



Theories of Psychotherapy (PSY 641-500)
Western Kentucky University
College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Department of Psychology
Course Syllabus - Spring 2023



This syllabus is subject to change, but you will be notified of such changes as early as possible

Instructor: Ellie Steele, Ph.D.
Class days/times: Mondays 4:30 pm – 7:15 pm **Classroom:** <https://wku.zoom.us/j/96107859654>
Email: ellen.steele@wku.edu
Office: Virtual
Office hours: W 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm, and F 9 am – 11:00am. If you cannot make these times, please feel free to send me an email to set up an alternative time to meet.

Faculty Credentials: Dr. Steele's qualifications to teach this course include: a PhD in Clinical Psychology from an APA-accredited program; a postdoctoral fellowship in Clinical Psychology from an APA-accredited program; graduate faculty status; and relevant research products related to financial stress and family systems.

Required Textbook:

Sommers-Flanagan, J. & Sommers-Flanagan, R. (2018). *Counseling and Psychotherapy Theories in Context and Practice: Skills, Strategies, and Techniques (3rd ed.)*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Required Articles:

*Additional readings as assigned.

Course Website:

This course website is on WKU's Blackboard system. I will post lecture slides, additional assigned readings, and other resources to Blackboard. In addition, should there be a change in the course assignments or schedule, I will post announcements to Blackboard and send emails whenever feasible.

Course Description:

Selected theories and techniques of psychotherapy and counseling. Also covers group therapy, clinical topics, and professional and ethical issues. Prerequisite: permission of instructor.

The focus of this course is on the historical roots, conceptual foundations, and the modern application of techniques derived from major theoretical schools of psychotherapy. In addition, this course will provide a setting in which you will explore how these schools of psychotherapy may influence your professional identity and your approach to ethically and effectively applying these techniques in your work. This survey course helps you lay the foundation and understand the context within which you provide therapy. It will also allow you to identify and explore the assumptions (personal and/or professional) you bring to the therapy process.

These theories vary greatly in their terminology, their application, and their assumptions about human nature. I do not expect you to accept or agree with all models presented, but I ask that you keep an open mind about all models and consider how each might contribute uniquely to help you conceptualize and

treat a variety of cases.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Identify and describe major historical trends leading to the current understanding of psychopathology, functional behaviors, psychotherapy, and the evidence-based practice movement.
- 2) Explain major ethical issues that will influence your practice of psychotherapy.
- 3) Articulate your personal theory of counseling and psychotherapy, and describe how your personal and professional biases might influence your understanding and delivery of professional services to diverse clients.
- 4) Describe the major theoretical assumptions and conceptualizations associated with the major schools of psychotherapy, including: psychoanalysis, individual therapy, existentialism, person-centered therapy, gestalt, behaviorism, cognitive-behavioral, feminist, and family systems.
- 5) Demonstrate how you would use major approaches and techniques from the various schools of therapy.

Objectives will be achieved via several activities. These include completing the assigned readings, critically and intentionally thinking about the material, and participating in class discussions and learning activities in and out of the classroom. The more you can tie the course objectives into your personal life and make the material personally meaningful to you, the more likely you will learn it. Objectives will be assessed via course examinations, reflective papers, and a research paper. Specific learning objectives will be provided at the beginning of every unit.

Classroom Environment:

Please do your best to be on time for class. If you do need to join late, please enter quietly. Please inform me ahead of time (by email) that you will be late or will need to leave early. While in class, I expect you to be courteous to me as the instructor as well as other students. This entails not carrying on off-topic conversations with other students while in class, silencing all cell phones before class starts, being attentive (i.e., not texting or working on assignments for other classes during lecture), and keeping the video (within reason) during the class. If you become disruptive during class you will be asked to leave.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class for administrative purposes (e.g., dropping and adding students). Attendance is expected at the graduate level and highly recommended as studies show a high, positive correlation between class attendance and final grades. However, **if you miss class, you are expected then to ask someone else for notes rather than ask for a repeat of the notes.** Also, you will need to attend class in order to receive updates on assignment due dates, information regarding assignment topics and questions, and in order to earn credit for in-class assignments.

