Counseling 539: Play Therapy
Spring 2013

Instructor: Steve Armstrong, Ph.D., LPC-S, RPT-S
Office: 201 Henderson
E-Mail: steve.armstrong@tamuc.edu
Phone: (214) 536-0860
Office Hours: Tues 3:00-4:30 (Commerce); Metro: Wed 3:00-4:30; Thur 4:00-7:00

Course Description:
This course is designed to (1) assist those who work with children in understanding the fundamental tenets of play therapy, (2) help participants develop an effective philosophy of and approach to play therapy, (3) increase participants’ understanding of the inner world and behavior of children, (4) help students connect with children on a feeling level, (5) promote self-awareness and self-understanding, (6) increase participants’ understanding of child development, particularly with children ages three to nine, (7) enhance participants’ sensitivity to and acceptance of others, and (8) equip students with beginning-level play therapy skills.

Course Procedures: Involvement and learning in the course will be facilitated by means of:
- Lecture
- Small group activities and discussion
- Assigned readings and class discussion
- Role-play with toys and other hands on activities
- Videotapes and practicum experience

Required Texts:

Supplemental Texts:
Class Requirements:

1. **Reading text:** I cannot stress how important it is to keep up with assigned reading in the text. This material is different from other material that you have read. Play therapy is a unique specialty that is very different from mainstream counseling. The first half of the class requires consistent reading. The second half of the class is mostly experiential.

2. **Play sessions:** Arrange two 30-minute play sessions with a 4 to 8 year old child, other than your own, at your home, a kindergarten room, or other setting with toys. Either use your toy bag, or use toys that are consistent with appropriate toys in the playroom (See Landreth text p. 166). Do not conduct home play sessions until after the limit setting class. Videotape the sessions and critique each experience in a paper (2-3 pages for each session), double-spaced) using the following subheadings:
   - Overview of the Session (setting, happenings, etc.)
   - My feelings about the session (write in detail)
   - Child’s Feelings (your best guess or hunch if you’re not sure)
   - Returning Responsibility to the Child (Provide specific examples)
   - **Corrected Response (very important)**
     (Select four responses you would like to correct and show how you would change the response using the following format:
     - Child – (said or did… Give child’s verbal response or action)
     - Your response
     - Corrected Response
     - Reason for Change

3. **Micro-Practicum:** A supervised play therapy experience with a child will provide you with an opportunity to implement what we have dealt with in class. You will critique this experience in a group sharing session and provide a self-evaluation of your experiences. Details of this assignment will be worked out later.

4. **Exam:** There will be one mid-semester exam.

5. **Portable Play Therapy Bag/Box:** This class is based on the concept that play therapy can be delivered in most any setting. Hence, you will need to create/develop your own bag/box of portable play therapy materials. Your bag/box should be designed to meet the needs of your expected population.

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/class participation</td>
<td>20 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Play Sessions/critiques (2)</td>
<td>40 pts. each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micropracticum</td>
<td>100 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable bag/box</td>
<td>20 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>80 pts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A 90% 270 points  
B 80% 240 points  
C 70% 210 points
**Attendance:** A large part of what we do in class is experiential, therefore, class attendance is considered to be crucial. **More than two absences will result in the final grade being lowered one grade level.** Being repeatedly **late** for class will affect your attendance grade. Any late assignment will result in a deduction of 10 points per week for that assignment.

**Digital devices:** It is inappropriate to text, email, check email or texts, use a laptop or go online during this course. I expect your full attention and participation. Confine your use of digital devices to breaks.

**Students with Disabilities:**  
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library Rm 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu

"All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment." (See Student's Guide Handbook, Polices and Procedures, Conduct)

**UNIVERSITY CLOSING DUE TO WEATHER**  
Check http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/ regarding class cancellations. Also, KETR radio on 88.9 FM and television channels 4, 5, and 8 (channel 7 for Tyler & Longview Area).
Flexible Calendar

Jan 16  Course Overview, Play, Development, & Children, Read Dibs & chapters 2 & 3 in Landreth prior to next class

Jan 23  Discussion of Dibs
        Read chapters 4-6 in Landreth prior to next class

Jan 30  The core conditions, The child-centered philosophy & therapist
        Read chapters 7 & 8 in Landreth text prior to next class

Feb 6   Playroom and toys, parents role, Read chapters 9 & 10 in Landreth text prior to next class

Feb 13  Facilitative responses, Skill Practice
        PT Boxes Read chapters 11 & 12 in Landreth text prior to next class due

Feb 20  Limit setting, Skill practice
        Read chapter 16 in Landreth text prior to next class
        After this class, you may schedule home sessions

Feb 27  Responding to typical problems, themes & progress, Exam Review

Mar 6   Exam
        Read chapter 15 in Landreth text prior to next class

Mar 13  Spring Break

Mar 20  Discuss home sessions, Play therapy cases-no reading Yea!!!
        (Home play session critiques and videotapes due)

Mar 27  Sandtray, Prepare for Micropracticum

Apr 3   Micropracticum
        Read Positive Discipline prior to next class

Apr 10  Process Micropracticum

Apr 17  Positive discipline, Consulting with parents

Apr 24  Activity therapy/group play therapy

May 1   Child Parent Relationship Therapy (CPRT)-Filial Therapy
NAME:

ADDRESS:

Cell Phone:

E-mail you use most often:

Did you take this class as an elective or a required course?

Do you have any children of your own between the ages of 4-8?

Are you interested in becoming a Registered Play Therapist (RPT)?

Do you want to use play therapy in a school or community setting?

Do you have any interest in using play therapy in private practice in the future?

What experience do you have working with young children?

What is your dream job?