

Argosy University
COURSE SYLLABUS

PC6700

Couples and Families Counseling

Spring I: 1/8/07 – 4/21/07

Faculty Information:

Faculty Name: Karim G. Dajani, Psy.D

Campus: Argosy University San Francisco Bay Area

Contact Information and Office Hours:

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Please feel free to contact me either by phone or email. Should the need arise we can schedule a meeting.

All communication from your instructors and the department will be sent to your Argosy email address. You are responsible for checking your Argosy email regularly.

Faculty Bio for Karim G. Dajani:

I earned an M.A. in counseling from the California Institute of Integral Studies before completing a Psy.D. at the Wright Institute in Berkeley. My clinical experience is varied. I have treated seriously mentally ill individuals, poor people living on government subsidies, war and torture victims in community mental health settings, as well as high functioning people seeking therapy in a private practice setting. Currently, I am supervising and teaching at an outpatient mental health clinic in San Francisco – Westside Community Mental Health. I am also completing training in psychoanalysis at the San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis in San Francisco. In addition, I have a full time private practice where I mainly treat individuals and couples, and occasionally families.

Course description:

This course covers both a theoretical and practical approach to families and couples therapy. I have conceptualized the course in three parts: 1) We will use a systems oriented textbook to learn basic skills that all beginner therapists need to know – from handling your first hour to diagnosing, treatment planning, and

termination. 2) I will introduce you to a psychodynamic theory of mind – object relations theory- that will help ground your thinking about people in general. We will look at its specific application in treating couples and families. 3) we will look at Gottam’s model for treating couples because it is an evidence based approach that is quite structured, rich in phenomenology and practical technique. It will boost your technical arsenal, which will help ground you in your first few thousand hours of practice! We will look at DVD material, dialogue about the material and engage in skill practice for this part.

Methods of the course include lecture, class discussion, class exploration, class presentation, video viewing, and skill practice.

Course Pre-requisites: None

Required Textbooks:

Patterson, J., Williams, L., Grauf-Grounds, C. and Chamow, L. (1998). *Essential skills in family therapy*. New York: The Guilford Press. ISBN 1-57230-307-7

Selected Readings to be provided by instructor.

Final Date to Drop the Class:

To receive a “W” grade a student must officially drop this class by the date listed below that corresponds to this course’s term and length (indicated by bold type). Students may not withdraw from this course after the date this date. If a student chooses to discontinue course work after the final drop date, the student may receive an “F” grade for the course.

Spring Full Term (15 week courses): March 17, 2008

Spring First Session (7 ½ week courses): February 11, 2008

Spring Second Session (7 ½ week courses): April 3, 2008

Technology: Internet Access; Microsoft WORD; Adobe Acrobat (full version)

Course length: 15 Weeks

Contact Hours: 30 Hours

Credit Value: 3.0

Course Objectives:

As a result of this course, students will demonstrate the following:

The main objectives of the course are:

1. Learn two complementary theoretical approaches to couples and family work – systemic and psychodynamic.
2. Describe your own family and family culture demonstrating how that experience and legacy influences your views of family life;
3. Account for your biases about family life, based on your own family culture, and strategize how you would work with families from differing cultural backgrounds.

4. Gain insight into your own family dynamic by writing a comprehensive paper using one therapeutic modality to assess and evaluate one's family of origin.
5. Develop basic counseling skills to include managing your own anxiety and developing a therapeutic alliance.
6. Develop skills in conducting an assessment that includes identifying potential issues of harm, substance abuse, biological factors, and a general psychosocial assessment. Learn how to develop a treatment plan that includes treatment priorities, historical information, diagnosis, treatment goals and interventions.
7. Identify the key concepts in systems theory and object relations theory as they pertain to working with families and couples.
8. Formulate couple counseling strategies using these theoretical approaches: A structural systemic approach, object relations, and the Gottman method.
9. Implement appropriate interventions when working with children and adolescents.
10. Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity.

Program Outcomes: Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology

Program Outcome One: Professional Practice

Competency 1: Assessment and Skills

Formulate assessments of psychological functioning and apply therapeutic intervention strategies when working with individuals, couples, families, and groups, toward the development of optimal mental health.

