



# COURSE SYLLABUS

## INTEGRATIVE COUPLE THERAPY II

18:820:636:01

**SPRING, 2022**

Class begins **Monday, January 24, 2022** and ends on **Monday, May 9, 2022**

### INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

**Instructor:** Karen Riggs Skean, Psy.D.

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**Phone:** 732-236-6821

**Class Location:** GSAPP A317

### GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

Integrative Couple Therapy II is designed to be a companion class to Integrative Couple Therapy I, as well as a stand-alone class itself. The two classes together provide the student interested in building solid skills in couple work with a broad range of theoretical models and intervention skills for working with couples as well as grounding in normative couple functioning and relationship enhancement. Some students will have ongoing cases in the Couples Clinic to provide experience in clinical application of the work. Students not taking on a case will be given opportunities for other kinds of clinical application, and class will focus on active learning methods: demonstrations, roleplays, and deliberate practice of key skills, acting as a consulting team to ongoing cases. We will watch video of couple therapists as well as have students share their own work with the class. The sharing of case material allows you to benefit not only from your own experiences in conducting this treatment, or in practicing through roleplay, but from those of your colleagues as well.

As did the first semester, the second semester will include work with Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy while also including some additional models not covered in the first term, especially the work of John Gottman and some newer models which focus on experiential and body-focused methods. We will also have classes on specific topics in couple therapy (as opposed to models). We will include two short-term interventions, Cordova's Couples Check-Up and Doherty's Discernment Counseling, the first an early intervention model to enhance relationship health and the second an intervention for couples on the brink of divorce to help their decision-making process.

### **Course Modality:**

This course is delivered in person when possible, and a synchronous online platform when necessary, in accordance with university guidelines. To access the companion Canvas course site, please visit [Rutgers Canvas](https://canvas.rutgers.edu/) at <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/> and log in using your NetID. This site will be your go-to place for the class. Week by week modules will have everything you need for that week, with learning objectives, readings, links to videos, quizzes and assignments.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Summarize core assumptions and tenets of the models covered this term.
2. Describe interventions arising from these models.
3. Demonstrate improved skills in conceptualizing and intervening the couple system by participation in role plays and class exercises.
4. Development of the skills necessary for ongoing assessment and evaluation of treatment process and progress in light of the models being applied.
5. Identify and pursue individualized learning goals to enhance clinical skills, using the deliberate practice model.

The focus will be on practice and on clinical applications. I will also be open to student suggestions about what might be most useful as you increasingly develop your own clinical identities and we as we are presented with the specific issues of clients we are following.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Class Participation 25%

This is perhaps the most important requirement, that you come to class prepared with the knowledge needed for the day's activities and ready to engage in experiential learning.

### 2. Tests and Quizzes 25%

There will be tests and quizzes along the way, mainly to show to me and yourself that you have the content mastery that will let us learn and apply the skills actively in class. My aim is to have this be a low-stakes, low-anxiety learning experience, so they will be open-book with multiple re-takes allowed.

### 3. Choose your Own Adventure – Model Exploration 25%

In offering an integrative class, I am committed to the premise that there is no one model that is universally superior to all others. A clinician needs to find a model that is grounded in the evidence of our field, resonates with them and is well-suited to the populations and couples with whom they work. We sometimes find illumination from another model when we are at a stuck place with one we have been using. Though this semester introduces you to several models, there are other well-known and respected models in couple therapy. There are also protocols and approaches developed for addressing particular sub-groups or clinical issues. Papers handed in to me as the professor advance the knowledge of the chosen topic of just the student who wrote the paper and me. Much as I appreciate the continual learning that this has provided me, it is more useful to share with each other as well. So I will ask you to pick from a list of possibilities a topic you would like to explore further. Then you will share what you have learned with us all by posting on Canvas:

- A paper of 7-10 pages
- A PowerPoint presenting the key elements
- A video (fairly easy to do now that we all are Zoom pros) giving key points of the topic you have chosen

### 4. Deliberate Practice Project and Paper 25%

For this part of the course requirement, you will be creating, using Deliberate Practice model, your own individualized plan to take your clinical work, from

whatever point it currently is, to its next level. Select a target skill that would be the best match for your current learning and professional goals. We will be working through the term to:

1. First define the specific skill or skills (no more than one or two) you think would have the biggest impact on your growth and effectiveness as a clinician, with particular reference to working with couples.
2. Note where you currently are in this skill (assess your baseline).
3. Decide on the kind of drill, practice or focused intention that would promote your greater mastery of this skill.
4. Implement your practice, asking for help and coaching from your supervisor, classmates or trusted others when needed or helpful.
5. Evaluate the outcome of your practice. What were your gains? Do you experience movement? What were the challenges and limits?
6. The final work product will be submitted in the Quiz format, where you will answer questions that indicate your work on the objectives above.

