



ST. JEROME'S
UNIVERSITY

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies

SMF 308: Relational Therapy

Winter 2023

Thursdays, 11:30am - 2:20pm, Room: SJ2 2001

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Siobhan Sutherland

Office: SH 2034 (Sweeney Hall)

Office Hour: Thursdays, 2:30pm-3:30pm, or by appointment

Email: siobhan.sutherland@uwaterloo.ca

Correspondence with Instructor

It is best to contact me via email or to come see me in person during office hours. When emailing, please include your first & last name and the course code in the subject line.

Email responses: If you do not hear back from me within 48 hours (excluding weekends), please resend your message as it may have ended up in my junk mail (note: use of non-waterloo accounts sometimes results in messages flagged as spam. It is best to use your UW email address).

Course Description

This course will focus on the implementation and development of relational therapy clinical and ethical skills. Students will interrogate and implement modern and post-modern theoretical approaches to relational therapy. This course has an applied focus featuring basic assessment, facilitation, communication, observational, analytical, and reflective skills. This applied focus will enable students to connect and implement theory to practice in simulated therapeutic settings. Students will critically explore systemic thinking, the family life cycle, cultural sensitivity, social justice, and anti-oppressive lenses/perspectives; this course encourages learners to be self-aware and reflexive about clinical work.

Prerequisites: SMF 208; Level 3A or higher for best engagement

REQUIRED READING MATERIAL

Australian Institute of Community Services. Report 4 Counsellor Skills Series: Reflective Practice, Supervision & Self Care. Sydney, Australia+

Worden, M. (2003). Family Therapy Basics 3rd, Ed. Toronto: Brooks/Cole.

+ Accessible via LEARN

RECOMMENDED READING MATERIAL

*Nichols, N.P., (2014). The Essentials of Family Therapy, 6th, Ed. Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

***Or any previous edition of The Essentials of Family Therapy by Nichols**

Please note that SMF 308 is not a “therapist-training” course.

*This course does not provide the full range of theoretical and applied content necessary to become certified as a counsellor or therapist with any governing organization. **It offers an introduction to a specific skill-set that can be used in relational therapy.** Significant additional training is required to become licensed to practice couples/family/relational therapy.*

Course Format and Teaching Pedagogy

This course demonstrates commitment to the notion of learner-centeredness, with methods of instruction and learning opportunities that move beyond lecture to more collective efforts that place significant responsibility for learning on the student. Teaching and learning are collaborative processes in which the instructor shares, but does not assume responsibility for students' learning. The instructor and students will jointly share in teaching, learning, and supervisory roles. The results of this collaborative process are expected to be a meaningful learning experience for all of us. I will aim to provide you with clear expectations, bring content to life using real-world examples, and give you timely and targeted feedback. Throughout the course, I will prompt you to think about how course material and therapeutic process are connected, and how these relate to human relationships throughout the lifespan within various contexts.

Learning and Course Objectives

1. To create a dynamic, exploratory, and respectful learning experience for students and instructor.
2. To provide students with an understanding of relational therapy practices and how these approaches shape the therapeutic relationship between client(s) and therapist.
3. To research, analyze, and interrogate selected concepts in the field of relational therapy.
4. To review basic methods related to assessing and facilitating therapeutic change.
5. To introduce and develop basic therapeutic interviewing, listening, and assessing skills.
6. To develop effective engagement, reflective, observational, and conceptual skills.
7. To examine issues of power and privilege related to diversity, especially diversity pertaining to family structures, class, race, gender identity, and so forth.
8. To invite students to be self-aware and interrogate their own experiences, values, and biases in relation

to their various socio-political locations.

9. To increase self-reflective abilities, self-evaluation skills, and sensitivity to diverse experiences of self and others.
10. To constructively evaluate self and peers as part of feedback process for optimal learning.
11. To communicate clearly, concisely, and appropriately across written, spoken, and visual contexts.
12. To interact with others in groups/teams in ways that contributes to effective working relationships and the achievement of course and course assignment goals.
13. To demonstrate the ability to foster and utilize a therapeutic learning environment, which respects culture, promotes overall well-being, and facilitates positive change.

A course of this nature requires active participation of all students. This course presupposes a strong interest in and willingness to engage in the material.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Assignment	Date	Weighting
Experiential Learning Skills Labs Group Facilitation (20%) Participation/Supervision (10%)	TBD	30%
Perfect Therapy Session Project In Class Presentation (30%) Individual Critical Analysis (20%)	TBD	50%
Critical Self Reflection	1 week after group role play April 6	20%
Total		100%

Note: Assignment outlines and rubrics will be posted on LEARN

Late Policy

Due to the nature of this course, all group work dates stand. Any individual assignment submitted after the due date/time will be subject to a 10% penalty per day, including weekends. For group presentations - all members will receive a grade of 0% if material is not submitted on the presentation date.

