



# GRACE ABBOTT SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

## SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH COUPLES AND CHANGING FAMILY STRUCTURES

SOWK 8280 | 3 credit hours  
Class Meetings: TBD

**Instructor:** TBD

**Office:** TBD

**Office Phone:** TBD

**Email:** TBD

**Office Hours:** TBD

**Department:** Grace Abbott School of Social Work

**Main Office:** 206 CPACS

**Dept. Phone:** 402.554.2793

**Dept. Email:** [graceabbott@unomaha.edu](mailto:graceabbott@unomaha.edu)

### COURSE INFORMATION

#### Description

This is an advanced practice course designed to prepare students to provide therapy for couples and families at all life stages who are experiencing problems in intimacy, marital, divorce, or remarriage adjustment.

#### Prerequisites of the course:

SOWK 8220

#### Rationale

This course presents several models of couple therapy for working with distressed couples. It also includes critical issues involved in troubled intimate relationships, the impact of dissolution or divorce on adults and children, and therapeutic models for helping families adapt to changing family structures.

#### Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

1. Critique selected major theoretical models of couple's therapy.



2. Compose a theoretically informed assessment and treatment plan relevant to the relationship content.
3. Distinguish characteristics of diverse family structures and systems, including anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI).

## REQUIRED TEXT(S)/SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

### Required Text(s)

TBD

## COURSE STRUCTURE/FORMAT

Lecture, discussion, experiential learning experiences, video and Internet resources

## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Session/Date	Topic	Assignment
Session 1 [date]	The theory and practice of couple therapy Introduction to Class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syllabus/class schedule</li> <li>• Assignments</li> </ul>	CHCT: Chapter 1
Session 2 [date]	Theories of intimate relationships and couple therapy-Gottman model	CHCT: Chapter 5 <b>Reflection #1 Due to Canvas by 11:59pm on TBD</b>
Session 3 [date]	Video on CBCT (Constructive Conflict and Fighting Fair)  Cognitive behavioral couple therapy (CHCT): Assessment and Interventions	CHCT: Chapter 2
Session 4 [date]	Integrative behavior couple therapy (IBCT): assessment and interventions	CHCT: Chapter 3 <b>Reflection #2 Due to Canvas by 11:59pm on TBD</b>
Session 5 [date]	Emotionally focused couple therapy (EFCT)	CHCT: Chapter 4
Session 6 [date]	Bowen family systems couple coaching  Solution focused couple therapy	CHCT: Chapter 9 CHCT: Chapter 11 <b>Reflection #3 Due to Canvas by 11:59pm on TBD</b>
Session 7 [date]	Couple therapy and physical aggression	CHCT: Chapter 14
Session 8	Couple therapy and the treatment of affairs	CHCT: Chapter 15



Session/Date	Topic	Assignment
[date]		Reflection #4 Due to Canvas by 11:59pm on TBD
Session 9 [date]	Separation, uncoupling, divorce: therapy process	CHCT: Chapter 16
Session 10 [date]	Therapy with couples in stepfamilies	CHCT: Chapter 17 Reflection #5 Due to Canvas by 11:59pm on TBD
Session 11 [date]	Changing family systems and structures: Adults and children  Value, policy, and research on divorce	The Post-Divorce Family Case Assessment Paper due to Canvas by 11:59pm on TBD
Session 12 [date]	Final Exam	Exam will be open on Canvas starting TBD and is due by TBD 11:59pm

### IMPORTANT DATES

Last day to drop a course (via MavLink) and receive a 100% refund	TBD
Last day to withdraw from a course (via MavLink) with a grade of “W”	TB

NOTE: This syllabus is written as an expectation of class topics, learning activities, and expected learning outcomes. However, the instructor reserves the right to make changes in this schedule that may result in enhanced or more effective learning for students. These modifications will not substantially change the intent or objectives of this course.

