



EAST TEXAS A&M
— UNIVERSITY —

EAST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
COUN 539:41E Introduction to Play Therapy
SPRING, 2026
Mesquite Metroplex, Room 219
MONDAYS, 4:30PM-7:10PM

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Roberta Jacobs, PhD, LPC-S

Office Location: Virtual

Office Hours: By Appointment Only

University Email Address: jacobsroberta@etamu.edu

Preferred Method of Communication: Texting (903-274-9901)

Communication Response Time: 24-48 hours, excluding weekends

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Required Textbooks:

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

Landreth, G. (2012). *Play therapy: The art of the relationship* (3rd Ed or 4th Ed). Routledge.

Ray, D. C. (Ed). (2016). *A therapist's guide to child development. The extraordinarily normal years*. Routledge-Taylor& Francis Group

Supplemental Reading:

Allan, J. (1988). *Inscapes of the child's world: Jungian counseling in schools and clinics*. Springs Publications.

Armstrong, S. A. (2008). *Sandtray therapy: A humanistic approach*. Ludic Press.

Homeyer, L., & Sweeney, D. (2011). *Sandtray therapy: A practical manual* (2nd Ed.). Routledge.

Oaklander, V. (1985). *Windows to our children*. Gestalt Journal Press.

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Ray, D. C., Armstrong, S. A., Balkin, R. S., & Jayne, K. M. (2015). Child centered play therapy in the schools: Review and meta-analysis. *Psychology in the Schools, 52*(2), 107-123, <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21798>

Sweeney, D., & Homeyer, L. (1999). *The handbook of group play therapy*. Jossey-Bass.

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 selfawareness 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.

Course Procedures: 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

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

Measurement 1 (Knowledge):

I. Exam. Through this exam, students will demonstrate knowledge of course material gained from lecture and readings.

Measurement 2 (Skills):

I. Micro-Practicum. Students will apply skills training to a supervised play therapy experience. Students will critically evaluate their own clinical effectiveness in group supervision and will provide peer feedback as well.

*All SLOs address the respective CACREP Standards evident in the syllabus.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed (For this class we will not use LMS or D2L)

In this class, you will utilize the Learning Management System (LMS) entitled D2L for portions of instructional and learning methods, submitting assignments, participating in online discussions, and completing quizzes. You will need to utilize other technologies such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, etc. If you have issues with this system, it is your responsibility to contact the help desk immediately.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

As a student in this course, you are responsible for the active learning process. Expectations of this course include the following:

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- You are expected to display professionalism at all times.
 - You are expected to be respectful of your professor and peers.
 - You are expected to be open to feedback, as you will receive this throughout the program.
 - You are expected to be prepared for classes. Complete any-and-all readings prior to class time.
 - You are expected to complete all assignments by the deadline.
 - You are expected to adhere to the university student code of conduct.
 - You are expected to participate. During face-to-face classes, you are expected to actively participate in all activities and discussion. In the online format, you are expected to participate in all online discussions/activities. This is crucial to your learning.
 - Regularly check your university email. My suggestion is to check this at least once a day as your instructors and others from the department and University may contact you.
 - You are expected to begin your readings ASAP. Sometimes it may take more than one attempt to digest the material.
- Deadlines are the last possible moment something is due—not the first moment to start. Work ahead. I realize this may not always be possible. Whenever possible, please do so.
 - Be open to the process. This degree takes time, work, effort, and growth.

Assignments/Assessments*

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 session:** Arrange a 30-minute play session with a 4 to 8 year old child, other than your own, using a kindergarten room, or other setting with toys (**not in the child's bedroom**). Either use your toy bag (which is preferred) , or use toys that are consistent with appropriate toys in the playroom (approved by your instructor before the play session). Do not conduct home play sessions until after the limit setting class. Videotape the session (with a view of you and the child if at all possible) and critique each experience using APA format 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

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- Reason for Change

Note: I know it can be hard to get a quality video recording but in play therapy it is much more important than talk therapy with an adolescent or adult because the child's actions matter more than the words.

3. **Micro-Practicum:** A supervised play therapy experience with a classmate will provide you with an opportunity to implement what we have learned in the classroom setting using your portable play therapy bag/box.

4. **Exam:** There will be one 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.

*Note: (**For doctoral students only**)

If you are currently a doctoral student in our program, you will be required to submit an APA paper on play therapy. The topic for your paper must be approved by the instructor.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

90%-100%	A
80%-89%	B
70%-79%	C
60%-69%	D
< 59%	F

Grading:

Attendance/class participation/class discussions	20 pts.
Home Play Session/critique	80 pts
. (40 points per critique=80 points)	
Micropracticum	100 pts
. (50 points per session=100 points)	
Portable bag/box	20 pts.
Exam	80 pts.

Total points possible = 300. Your Final Grade is determined adding the point values earned from each assignment and dividing by 300. The resulting value is multiplied by 100 to yield a percentage. For example: $(240 \text{ [points earned]}/300) \times 100 = 80\%$

Assignments are due on the day noted in the syllabus. Unless noted otherwise, all assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. Late assignments will have 10% deduction per day late from the final score.