More detailed instructions for all assignments are available on our Canvas site. All assignments should be submitted on Canvas (not emailed to me, as that gets confusing!).

## CLASS STRUCTURE

Class time will oriented toward active learning and a somewhat “flipped” classroom. This means that you will need to review some didactics before class so that we can spend much of our class time on working actively with the material.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

DATE	CLASS	TOPIC
January 24	1	<p style="text-align: center;">Introduction to the Class                      History of Couple Therapy and Current Status                      Evidence Base of Couple Therapy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Introduction to Deliberate Practice</p>
January 31	2	Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy I

February 7	3	Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy II
February 14	4	Gottman Approach to Couple Therapy  TODAY IS CLINICAL INTERVIEW DAY Class will still be held, but asynchronously and online this week.  Gottman Approach to Couple Therapy Assessment and Structuring of the Therapy
February 21	5	Gottman Approach to Couple Therapy Interventions and Practice
February 28	6	The Body in Couple Therapy Psychobiological Approach to Couple Therapy
March 7	7	Psychobiological Approach to Couple Therapy Assessment and Structuring of the Therapy
March 14		SPRING BREAK
March 21	8	Checking in on your Deliberate Practice How will YOU work to become a better therapist?
March 28	9	<b>PAPER/PROJECT ON YOUR MODEL CHOICE DUE</b> Sharing of the model explorations
April 4	10	Affirming and Working with Diverse Identities
April 11	11	Separation and Divorce I Uncoupling: How Relationships Come Apart
April 18	12	Separation and Divorce II Doherty's Model of Discernment Counseling
April 25	13	Relationship Enhancement I Cordova's Model of Marriage Checkup
May 2	14	Relationship Enhancement II Psychoeducational Workshops
May 9	15	Course Wrap-Up  <b>DELIBERATE PRACTICE PAPERS DUE</b>

## STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY

The couple inherently brings together multiple systems. One family therapy saying: “The central struggle of the couple is whose family of origin gets replicated.” We bring our intersectional identities, together with all their embedded assumptions, into our most intimate relationship, with our own often implicit ideas of normal and expectable colliding with our partner’s. Our increasingly multicultural world brings together in the couple system ever more complex dynamics, as diversity of race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexual orientation are present in the microcosm of the dyad. Outside the dyad, systemic forces impact them, creating stresses that impacts them in multiple ways. And the therapist brings into this mix their own intersectional identity, complete with unexamined assumptions and blind spots. We do our work in the context of this complexity.

Among therapeutic orientations, the family systems movement was in a leadership position in critiquing in then-current modes of therapy the lack of recognizing the impact of systems and the role of power. We will be focusing on this throughout the class. The couples we discuss will bring in real-world issues which are shaped by the intersectionality of their identities and their interaction with the wider world. It will also be important that we have a space to explore the impact of the identities we carry into our work with them.

## READINGS

### Session 1: January 24, 2022

#### Introduction to the Class

Gurman, A.S. (2015). Theory and practice of couple therapy: History, contemporary models, and a framework for comparative analysis. In Gurman, A. S., Lebow, J.L. and Snyder, D.K. (Eds.), *Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy* (5<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 1-17). New York, NY: Guilford.

Carr, A. (2014). The evidence base for couple therapy, family therapy and systemic interventions for adult-focused problems. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 36, 158-194.

Lebow, J. L. (2019). Current issues in the practice of integrative couple and family therapy. *Family process*, 58(3), 610-628.

### Session 2: January 31, 2022

#### Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy I

As this particular topic will have a range of levels of previous exposure, I will be individualizing what you will do for the two weeks where we focus on EFT. Those of you who are new to EFT will have the choice of either:

- Attending the workshop offered by the Couples Clinic on Friday, 1/28 and Friday, 2/4 and working with the “new to EFT” group
- Watching the video of the training

This is a great way to learn the overall basics of the model.

