commitment, divorce, separation and specific marital problems (i.e. communication disconnections, structural breaks, sexual problems, etc.) are explored from both generic and sub-culturally relevant perspectives. Systems and Existential models of couple therapy are examined in depth. Students will role play couples and analyze these relationships from diagnostic and treatment perspectives. The process of relationship cycles and divorce are examined and coordinating the type of treatment to different stages of the cycle is stressed. Cultural, age and SES influences on relationships are explored in some depth. The role of the couple in unique sub-cultures is examined for indices of therapeutic intervention.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- I. Group Project.** You will be assigned to a small group of students. Each group will be assigned a theory from the list below. You will make a case presentation of a couple like those in the Gurman text, using the assigned theory. Your case can be drawn from popular film, tv or video.

Diagnosis. Taking an example of popular media couple (Film, TV show, internet, etc.), develop a clinical picture of the chosen couple – you may use a lot of latitude in your description – when they would come in, what they might say, do that goes beyond the film presentation etc. Do both a descriptive analysis (i.e. Relationship Cycles, Myths Analysis, Divorce Sequence) and your assigned theoretical analysis (Gurman).

Treatment. Briefly outline your theory and indicate therapeutic interventions you propose to use with them using your assigned theory. To the extent possible provide some treatment moments (can be fictionalized) and address ethical issues that are uniquely relevant with your theory and population. Your group will have **40 minutes** for the presentation

**You will be assigned to a group. Each group will be assigned randomly to one of these six theories: A more comprehensive chapter on your theory is available on Camino**

- 1. Cognitive Behavioral Couples Therapy**
- 2. Psychodynamic Couples Therapy**
- 3. Emotion Focused Couples Therapy**
- 4. Solution Focused Couples Therapy**
- 5. Systems therapy [choose any in the structural/strategic range]**
- 6. Existential/symbolic Marital Therapy**

Some recommended films/ video/ tv programs as ideas. **Not a comprehensive list.**

**These are in no particular order:**

|                                |   |                          |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Two Faces in the Mirror</b> | <b>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf</b>   | <b>Fools Rush In</b>     |
| <b>Story of Us</b>             | <b>Enough Said</b>                      | <b>All or Nothing</b>    |
| <b>Husbands and Wives</b>      | <b>Before Midnight</b>                  | <b>Before Sunset</b>     |
| <b>Hope Springs</b>            | <b>Ordinary People</b>                  | <b>Ira and Abby</b>      |
| <b>Midnight in Paris</b>       | <b>Kramer and Kramer</b>                | <b>To Rome With love</b> |
| <b>Any TV Sitcom</b>           | <b>Scenes from a Marriage (Bergman)</b> | <b>Annie Hall</b>        |

**Almost any Cameron Diaz, Jennifer Aniston, Matthew Perry, Paul Rudd or Owen Wilson film**

II. **Personal Term Paper (maximum length 20 pages**, double spaced with reasonable margins on top, bottom and sides). The subject of the paper **is a description of couples in your family of origin and the impact these have had on your relationships (including future), and your therapy (including potential)**. When you submit the paper, Please be sure that you proof read for grammar (Green squiggly underline in MS Word) and Spell check (red squiggly underline in MS Word). Be careful to do a final edit and check for sentence structure and proper use of apostrophes. **SUBMIT BOTH A HARD COPY AND AN E-COPY OF YOUR PAPER (E-COPY to JSHAPIRO@SCU.EDU)**

**The paper should contain at least the following:**

1) A tracing of your roots at least as far back as your grandparents' generation. This can be done in genogram, diagram or prose. **A wonderful free resource is GENIPRO which you can download with a code from the dept. to use on a PC or also available in the computer lab on the MAC computers. They open in bootcamp – choose the PC (Windows) option and the program will be available to you** *Please get started on getting this information early. It often takes much more time, effort and difficulty than you would expect.* N.B. If you have not taken CPSY 315, you will have to do a genogram in that class, so it's worth the time to do it this term. Of course, if you have already done one, just focus on couples for this class.

