Carson-Newman College
Play Therapy Across The Lifespan
MSC 638: Play Therapy Across The Lifespan
COURSE SYLLABUS
10 Week Term – Summer 2010

Semester Credit Hours: 3 Credits

Instructor: Carolyn Cole Brewer, Ed.D.
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Course Location and Time: 273 S Heritage Hall, Blended Class with 50% of course online and 50% in class

Required Texts:


Resource for Counseling Children:


Suggested, but Not Required Reading (A number of these are considered to be classics in the field):


*Denotes a classic in the field.

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to introduce counselors, educators, and community service personnel to the history, theories, techniques, and appropriate uses of play therapy across the lifespan. Through on-line information, discussion, feedback and the use of creative (expressive) arts, students are provided an introductory experience in skill development. Students will work both in specialty area groups and as a consortium of community counseling, school counseling, and education students during the class experience. Students will have the opportunity to develop a program of play therapy activities appropriate for their areas of emphasis.

**Relationship of Course to College and Program Philosophy and Goals:** This course allows students to become reflective and creative in practice with children and develops critical thinking skills in relation to children’s difficulties. Caring, interest, and psychological contact with children are demonstrated in materials presented and through cooperative and collaborative interactions. The emphasis in this course is the importance of the world of play as an opportunity for counseling and therapeutic intervention.

**Course Purpose and Goals:**

The purpose and overall goals of this course are:

- To provide students with an introduction to the use of play therapy across the lifespan; and
- To assist students in developing a program of play therapy activities appropriate for the individual student’s area of emphasis.

**Overall Course Objectives:** Students who successfully complete the course will:

(The practice listed in the objectives will be carried out in the college classroom during five in-class meetings and will not involve direct work with students through the college. If the student is employed in a supervised setting and the supervisor approves the student’s use of techniques
in the work setting, the supervisor and the student are responsible. This is not a practicum or internship course.)

1. Define and describe play therapy as it is used across age groups;
2. Describe the history of play therapy;
3. List and describe the major theoretical models of play therapy;
4. Identify legal, ethical, sociocultural, and developmental issues important to the use of play therapy;
5. Identify twenty-five techniques or activities that may be used in the individual student’s area of interest and outline the process, materials, and guidelines for how activities would be used and present three of the activities in class (one at each in class meeting);
6. Practice and process play therapy techniques and activities during three extended in-class sessions;
7. Identify and describe methods of assessment and evaluation of play therapy sessions and programs.
8. Observe three age groups at play and record what happened during the play process.

**Specific Learning Objectives as Required by the Association of Play Therapy Used for this course:**

Class participants will:

1. Review essential people, theorists and organizations that shaped the history of the profession of play therapy.
2. Understand the developmental stages of children and children’s play.
3. Appreciate and understand the most widely accepted theoretical models of play therapy and the formats in which they are most commonly offered (individual, group, family, etc.).
4. Identify developmentally appropriate play therapy toys and materials that can be incorporated into either a permanent or traveling play room for the purposes of both assessment and treatment.
5. Be able to conceptualize a client’s presenting clinical problem(s) developmentally and theoretically.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the play therapist and the play therapy in the context of the client’s broader clinical (medical/psychiatric treatment) and non-clinical system (family, school, community).
7. Identify elements of, and stages within the play therapy relationship, from intake to termination.
8. Demonstrate basic play therapy skills (with non-clinical volunteers) including (but not limited to) structuring, tracking, reflection of content and process, returning responsibility, facilitating self-advocacy, and limit setting.
9. Understand the person of the play therapist and how it impacts on the unfolding relationship with the client. This will include issues of transference and counter-transference.
10. Appreciate the legal and ethical issues that are both unique to play therapy and shared with other modalities, i.e. documentation, competence, informed consent, confidentiality, boundaries and duty to warn and protect.
11. Appreciate the evolving body of qualitative and quantitative play therapy research.
12. Understand issues of diversity and how they impact on every facet of play therapy, from choice of materials to the relationship with the client.
13. Read and understand the minimal training/supervision and voluntary practice guidelines promulgated by the Association for Play therapy.
Major Topics Presented in Class and in Required Texts:

