

WURZWEILER SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK. OF YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

SPIRITUAL THERAPY: THE STRENGTHS PERSPECTIVE AND MORE

SWK [Insert Course Numbers] (3 Credits)

Summer 2022

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course was originally developed at the request of my students as a sequel to the successful "Grounding the Strengths-Perspective" course, in the same spirit but with all new material, but it has now been updated to be accessible to all students. Thus, while it builds upon themes of this first course and its unique *Social-Work True*, Humanistic, non-reductive, holistic, and spiritually inclusive approach, **it is a free-standing elective with no prerequisites**, though it goes considerably deeper with some areas, using spirituality and spiritually inclusive therapeutic modalities to facilitate healing and growth, providing the deepest frameworks and tools available for clinical social work practice. These include the spiritually inclusive content drawn from *Gestalt Therapy*, *Psychodrama*, "Parts-Work" (e.g., from frameworks such as *IFS*, etc.), *Hypnotherapy*, Freud and especially Jung and Dr. Stanislav Grof and the whole tradition of *Transpersonal Psychology*, and a lot more. Moreover, part of the mission of the course, and its commitment to the core values of the profession, is to teach and ultimately practice with, truly empowering, edifying, non-deficit, non-pathologizing, models and interventions, making them accessible to social work clients, and thereby valuing the full depth, spectrum, and worth of the person, and of human experience and potential.

In line with the above ideas, however, it is important to emphasize that while there will be some time devoted to outlining theory and engaging in conceptual and textual learning (through class lectures and readings), **the overwhelming focus of the course will be on experiential learning and the concrete development of practice knowledge and skills**; i.e., this course has been designed as a systematically integrated (though of course not exhaustive) *survey* of what we have termed herein approaches to "Spiritual Therapy." **As such, the main focus of our study will be experienced-based, centered around, for example, meditations and exercises done in class and practiced in weekly assignments, real clinical demonstrations of therapeutic modalities and interventions, and related experiential activities done in pairs and in groups, etc.** In other words, the overarching goal will be to provide each of the developing practitioners with a substantial toolkit of interventions, coupled with a unifying framework and conception of the person to anchor it, as well as a wealth of resources that enable further study in this domain, etc.

WSSW SCHOOL POLICIES:

See below on the last page of this syllabus regarding “PLAGIARISM,” “HIPAA ALERT,” and “STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.”

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF THE COURSE:

A threefold guiding principle will govern all of the course content, and in particular, the various forms of clinical interventions; this principle has been loosely termed:

“The Person-Centered Empowerment Practice Principle,” and defined, as follows:

Each experiential exercise, principle of well-being & healthy living, meditation practice, wisdom teaching, and clinical technique, has a triad of application, such that it can be:

- 1.) Applied to one’s own life for awareness, personal growth, and for the sake of what is termed “self-care”;
- 2.) Utilized with a client in a therapeutic session or in another direct practice context; and also:
- 3.) Taught to a client, so that the client is empowered to use it outside of the practice setting in real life situations, etc.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

This course has a series of interrelated learning objectives, delineated in three categories (*awareness, relational, and conceptual*), as follows:

1.) Awareness (framed in reference to oneself, though fostered in the other):

- A.) The cultivation of the student’s own sensitivity to ***spirituality*** and self-awareness.
- B.) The awakening of the student’s sense of conscience, integrity, freedom & responsibility.
- C.) The concrete development of empathy, compassion, and emotional intelligence.
- D.) The acquisition of a series of specific self-care tools & principles of well-being, (designed, for example, to provide the resources in professional life to avoid “burn out,” cynicism, and “compassion fatigue”), etc.

2.) Relational (in reference to others, to use with/teach to clients, and oneself):

E.) The thoroughgoing use of spirituality, as a core therapeutic principle and clinical tool, that applies to, and underlies, all therapeutic work, etc.

F.) The acquisition of several meditation practices, experiential tools, and interventions.

G.) The learning of a number of strengths-based, assessment principles and protocols.

H.) The development of the capacity for culturally sensitive practice through the conscious use of self and the recognition of the shared humanity and intrinsic capabilities of all people; this is deeply enhanced by the perspectives of spirituality.

3.) Conceptual (articulation of the intellectual principles and background):

I.) Learn a comprehensive model of the person & macro/integration framework for "Spiritual Therapy," and for humanistic, strength-based, social work practice, anchoring the profession's core values.

