



Theories of Psychotherapy (PSY 641-001)
Western Kentucky University
College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Department of Psychology
Course Syllabus - Spring 2021



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

Instructor: Tim Thornberry, Ph.D.
Class days/times: Mondays 5:00 pm – 7:45 pm
Classroom: 3003 Gary Ransdell Hall
Email: timothy.thornberry@wku.edu
Phone: 270-745-2698
Office: 3020 Gary Ransdell Hall
Office hours: M 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm, T 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm, and F 12:00 noon – 2:00pm. If you cannot make these times, please feel free to send me an email to set up an alternative time to meet.

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 (NASP Standard):

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, psychotherapy, and the evidence-based practice movement. (NASP 2.4)
- 2) Explain major ethical issues that will influence your practice of psychotherapy. (NASP 2.10)
- 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. (NASP 2.4)
- 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. (NASP 2.4)
- 5) Demonstrate how you would use major approaches and techniques from the various schools of therapy. (NASP 2.4)

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, reading quizzes, reflective papers, and a research paper.

Teaching Philosophy:

“It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.”

-Albert Einstein

It is my belief that a teacher’s primary task is to awaken a passion for learning within the student. Not only should this passion be for the content of the course, but for all learning endeavors. It is my primary responsibility to present content in such a way as to make it meaningful to each student’s individual life. Also, it is my responsibility to present content and create assignments in multiple modalities to cater to the strengths and challenge the weaknesses of each student. I will give students opportunities to take an active role in their education through discussion, collaborative tasks with fellow students, creative thinking, and expressive writing. I believe it is your responsibility to be prepared for every class (i.e., complete assigned readings, prepare questions for class, carefully consider what the content means to you). Also, you should be responsible for completing work on time, attending every class, and accepting the consequences of failing to do with maturity. I believe that our mutual experiences and thoughts will result in an exciting semester that will broaden not only your views of testing but mine as well. Furthermore, I hope this course challenges yours and my perceptions of mental health so that we may perpetually re-evaluate our perceptions in the pursuit of tolerance, ethics, wisdom, and understanding.

Classroom Environment:

Please do your best to be on time for class. If you do arrive late, please enter quietly. If you know you will have to leave class early or arrive late on a regular basis, please take a seat somewhere near the exit so that you will not disturb others when you are entering or leaving. Please inform me ahead of time (by email or in-person) 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 seated around you. This entails not carrying on off-topic conversations with other students while in class, silencing all cell phones before class starts, and being attentive (i.e., not texting or working on assignments for other classes during lecture). If you are unable to meet these expectations, I would prefer you to miss class rather than disturb myself and others. 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. 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 stop by my office during office hours, and I'd be happy to answer them.

Getting Help:

If you are having difficulties with any aspect of this course, please come to my office hours, 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. 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.

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 exams and quizzes, completion of reflection papers, and a research paper.

Exams (100 points x 2 = 200 points - 32%): NASP 2.4, 2.10

There will be 2 multiple choice/essay exams worth 100 points each. Each exam will comprise 50 multiple choice questions worth 1 point each and an essay question worth 50 points. The multiple-choice portion of the exam will be completed in class and will be closed note/closed book. The essay portion of the exam will be take-home and open note/open book. Although you are encouraged to use outside resources for the take-home portion of the exam, you are expected to work independently and are not allowed to consult with other students. Exams will cover material from the textbooks, lectures, and any assigned outside readings.

Exam Policies:

If you are late to the exam, you will be required to finish the exam at the scheduled end-time. If another student has exited the exam room, you will not be permitted to take the exam. Turn off your cell phone and other electronic devices and leave them out of sight during exams. If I see you looking at an electronic device during an exam, I will assume you are cheating.

*NO make-up exams will be given without a **University Excused Absence** and **advanced notice** that you will need a make-up exam.

Reading Quizzes (130 points – 20%): NASP 2.4, 2.10

To ensure you keep up with the readings, a multiple-choice quiz will be given at the beginning of 13 classes (see tentative schedule for quiz days and assigned readings). Each quiz will be worth 10 points.

Reflection Papers/Discussion Questions (100 points – 12.5%): NASP 2.4, 2.10

Your textbook readings required for this course consist of 13 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 **emailing to me** a document 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.

These reflection papers/discussion questions will be **labeled with your name, course number, and the corresponding chapter (e.g., “Tim Thornberry PSY 641 Chapter 1 Reflection Paper”)** and **turned in via email by the beginning of class on the due date listed in the syllabus. No handwritten responses will be accepted.** Why not handwritten? Besides ease of reading, typing your discussion questions illustrates thoughtfulness, planning ahead, and demonstrates to me 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 13.

Personal Theoretical Orientation Paper (200 points – 32%): NASP 2.4, 2.10

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 (20 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 **emailed** to me prior to the deadline.

Course Points Breakdown:

Exams = 2 X 100 points each = 200 points (33% of total grade, each exam worth ~32% of your grade)

Reading Quizzes = 13 X 10 points each = 130 points (~20% of your grade)

Reflection Papers = 10 X 10 points each = 100 points (~16% of your grade)

Personal Orientation Paper = 200 points (~32% of your grade)

Course Total Points = 630 points

Final course grades will be based on the scale below:

A = 564 – 630 points (90-100%)

B = 501– 563 points (80-89%)

C = 438 – 500 points (70-79%)

D = 375 – 437 points (60-69%)

E = less than 375 points (< 59.5%)

Tentative Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture Topic</u>	<u>Readings and RPs/DQs Due</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1/25/21 Monday	Welcome, syllabus, intro to the course, historical context History (cont'd), definitions, ethics	Chapter 1	
2/1/21 Monday	Psychoanalytic Approach	Chapter 2	Reading Quiz Ch. 1 Reading Quiz Ch. 2
2/8/21 Monday	Individual Psychology	Chapter 3	Reading Quiz Ch. 3
2/15/21 Monday	Existentialism	Chapter 4	Reading Quiz Ch. 4
2/22/21 Monday	Person-centered therapy	Chapter 5	Reading Quiz Ch. 5
3/1/21 Monday	Gestalt	Chapter 6	Reading Quiz Ch. 6 Exam 1 via Blackboard
3/8/21 Monday	Behaviorism	Chapter 7	Reading Quiz Ch. 7

3/15/21 Monday	CBT	Chapter 8	Reading Quiz Ch. 8
3/22/21 Monday	Choice and Reality Therapy	Chapter 9	Reading Quiz Ch. 9
3/29/21 Monday	Feminist Therapy	Chapter 10	Reading Quiz Ch. 10
4/5/21 Monday	Constructive Therapy	Chapter 11	Reading Quiz Ch. 11
4/12/21 Monday	Family Systems	Chapter 12	Reading Quiz Ch. 12
4/19/21 Monday	Multi-cultural	Chapter 13	Reading Quiz Ch. 13
4/26/21 Monday	Final via Blackboard		Final Papers Due