Children’s growth and development; influence of the family on children; children’s behaviors and motivations; listening to children; meaning in children’s stories; childhood contexts; poverty and other disablers of children; reflective conversations; conscious and non-conscious goals in children; goal recognition and disclosure; play therapy assessments, interventions, materials, and process; expressive therapies: assessments, interventions, materials, and process; group skills and process with children, adolescents, young adults, middle-aged adults, and senior citizens; and school, societal, and behavior problems.

Instructional Components:

1. Individually Designed Projects:
   a. Each course participant will design a play therapy tool kit for his/her area of specialization and for a specific population.
   b. Each course participant will create a notebook of 25 play therapy techniques applicable to his/her area of specialization. Each activity outline will be completed following specific guidelines given by the instructor. Students are not allowed to copy activities from the Kaduson and Schaefer text for this requirement.

2. Course participants will observe local professionals, the instructor or videotape themselves in play interactions with a “normal” child in the context, mini-practica. These will be supervised by the instructor and observed by classmates.

3. Each course participant will lead the class in a minimum of two play therapy activities.

4. Each course participant will develop an emotional alphabet art/music notebook.

5. Each course participant will complete ten Blackboard assignment and submit them in a timely manner by the due date. Two points will be deducted for each late submission.

6. Each course participant will submit ten Discussion Question Responses on Blackboard on the due date. Two points will be deducted for each late submission.

7. Final: An exam assessing mastery of theories, concepts, and applications through a case study approach including specific questions, and the completion of the student’s personal assessment of his/her skills and needs for future review and study.


Course Grading:

Course grades will be based on class participation and attendance, response to weekly discussion questions on Blackboard, weekly assignments on Blackboard, development of a toolkit, development of an activities notebook, leadership of class activities, and a final exam. Students are expected to complete the required readings and all activities listed on the syllabus and given in class meetings. Evidence of dishonesty on any assignments will be handled according to University Policy and Procedures.

Class Participation, Attendance, and skills practice - 100 Points (20 points each for five class meetings)

Leadership of Two Class Activities – 50 points (25 points each)
Play Therapy Toolkit (Compiled using directions from instructor. Most students design this kit to include the materials needed for the activities in the activities notebook described below) - 100 points

Play Therapy Program Activities - 300 Points (15 points per activity for each of 25 activities)
Design a program for a certain population or specific area of concern. Include 25 activities to be used in this program and complete each activity description following guidelines given by the instructor.

Each activity write-up is required to have a 1 page sheet describing the following:
Title of the activity
Reference source(s) used for the activity in APA reference form
Appropriate population and age group for use of activity
Time required for activity
Materials and space needed for the activity
Specific objectives for student’s use of the activity
Training needed for use of the activity in the setting chosen
Activity outline
Activity evaluation process (including any forms to be used)
Legal, ethical, and multicultural considerations for use of activity

Emotions Alphabet Art/Music Book (75 points)
Each student will develop an emotions alphabet art/music book. Instructions will be given at the first class meeting and students will have the opportunity to develop the first letter of their emotional alphabet

Weekly Assignments on Blackboard - 100 points (10 points for each of 10 assignments)

Weekly Discussion Questions on Blackboard – 100 points (10 points for each of 10 discussion questions)

Final Exam (including case study) - 175 points

Total Points for the Class – 1000 points

**Grading Scale:** Grades will be distributed based on the following percentage scale of the total points possible: *(Based on a total of 1000 Points)*

93-100%=A; 85-92%=B; 76-84%=C; below 76%=F.

**Important Note:**
Due to the nature of this course, confidentiality is a major concern for this class. Information shared in class by class members is to be kept confidential.