Competency 2: Theory

Interpret and apply psychological and developmental theories to therapeutic intervention strategies.

Competency 3: Writing

Employ media and technology when presenting counseling information orally and in writing, so that the presentation is concise, organized, well supported, professional, and appropriate to the audience.

Program Outcome Two: Research

Competency 1: Analyze research, and translate research findings for improvement of counseling services using statistics and program evaluation methods.

Program Outcome Three: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Professional Development

Competency 1: Students will develop positive relationship skills that promote personal and professional development via effective communication, encouragement, empathy, respect for others, self-awareness, and other-awareness.

- a. Apply active listening communication skills in interpersonal scenarios to establish empathetic relationships.
- b. Analyze the importance of effective nonverbal communication skills in interpersonal relationships.
- c. Solicit and utilize feedback to build and maintain interpersonal relationships.

Program Outcome Four: Ethics

Competency 1: Using the American Counseling Association's Standards of Practice /or the American Psychological Association's Ethical Code, as well as, and local state law as it applies to the behavior of mental health professionals, identify ethical dilemmas and apply ethical decision-making strategies while engaging in professional activities.

Program Outcome Five: Diversity

Competency 1: Multicultural Skills

Provide assessment, counseling, and consultation services in work with clients by applying psychological and multicultural theories and research to diverse populations, and modifying interventions as needed to work effectively with diverse clients.

Competency 2: Multicultural Awareness

Examine personal values and biases, reflect on beliefs, and understand how they impact work with clients and interpersonal relationships with other students and faculty.

Competency 3: Multicultural Knowledge

Identify and assess the complexity and multidimensionality of cultural/diversity theories and issues in the field of counseling psychology while working with clients and interpersonal relationships with other students and faculty.

Assignments:

- 1) Read text according to the following schedule (*specific dates to be specified*).
Handouts will be added for further reading:

Week 1: Chapters 1 and 2

Week 2: Chapter 3 and 4

Week 3: Chapters 5 and 6

Week 4: Chapter 6

Week 5: Chapter 7 and 9

Week 6: Chapter 8 and selected reading

Week 7: Chapter 10 and 11

Week 8: DVD and Selected Reading

Week 9: DVD and Selected Reading

Week 10: DVD and Selected Reading

As you read the text, complete the Reading Review (attached at the end of the syllabus) that corresponds with the reading. Please hand in our responses to readings at beginning of each class. This will account for 20% of your grade and it will substitute for a final examination.

2) Family Self-Study Paper

The purpose of this assignment is to gain insight into your own personal experience, feelings, thoughts, and attitudes which will influence you as a family therapist.

Papers are to be typed or word processed in Word or RTF, double spaced, conform to the APA 4th Edition, be free from obvious spelling and grammatical errors, and be around 8 to 10 pages in length.

Include the following:

1. Discuss your family of origin's background, structure, and functioning, including grandparents. This may include issues related to culture, ethnicity, religion, occupations, economics, schooling, group affiliations, transactions between family members (past and present), discipline, family routines and rituals, family values, family rules, family problems, and methods of handling problems. You select those issues most relevant to your family.
2. Evaluate your own family on the following characteristics:
 - Thoughtfulness
 - Emotionality
 - Cooperation
 - Alliances
 - competence
3. Highlight four issues, 2 positive and 2 negative, arising from your family of origin which may impact on your work as a family therapist. For positives, how do you see yourself utilizing this strength in family therapy practice? What would it bring to the service and how could it benefit your clients? For negatives, how do you see yourself adjusting or accommodating for this difficulty so it won't interfere with your family therapy services? What do you need to learn, do, or change to remove or diminish this particular weakness?