Those of you who have attended this workshop already or who have trained in the Couples Clinic will have the choice of either:

- Attending the workshop offered by the Couples Clinic on Friday, 1/28 and Friday, 2/4 and working with the “old hands” group
- Watching the video of the training

A third option, and one I hope you will be utilizing throughout the class is to spend some time going through the online training modules made available to you through [psychotherapy.net](http://psychotherapy.net). See the Canvas site for more information on how to access.

### **Session 3: February 7, 2022**

#### **Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy II**

Johnson, S. (2015). Emotionally focused couple therapy. In Gurman, A. S., Lebow, J.L. and Snyder, D.K. (Eds.), *Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy* (5<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 97-128). New York, NY: Guilford.

Wiebe, S. A., & Johnson, S. M. (2016). A review of the research in emotionally focused therapy for couples. *Family Process*, 55(3), 390-407.

Burgess Moser, M., Johnson, S. M., Dalglish, T. L., Wiebe, S. A., & Tasca, G. A. (2018). The impact of blamer-softening on romantic attachment in emotionally focused couples therapy. *Journal of marital and family therapy*, 44(4), 640-654.

### **Session 4: February 14, 2022**

#### **CLINICAL INTERVIEW DAY: CLASS IS ONLINE and ASYNCHRONOUS!!**

#### **Gottman Approach to Couple Therapy I**

Gottman, J.M., and Gottman, J.S. (2015). Gottman couple therapy. In Gurman, A. S., Lebow, J.L. and Snyder, D.K. (Eds.), *Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy* (5<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 129-160). New York, NY: Guilford.

Today is Clinical Interview Day, so class will be held as an asynchronous online unit. Through its “University Outreach Program,” I have been able to secure some materials that the Gottman Institute offers to licensed professional engaging in training in the Gottman Approach. A portion of this will be assigned for today. This will be didactic material and video of clinical examples, with a test to assess your mastery of the material.

## **Session 5: February 21, 2022**

### **Gottman Approach to Couple Therapy II**

Assigned is continuing with the Gottman training material. This will enable you to work in class on application of the material. There is an exam that will check your understanding of the Gottman material that you will need to pass by class time.

## **Session 6: February 28, 2022**

### **The Body in Couple Therapy: Tatkin's Psychobiological Approach I**

Fishbane, M.D. (2015). Couple therapy and interpersonal neurobiology. In Gurman, A. S., Lebow, J.L. and Snyder, D.K. (Eds.), *Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy* (5<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 681-701). New York, NY: Guilford.

Tatkin, S. (2009). A psychobiological approach to couple therapy: Integrating attachment and personality theory as interchangeable structural components. *Psychologist-Psychoanalyst: Division 39 of the American Psychological Association*, 29(3), 7–15.

## **Session 7: March 7, 2022**

### **The Body in Couple Therapy: Tatkin's Psychobiological Approach II**

Tatkin, S. (2011). Allergic to hope: Angry resistant attachment and a one-person psychology within a two-person psychological system. *Psychotherapy in Australia*, 18(1), 66–73.

Tatkin, S. (2009). I want you in the house, just not in my room... Unless I ask you: The plight of the avoidantly attached partner in couples therapy. *New Therapist Magazine* (Couples Edition).

## **Session 8: March 21, 2022**

### **Deliberate Practice**

Miller, S.D., Hubble, M.A., & Chow, D. (2018). The question of expertise in psychotherapy. *Journal of Expertise*, 1, 121-129.

Miller, S., Hubble, M.A., & Chow, D. (2017). Professional development: From oxymoron to reality. In T. Rousmaniere, R.K. Goodyear, S.D. Miller & B.E. Wampold (Eds.), *The cycle of excellence: Using deliberate practice to improve supervision and training*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. (pp. 23-47)

Rousmaniere, T. (2017). *Deliberate practice for psychotherapists*. New York: Routledge. (pp. 113-155)



## Session 9: March 28, 2022

### Sharing the Projects With Each Other

Class presentations of those who want to present during class time. Time during class to view the online projects and report back on key takeaways.

