

COUN 697: Gestalt Therapy Summer 2015

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Office Hours: MW 3:30-5:00 (Metro); TTH 3:30-5:00 McKinney

Course Description: This course provides advanced masters and doctoral students with knowledge of appropriate uses of gestalt therapy with diverse populations. Students will learn how to use therapeutic interventions that are designed to enhance client growth and awareness. Gestalt interventions and techniques will be demonstrated and practiced in class so that students may learn experientially how to utilize these interventions with clients. Students also will engage in experiential activities designed to enhance their own growth and development.

Textbooks:

Armstrong, S. A. (2008). *Sandtray therapy: A humanistic approach*. Dallas, TX: Ludic Press.

Carson, R. (2003). *Taming your gremlin: A surprisingly simple method for getting out of your own way*. New York: Collins.

Yontef, G. M., & Simkin, J. S. (1989). Gestalt therapy. In R. J. Corsini & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Current Psychotherapies* (4th ed.). Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock.

Recommended Reading:=

Benson, H. (1975). *The relaxation response*. New York: Morrow.

Bugental, J. F. T. (1999). *Psychotherapy isn't what you think*. Phoenix, AZ: Zeig, Tucker & Theisen.

Keating, T. (1992). *Open mind, open heart*. New York: Continuum Publishing.

Kirschenbaum, H., & Henderson, V. L. (1989). *The Carl Rogers reader*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Rogers, C. (1957). The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 21(2), 95-103.

Wilkins, P. (2010). *Person-centred therapy: 100 key points*. New York: Routledge.

Course Objectives: Students will demonstrate:

1. Increased self-awareness
2. Effective use of sandtray processing interventions with clients including facilitating awareness, accentuating the obvious, recognizing and accentuating polarities, and embracing resistance.
3. Willingness to work on issues in self that hinder ability to be present with clients and effective in the here and now.
4. Insight into own issues and unfinished business.
5. Improvement in working with "clients" in the here and now.

Content areas include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Strategies for facilitating personal growth and development in sandtray therapy
2. Advanced sandtray therapy techniques that facilitate client growth
3. Self-awareness
4. Ethical considerations when working in the here and now
5. Theories of learning, growth and change
6. Group counseling applications
7. Relationship building skills

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes. This class is experiential in nature and thus it demands consistent attendance. Arriving habitually late to class is unacceptable and will adversely affect your grade. If you are going to miss more than one class you need to meet with me personally.

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@tamuc.edu

CONDUCT AND ACADEMIC HONESTY

"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, Policies and Procedures, Conduct) "Graduate students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work." (See Section A13.12, Academic Honesty, A&M-Commerce Procedures.)

Discrimination Free Environment

A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

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).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. **Journal of self-awareness and personal/professional growth.** You will keep a journal that provides a record of your growth and development in the class. You will be required to make one entry of 10-15 minutes twice a week. In this entry, you will discuss how any of the concepts, exercises and techniques that are covered in class or your reading relates specifically to you. This discussion will include but will not be limited to: your family of origin, awareness of unfinished business, awareness of aspects of your personality that hinder you, and feelings related to relationships. What I am looking for is an incredibly honest and deep look at yourself and your own issues. Focus on yourself and your feelings in the journal rather than other people and their feelings. In addition to the topics above, you may want to also reflect on what it is like to learn gestalt techniques in this setting. The journals may be picked up during any class and graded. Therefore, you will need to bring your journal to class every class period.

This class is an **advanced** class and I expect you to reflect deeply on yourself and issues related to the course. In order to get an A on this assignment, you will need to set aside defenses that you may be in the habit of using in your interactions with people. To an extent, we all tend to project a certain image, etc. You will need to get beyond that.

2. **Videotapes of the gestalt method.** You will be required to videotape two 30-minute sessions with a classmate during class. Both tapes will demonstrate skills learned and practiced in class. You will submit a brief reflection paper with your tape.

3. **Class participation and attendance.** This class is almost completely experiential. If you miss a class you will miss activities and learning experiences that will not be repeated. I will demonstrate gestalt therapy interventions and techniques throughout the summer. The reading in the class is not demanding but I expect you to come to every class unless you have a serious conflict.

You will be expected to participate in several activities that are quite different from a content class. You will be expected to **disclose personal feelings in the moment**, unfinished business and feelings about professional material covered in class. You will be asked to practice self-awareness exercises in pairs and share feelings in a group. You will be required to demonstrate your newly acquired skills in a group setting. I will do my best to create a safe learning environment in which you feel as comfortable as possible about self-disclosing and showing your skills.

Grade Assignment:

Attendance/participation	50 points
Journal	50 points
Tape 1	100 points
Tape 2	100 points
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Total	300 points

A	90%	270 points
B	80%	240 points
C	70%	210 points

Flexible Calendar

- June 9 Introduction, Syllabus, demonstration of gestalt method, group processing
Read chapters 1 & 2 in Armstrong text **prior** to next class
- June 11 Working in the here and now, Core conditions
Prior to next class read Yontef & Simkin chapter and chapters 3 & 4 in Armstrong text
- June 16 Accentuating the obvious, polarities, Sandtray
Read chapters 5 & 6 in Armstrong text prior to next class
- June 18 Tape 1 video recording (in class), Polarities and paradoxical techniques, watch DVD prior to next class, Read Taming Your Gremlin prior to next class
- June 23 Group supervision, Resistance and physical defenses, Read chapters 9 & 10 in Armstrong text prior to next class
- Tape 1 Due**
- June 25 Grief, Self-care, Read chapters 11 & 12 in Armstrong text
- June 30 Tape 2 video recording (in class), Group supervision & Lab
- July 7 Group supervision & Lab
- July 9 Group supervision & Lab
Tape 2 Due, Journals Due