Checking Your WKU Email Account:

I will from time to time send course announcements by email. Please be sure to check your WKU email account at least twice per day. I will do the same for you – if you have any questions about the class, feel free to email me or sign up to meet during my office during office hours, and I'd be happy to answer them. I endeavor to reply to emails within 2 business days.

Getting Help:

If you are having difficulties with any aspect of this course, please come to my office hours or email me, and I will do my best to help you. If you are unable to come to my office hours, you can contact me to schedule an appointment at a different time. If you have just a short question, feel free to ask me after

class or send it via e-mail. I can't help you improve your performance in class if you do not ask for it! Also, be sure to ask for help earlier rather than later – research shows that earlier intervention leads to the best outcomes.

Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to complete their own work. As stated in the university catalog, “students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the coursework in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal.” In other words, do your own work and do not cheat. This includes (but is not limited to) papers purchased, written by another individual, written as part of another class, or written using an artificial intelligence system. The psychology faculty consider academic dishonesty an ethical matter. As a reminder, you should know that students can be dismissed from the program for unethical behavior.

Campus Safety and COVID-19:

All students are strongly encouraged to get the COVID-19 vaccine. In accordance with WKU policy, all students must call the WKU COVID-19 Assistance Line at 270-745-2019 within 4 hours of testing positive for COVID-19 or being identified as a close contact to someone who has tested positive. The COVID Assistance Line is available to answer questions regarding any COVID-19 related issue. This guidance is subject to change based on requirements set forth by federal, state, and local public health entities. Please refer to the Healthy on the Hill website for the most current information. www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill

Student Accommodations:

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Title IX Statement:

“Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU’s Title IX Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy (#0.2070) at <https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf>. Under this policy, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex-gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, **WKU faculty are “Responsible Employees” of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU’s Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.** If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU’s Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.”

***Additional information about Title IX, academic dishonesty, and campus safety can be found at:** <https://www.wku.edu/syllabusinfo/>

Your Grade:

Your grade will be determined by your performance on the exam, leading discussion, completion of reflection papers, and a paper.

Exam (100 points)

There will be 1 multiple choice/essay exam worth 100 points. The exam will comprise multiple choice questions worth 1 point each and an essay question. The exam will cover material from the textbooks, lectures, and any assigned outside readings.

Exam Policies:

Exams will be administered via Blackboard and will use the Respondus Lockdown Browser. If you are late starting the exam, you will be required to finish the exam at the scheduled end-time.

*NO make-up exams will be given without a **University Excused Absence** and **advanced notice** that you will need a make-up exam. **Excuses must be provided within 2 weeks of the return date.**

Leading Discussion (50 points)

Each week two of you will lead a 30-to-45-minute discussion around that week's topic. You will be responsible for highlighting important details or findings and contributing questions to lead the discussion. I strongly encourage that you complete both of the readings for the class and collaborate on thoughtful questions in advance, so that both of you will be able to contribute. You will need to send a list of discussion questions to me via email in advance.

Reflection Papers/Discussion Questions (100 points)

Your textbook readings required for this course consist of 12 chapters. To encourage thoughtful, active reading (which is required for long-term retention of information learned in this class), you will submit **10** reflective papers/sets of discussion questions (worth 10 points each). Why 10? This allows you to choose the chapters that are most interesting for you while also allowing for flexibility in case of illness, exams in other classes, etc. Students will be responsible for composing and **posting a reflection to Blackboard** that does one of two things:

Option 1: Write **at least 1 full page** (double-spaced) **thoughtfully reflecting** on the assigned reading and/or lecture topic. Consider addressing the following:

- Describe how the topic is personally meaningful to you (bearing in mind that I will keep these papers confidential but that I am also not your therapist – I encourage you to seek counseling services as needed from the various resources in our community).
- How is this topic important for the WKU community, for Bowling Green, or for society?
- What fact did you find most interesting? Did anything challenge your pre-existing beliefs?
- What concept was most difficult for you to understand?

