Coun 511: Counseling Theories & Techniques/Fall 2012
Course Syllabus – University of Montana

Instructor: John Sommers-Flanagan, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: Mon 10-1pm; Tues: 3-5pm; Wed 2-4pm; Thurs & Fri: By appt.
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Scheduled Class Meetings: Class meets on Mondays from 4:10pm to 7pm, beginning Monday, August 27, 2011. The final exam is scheduled for Tuesday, December 11 from 1:00pm-3:00pm and will be in our usual classroom. The oral final time is TBD.

Course Content and Description: This course is an overview of major theories of counseling and psychotherapy with a special focus on gender, culture, counselor preparation, and common theoretically-based assessment and case formulation strategies. Because the purpose of counseling and psychotherapy is to help individuals make personally meaningful changes in their lives, we will consistently examine the means through which traditional theories try to produce such changes. Students will read about historical and intellectual foundations of major counseling theories, while at the same time, observing skills and techniques employed by practitioners using those theoretical perspectives. There will be opportunities, through assignments and class discussions, for students to analyze clients as well as themselves through the various lenses of psychological theories. Overall, students are encouraged not only to explore all the major theoretical orientations, but also to explore their personal beliefs and values in an effort to develop and deepen their understanding of counseling and psychotherapy process and outcome.


Course Objectives
The overall purpose of this course is to introduce you to theories and techniques used by a variety of mental health professionals, school counselors, and other human service providers. We will explore and discuss the major theories and their practical application. Specific course objectives linked to CACREP objectives and student learning outcomes are included next.

CACREP-Related Course Objectives: This course is a first Fall semester requirement for graduate students in Counselor Education at the University of Montana. The course includes input related to CACREP Core Standards and CACREP Specialty Standards. Specific student learning outcomes are evaluated during an integrated Level I assessment. This assessment occurs at the end of the first semester of study by Counselor Education students. The Level I assessment includes orally
administered content questions related to this course combined with a brief counseling demonstration that integrates knowledge and skills from this course and COUN 512. Performance on the Level I assessment is used to determine (a) how well the Counselor Education faculty is teaching specific CACREP-related objectives, (b) student performance on the COUN 511 final oral examination, and (c) student readiness to enroll in counseling practicum (COUN 530). CACREP-related Core and Specialty standards covered in this course are listed below.

**CACREP Core Course Objectives**

Students completing COUN 511 will:

- Be able to identify multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally (G.2.a)
- Understand that an orientation to wellness and prevention are desired counseling goals (G.5.a)
- Be able to identify counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes (G.5.b)
- Be exposed to essential interviewing and counseling skills associated with different theoretical approaches (G.5.c)
- Understand a range of counseling theories that provide models for conceptualizing client presentation and that help with the selection of appropriate counseling interventions (G.5.d)
- Be exposed to models of counseling that are consistent with current professional research and practice in the field so they can begin to develop a personal model of counseling (G.5.d)
- Understand historical perspectives concerning the nature and meaning of assessment (G.7.a)
- Understand social and cultural factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations (G.7.f)
- Recognize the importance of research in advancing the counseling profession (G.8.a)

**CACREP-Related SLO Objectives [Measured SLOs are at the end of the syllabus]**

- Understand the differences and distinctions between counseling and psychotherapy (CMHC A.1)
- Recognize and understand essential ethical principles and practices for mental health professionals (CMHC A.2)
- Understand a variety of models and theories related to mental health professional practice (CMHC A.5)
- Learn about unique multicultural, gender, and diversity issues related to counseling and psychotherapy—including how power, privilege, racism, and sexism affect counseling case formulation, process, and outcomes (CMHC D.2)
- Develop an orientation toward theory and research as foundational for advancing counseling and psychotherapy knowledge and evidence-based practice as well as an understanding of current literature related to which theories, approaches, strategies, and techniques are shown to be effective with specific client populations (CMHC E.3)
- Be able to demonstrate how to modify counseling systems, theories, techniques, and interventions to make them culturally appropriate for diverse populations (CMHC F.3)
- Know evidence-based treatments and basic strategies for evaluating counseling outcomes in clinical mental health counseling (CMHC I.3)
- Know the theories and processes of effective counseling and wellness programs for individual students and groups of students (SCH C.1)
- Demonstrates multicultural competencies in relation to diversity, equity, and opportunity in student learning and development (SCH F.1)
**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:** If you are a student with a disability and wish to discuss reasonable accommodations for this course, contact me privately to discuss the specific modifications you wish to request. Please be advised I may request that you provide a letter from Disability Services for Students verifying your right to reasonable modifications. If you have not yet contacted Disability Services, located in Lommasson Center 154, please do so in order to verify your disability and to coordinate your reasonable modifications. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at [http://life.umt.edu/dss](http://life.umt.edu/dss).