### ASSESSMENTS (ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXAMS)

Reflections (5 x 40 points each= 200 points)	31%
Exams (1 x 150 points= 150 points)	23%
Clinical Case Assessment (300 points)	46%



## GRADING SCALE

Percent	Final Grade	Quality Points
98–100%	A+	4.00
94–97.9%	A	4.00
91–93.9%	A-	3.67
88–90.9%	B+	3.33
84–87.9%	B	3.00
81–83.9%	B-	2.67
78–80.9%	C+	2.33
77–77.9%	C	2.00
71–73.9%	C-	1.67
68–70.9%	D+	1.33
64–67.9%	D	1.00
61–63.9%	D-	0.67
Below 60.9%	F	0.00

## WRITING GUIDELINES

Students should make sure that writing assignments are free of grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. Papers should adhere to the most recent citation style outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA).

## PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

In this course, students will submit written work by making use of information and ideas found in print or online sources. Whenever material from another writer is used, it is important that students quote or paraphrase appropriately and cite the source.

The UNO Academic Integrity policy defines plagiarism as "presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source) and submitting academic work in whole or in part as one's own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person."

Failure to cite sources appropriately is plagiarism, a serious academic offense. Plagiarized work will not be accepted. Consequences for plagiarism are up to the discretion of the instructor; they may range, for example, from rewriting all or part of a paper to a grade of F for the course. Students who plagiarize more than once are subject to disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the university.

**Students SHOULD NOT GUESS when it comes to using or citing another writer's work. Students should contact the instructor or a consultant at the UNO Writing Center with questions. Students should take a printout of the original source as well as the paper that is being written to the consultation.**



## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

The maintenance of academic honesty and integrity is a vital concern of the University community. Any student found responsible for violating the [policy on Academic Integrity](#) shall be subject to both academic and disciplinary sanctions. Violations of the policy on Academic Integrity include, but are not limited to, the following: cheating, fabrication and falsification, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials and/or equipment, complicity in academic dishonesty, falsifying grade reports, and/or misrepresentation to avoid academic work. More information about these areas and the procedures addressing academic integrity is available from the Office of Academic and Student Affairs (EAB 202 | 402.554.2262).

## **CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS**

Students are expected to arrive on time to class meetings. Students should come to class well prepared, meaning readings and other assignments have been completed. Students are expected to be respectful of their classmates and the instructor. Distracting and/or disrespectful behaviors will not be tolerated.

## **CELL PHONES, MOBILE DEVICES, AND LAPTOPS**

Students are welcome to use cell phones, mobile devices, and/or laptops in class provided they are used for academic purposes such as note taking, accessing course materials, or researching course concepts and their use does not disrupt fellow classmates. Please silence devices if at all possible. A student who receives a phone call or text, should step outside the classroom to respond. DO NOT take pictures or video during class.

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

Students will be expected to have access to a computer frequently, as all writing assignments used will be typed out and not handwritten. The software students use to write assignments is irrelevant, as long as the writing guidelines outlined in this syllabus are followed. It is recommended that students have access to a computer weekly. Public computers are available on the UNO campus. Consult [Information Technology Services](#) and the [Criss Library](#), for more information on equipment locations and availability.

## **TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

Technical support for common university systems, including Canvas and email, is available from Information Technology Services [technical support](#) located in Eppley Administration Building (EAB) 104.

## **ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

Reasonable accommodations are provided for students who are registered with Accessibility Services Center (ASC) and make their requests sufficiently in advance. For more information, contact ASC (Location: 104 H&K, Phone: 402.554.2872, Email: [unoaccessibility@unomaha.edu](mailto:unoaccessibility@unomaha.edu))



## **CRISS LIBRARY**

UNO's Criss Library offers a wide variety of resources that support student learning. Subject specialist librarians have in-depth knowledge of researching within specific disciplines and can provide guidance for a specific area of study. Students are encouraged to explore customized resources featured on the [Criss Library](#) website.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