2) A clear description of your parents' marital system, and the family system in which you grew up. Describe in detail important events in the development and progression of your parents' relationship over time. You may begin with your parents in their own families of origin and progress through their relationships, courtship, marriage or ?, and their parenting. Look at all relevant systems (holons) in their relationships with their parents, siblings, etc. It may be easier to look at each parent as an individual, as a child, as a part of a couple, and as a member of the extended family.

3) Examine the impact of your birth on all relevant systems in the marriage and family. Describe the various structures, interactions and patterns that were produced in your family of origin. Be sure to include cultural patterns within the nuclear family and any extended family. *Rules, roles, interactional patterns, myths, triangles, hierarchies, boundaries, etc. are all important components here.*

**---- The final three are the most important. Please devote appropriate space in your paper to these**

4) **Describe in detail the ways in which your parents' relationship has influenced your own intimate relationships. In what ways did they model certain attitudes, behaviors etc., and in what ways has your reaction to their relationship affected your own intimate relationships over time?**

5) **Based on the impact of your family history, and of your personal history and knowledge, describe your (potential) strengths and weaknesses as a *couples therapist*. Be sure to connect this to the information above.**

**6) Integrate the work on Marriage and Divorce described by Gurman, Weeks et al and class materials or other readings into your analysis.**

|                |                     |     |   |
|----------------|---------------------|-----|---|
| <b>GRADING</b> | Class Participation | 25% | Interactive contributions are important |
|                | Personal Paper      | 40% |   |
|                | Group Presentation  | 35% |   |

**This is a graduate level class in your intended profession. Regardless of your undergraduate experience or expectations in other programs or classes, your full attention and participation are expected in this class. It is inappropriate during class time to use your computer or smart phone to read email, surf the web or the like. If your professor observes you engaging in such endeavors, your class participation grade will be lowered significantly and you may be asked to leave.**

**CLASS TOPICS AND READINGS -- Due By:**

- 4/1 Food free "POTLUCK" Question and Answer, NO READING ASSIGNMENT  
Questions about couples therapy. Film?
- 4/8 MYTHS OF INTIMACY AND RELATIONSHIP HISTORY  
MUSIC AND FILM EXAMPLES Development and dissolution of relationship I  
Gurman: Preface; Ch. 1, ch 19 [intro, legal/ethical, prevention, multiple perspectives]
- 4/15 DEVELOPMENT AND DISSOLUTION OF A RELATIONSHIP II  
SHAPIRO: Chronological Divorce Sequence  
Gurman Ch. 13, 14, Weeks et al pages 1 – 85 [mutuality, rough spots in cpl therapy]
- 4/22 COUPLES THERAPY BASIC INTERVIEWING  
Weeks et al 86 – 144; Gurman 2. 12, 17 [eft, attunement,]
- 4/29 VIDEOTAPE OF COUPLES THERAPY OR DEMO  
Gurman 5, 6, 11 [systems] Shapiro: *Measure of a Man* first half
- 5/6 TRANSITIONS; MALE AND FEMALE ROLES AND GENDER ISSUES  
IN RELATIONSHIPS  
Shapiro: *Measure of a Man* second half  
Gurman Ch., 3, 4, 15 [Behavioral approaches, sft] Weeks et al 145 - 217
- 5/13 COUPLES TREATMENT Demo or Video Role play crucial issues in therapy  
Gurman Ch. 7, 16 , [dynamic]
- 5/20 GROUP PRESENTATIONS Groups with theories (4, 5, 6 above)  
**Potluck** (Provided by non-presenting groups, Theories 1,2,3)  
Gurman 8, 18, [narrative; existential]
- 5/27 GROUP PRESENTATIONS (Groups with theories 1,2,3 above)  
**Potluck** (provided by non-presenting groups Theories 4, 5, 6)  
Gurman, 9, 10 [integrative]

-----NO CLASS ON 6/3-----

- 6/10 THERAPY DEMO OR VIDEO ROLE PLAY CRUCIAL ISSUES IN THERAPY  
Weeks et al, 218 – 243 (optional) **Personal Term Paper Due**

**COURSE HAS A GREATER THAN AVERAGE AMOUNT OF COURSEWORK. THERE IS MORE WORK ASSIGNED THAN IN MANY OTHER CLASSES**

*Have a nice SUMMER*