**Course Management and Evaluation Policies:**

**Attendance:** It is impossible to maintain the quality of this course without full attendance and participation. Students are expected to be at each class and to participate in all online activities, having completed assigned reading ahead of time.
**Special Needs Policy:** Any student with a special documented disability (sight, hearing, mobility, learning disability, etc.) which may affect class activities should contact Dr. Rebecca Van Cleave at the Life Directions Center and provide appropriate documentation.

It is the responsibility of the disabled student (physical or learning), following self-identification with the Office of Services for Disabilities and filing of documentation, to notify instructors at the **beginning of the term**. If there is any student in the class who has a need for test-taking or note-taking accommodations, please discuss this with course faculty. Students preferring to participate in class without accommodations are also advised to inform the instructor of the specific nature of the disability at the **beginning of the term** in the event that accommodations are needed as the semester progresses.

**Academic Misconduct:** Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Students guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. In addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions, which may be imposed through the regular institutional procedures as a result of academic misconduct, the instructor has the authority to assign an “F” or a zero for the exercise or examination, or to assign an “F” in the course.

**Student Responsibilities:** Group discussion (online and in class) and class participation are required in this course. The value of this course depends on personal experience and student introspection is used to question or validate the principles taught. Indeed, it is through building an experiential consensus of practical application that the course materials will prove of value. It is essential that students complete required reading prior to the assigned class meeting and engage in class activities.
CLASS CALENDAR OF STUDY

Basic format of the course is as follows:

Keep in mind Mondays and Wednesdays at noon!

Weekly Questions/Assignments are due each Monday at noon. Student discussions are to be posted by noon on each Wednesday. The pattern is for you to submit work before noon on Mondays and Wednesdays and to check Blackboard each Monday and Wednesday at noon for work and new postings. Hopefully this will make the course easier for you to monitor.

Weekly Questions/Assignments will be posted on each Monday by noon and will be due the following Monday at noon. Weekly Discussion Question will be posted on each Monday by noon and will be due posting on Wednesday by noon.

Each Monday beginning on May 24\textsuperscript{th} content information for the week will be posted on Blackboard. This will feature and outline of the week’s reading material and key points. Additional article references will be available to increase the student’s opportunity to explore content topics. These will be added throughout the course.

All discussions are due to be posted by noon on Wednesday for review by all class members. All discussion questions will be posted on Monday for the week. There will be ten discussion questions for the course.

Weekly questions/assignments will be posted on Monday at noon and due the following Monday (with the exception of Memorial Day) at noon. There are ten sets of weekly questions/assignments. The first set will be posted on Monday, May 24\textsuperscript{th} and due on Tuesday, June 1\textsuperscript{st}, at noon due to the holiday weekend.

The final exam will be posted on July 19\textsuperscript{th} and due on July 30\textsuperscript{th}. The case study part of the final exam will be given at the second class meeting. This will give you several weeks to complete your case study part of your final and will make the last part of your exam more meaningful.

Weekly Calendar on the following pages...
DURING THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF CLASS HIGHLIGHTS WILL BE ADDED DAILY ON BLACKBOARD TO INTRODUCE YOU TO THE WORLD OF PLAY THERAPY!

Week 1: May 24 – May 28
Basic Orientation to Course
Overview of Play Therapy
  History of Play Therapy
  Uses of Play Therapy
  Types of Play Therapy
Ethical, Social, and Cultural Issues in Play Therapy

Readings:
1. Please spend some time reviewing each of the required books for this course. Begin with Landreth. The child-centered play therapy approach has been one of the foundations of the play therapy training across our world. Next, spend some time browsing through the Kottman text. This is an extremely practical text utilizing Adlerian theoretical approaches. The Appendices in this text are most practical and usable in many settings with differing age groups and can be adapted across the lifespan. Now take time to review the names of the favorite techniques. Finally, settle in and spend the next three weeks reading the entire Oaklander text. It will only take you a small amount of time...and you will enjoy the time. You have some other assigned readings, but all the students I have taught who read this text commented on its impact on their lives and their approach to counseling children and adolescents. Enjoy the richness of the years of Oaklander’s experience and her gift to the world of counseling.
2. During this week, be sure to read the first three chapters of Landreth and the Preface and Chapter 1 of Kottman as an introduction to Play Therapy.
3. Please refer to Chapter 13 of Landreth throughout the course.