The University of Nebraska at Omaha is prepared for a wide range of emergencies. Students should familiarize themselves with procedures and assistance available on UNO's [emergency information page](#). If travel to campus is not feasible due to a declared emergency, a combination of Canvas, teleconferencing, and other technologies will be used to facilitate academic continuity. Students will be notified of procedures through Canvas course site announcements and email as appropriate.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In the event of inclement or threatening weather, students should use his/her best judgment regarding travel to and from campus. Students who are not able to attend class due to adverse weather conditions, should contact the instructor as soon as possible. Similarly, if the instructor is unable to reach the class location, students will be notified of any cancellation or change as soon as possible (by approximately 1 hour before class starts and by posting an announcement in Canvas). Students who cannot get to class because of weather conditions, will be provided allowances relative to attendance policies as well as any scheduled tests, quizzes, or other assessments.

## **PREFERRED NAME AND PREFERRED GENDER PRONOUNS**

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. The instructor will gladly honor a student's request to be addressed by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise the instructor of this preference early in the semester so that instructor records may be changed appropriately.

## **WRITING CENTER**

The UNO Writing Center offers free one-on-one consultations with trained consultants to all students, faculty, and staff. Their goal is to help writers improve their writing skills and confidence in all types of writing, in all subject areas, and at all stages of the writing process. For more information about their hours and locations or to schedule an appointment, go to [unomaha.edu/writingcenter](http://unomaha.edu/writingcenter) or visit their main location in Arts and Sciences Hall (ASH) 150.

## **SPEECH CENTER**

The [UNO Speech Center](#) provides free consulting and coaching services to all UNO students, faculty, and staff in preparing oral presentations. The Speech Center Consulting Room can help students with presentation preparation, outlining, effective delivery techniques, along with any other presentational needs. Speech consulting will help at any stage in the speech-making



process. For more information, visit the UNO Speech Center in Arts and Sciences Hall (ASH) 183 and 185.

**STUDENT SAFETY**

A variety of resources are available to support student safety and security. Students have experienced or are experiencing a difficult personal situation, should consult the resources available through the [Division of Student Success](#).

**OUTCOMES MAP AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)  
Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Competencies**

The student learning outcomes for this course are built upon the following nine social work core competencies set forth by the CSWE’s 2022 Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) which is required for all accredited social work programs.

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
2. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
3. Engage in anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (A DEI) in practice.
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
5. Engage in policy practice.
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

This map is intended to show how course topics, content, and activities align to the student learning outcomes outlined above. Course objectives are italicized to distinguish them from the core competencies set forth by the CSWE’s 2022 EPAS.

<b>EPAS Competency*</b>	<b>Course Objective/Student Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Dimension*</b>
3 = Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (A DEI) in Practice	3.Distinguish characteristics of diverse family structures and systems, including anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (A DEI).		
4 = Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice	1.Critique selected major theoretical models of couple's therapy.		
7 = Assess Individuals,	2.Compose a theoretically informed assessment and		



EPAS Competency*	Course Objective/Student Learning Outcome	Assignment	Dimension*
Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	treatment plan relevant to the relationship content.		
8 = Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	2.Compose a theoretically informed assessment and treatment plan relevant to the relationship content.		

## REFERENCES AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

### References

#### Effectiveness of Couple Therapy and Evidence-Based Sources

- Christensen, A., Jean, Y., Atkins, D. C., Baucom, D. H., & George, W. H. (2006). Couple and individual adjustment for two years following a randomized clinical trial comparing traditional versus integrative behavioral couple therapy. *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology, 74*, 1180-1191.
- Christensen, A., Baucom, B., Atkins, D. C., & Jean, Y. (2010). Marital satisfaction five years following a randomized clinical trial comparing traditional versus integrative behavioral couple therapy. *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology, 78*, 225-235.
- O’Leary, K. D., Heyman, R. E., & Jongsma, A. E., Jr. (2011). *The couples psychotherapy treatment planner* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Patterson, J. E., Miller, R. B., Carnes, S., & Wilson, S. (2004). Evidence-based practice for marriage and family therapists. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 30*, 183-195.