3) Family Intervention Paper

Write a paper presenting a couple or family. The couple or family you select could be an actual family that you are working with, a fictitious or historical family, a family that you know, or, your own family. Briefly tell the couple or family story and describe the presenting problems. Using two of the theoretical models that we cover during the semester, articulate the treatment approaches you might take using each approach. Include the goals of such treatment, your method of assessment, the initial treatment plan, the challenges you think you might face, and the adjustments you might make to address those challenges. Please cite references from the assigned readings, and, if you wish, other sources. References must be in APA format. Paper is to be e-mailed to the instructor and the other students by 10:00 PM, April 14, 2008. The paper will be graded using the following rubric;

Criteria	Distinguished Category (A)	Commendable Category (B)	Average Category (C)	Failed Category (F)
Briefly tell the couple/family story/ describe presenting problem/ goals 6 points	Concise telling of story, interesting/creative narrative. Clear statement of problems & goals	Concise telling of story. Readable narrative, understandable statement of problems/goals	Somewhat rambling/unclear narrative. Vague statement of problems and goals.	Narrative difficult to understand. Little understanding of problem/goals

Use two of the theoretical models we covered in class: 8 points	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of both theories and is very clear as to how to apply theories to couple/family	Demonstrates comprehension of both theories and articulates an reasonable attempt to apply theories	Demonstrates a beginning of understanding of both theories and makes some attempt at applying them	Does not indicate adequate understanding of theories/ application is confused, incomplete
Assessment and treatment planning: 8 points	Comprehensive culturally competent, assessment. Treatment plan is creative, realistic, flexible, well-organized, and clearly consistent with theory/goals.	Good assessment, Treatment plan is realistic, and reasonably connected with theory and goals. Alters plan to meet challenges	Adequate assessment. Treatment plan, while not creative, could possibly work. Is somewhat flexible in meeting challenges	Fails to adequately assess or articulate a clear treatment plan
Interventions 8 points	Describes possible interventions that are creative, consistent with theory. Clearly ties interventions to treatment plan	Describes interventions that are solid, consistent with theory, and related to treatment plan	Describes interventions that are adequate, somewhat related to theory/treatment plan	Fails to describe interventions clearly. Interventions not likely to work, do not follow theory
Ease of reading, proper use of citations 5 points	Compelling reading, proper APA citations	Readable, mostly good APA citations	A little hard to understand, inconsistent use of APA citations	Ambiguous, irrelevant, little use of APA citations

5) Final Exam based on the reading required for the class.

Grading Criteria

Class attendance is mandatory and class participation is essential. Grades are determined by

- 1) Class Participation: 35%
- 2) Reading: 25%
- 3) Writing assignments (2 papers): 40%

Class Participation: Students are expected to arrive on time, attend class regularly, and participate in class discussion. Class participation must indicate an understanding

of the required reading, and an ability to engage in meaningful academic discourse about the topics discussed. In accordance with University policy, students who miss more than 2 classes will not receive credit for the class. However, since absent students do not participate in class discussion; any absences could lower your grade. Class Participation will be evaluated by the instructor using the following rubric:

Criteria	Distinguished Category (A)	Commendable Category (B)	Acceptable Category (C)	Failed Category (F)
Present for class and participating in discussion	Present and attentive for entire class, each week.	Mostly present, attentive, some lateness absence and/or inattentiveness	Misses classes, and/or late and/or speaks rarely and/or is inattentive	Misses three classes, is often late or does not participate in discussion
Demonstrates understanding of the assigned reading	Speaks about each reading assignment to demonstrate clear understanding of assigned reading	Speaks about most reading assignments to demonstrate some understanding of assigned readings	Speaks about some reading assignments and demonstrates minimal understanding	Does not demonstrate that assignments have been read and/or understood
Meets Course Learning Outcomes (listed above)	Shows evidence of meeting all eight Course Learning Outcomes	Shows evidence of meeting seven Course Learning Outcomes	Shows evidence of meeting six Course Learning Outcomes	Shows little evidence of meeting Course Learning Outcomes
Respectful of and open to opinions of others.	Clearly learns from others in discussion. Balances speaking and listening	Respects opinions and views offered by others	Tolerates the opinions and views of others	Refuses to consider other points of view and/or personally attacks others

Grading Scale:

A	100 – 93
A-	92 – 90
B+	89 – 88
B	87 – 83
B-	82 – 80
C+	79 – 78
C	77 - 73
C-	72 – 70
F	69 and below

Library

All resources in Argosy University’s online collection are available through the Internet. The campus librarian will provide students with links, user IDs, and passwords.