## Session 10: April 4, 2022

### Affirming and Working With Diverse Identities in Couple Therapy

#### Required:

Kelly, S., Jérémie-Brink, G., Chambers, A. L., & Smith-Bynum, M. A. (2020). The black lives matter movement: A call to action for couple and family therapists. *Family process*, 59(4), 1374-1388.

McGeorge, C.R., Coburn, C.O., & Walsdorf, A.A. (2021). Deconstructing cissexism: The journey of becoming an affirmative family therapist for transgender and nonbinary clients. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 47, 785-802.

Kanter, J. B., Williams, D. T., & Rauer, A. J. (2021). Strengthening lower-income families: Lessons learned from policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Family Process*.

#### Recommended:

Gottman, J. M., Gottman, J. S., Cole, C., & Preciado, M. (2020). Gay, Lesbian, and Heterosexual Couples About to Begin Couples Therapy: An Online Relationship Assessment of 40,681 Couples. *Journal of marital and family therapy*, 46(2), 218-239.

Shipman, D., & Martin, T. (2019). Clinical and supervisory considerations for transgender therapists: Implications for working with clients. *Journal of marital and family therapy*, 45(1), 92-105.

*This article explores the relatively less written-about issue of what it is like to work when therapists themselves are members of a sexual minority group.*

## Session 11: April 11, 2022

### Separation and Divorce I: Uncoupling/How Relationships Come Apart

Lebow, J. (2015). Separation and divorce issues in couple therapy. In Gurman, A. S., Lebow, J.L. and Snyder, D.K. (Eds.), *Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy* (5<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 445-463). New York, NY: Guilford.

Vaughn, D. (1990). *Uncoupling: Turning points in intimate relationships*. New York: Vintage, pp. 3-27.

Watch my recorded lecture that covers the entire book and Vaughn's examination of universal patterns in the endings of couple relationships.

## **Session 12: April 18, 2022**

### **Separation and Divorce II: Doherty's Model of Discernment Counseling**

Doherty, W.H., & Harris, S.M. (2017). Helping couples on the brink of divorce. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association. Chapter 1: Background and Overview of Discernment Counseling, pp. 9-22.

Edwards, C. (2021). The Integration of Discernment Counseling and Emotionally Focused Therapy: Attachment-Based Therapy with Mixed Agenda Couples. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 1-9.

## **Session 13: April 25, 2022**

### **Relationship Enhancement: Cordova's Model of Marriage Checkup**

#### Required:

Cordova, J. (2014). *The marriage checkup practitioner's guide: Promoting lifelong relationship health*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association. Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 9-42.

Marriage Checkup Manual (available on our Canvas site)

Cordova, J. V., Fleming, C. J., Morrill, M. I., Hawrilenko, M., Sollenberger, J. W., Harp, A. G., & Wachs, K. (2014). The Marriage Checkup: a randomized controlled trial of annual relationship health checkups. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 82(4), 592.

#### Recommended:

Coop Gordon, K., Cordova, J. V., Roberson, P. N., Miller, M., Gray, T., Lenger, K. A., & Martin, K. (2019). An implementation study of relationship checkups as home visitations for low-income at-risk couples. *Family process*, 58(1), 247-265.

Gray, T. D., Hawrilenko, M., & Cordova, J. V. (2020). Randomized controlled trial of the marriage checkup: Depression outcomes. *Journal of marital and family therapy*, 46(3), 507-522.

## Session 14: May 2, 2022

### **Relationship Enhancement II: Psychoeducational Workshops**

#### Required:

Humphrey, S. C. (2018). *How do you hold me tight: an exploration of workshop leaders' adaptations and conceptions of success of an emotionally focused couples psychoeducational program* (Doctoral dissertation, Rutgers University-Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology). pp. 4-23

Spencer, C. M., & Anderson, J. R. (2021). Online relationship education programs improve individual and relationship functioning: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 47(2), 485-500.

#### Recommended:

Stavrianopoulos, K. (2015). Enhancing relationship satisfaction among college student couples: An emotionally focused therapy (EFT) approach. *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 14(1), 1-16.

## Session 15: May 9, 2022

### **Course Wrap-Up**

### **Reports on your deliberate practice projects**

## **STATEMENT ON DISABILITIES**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

## **STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

The University's academic integrity policy, to which this class will adhere, can be reviewed at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>