#### Minority/Diversity References

- Carter, B. and McGoldrick, M. (Eds.). (2005). *The changing family life cycle: A framework for family therapy* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- La Taillade, J. J. (2006). Considerations for treatment of African American couple relationships. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy, 20*, 341-358.
- McGoldrick, M., Giordano, J., & Garcia-Preto, N. (2005). *Ethnicity and family therapy*. New York: Guilford.
- Sue, D. W. & Sue, D. (2008) *Counseling the culturally different: Theory and practice* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Wiley and Sons.

#### Divorce/Remarriage References

- Mercer, D. & Wennechuk, K. J. (2010). *Making divorce work: Eight essential keys to resolving conflict and rebuilding your life*. New York: Pedigree.
- Wolchik, S.A., Sandler, I.N., Millsap, R.E., Plummer, B.A., Greene, S.M., Anderson E.R., Dawson-McClure, S.R., Hipke, K., and Haine, R.A. (2002). Six-year follow up of





preventive interventions for children of divorce: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 288, 1874-1881.

### Other Selected References

- Markman, H., Stanley, S., & Blumberg, S. (2010). *Fighting for your marriage: Positive steps toward preventing divorce and preserving a lasting love* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Snyder, D. K., Baucom, D. H., & Gordon, K. C. (2008). An integrative approach to treating infidelity. *Family Journal*, 16, 300-307.

### Classic resources

- Ahrons, C.R. (1994). *The good divorce: Keeping your family together when your marriage comes apart*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Ahrons, C. R. (Video). Making Divorce Work: A Clinical Approach to the Binuclear Family. Therapeutic Resources Co. P. O. Box 16814, Cleveland, OH 44116, 1.888.331.7114.
- Bargarozzi, D.A. (2001). *Enhancing intimacy in the marriage: A clinician's handbook*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.
- Berger, R., & Hannah, M. T. (1999). *Preventive approaches in couple therapy*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.
- Christian, S.S. (1996). *Working with groups on family issues: Structured exercises for exploring divorce, balancing work and family, family problems, solo parenting, boundaries, intimacy, stepfamilies*. Whole Person Associates.
- Congress, E.P. (1994). The use of culturagrams to assess and empower culturally diverse families. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 75(9), 531-539.
- Dandeneau, M. L., & Johnson, S.M. (1994). Facilitating intimacy: Interventions and effects. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 20, 1, 17-33.
- Gottman, J. (1999). *Seven principles for making marriage work*. New York: Random House.
- Griffin, J.M., & Apostol, R.A. (1993). The influence of relationship enhancement training on differentiation of self. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 9, 3, 267-272.
- Heatherington, M., Issaks, M.B., Abelsohn, D., and Montalvo, B. (2000). *Therapy of the difficult divorce*. New York: Arouson.
- Johnson, S.M. (1996) *The practice of emotionally focused marital therapy*. New York: Bruner-Routledge.
- Marital/Couple Violence. Whole Issue. (1999). *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 25(3).
- Montag, K.R., & Wilson, G. (1991). An empirical evaluation of behavioral and cognitive-behavioral group marital treatments with discordant couples. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 18, 4, 255-272.
- Proctor, E.K., and Davis, L.E.(1994). The challenge of racial difference: Skills for clinical practice. *Social Work*, 39 (3), 314-323.
- Snyder, D.K., Wills, R.M., & Grady-Fletcher, A. (1991). Long-term effectiveness of behavioral vs. insight-oriented marital therapy: A 4-year follow-up study. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 59, 138-141.
- Touliatos, J., Perlmutter, B.F., Strauss, M., and Holden, G.W. (Eds) (2001). *Handbook of family measurement techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Weeks, G.R., & Treat, S. R. (2001). *Couples in treatment*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.



Woody, R. H., & Woody, J. D. (Eds.). (2001). *Ethics in marriage and family therapy*. Washington, DC: AAMFT.