Library Resources: Argosy University’s core online collection features nearly 21,000 full-text journals and 23,000 electronic books and other content covering all academic subject areas including Business & Economics, Career & General Education, Computers, Engineering & Applied Science, Humanities, Science, Medicine & Allied Health, and Social & Behavior Sciences. Many titles are directly accessible through the Online Public Access Catalog at <http://library.argosyu.edu>. Detailed descriptions of online resources are located at <http://library.argosyu.edu/misc/onlineblist.html>.

In addition to online resources, Argosy University’s onsite collections contain a wealth of subject-specific research materials searchable in the Online Public Access Catalog. Catalog searching is easily limited to individual campus collections. Alternatively, students can search combined collections of all Argosy University Libraries. Students are encouraged to seek research and reference assistance from campus librarians.

Information Literacy: Argosy University’s Information Literacy Tutorial was developed to teach students fundamental and transferable research skills. The tutorial consists of five modules where students learn to select sources appropriate for academic-level research; search periodical indexes and search engines, and evaluate and cite information. In the tutorial, students study concepts and practice them through interactions. At the conclusion of each module, they can test their comprehension and receive immediate feedback. Each module takes less than 20 minutes to complete. Please view the tutorial at <http://library.argosyu.edu/infolit/>

Academic Policies

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism: In an effort to foster a spirit of honesty and integrity during the learning process, Argosy University requires that the submission of all course assignments represent the original work produced by that student. All sources must be documented through normal scholarly references/citations and all work must

be submitted using the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition (2001)*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association (APA) format. Please refer to Appendix A in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition* for thesis and paper format. Students are encouraged to purchase this manual (required in some courses) and become familiar with its content as well as consult the Argosy University catalog for further information regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

Scholarly writing: The faculty at Argosy University is dedicated to providing a learning environment that supports scholarly and ethical writing, free from academic dishonesty and plagiarism. This includes the proper and appropriate referencing of all sources. You may be asked to submit your course assignments through “Turnitin,” (www.turnitin.com), an online resource established to help educators develop writing/research skills and detect potential cases of academic dishonesty. Turnitin compares submitted papers to billions of pages of content and provides a comparison report to your instructor. This comparison detects papers that share common information and duplicative language.

Americans with Disabilities Act Policy

It is the policy of Argosy University to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If a student with disabilities needs accommodations, the student must notify the Director of Student Services. Procedures for documenting student disability and the development of reasonable accommodations will be provided to the student upon request.

Students will be notified by the Director of Student Services when each request for accommodation is approved or denied in writing via a designated form. To receive accommodation in class, it is the student’s responsibility to present the form (at his or her discretion) to the instructor. In an effort to protect student privacy, the Department of Student Services will not discuss the accommodation needs of any student with instructors. Faculty may not make accommodations for individuals who have not been approved in this manner.

The Argosy University Statement Regarding Diversity

Argosy University prepares students to serve populations with diverse social, ethnic, economic, and educational experiences. Both the academic and training curricula are designed to provide an environment in which students can develop the skills and attitudes essential to working with people from a wide range of backgrounds.

**COUPLES AND FAMILY COUNSELING (PC 6700)
READING REVIEW**

Name:

Part 1: Questions 1 – 29

Type each response following each question.

- 1) Name 3 stages of therapist development (Ch. 1).
- 2) What is the basic principle regarding *who* should come to therapy (Ch. 2)?
- 3) Summarize the process of *initial hypothesizing* (Ch. 2).
- 4) Summarize the process of *joining* (Ch. 3).
- 5) Name 3 steps in the event your credibility is questioned (Ch. 3).
- 6) Summarize the process of *building motivation* (Ch. 3).
- 7) State 3 benefits in having each member of family share their version of the problem (Ch.3).
- 8) State 3 benefits in exploring *attempted* solutions (Ch. 3).
- 9) List 10 potential *issues of harm* (Ch. 4).
- 10) List 5 themes in couple's assessment (Ch. 4).
- 11) List 5 themes in family assessment (Ch. 4).
- 12) List 5 themes in assessing social systems outside the family (Ch. 4).
- 13) List 5 themes in assessing the larger social context (Ch. 4).
- 14) How does a *problem priority list* help (Ch. 5)?
- 15) List 4 *family therapy frameworks* and their corresponding interventions (Ch. 5).
- 16) What is a question that assists the client to specifically identify a *long-term* treatment goal (Ch. 5)?
- 17) What factors influence the selection of a *framework theory* used with a particular family (Ch. 5)?
- 18) List 5 factors that influence therapists in considering *medication consultation* (Ch. 5).