Class Schedule *Flexible/fluid - may be adjusted at Instructor's discretion. Any changes will be posted in LEARN and you will be notified in class.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments Due
1	Jan 12, 2023	Introduction to Course & Ethical Practices Review assignments, groups, dates Create Student Teams	NA
2	Jan 19, 2023	Therapist Development and the Supervisory Relationship The Importance of Self-Care in the Therapeutic Field The Movement to Systems & Social Construction	Reflective practice, supervision and self-care (PDF in Learn) Chapter 1 (Worden)
3	Jan 26, 2023	The First Interview – Initiating Assessment & Engagement Skills Lab 1 Therapeutic Boundaries Skills Lab 2	Chapter 2 (Worden) Student Team 1 Chapter 3 (Worden) Student Team 2
4	Feb 2, 2023	Assessment: Diagnosis and Systems Model Skills Lab 3 Assessment: The Process of Identifying Family Patterns Skills Lab 4	Chapter 4 (Worden) Student Team 3 Chapter 5 (Worden) Student Team 4
5	Feb 9, 2023	Change and Resistance Skills Lab 5 Change Techniques Skills Lab 6 Discuss Group Supervision, Create Clinical Teams, and Review Perfect Therapy Session Project	Chapter 6 (Worden) Student Team 5 Chapter 7 (Worden) Student Team 6
6	Feb 16, 2023	Termination Skills Lab 7 Watch the film “Encanto” (Walt Disney Animation, 2022)	Chapter 8 (Worden) Student Team 7
Thursday, Feb 23rd NO CLASS		February 20th – 24th: Winter Reading Week	

8	March 2, 2023	Guest Speaker - Jackson Smith, MA (PhD Candidate; Whole Families Lab): <i>Processes in Family Therapy</i> Therapist's Self-Awareness and Identity	Critical Reflection Paper due in Learn Dropbox by 11:59pm
9	March 9, 2023	Guest Speaker - Dr. Uzma Rehman, C.Psych (Relationships Research Lab): <i>Emotion-Focused Couples Therapy</i> Dyadic processes related to sexual outcomes in intimate relationships	Van Anders et al. (2022) (Will be posted in Learn)
10	March 16, 2023	Bowen Family Therapy Self and Social Work: Toward an Integrated Model of Learning and Intersectionality	Clinical Team 1
11	March 23, 2023	Structural Family Therapy Experiential Therapy	Clinical Team 2 Clinical Team 3
12	March 30, 2023	Solution-Focused Therapy Narrative Therapy	Clinical Team 4 Clinical Team 5
13	April 6, 2023	*Optional Lecture: Becoming a Clinician/Relational Therapist	No Readings

Classroom Learning Climate, Conduct & Expectations

We will seek to create a classroom environment that embraces diversity and promotes equity and respect among all of us. I hope to create a learning context that increases our awareness of our explicit and implicit privilege, while being mindful of our positions and intersections that are both privileged and marginalized. Each student in this class is expected to be active, engaged, and to participate as they are able. Being respectful and considerate to one another, as fellow students and instructor, creates a learning environment that is safe, challenging, and engaging. If for any reason you are not able to engage in a portion of the class material, you are encouraged to step out of the class at your discretion.

Electronic Device Policy

In the spirit of creating a classroom environment conducive to listening and learning, I ask all students to restrict your laptop use during lectures to note-taking, and to silence your smartphones and other devices. In a shared learning environment online activity unrelated to class are distracting to other students and to the instructor. Your respectful consideration of others is very much appreciated.

Attendance Policy

Simple attendance will not be directly evaluated or monitored; however, academic success and

achievement of the course goals are facilitated by strong attendance. Note that active participation in the group supervision, role plays, and skills labs will be assessed, and attendance is, of course, a necessary condition for active participation.

Plan for Suspension of In-Person Learning

In the event that in-class meetings are suspended as per UW/SJU guidance, class will meet online. Classes will involve a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning. Online classes will end when we are cleared to return to in-person teaching/learning. Alternative methods of assessment (e.g., essays/quizzes/tests) may be used should this situation materialize as much of the current course evaluation consists of in-person presentations.

You are ill. What do you do next?

The Faculty of Arts has implemented new procedures starting January 1, 2023 for students needing accommodations for medical reasons. Students will now be required to access the central portal [Accommodations and Illness page](#) for a variety of medical issues – such as self-declarations of illness, pandemic declarations, or to upload your completed Verification of Illness Form (VIF).

You can **self-declare** an absence on Quest for pandemic-related reasons or short-term reasons. A short-term absence can be used for any reason for a maximum length of 48 hours (see link for more details). Here are the highlights:

- The declaration of a short-term absence is available to all undergraduate students taking courses at the University of Waterloo.
- Only one short-term absence can be self-declared per academic term.
- All of your instructors will be notified by email of your absence, as indicated in Quest.
- You are excused from all assessments due during the absence window.
- You are required to reach out to your instructors within the first 24 hours to discuss possible accommodations for missed due dates.

For other medical issues (particularly if longer than 48 hours) you can obtain a Verification of Illness Form (VIF) for other conditions and follow the instructions for submission of a VIF and/or supporting documentation. The VIFS will be reviewed in the Arts Undergraduate Office (AUO) for appropriate dates and signatures before being accepted.

Once you have self-declared or submitted an VIF ALL of your professors will be notified by the AUO and the length of your incapacitation.

Students are asked NOT to send VIFs or other medical documentation directly to their professors. Submitting only to the AUO allows students some privacy. Accommodations will then be negotiated with the Arts Undergraduate Office who will assist in providing direction to the professor on needed student accommodations. Many professors already are used to this system with the Access Ability office.

Academic Integrity

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.

Grievance

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo Policy 71, Student Discipline. For typical penalties, check the Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

Appeals

A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals.

Note for students with disabilities

AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Mental Health Services

All of us need a support system. The SJU faculty and staff encourage students to seek out mental health support if they are needed.

On Campus:

Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 x32655

Note: UW's in-person counselling services are currently limited, and most support will be provided online or by phone.

MATES: one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off campus, 24/7:

Good2Talk: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454 Grand

River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-4300 x6880 Here 24/7:

Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247

OK2BME: set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 x213