



COURSE OUTLINE

COU781 Pluralistic Couple and Family Counselling

Course Coordinator: Mark Pearson (mpearson@usc.edu.au) **School:** School of Law and Society

2021 | Semester 2

USC Sunshine Coast

ON CAMPUS

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Please go to the USC website for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

This course develops your practice of advanced counselling skills enabling you to apply a cutting-edge approach to your work with groups of clients, with a focus on supporting couples and families. This course includes the extended understanding of recent developments in counselling and its professional practice. You will develop advanced skills for working within family systems and relationship issues. A key element of the course will be the development of an appreciation and understanding of the complexity and skills within therapeutic integration, pluralism and your own personal counselling style.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
ON CAMPUS			
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – On campus workshop - 3 hours	3hrs	Week 1	12 times

1.3. Course Topics

Course Topics

Course and Assessment Overview. The creative counsellor. The composite model of counsellor competence. Becoming a 'master' therapist.

Psychodynamic approaches - origins, evolution and research findings. Freud and Jung; conscious vs. unconscious - contemporary discussions; defence mechanisms; theories of personality; therapeutic strategies.

The Implications of Attachment Theory for counsellors and couples' therapy. Approaches that use attachment theory; recognising "internal working models"; attachment patterns.

Emotion-focused Therapy – with individuals and couples. Emotion schemes; layers of emotion; empathic attunement; experiential processing; the 2-chair process.

Systemic Thinking, Family & Couple Therapy – 1

Supporting Families. Schools of Family Therapy; Family system boundaries; structuring sessions.

Systemic Thinking, Family & Couple Therapy – 2

Supporting Families and Couples. Types of families; multi-generational family therapy (Bowen); Family resilience; Couples Therapy.

Systemic Thinking, Family & Couple Therapy – 3

Supporting Families. Genograms; Role-play practice; life cycle perspective.

A Post-Modern Approach: Narrative Therapy in supporting couples. Use of language; dealing with dominant stories; use of metaphors; externalising problems.

Art-making approaches with families and couples. Rationale for creative activities; projective techniques; symbol work; visual art.

Integrative Approaches and Pluralism in Counselling. Client preferences and collaboration; eclectic practice; use of cultural resources.

2. What level is this course?

700 Level (Specialised)

Demonstrating a specialised body of knowledge and set of skills for professional practice or further learning. Advanced application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES		GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...		Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1	Develop and apply deep knowledge of theoretical underpinnings of counselling through meta-cognition and self-reasoning.	Knowledgeable
2	Demonstrate an ability to engage with family systems and sociocultural systems within the context of counselling in an ethical and professional manner.	Ethical Engaged
3	Demonstrate expertise in the knowledge and skills of therapeutic integration.	Knowledgeable Empowered
4	Identify and develop decision making pathways in counselling that maintain sustainable outcomes for clients and families.	Sustainability-focussed
5	Articulate and demonstrate your personal approach to counselling and psychotherapy.	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [USC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of "pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites".

5.1. Pre-requisites

COU701 and enrolled in Program AR708

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Timely and detailed feedback is provided for each assessment. Feedback is provided both within text and general comments to build scholarly skills. Students are able to seek feedback through face-to-face discussion with the course coordinator. Tutorials will include extended discussion and review of the assessment task requirements

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Oral	Individual	35%	20-30 Minutes	Week 10	Online Assignment Submission
All	2	Written Piece	Individual	35%	1500 words	Week 11	Online Assignment Submission
All	3	Oral	Individual	30%	20 Minutes	Week 11	In Class

All - Assessment Task 1: Family or Couples Counselling Recorded Demonstration

GOAL:	Present a video recording of a counselling session demonstrating your use of family or relationship counselling skills.		
PRODUCT:	Oral		
FORMAT:	Working with two student colleagues from COU781 you will complete a 20 to 30 minute video session demonstrating your use of family or couple counselling skills within the context of family systems. The video will demonstrate how you are integrating your personal style of counselling. Full details of the requirement will be posted on Blackboard.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Clear video recording demonstrating use of advanced skills and techniques;	1 2
	2	Demonstration of client engagement.	1 2 3
	3	Evidence of exploring the clients' relationship to their "system";	2 4 5

All - Assessment Task 2: Self-critique of Recorded Demonstration

GOAL:	Demonstrate your ability to critically reflect on your skills in conducting a family or couple's session
PRODUCT:	Written Piece
FORMAT:	A written self-assessment and reflective critique of your session.

CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Ability to critique your use of advanced family or couple skills and techniques; 1 4
	2	Comment on your engagement and efforts at alliance formation with clients 1 3
	3	Self-assessment reflection using supplied reflection questions 1 3
	4	Overall critique of your competence and skills and recognition of what needs to be developed further. 1 3

All - Assessment Task 3: Practice Framework Class Presentation

GOAL:	To present your present understanding of your personal counselling practice framework, including your style, and philosophical beliefs about therapy.	
PRODUCT:	Oral	
FORMAT:	Submit: Week 11 & 12. The requirements for the in-class presentation will be outlined in the separate Detailed Assessment Guide (provided on Blackboard during the semester), and will include: 1. your present understanding of your personal counselling style, and philosophical beliefs (regarding your counselling approach); 2. your present strengths, and competencies as a counselling practitioner; 3. your primary areas for growth and development as a counselling practitioner; 4. your grasp of supportable rationales underpinning your evolving practice framework	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1	You will be assessed on: The quality, content, and philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the presentation, 1 5
	2	Meeting of the minimum requirements criteria as outlined in the Detailed Assessment Guide (on Blackboard); 1 3
	3	Use of the provided Guiding Questions; 1 3 5
	4	Meeting all criteria of the in-class presentation requirements for presenting your practice framework, including rationale, and theoretical and philosophical underpinnings. 1

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Directed study hours may vary by location. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Blackboard site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

There are no required/recommended resources for this course.

8.2. Specific requirements

Nil

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Blackboard, are electronically checked through SafeAssign. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work that SafeAssign has access to.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%

The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

You have not failed an assessment task in the course due to academic misconduct

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submission of assessment tasks may be penalised at the following maximum rate:

- 5% (of the assessment task's identified value) per day for the first two days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task.

- 10% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the third day - 20% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the fourth day and subsequent days up to and including seven days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task.

- A result of zero is awarded for an assessment task submitted after seven days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task. Weekdays and weekends are included in the calculation of days late. To request an extension you must contact your course coordinator to negotiate an outcome.

10.4. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.6. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, , injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.7. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Administration of Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Academic Misconduct
- Students with a Disability

Visit the USC website: <http://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.8. General Enquiries

In person:

- **USC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **USC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **USC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **USC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **USC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **USC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au