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at [http://www.umt.edu/AS/APSA/index.cfm/page/1321](http://www.umt.edu/AS/APSA/index.cfm/page/1321).

**IN-CLASS BEHAVIOR STANDARDS AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:** In the Department of Counselor Education and The University of Montana we strive to establish and maintain a positive learning environment. The expectation is that we will strive to treat one another with utmost respect . . . even when we disagree. This also means that students (and faculty) will turn off their cell phones and not engage in internet shopping during class. If calls and texting are necessary, you should either not attend class or take care of your calling and texting at class break.

**TEACHING METHODS:**
1. Lectures/class demonstrations.
2. Guest lectures/student presentations.
3. Video/DVD/Film presentations.
4. Class activities.
5. Class discussions.

**GRADING PROCEDURES AND COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:** Grades are based on completion of class assignments, midterm and final examination scores, and class participation/attendance. **Course assignments are listed and described in a separate section.** The grading scale is below:

- **A** = 93%+
- **A-** = 90-92%
- **B+** = 87-89%
- **B** = 83-86%
- **B-** = 80-82%
- **C+** = 77-79%
- **C** = 73-76%
- **C-** = 70-72%
- **D+** = 67-69%
- **D** = 63-66%
- **D-** = 60-62%
- **F** = Below 60%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assigned Reading</th>
<th>In-Class Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>Ch. 1</td>
<td>Syllabus distribution and introduction. Note: There will be a moodle course supplement that appears in your moodle account sometime in the first week of class. This is mostly for communication purposes.</td>
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<td>9/3</td>
<td>Labor Day holiday – No class</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Ch. 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>Psychoanalytic theory &amp; therapy and Individual Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/17</td>
<td>Ch. 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>Individual psychology and existential theory and therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/24</td>
<td>Ch. 5</td>
<td>The person-centered approach. Initial theories reflection paper due (20 points)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>Review chapters 1-5 and lectures</td>
<td>Midterm #1 – 1st hour: Covers chapters 1-5. [There will be an optional Jungian lecture and visualization activity after the midterm]</td>
<td>Midterm #1 (50 pts) Chapters 1-5 plus lecture material</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>10/8</td>
<td>Ch. 6</td>
<td>Gestalt theory and therapy.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>Ch. 7</td>
<td>Behavioral theory and therapy.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>10/22</td>
<td>Ch. 8</td>
<td>Cognitive approaches (or CBT).</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>Ch. 9</td>
<td>Choice theory and reality therapy.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>11/5</td>
<td>Review readings and lectures</td>
<td>Midterm #2 – 1st hour. Covers chapters 6-9, plus lectures.</td>
<td>Midterm #2 (50 pts). Chapters 6-9, plus lectures</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>Holiday – Veteran’s Day</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>11/19</td>
<td>Ch. 10 &amp; 11</td>
<td>Feminist theory and therapy.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>Ch. 11 &amp; 13</td>
<td>Constructive theory and therapy. Multicultural theory and therapy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>12/3</td>
<td>Ch. 13 &amp; 14</td>
<td>Multicultural and Counseling integration. Final exam preparation and course review.</td>
<td>Book reviews and personal change projects due.</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Tuesday 12/11 from 1-3pm</td>
<td>Review readings and lectures.</td>
<td>Final examination. Covers chapters 10, 11; 13-15</td>
<td>Final exam (50 pts) The graduate oral final exam is TBD</td>
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OFFICIAL ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

There are 300 possible points available (YOU CAN CHOOSE TO DO #3 OR #4, BUT NOT BOTH).

1. **Two Midterm Examinations and Final (50 points each; 150 total)**: These are standard multiple choice and short answer exams. They will cover material from all the lectures and chapters as outlined in the syllabus and worth 50 points each. Graduate students also will take an oral final examination (see below).