J.) Acquire an introductory understanding of the various practice modalities and systems taught in the course.

K.) Gain a basic proficiency in the intellectual and textual background of the various thinkers and traditions that populate the course syllabus.

L.) Identify the most common forms of reductionism that contradict the core values of the social work profession and human reason, while developing the means to negotiate the value conflicts that result from this problem.

M.) Develop the ability to "reconstruct" and "reintegrate" spiritually exclusive and deficit-oriented, modes of practice, incorporating their insights and tools into a spiritually inclusive (and strengths-based) approach.

LEARNING METHODS:

The official course requirements and grading procedures have been designed to facilitate the integration and internalization of *practice knowledge, wisdom, and skills*; they thus include three main components, as follows:

1.) Regular attendance, and active class participation, with a curiosity and openness to experiential learning, and a willingness to engage in such exercises and activities with the whole class, etc.;

2.) Short weekly written assignments that are linked to in-class learning, and designed primarily to foster the development and acquisition of clinical skills and self-awareness; (these include, for example, practicing meditations learned in class and writing short experiential descriptions of them as directed, and on a small number of occasions during the semester may also include assignments that are a bit longer and slightly more involved, such as watching a video with experiential exercises and giving a report, or having a structured conversation with someone -- students will be notified in advance of any such longer assignments in order to give them ample time to complete them). These weekly written assignments added together, in conjunction with number one above, will substitute for any midterm and final paper requirements that could have been formulated for the course.

3.) Short readings (and/or videos) that are composed of primary source texts, along with supplementary material compiled by the instructor (that combines excerpts from such works with commentary and analysis).

[Additional notes: Students must finish all the assignments to complete the course. And see below on the penultimate page of this syllabus for required formal grading rubric.]

COURSE TEXTS & READINGS (AND VIDEOS):

To be Announced (see number three immediately *above*, and see "selected book list" and the course outline *below*; these will be announced ahead of time as needed, following course themes and background texts listed on this Syllabus, and according to each of the three course Units, etc.).

COURSE OUTLINE:

Though the entire course and all its content builds together as one fluid and structured whole, in which all the components are synergistically and systematically related, it has nonetheless been roughly divided into three core Units on the basis of thematic elements and traditions, as follows:

Unit One (~Weeks 1-3): *The Blueprint Model*.

This unit will teach an integrative model of the person that accounts for the full range and spectrum of human experience, and, in particular, has a detailed mapping of the mechanics of spirituality and spiritual experience. This will provide a useful backdrop for the rest of the course, in addition to providing therapeutic tools and interventions, etc.

Unit Two (~ Weeks 4-8): From the Tradition of *Existential-Humanism* to the *Enhanced Existential-Humanistic Approach* (and Beyond).

This unit draws on Gestalt, Psychodrama, Parts-Work, Hypnotherapy, and other material from classical and more recent Existential-Humanistic theory (broadly

conceived), designed to harness the healing and transformative power of spirituality and spiritual experience, making use of extensive therapy demonstrations and practices (e.g., "encountering and dialoguing with the Divine through the empty chair technique," etc.). This unit in particular imparts to the students a wealth of clinical skills and tools.

Unit Three (~Weeks 9-14): *Spiritual Therapy, the Transpersonal Tradition, and More.*

This unit includes some simple background from Freud, and especially Jung, and then dives deeply into the tradition of *Transpersonal Psychology*, in particular, the works of Dr. Stanislav Grof. It incorporates more theory and experiential elements, imparting both new clinical tools and assessment structures.

SELECTED BOOK LIST (Roughly Delineated by Unit):

Unit One:

Strive for Truth! (Part Two.) Discourse on Free Will. Rabbi Eliyahu E. Dessler.

The Will to Meaning: Foundations and Applications of Logotherapy. Dr. Viktor E. Frankl.

On the Theory and Therapy of Mental Disorders: An Introduction to Logotherapy and Existential Analysis. Dr. Viktor E. Frankl.

Unit Two:

The Carl Rogers Reader. Dr. Carl Rogers.

Client Centered Therapy. Dr. Carl Rogers.

Self Therapy: A Step-By-Step Guide to Creating Wholeness and Healing Your Inner Child Using IFS [Internal Family Systems], A New, Cutting-Edge Psychotherapy. Dr. Jay Earley.