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TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Browser support

D2L is committed to performing key application testing when new browser versions are released. New and updated functionality is also tested against the latest version of supported browsers. However, due to the frequency of some browser releases, D2L cannot guarantee that each browser version will perform as expected. If you encounter any issues with any of the browser versions listed in the tables below, contact D2L Support, who will determine the best course of action for resolution. Reported issues are prioritized by supported browsers and then maintenance browsers.

Supported browsers are the latest or most recent browser versions that are tested against new versions of D2L products. Customers can report problems and receive support for issues. For an optimal experience, D2L recommends using supported browsers with D2L products.

Maintenance browsers are older browser versions that are not tested extensively against new versions of D2L products. Customers can still report problems and receive support for critical issues; however, D2L does not guarantee all issues will be addressed. A maintenance browser becomes officially unsupported after one year.

Note the following:

- Ensure that your browser has JavaScript and Cookies enabled.
- For desktop systems, you must have Adobe Flash Player 10.1 or greater.
- The Brightspace Support features are now optimized for production environments when using the Google Chrome browser, Apple Safari browser, Microsoft Edge browser, Microsoft Internet Explorer browser, and Mozilla Firefox browsers.

Desktop Support

Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)	Maintenance Browser Version(s)
Microsoft® Edge	Latest	N/A
Microsoft® Internet Explorer®	N/A	11
Mozilla® Firefox®	Latest, ESR	N/A
Google® Chrome™	Latest	N/A
Apple® Safari®	Latest	N/A

Tablet and Mobile Support

Device	Operating System	Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)
Android™	Android 4.4+	Chrome	Latest
Apple	iOS®	Safari, Chrome	The current major version of iOS (the latest minor or point release of that major version) and the previous major version of iOS (the latest minor or point release of that major version). For example, as of June 7, 2017, D2L supports iOS 10.3.2 and iOS 9.3.5, but not iOS 10.2.1, 9.0.2, or any other version. Chrome: Latest version for the iOS browser.
Windows	Windows 10	Edge, Chrome, Firefox	Latest of all browsers, and Firefox ESR.

- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:
 - 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
 - Broadband connection required
 - courses are heavily video intensive
 - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution
- **For YouSeeU Sync Meeting sessions *8 Mbps* is required.** Additional system requirements found here: <https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-SystemRequirements>
- You must have a:
 - Sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
 - Speakers or headphones.
 - *For courses utilizing video-conferencing tools and/or an online proctoring solution, a webcam and microphone are required.
- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. At a minimum Java 7, update 51, is required to support the learning management system. The most current version of Java can be downloaded at: [JAVA web site](http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp) <http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp>
- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.

Running the browser check will ensure your internet browser is supported. Pop-ups are allowed.

JavaScript is enabled.

Cookies are enabled.

- You will need some additional free software (plug-ins) for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
 - [Adobe Reader](https://get.adobe.com/reader/) <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - [Adobe Flash Player](https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/) (version 17 or later) <https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>
 - [Adobe Shockwave Player](https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/) <https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/>
 - [Apple Quick Time](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/) <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>
- At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Brightspace Support

Need Help?

Student Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on **Chat** or click on the words "click here" to submit an issue via email.



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System Maintenance

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Please note that on the 4th Sunday of each month there will be System Maintenance which means the system will not be available 12 pm-6 am CST.

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Communication with your professors is key to your professional growth. I am here to support and guide you along your academic journey. With that being said, I cannot help you if you do not communicate with me. Please make an appointment if you have any concerns or questions. Because I teach in different locations, email is the best way to reach me. I will attempt to answer all emails within 24 hours, Monday-Friday, but at times will need up to 72 hours to do so. When emailing, please use your university email and address me with courtesy and respect.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Written assignments are due on the day noted in the syllabus. All papers are due at the beginning of the class period. Late papers will have 10% deduction per day late from the final score.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html](http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html)

ETAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

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Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

ADA Statement

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- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-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 Statement

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

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so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&MCommerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

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.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING

The University aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to

TELUS HEALTH, a service available 24/7/365, via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR Code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



WEEK 6
March 09

SPRING BREAK

WEEK 7
March 16

Therapeutic Limit Setting—Practice Limit Setting
ASSIGNMENTS-KEEPING ON TRACK—BEFORE NEXT WEEK
READ Landreth Chapter 11

WEEK 8
March 23

Typical problems in play therapy and what to do if...
Practice Skill Sets
KEEPING ON TRACK—BEFORE NEXT WEEK
READ Landreth Chapter 12



REMINDER



Play Session #1/Reflection Paper Due
Video #1 Due in Class



WEEK 9
March 30

Group Supervision #1
Video #1 Bring to Class
Turn in Reflection Paper at the beginning of class

WEEK 10
April 06

Resolving challenges in the play room
Ethics and Legalities
Practice
ASSIGNMENTS-KEEPING ON TRACK—BEFORE NEXT WEEK
READ Landreth Chapter 13

WEEK 11
April 13

Parents as partners in play therapy
Clinical Forms/Treatment Planning
Multicultural considerations
Skills Checklist/Practice
Stages of Therapy and Termination
KEEPING ON TRACK—BEFORE NEXT WEEK
READ Landreth Chapter 7
BE FAMILIAR WITH WHAT IS NEEDED TO BE A PLAY THERAPIST
VISIT-- <https://cpt.unt.edu/registered-play-therapist>