2. **Initial Theories Reflection Paper (30 points; due 9/24/12)**:
   This is a short paper designed to accomplish three objectives: (a) give you an opportunity, early in the course, to explore a concept from the text or from class in greater depth; (b) provide you with an initial, simple library-related assignment; (c) provide me with an early sample of your writing skills.
   The paper can focus on virtually any topic addressed in class or covered in the text. Of course, it makes the most sense for you to select a topic from the first three chapters of the text, because the assignment is due during week #5 and therefore, you will be reading chapters 1-4. Here's what you should do:
   - Select a topic: Sample topics include
     - The great psychotherapy debate (pp. 11-17)
     - Informed consent (p. 18)
     - Multicultural competence (p. 19)
     - Doing no harm (p. 24-26)
     - The seduction hypothesis (p. 42)
     - Defense mechanisms (p. 48-49)
     - Feminism and psychoanalysis (p. 54-55)
     - Why children misbehave (p. 83)
     - Earliest recollections (p. 97-100)
     - Paradoxical strategies (p. 105-106)
   - Read the section in the text about that topic
   - Go to the library (or do an online search) and find a professional journal reference pertaining to your topic
   - Write a three page paper (following APA format) on your selected topic
   - In your paper write (a) a description of the topic or issue and why you think it is an especially important topic for beginning counselors; (b) additional information that you learned about the topic through your library research; (c) any critical comments about the topic/issue; and (d) some concluding comments about how this topic is relevant for you and your work in the future as a counselor [IYFD students should describe the cultural generalizability of whatever concept you choose to write about]

   The paper will be graded in the following areas: (a) attention to detail/typos, etc. (10%); (b) following APA format (10%); (c) writing skills/grammar/organization (20%); (d) general summary and accuracy regarding the topic chosen (40%); (e) inclusion of some original and interesting thoughts about the topic (20%).

3. **Theories or Cultural Book Review and Critique (50 points; due 12/3/12)**: The purpose of this assignment is for you, as an individual, to dive deeper into, and learn more about, a theory of interest to you. I have many books in my office that you can peruse for this assignment or you can go to the library or you can buy something on your own. After you've selected a book and check with me to make sure it's acceptable, there are three parts to this assignment: (a) read your selected book; (b) write a five-page summary and critique of the book (include both a summary and critique—focusing on the book's strengths and
weaknesses and well as a description of how you will apply the information you learned from
the book to your life in the future); and (c) be prepared to provide a ten-minute presentation
on the book at our final class, although this may or may not happen (you should just say if
you recommend the book to others and how you rate it on a 1-100 scale and engage the
class in a brief demonstration of something you learned from the book). Book Reviews are
due on or before Monday, December 5 at 5pm.

4. The Personal Change Project (50 points; due 12/3/12): The purpose of this assignment is
for you to apply some sort of personal change strategy to yourself. Previously this was a
purely behavior modification project, but due to diverse student interest, you can now
engage in any personal change strategy you like.

It helps to think like a behaviorist for this project. That’s because you need to identify a very
specific and measurable behavior to change. Beyond that, feel free to use techniques from any
theoretical orientation.

The Details

This assignment includes the following components:

• Select a specific, measurable behavior that you would like to increase, decrease, or eliminate.
  This behavior is called your “target behavior.” For example, you might choose (as many
  students do) to increase exercise behavior. To adequately begin this assignment, you need to
  have a clear, operational description of the behavior and a method for measuring the
  occurrence of the behavior. For example, if you select “push-ups” as your behavior to increase,
  you would need to define exactly what you meant by “push-up” and then detail a method for
  obsessively keeping track (measuring) of your push-up behavior. Other behaviors people have
  chosen in the past include: (a) increasing water consumption; (b) decreasing cigarette smoking;
  (c) increasing smiling behavior; (d) decreasing fingernail biting behavior; (e) increasing study
  behavior, etc. Of course, we encourage you to identify what you want to change, rather than
  simply choosing one of the aforementioned target behaviors. Please inform John of your
  target behavior before proceeding with the assignment. Email me at
  john.sf@mso.umt.edu or pass me a note in class informing me of your chosen behavior
  and general strategy.

• Tip: Don’t select a very infrequent behavior because it could then take you several years to
  complete this project.