Option 2: Write a **discussion question** related to the reading or lecture. These are questions you would like to bring up for discussion in class, **NOT** exam questions. For example, while reading you might wonder “Who is most likely to suffer from this disorder?” or “What assessments are used to diagnose this disorder?”

- Once you've identified your question, try to answer your own question by finding outside sources (e.g., journal articles, book chapters, news articles, credible websites).
- Were you able to find answers to your questions?
- Did you find conflicting answers?
- How much do you trust the sources you found?
- You must provide a **citation** for your source using APA style (APA manual 7th edition) so I can find your source.

Your discussion questions illustrate thoughtfulness, planning ahead, and demonstrates to me and your peers that you read the required readings prior to the class. All of these factors will contribute to more thoughtful, meaningful discussion in class, which will help everyone learn the material better by

associating the material with personally meaningful information, stories, examples, controversies, etc. as presented orally in class. Reflections and discussion questions should be carefully thought out, should integrate material across chapters or material beyond or outside of the textbook or class (e.g., personal experiences, news headlines, popular press), and should reflect more than a simple regurgitation of the readings. Be prepared to discuss your responses in class. **I will not accept late submissions.** Forgot to upload your reflections/discussion questions? That's okay – you can write discussion questions for a different chapter in the future. This is why I ask for 10 instead of 12.

Personal Theoretical Orientation Paper (150 points)

Students will write an essay describing their theoretical orientation and approach to psychotherapy. This paper will adhere to APA style (7th edition) and will incorporate readings and discussions from the course. Papers should include the following (15 points each):

1. Accurate spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
2. A brief introduction to and summary of your therapeutic orientation/approach. From which major historical orientation(s) does your approach borrow (approximately 1-2 pages)?
3. An explanation for why you subscribe to this orientation – what do you like and dislike about this approach? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach? (approximately 1 page)
4. With which populations do you think this approach would work well? With which populations do you think this approach would not work? (approximately 1-2 pages)
5. How does this approach integrate assessment and diagnosis? Does this approach support a diagnosis-driven approach or does it minimize the importance of diagnosis in favor of a transdiagnostic approach? (1-2 pages)
6. Cultural and developmental considerations for diagnosis and intervention – how might you adapt your approach for certain cultures or age groups? (1-2 pages)
7. What personal, professional, or ethical issues may arise that could impede your ability to implement your therapy approach safely and effectively? (1-2 pages)
8. What empirical support backs up your approach (describe specific studies!)? If there is no empirical support, why do you think that is, and why do you like this approach despite the lack of empirical support? What additional studies are needed to bolster the evidence base for your approach? (1-2 pages)
9. An illustrative case for this approach that shows what the approach might look like in clinical work – this can be based on a true case (deidentified) or can be based on a fictitious character. How would your approach **conceptualize** the case and how would the **process** and structure of therapy look? (1-2 pages)
10. Reference list of supporting empirical literature with correct, APA-style, in-text citations

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and may be assessed via plagiarism-detecting software. If it is determined that plagiarism has occurred in your research paper, you will be given a score of 0 on the assignment (see academic honesty policy above) and possibly reported for further disciplinary measures up to and including dismissal from WKU. Plagiarism is considered a violation of the APA ethics code.

It is expected that papers will be turned in on time (see tentative schedule that follows for assignment due dates). Five points will be deducted for papers turned in 15 minutes late; an additional 5 points will be deducted after a paper is 24 hours late, and an additional 5 points will be deducted for each additional day a paper is late. Final copies of papers should be **uploaded to Blackboard** prior to the deadline.

