

## **Counseling 539: Play Therapy Fall 2017**

**Instructor:** Steve Armstrong, Ph.D., LPC (Board Approved Supervisor)

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**Office Hours (by appointment):**

**Monday 2:30-4:30 CHEC**

**Tuesday 5:30-7:20 Metro**

**Thursday 2:30-4:30 Metro**

**Friday 1:00-3:00 Commerce**

### **Course Description:**

This course is designed to (1) assist those who work with children in understanding the fundamental tenets of play therapy, (2) help participants develop an effective philosophy of and approach to play therapy, (3) increase participants' understanding of the inner world and behavior of children, (4) help students connect with children on a feeling level, (5) promote self-awareness and self-understanding, (6) increase participants' understanding of child development, particularly with children ages three to nine, (7) enhance participants' sensitivity to and acceptance of others, and (8) equip students with beginning-level play therapy skills.

### **Learning outcomes:**

Student will demonstrate:

Basic play therapy skills such as tracking, limit setting and the ability to respond to child's questions appropriately

An understanding of the core conditions and how they can be challenging in child-centered play therapy

The ability to explain child-centered play therapy to parents

Course Procedures: This course is a face-to-face course. No website will be used for instructional purposes. Involvement and learning in the course will be facilitated by means of:

- Lecture
- Small group activities and discussion
- Assigned readings and class discussion
- Role-play with toys and other hands on activities
- Videotapes and practicum experience

### **Required Texts:**

Axline, V. (1964). *Dibs: In search of self*. New York: Ballantine.

Landreth, G. (2012). *Play therapy: The art of the relationship* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Muncie, IN: Accelerated Development.

Nelsen, J. (1996). *Positive discipline*. New York: Ballantine.

### **Supplemental Texts:**

- Allan, J. (1988). *Inscapes of the child's world: Jungian counseling in schools and clinics*. Dallas, TX: Spring Publications.
- Armstrong, S. A. (2008). *Sandtray therapy: A humanistic approach*. Dallas, TX: Ludic Press.
- Oaklander, V. (1985). *Windows to our children*. Highland, NY: Gestalt Journal Press.

**No computer software has to be purchased to complete this course.**

### **Class Requirements:**

1. **Reading text:** I cannot stress how important it is to keep up with assigned reading in the text. This material is different from other material that you have read. Play therapy is a unique specialty that is very different from mainstream counseling. The first half of the class requires consistent reading. The second half of the class is mostly experiential.

2. **Play sessions:** Arrange two 30-minute play sessions with a 4 to 8 year old child, other than your own, at your home, a kindergarten room, or other setting with toys. Either use your toy bag, or use toys that are consistent with appropriate toys in the playroom (See Landreth text p. 166). Do not use a child's bedroom or a playroom because other toys will distract from the quality of the session. Do not conduct home play sessions until after the limit setting class. **Videotape both** sessions and choose **one** to submit for a **grade**. You will turn in both tapes but only one will be graded. You will critique the graded session in a paper (2-3 pages for each session), double-spaced) using the following subheadings:

- Overview of the Session (setting, happenings, etc.)
- My feelings about the session (write in detail)
- Child's Feelings (your best guess or hunch if you're not sure)
- Returning Responsibility to the Child (Provide specific examples)
- **Corrected Response (very important)**  
(Select four responses you would like to correct and show how you would change the response using the following format:
  - Child – (said or did... Give child's verbal response or action)
  - Your response
  - Corrected Response
  - Reason for Change

3. **Micro-Practicum:** A supervised play therapy experience with a child will provide you with an opportunity to implement what we have dealt with in class. You will critique this experience in a group sharing session and provide a self-evaluation of your experiences. Details of this assignment will be worked out later.

4. **Exam:** There will be one mid-semester exam.

5. **Portable Play Therapy Bag/Box:** This class is based on the concept that play therapy can be delivered in most any setting. Hence, you will need to create/develop your own bag/box of portable play therapy materials. Your bag/box should be designed to meet the needs of your expected population.

### **Grading:**

Attendance/class participation                      20 pts.

Home Play Session critique	80 pts.
Micropracticum	100 pts.
Portable bag/box	20 pts.
Exam	80 pts.

A	90%	270 points
B	80%	240 points
C	70%	210 points

**Attendance:** A large part of what we do in class is experiential, therefore, class attendance is considered to be crucial. **More than two absences will result in the final grade being lowered one grade level.** Being repeatedly **late** for class will affect your final grade. Any late assignment will result in a deduction of 10 points per week for that assignment.

**Please do everything you can to attend class on Feb 25 and Mar 3. Missing the facilitative responses or limit setting classes significantly will hinder your development as a play therapist. These two classes are hands-on, experiential, skill building classes.**

**Digital devices:** It is inappropriate to text, email, check email or texts, use a laptop or go online during this course. I expect your full attention and participation. Confine your use of digital devices to breaks.

#### **Students with Disabilities:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services  
 Texas A&M University-Commerce  
 Gee Library Rm 132  
 Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
 Fax (903) 468-8148  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

"All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment." (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)

#### **UNIVERSITY CLOSING DUE TO WEATHER**

Check <http://www.tamuc.edu/> regarding class cancellations. Also, KETR radio on 88.9 FM and television channels 4, 5, and 8 (channel 7 for Tyler & Longview Area).

#### **Discrimination Free Environment**

A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

#### **Campus Concealed Carry**

**Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed**

handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to (<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

## Flexible Calendar

- Jan 29 Course Overview, Play, Development, & Children, **Read Dibs & chapters 2 & 3 in Landreth prior to next class**
- Jan 26 Discussion of Dibs  
**Read chapters 4-6** in Landreth prior to next class
- Feb 2 The core conditions, Child-centered philosophy & therapist, Meaning of play **Read chapters 7 & 8** in Landreth text prior to next class
- Feb 9 History of Play Therapy, Playroom and toys, parents role, **Read chapters 9 & 10** in Landreth text prior to next class
- Feb 16 Facilitative responses, **Skill Practice**  
**PT Boxes due** **Read chapters 11 & 12** in Landreth text prior to next class
- Feb 23 Limit setting, **Skill practice** **Read chapter 16** in Landreth text prior to next class  
**\*\*After this class, you may schedule home sessions**
- Mar 2 Themes, progress and termination- Misty's tape, Exam Review
- Mar 9 **Exam**  
**Read chapter 15** in Landreth text prior to next class
- Mar 16 Spring Break
- Mar 23 Discuss home sessions, Play therapy cases-no reading Yea!!!  
**(Home play session critiques and videotapes due)**
- Mar 30 Prepare for Micropracticum
- Apr 6 **Micropracticum**  
**Read Positive Discipline prior to next class**
- Apr 13 Process Micropracticum, Positive discipline, Consulting with parents
- Apr 20 Sandtray
- Apr 27 Activity therapy/group play therapy, RPT
- May 4 Child Parent Relationship Therapy (CPRT)-Filial Therapy

**COUNSELING 539- Spring 2017**

Name:

Cell Phone:

E-mail you use most often:

Do you have any children of your own between the ages of 4-8? If so, how many children and what ages?

What experience do you have working with young children?

What is your dream job?

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