Weekly Questions/Assignment posted on Monday night or Tuesday (Due Tues., June 1 at noon)
Weekly Discussion I posted on Monday (Student postings for Discussion I due on Wed. at noon)
No in class meeting this week

Week 2: June 1 – June 4
The Counselor’s relationship with the counselee/client

Readings: Chapters 2 and 3 of Oaklander, Chapter 4 of Landreth, and Chapter 5 of Kottman.

Week 2 Questions/Assignment posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Mon., June 7)
Week 2 Discussion posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Wed., June 2)
No in class meeting this week

Week 3: June 7 – June 11
Three theoretical approaches to Play Therapy
Child-centered Play Therapy (Landreth)
Adlerian Play Therapy (Kottman)
Gestalt and Creative Arts Play Therapy (Oaklander)

Readings: Chapter 5 of Landreth, Chapter 2 of Kottman, and Chapter 3 of Oaklander

Week 3 Questions/Assignment posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Mon., June 14)
Week 3 Discussion posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Wed., June 9)
Possible class meeting this week (TBA)

Week 4: June 14 – June 18
Consultation opportunities: The role of the parent (or the family), the teacher, and the counselor in play therapy

Readings: Chapter 4 and Appendices D, E, F, G, and I of Kottman and Chapter 8 of Landreth

Week 4 Questions/Assignment posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Mon., June 21)
Week 4 Discussion posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Wed., June 16)
No class meeting this week

Week 5: June 21 – June 25
Considerations for the Counselor
Materials and setups for Play Therapy

Readings: Chapters 6 and 7 of Landreth

Week 5 Questions/Assignment posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Mon., June 28)
Week 5 Discussion posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Wed., June 23)
Possible class meeting this week (TBA)

Week 6: June 28 – July 2
Process of Client-Centered Play Therapy

Readings: Chapters 9, 10, and 11 of Landreth

Week 6 Questions/Assignment posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Mon., July 5)
Week 6 Discussion posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Wed., June 30)
Class will meet this week!!!!!

Week 7: July 5 – July 9
Process of Adlerian Play Therapy

Readings: Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 of Kottman

Week 7 Questions/Assignment posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Mon., July 12)
Week 7 Discussion posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Wed., July 7)
Possible class meeting this week (TBA)

Week 8: July 12 – July 16
The magnificent world of the creative arts in counseling
Readings: Review Oaklander

Week 8 Questions/Assignment posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Mon., July 19)
Week 8 Discussion posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Wed., July 14)
No Class Meeting this week

Week 9:  July 19 – July 23
Play Therapy with special populations
What to do when situations

Readings: Chapter 12 of Landreth, Chapter 7 and Appendix B of Kottman, review of Oaklander

Week 9 Questions/Assignment posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Mon., July 26)
Week 9 Discussion posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Wed., July 21)
Possible class meeting this week (TBA)

Week 10:  July 26 – July 30
Terminating the counseling process
Re-educating
Filial Therapy: Child-Parent-Relationship Training

Readings: Chapters 16 and 17 of Landreth and Appendix J of Kottman

Week 10 Questions/Assignment posted on Fri. (Due at midnight on Fri., July 30)
Week 10 Discussion posted on Mon. (Due at noon on Wed., July 28)
Final Exam due on July 30 at midnight!

This course is the realization of a dream for me. I have wanted for many, many years to train counselors in the necessity and importance of play in the therapeutic process. Here at Carson-Newman I have been given that opportunity. This is the third offering of Play Therapy across the Lifespan and this semester includes a new approach to the course. Please accept my deepest thanks for your participation in this course. It is my hope that each of you will have a wonderful learning experience in this class and have some fun along the way! Carolyn Brewer