COUPLES AND FAMILY COUNSELING (PC 6700) READING REVIEW

Part 1: Questions 1 – 29 (continued)

- 19) Distinguish between 4 types of *questions* (Ch. 6).
- 20) Define *reframing* and give 4 examples of reframing (Ch. 6).
- 21) Define *confronting* (Ch. 6).
- 22) Distinguish between *pacing and leading* (Ch. 6).
- 23) List the four goals of *crisis intervention* (Ch. 6).
- 24) A basic principle is that the _____ guides the *content* and the _____ guides the *process* (Ch. 6).
- 25) Summarize 5 guidelines in determining level of *self-disclosure* (Ch. 6).
- 26) The therapist's role is to ____ clients, not to make decisions for them (Ch. 6).
- 27) List the seven steps of a family therapy *treatment plan* (Ch. 7).
- 28) List and define the 6 stages of the *family life cycle* (Ch. 7).
- 29) List one example per stage of *second-order changes* required in the family life cycle that is meaningful to you (Ch. 7).

Part 2: Questions 30 – 41

- 30) Summarize 1 section that is meaningful to you in Working with Families and Children from among the following (Ch. 7):
 - Common Childhood Disorders*
 - Young Children, Birth to 4 Years*
 - Children Ages 5-12 Years*
 - Adolescents*
 - Launching Children and Later Life*
 - Special Issues with Divorcing and Remarried Families*
 - Mediation & Child Custody/Special Issues w Single-Parent Poor Families*
- 31) Give an example of a statement with a couple from the *position of empathizing with an individual* (Ch. 8).

**COUPLES AND FAMILY COUNSELING (PC 6700)
READING REVIEW**

Part 2: Questions 30 – 41 (continued)

- 32) Give an example of a statement with a couple from the *triadic position* of working with the couple as a unit (Ch. 8).
- 33) Give an example of a statement with a couple from the “*translator*” position (Ch. 8).
- 34) Give 3 examples where couple therapy may *not be the therapy of choice* (Ch. 8).
- 35) List 5 *common problems* and their definitions presented in couple therapy (Ch. 8).
- 36) Per *John Gottman*, list 4 qualities in conflict process that are especially *corrosive* (Ch. 8).
- 37) *Emotionally Focused Therapy* as opposed to cognitive-behavior focuses more directly on _____ and draws from _____, and _____ (Ch. 8).
- 38) Summarize 1 section that is meaningful to you in *Special Topics* from among the following (Ch. 8):
Dealing with Infidelity
Violence
Sexual Difficulties
Same-Sex Couples
Structured Separation
- 39) Summarize 1 section that is meaningful to you from *When a Family member Has a Mental Illness* from among the following (Ch. 9):
Individual and Family Concepts
Individual Diagnosis in a Family Context
Depression
Anxiety
Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
- 40) Summarize 1 section that is meaningful to you in *Getting Unstuck* from among the following (Ch. 10):
Understand Clients’ Ambivalence to Change/Therapist’s Reluctance to Intervene
Therapist-Client Agenda and Timing Mismatch
Therapist’s Lack of Theoretical Clarity/Supervision
Dealing w Cancellations and No Shows/Difficulty Getting Members to Therapy

Handling Secrets
How Agencies Contribute to Being Stuck
Countertransference

COUPLES AND FAMILY COUNSELING (PC 6700)
READING REVIEW

Part 2: Questions 30 – 41(continued)

- 41) Summarize 1 section that is meaningful to you from *Termination* from among the following (Ch. 11):
When to Terminate/Goals/Interventions
Special Issues/Therapist Terminations/Client Terminations