Course Points Breakdown:

Exam = 100 points = 100 points (~25% of your grade)

Leading Discussion = 50 points (~13% of your grade)

Reflection Papers = 10 x 10 points each = 100 points (~25% of your grade)

Personal Orientation Paper = 150 points (~37% of your grade)

Course Total Points = 400 points

Final course grades will be based on the scale below:

A = 360 – 400 points (90-100%)

B = 320– 359 points (80-89%)

C = 280 – 319 points (70-79%)

D = 240 – 279 points (60-69%)

E = less than 240 points (< 59.5%)

Tentative Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture Topic</u>	<u>Readings and RPs/DQs Due</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1/23/23	Welcome, syllabus, intro to the course, historical context History (cont'd), definitions, ethics	Chapter 1; Eysenck (1980)	
1/30/23	Multi-cultural	Chapter 13; APA (2017)	Discussion Board Post
2/6/23	Psychoanalytic Approach	Chapter 2; Neher (1996)	Discussion Board Post
2/13/23	Individual Psychology	Chapter 3; Koocher et al. (2015)	Discussion Board Post
2/20/23	Existentialism	Chapter 4; Badiee (2008)	Discussion Board Post
2/27/23	Person-centered therapy	Chapter 5; Norcross et al. (2006)	Discussion Board Post
3/6/23	Gestalt	Chapter 6; Høglend & Hagtvet (2019)	Exam 1 via Blackboard
3/13/23-3/17/23	***No class – Spring Break		
3/20/23	Behaviorism	Chapter 7; Kline et al. (2020)	Discussion Board Post
3/27/23	CBT	Chapter 8; A-Tjak et al. (2021)	Discussion Board Post
4/3/23	Choice and Reality Therapy	Chapter 9; Cervantes & Robey (2018)	Discussion Board Post
4/10/23	Feminist Therapy	Chapter 10; Naqvi et al. (2020)	Discussion Board Post
4/17/23	Constructive Therapy	Chapter 11; Philp & Geldard (2011)	Discussion Board Post
4/24/23	Family Systems	Chapter 12; Tolman et al. (2008)	Discussion Board Post – Final Papers Due
5/1/23 Monday (3:45 – 5:45 pm)	Final via Blackboard		

References:

- American Psychological Association (2017). Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality. Retrieved from:
<http://www.apa.org/about/policy/multicultural-guidelines.pdf>
- A-Tjak, J. G. L., Morina, N., Topper, M., & Emmelkamp, P. M. G. (2021). On year follow-up and mediation in cognitive behavioral therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy for adult depression. *BMC Psychiatry*, 21:41. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-020-03020-1>
- Badiee, M. (2008). On the road to being: My personal journey into existential theory and practice. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 48, 477-488. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167808316248>
- Cervantes, S. N. & Robey, P. A. (2018). Aligning reality therapy and choice theory psychology with cognitive psychology. *International Journal of Choice Theory and Reality Therapy*, 38, 13-20.
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<http://garfield.library.upenn.edu/classics1980/A1980KB37300001.pdf>
- Høgland, P. & Hagtvet, K. (2019). Change mechanisms in psychotherapy: Both improved insight and improved affective awareness are necessary. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000381>
- Kline, A. C., Feeny, N. C., & Zoellner, L. A. (2020). Race and cultural factors in an RCT of prolonged exposure and sertraline for PTSD. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 132, 103690. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2020.103690>
- Koocher, G. P., McManis, M. R., Stout, A. O., & Norcross, J. C. (2015). Discredited assessment and treatment methods used with children and adolescents: A Delphi poll. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 44, 722-729. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2014.895941>
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- Naqvi, J. B., Helgeson, V. S., Gary-Webb, T. L., Korytkowski, M. T., & Seltman, H. J. (2020). Sex, race, and the role of relationships in diabetes health: Intersectionality matters. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 43, 69-79. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10865-019-00057-w>
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- Norcross, J. C., Koocher, G. P., & Garofalo, A. (2006). Discredited psychological treatments and tests: A Delphi poll. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 37, 515-522. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.37.5.515>
- Philp, K. & Geldard, K. (2011). Moving beyond right and wrong: Touchstones for teaching and learning constructionist therapy. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 30, 1-10. <http://dx.doi.org.libsrv.wku.edu/10.1521/jsyt.2011.30.2.1>

Tolman, R. T., Mueller, C. W., Daleiden, E. L., Stumpf, R. E., & Pestle, S. L. (2008). Outcomes from multisystemic therapy in a statewide system of care. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 17, 894-908. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-008-9197-y>