Body-Centered Psychotherapy: The Hakomi Method. Dr. Ron Kurtz

The Hakomi Way: Consciousness & Healing. Dr. Ron Kurtz.

Gestalt Therapy Verbatim. Dr. Frederick S. Perls.

Gestalt Therapy: The Attitude and Practice of an Atheoretical Experientialism. Dr. Claudio Naranjo.

Gestalt Therapy: History, Theory, and Practice. Ansel L. Woldt and Sarah M. Toman.

The Essential Moreno: Writings on Psychodrama, Group Method, and Spontaneity. Dr. J. L. Moreno.

Foundation of Psychodrama: History, Theory and Practice (Fourth Edition). Dr. Adam Blatner.

Scripture Windows: Toward a Practice of Bibliodrama. Dr. Peter A. Pitzele.

Connection: Emotional and Spiritual Growth Through Experiencing G-d's Presence. Rabbi Dr. Efim Svirsky.

Transforming Therapy. Gil Boyne.

Unit Three:

An Outline of Psychoanalysis. Dr. Sigmund Freud.

Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle. Dr. C. G. Jung.

The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious. Dr. C. G. Jung.

The Transpersonal Vision: The Healing Potential of Nonordinary States of Consciousness. Dr. Stanislav Grof.

The Way of the Psychonaut, Encyclopedia for Inner Journeys, Volumes One and Two. Stanislav Grof, MD, PhD.

Spiritual Emergency: When Personal Transformation Becomes a Crisis, Stanislav Grof M.D., and Christina Grof.

Holotropic Breathwork. Dr. Stanislav Grof and Christina Grof.

Toward a Psychology of Being. Dr. Abraham Maslow.

The Farther Reaches of Human Nature. Dr. Abraham Maslow.

Higher Creativity: Liberating the Unconscious for Breakthrough Insights. Willis Harman, Ph.D. and Howard Rheingold.

The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Transpersonal Psychology. Edited by Harris L. Friedman and Glenn Hartelius.

Alcoholics Anonymous [The "Big Book" of Bill W.]. Bill Wilson.

Understanding the Enneagram. Don Richard Riso and Russ Hudson.

| Assignment | Grade percentage | Due Date |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Assignment 1 Unit 1 | 5% | 2 nd session |
| Assignment 2 Unit 1 | 5% | 3 rd session |
| Assignment 3 Unit 1 | 5% | 4 th session |
| Assignment 4 Unit 1 | 5% | 5 th session |
| Assignment 5 Unit 2 | 5% | 6 th session |
| Assignment 6 Unit 2 | 5% | 7 th session |
| Assignment 7 Unit 2 | 5% | 8 th session |
| Assignment 8 Unit 2 | 5% | 9 th session |
| Assignment 9 Unit 3 | 5% | 10 th session |
| Assignment 10 Unit 3 | 5% | 11 th session |
| Assignment 11 Unit 3 | 5% | 12 th session |
| Assignment 12 Unit 3 | 5% | 13 th session |
| Assignment 13 Unit 3 | 5% | 14 th session |
| Course participation rubric | 35% | |

SPIRITUAL THERAPY - THE STRENGTHS PERSPECTIVE AND MORE
GRADING RUBRIC

PLAGIARISM

Students should remember that the school will not condone plagiarism in any form and will sanction acts of plagiarism. A student who presents someone else's work as his or her own work is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking and writing. Plagiarism occurs when a student directly copies another's work without citation; and when a student paraphrases major aspects of another's work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also plagiarism to use the ideas and/or work of another student and present them as your own. It is not plagiarism to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept as a reaction to someone else's work; however, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. Any student who can be shown to have plagiarized any part of any assignment in this course will automatically FAIL the course and will be referred to the Associate Dean for disciplinary action that may include expulsion.

HIPAA ALERT

In line with the new HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your work, will need to be de-identified. What this means is that any information that would allow another to identify the person needs to be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious things like names and birth dates but may also contain other information that is so unique to the person that it will allow for identification, including diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations are asked to make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, Rochelle Kohn, Beren Campus, 917-326-4828, rkohn1@yu.edu, Abby Kelsen, Wilf Campus, 646-685-0118, akelsen@yu.edu, during the first week of class. After approval for accommodations is granted, please submit your accommodations letter to Disability Services Office immediately.