Theoretical Approaches to Counseling and Psychotherapy

Course Syllabus

Course Number:  PSYC 6200 – 01, 4 semester hours
Semester:  Fall 2014
  Tuesday & Thursday 9:30 –11:10 p.m.
Melson Hall  Room 207
Instructor:   Larry Schor, Ph. D., L.P.C., CPCS
Office Hours:  Monday & Wednesday 8:30-12:00, Tuesday 8:00-9:30, and by
  appointment
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Course Description:
A comprehensive approach to understanding the basic paradigms of the major
systems of psychotherapeutic intervention. The emphasis will be upon bringing light to
the cardinal issues that are always at stake in any form of therapeutic praxis. The
exploration of basic counseling models is aimed at understanding the art / science of
therapy.

We will begin by deepening our understanding of ways in which theories reflect
assumptions, ways of making meaning, organization of the significant, and implications
for practice. Various belief systems, their relationships to one another, and applications
for therapeutic work with people in a variety of settings will be examined. Ethical and
social context will be viewed as ground for theoretical implications and consequent
intervention strategies.

Our investigation will be collaborative. Therefore, your spirited participation is
essential. Students are expected to attend all class meetings and contribute to
discussions, activities, and identification of topics of exploration. We will share and
critique our own work and the work of others. If absence from class is unavoidable,
discuss what was missed with a classmate prior to contacting the instructor.

Course Objectives:
Through class discussions, readings, readings, experiential exercises, and lecture,
we will focus our inquiry on questions like:
- What criteria and rationale are used to construct theories?
- What makes a good theory?
- How do psychological theories inform therapeutic practice?
- Can theory really be operationalized to help alleviate psychological suffering?
- How can various contradictory theories all be "right"?
- What ethical principles are implicit in the application of theory?
- How do various theoretical frameworks recognize free will, determinism, hope,
  spirituality, and the role of suffering?
- How do Humanistic and Existential therapies differ from other approaches?
- What are the theoretical contributions of postmodernism, constructivism, chaos
  theory, and transpersonal psychology?
- How do various counseling theories treat the issue of diagnosing people?
- How do therapists authentically integrate theory in their work?

Student Reading List: Students are expected to choose an area of emphasis and will identify at least one text reflecting a specific area of theoretical interest. (Additional readings and journal articles will be assigned weekly)

Licensure- This course will fulfill the “Counseling Theory” requirement for the professional counselor license in Georgia.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

1. Weekly Reaction Papers:
   The weekly reaction papers will reflect emerging understanding and ideas that seem most significant. Students will draw from class discussions, readings, and lecture and articulate central concepts and personal understanding. You are limited to approximately two typed pages per assignment and should post reaction papers on CourseDen.

2. Mid-Term Examination:
   There will be a take-home mid-term examination. Students will have one week to prepare their responses.

3. Class Participation:
   Participation should be understood in terms of presence, contact, and engagement with the material and with fellow students. Therefore, participation should take place on a number of levels; both inside and outside the classroom.

4. Final Exam:
   There will be final examination. Specific details will be discusses during coming weeks. The purpose of the exam is to provide an integrative and collaborative process reflecting what we have learned together.

5. Final Paper:
   The final paper (10 page max.) will be a reflection of the students’ exploration of various theoretical approaches to counseling and psychotherapy. Specifically, it will be a forum for students to describe their essential and emerging understanding of theory and practice. It should focus on the theory that seems most “true” and be contrasted with other perspectives and approaches. The identification of specific ways in which theory contributes to practice is essential.

   There is a CourseDen component to this course. Students are expected to use this forum for collaborative research and sharing of ideas and information.

Grading Policy:

A  Consistently excellent effort in all aspects of the course.
B  Good or very good effort in all aspects, perhaps excellent in one area, or fair in another.
C  Satisfactory completion of all requirements, minimal effort in one area.
F  Minimal effort in all or most areas.