• Do background research on how to best modify your target behavior. Although you may have
  some incredible ideas yourself, the point is for you to NOT completely rely on your own
  idiosyncratic ideas about how to change your target behavior. Go to the library. Consult with
  friends. Stimulate your creativity. For example, let’s say you chose to reduce your intake of
  sugar. There have been many books and articles written on diet change. We would expect you
to reference a few of these, even if none of them specifically targeted sugar-intake only. You
  need to find a few studies, articles, or a book that describes behavioral research that somehow
  relates to your target behavior.

• Set up a method for charting, graphing, or otherwise tracking the frequency of your target
  behavior. We’ll discuss methods for this in class.

• Take a baseline measurement of your target behavior over one week.

• Establish reasonable short- and long-term goals and a timeline for reaching those goals. If
  you’re doing zero push-ups a day, you probably shouldn’t have a goal of: 100 push-ups a day
  after 2 weeks of your behavioral intervention.

• Develop a cracker-jack change plan and describe it in your paper. Describe it so well that we
  could do it based on your description. Your plan SHOULD NOT rely exclusively on your
  WILLPOWER. When I grade your assignment all I’m interested in are specific techniques you’ve
gleaned from the text or outside readings. For example, if you are using a behavioral approach,
I’d look for you to use strategies like: (a) positive reinforcement; (b) punishment; (c) response cost; (d) negative reinforcement; (e) stimulus control; (f) stimulus generalization; (g) fading; (h) unconditioned stimulus; (i) conditioned stimulus, etc. If you choose to use a cognitive approach, consider using the three column technique, shades of gray, visualization, rational disputing, etc.

- Write a contract for yourself (e.g., “I Rita SF, do solemnly swear. . .”). Include the behavior, the plan, your goals, and a space for you and a witness (someone in your social environment) to sign and co-sign the contract.
- Write a weekly journal entry about how it’s going. Discuss your feelings, your personal experience and perspective, and why you think the project is working or not working. You can also modify your change plan during the semester, as long as you clearly identify how and why you’re going to change your approach in your weekly journal entry. Remember that good counselors are very flexible and creative in their approach.

**Grading Procedures and What to Turn In**

At the very least, turn in the following:

A. A signed contract
B. A description of your target behavior, goals, and change plan
C. A graph of your target behavior during baseline and treatment phases of your intervention
D. Your weekly musings about this project

This assignment is worth 30 points. To earn the 30 points you will need to turn in high quality work. However, your grade on this project is NOT AT ALL based on your success or failure in changing your behavior.

You will lose points for typos, misspelled words, concepts that are defined poorly or used incorrectly, incomplete or unclear descriptions of what you did and what happened, etc. Although we don’t want to incite an obsessive overachievement attitude, in the end, your paper will be compared with the papers of other students. Therefore, if your paper is substantially substandard as compared to other student papers, you’ll lose some points for that too. Failure to cite at least a couple of relevant studies, articles, or books will also lose significant points. Good luck and have fun!

5. **Attendance (30 points):** We’ll take attendance at every class. Perfect attendance is worth 30 points. You’ll lose an increasing number of points for each class missed (even if you miss class for legitimate reasons). To be fair, you can earn back points from missing class by completing extra assignments. You lose 0 points for missing one class (everyone deserves a mental health day), 3 points for missing two classes, 6 more for the third, 9 more for the fourth, and 12 more for the fifth. You can earn attendance points back by listening to recorded lectures (as available), contacting Emily Sidor (the TA) who will give you an additional assignment (e.g., writing an essay or responding to several lecture-related questions). Alternative assignments may be used at our discretion. If you’re motivated you can recover lost points. There will also be in-class reflection assignments. If you don’t turn these in or do a poor job you’ll lose attendance points.

6. **Individualized Final Oral Examination (40 points):**

For graduate students in counselor education, the final oral exam consists of specific questions and a short role-play demonstration during which you enact some of the skills associated with material you learning in this class and in COUN 512. You will receive a specific study guide and grading rubric for this exam during the semester.

For graduate students in IYFD and other programs, you will sit for a small (about 15 students) group examination. You will be given short answer questions at least one week prior to the exam and then you’ll be asked, at random, several questions from the questions you’ve been given (and hopefully have studied). This exam format is designed to help you learn to orally articulate some of the theories concepts we’ve studied during the semester.