SYLLABUS

Professor: Alessandra Rellini, Ph.D.  
Office: John Dewey Hall, 240  
Phone: I do not answer the phone – please use email  
Email: arellini@uvm.edu

Course Description: This graduate course examines the theoretical perspectives, empirical foundations, and treatment strategies of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and sex therapy. DBT is a treatment specifically designed for chronic suicidal patients. There is evidence for the efficacy of DBT treatment when used with individuals with borderline personality disorder (BPD). Therefore, part of the course will be dedicated to learn about the biological, social and psychological characteristics of individuals with BPD and chronic suicidal clients. The other half of the course will cover theories and techniques for sex therapy. We will focus on evidence from the literature although there is only scarce information on efficacy of sex therapy. The goal of this course is to help students understand how to implement these specific treatments and the empirical evidence behind these approaches.

Recommendations: This course is likely to be most appropriate for graduate students in clinical psychology who have already learned basic assessment and treatment skills. Also, students who are currently treating trauma survivors and/or couples may benefit the most from this course. Psychotherapy experience is not necessary but an open mind and interest in learning psychotherapy techniques is. Knowledge and familiarity with research designs and statistical tools used in clinical outcome studies is highly recommended.

Suggested Textbooks:  

Readings:  
Articles are posted on Bb

Learning Objectives: At the completion of the semester, you will be able to:  
- Describe the theory, principles, and techniques of DBT  
- Conceptualize patients according to DBT and identify and assess targets for change  
- Be familiar with most commonly used approaches to treat sexual dysfunction  
- Know evidence behind the efficacy of the different sex therapy techniques

Class Format: The lecture is divided into two parts: the first half is dedicated to DBT and the second half will be focused on sex therapy. The first hr of class will use a formal lecture style to present empirical evidence and theoretical formulations of borderline and sex therapy cases. The following 2 hrs will be used to teach how to implement techniques and skills. This section will use role-play exercises, experimental lectures, discussion of videotaped sessions conducted by experts, and discussion of cases presented by class members. In the spirit of DBT, lectures will start with mindfulness exercises and students will learn DBT skills and will be asked to practice these skills in their lives and keep a journal of their personal experiences. A selected number of readings will be assigned before class and students will be expected to intelligently discuss the readings during class.

Requirements and Grading:  
- **Exams** – two in-class exams based on the lectures and readings will be used to assess your ability to integrate and understand the material. The scores on the two tests will account for 60% of your total grade.  
  Part of the exams will use videotapes of experts doing therapy with clients with different diagnoses. The
video-exams are designed to test your ability to identify techniques and to provide a formulation of a case based on what you learned during the course.

♦ **In class participation** – because this is an experiential course, the success of the class is based on your participation in class. Between Sept 10 and Oct 8 you are required to email me 2 written questions to stimulate class discussion *(Note: questions need to be emailed by midnight on the day before class).* Make sure you sign up not later than the week before for the role play and the case presentation. Between Oct 22nd and Nov 26th you will need to present 4 articles that inform our understanding of sex therapy in one of the topics listed in the syllabus. Please be prepared to present and discuss these articles in class. Class participation counts for 30% of your total grade.

♦ **Skills Practice** – We will practice mindfulness exercises at the beginning of the class and you will learn DBT skills in class and are expected to practice these skills during the week. If you do not learn the skills yourself you will not be able to teach them to your client, hence the importance of this part of the class. You will keep a journal of your experience as you practice the skills or reflect on how these skills apply to your life or your clients’ situations. The actual content of the journal will not be graded, but your effort to engage in the skills and try to integrate them in your life and in your practice will. I will randomly collect and review students’ journals at least twice during the semester (but as many as 4 times) so bring the journal with you to class. The average grade you will receive for your journal will count for 10% of your final grade.

**Schedule of Assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Experiential Training (EXP.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Aug 27</td>
<td>DBT THEATRE</td>
<td>Intro to the Course &amp; Commitment</td>
<td>BPD Intro Orientation and Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sep 10</td>
<td>DBT Bio-Psycho-Social Model</td>
<td></td>
<td>BPD Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Sep 17</td>
<td>Acceptance and Validation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Validation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sep 24</td>
<td>MINDFULNESS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Suicidality, Behavioral Analysis Coaching Calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Oct 1</td>
<td>Does DBT Work? CBT vs DBT</td>
<td></td>
<td>Distress Tolerance Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Oct 8</td>
<td>Emotion Regulation Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpersonal Effect. Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Oct 15</td>
<td>EXAM 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Oct 22</td>
<td>Couple Therapy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sex Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Oct 29</td>
<td>Premature Ejaculation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Erectile Dysfunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Nov 5</td>
<td>Desire Biology/Psychology</td>
<td></td>
<td>HSDD Treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Nov 12</td>
<td>Female Sexual Arousal Disorder</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sexual Pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Nov 26</td>
<td>Female Orgasm Disorder – Bio-Psycho Model</td>
<td></td>
<td>FOD Treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC 3</td>
<td>EXAM 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Academic Honesty and Professional Conduct:** Plagiarism or dishonest examination behavior will result in the assignment of a grade of F for the course. It is expected that your interpersonal conduct is respectful of and sensitive to the needs of others at all times.

**Personal Comfort:** Your personal comfort during the learning process is important. Please do not hesitate to inform me of your training needs and preferences. Your feedback will allow me to try to better tailor the course to meet students’ preferences. You are free to excuse yourself from a technique demonstration or role-play should you become too uncomfortable. If you excuse yourself, please make certain to speak with me about your experience before the next class meeting. It is permissible to bring food and beverages to class. All cases discussed in class need to be treated with the same confidentiality limits of other clinical cases you are seeing. If a student presents a case of someone that you know at a personal level, you are expected to excuse yourself from the room as soon as you recognize the individual.

**Office Hours:** I will be available to meet to discuss anything related to the class or your professional development.
Class Topics

1. **BPD Introduction To The Course & Commitment**
   - **Lecture:** BPD and DBT Principles & Assumptions
   - **Readings:**
   - **Activity:** DBT Theatre: Developing empathy for BPD clients

2. **BPD Bio-Psycho-Social Model and Assessment**
   - **Lecture:** The Biosocial Model, Borderline Personality Assessment and Diagnosis
   - **Readings:**
     - Sanislow, Grilo, McGlashan, 2000
     - Zimmerman & Mattia, 1999
     - Putnam & Silk, 2005

3. **DBT Acceptance and Validation**
   - **Lecture:** What is Validation and how it works
   - **Readings:**
     - Linehan, 1993, Ch.8
     - Miller, Glinis, Woodberry et al., 2002.
     - DBT Manual – Introduction
     - DBT - Ancillary
     - Also reading from prev. week Lynch, Chapman, Rosenthal, Kuo, Linehan 2006

4. **Mindfulness – Suicidality - Behavioral Analysis – Coaching Calls**
   - **Lecture:** The Whats and Hows of Mindfulness
   - **Readings:**
     - Linahen ch. 6
     - DBT Manual Behavioral Analysis
     - DBT Manual Mindfulness

5. **Does DBT Work? – Distress Tolerance Skills**
   - **Lecture:** Empirical Evidence for Dialectical Behavior Therapy
   - **Readings:**
     - Dexter-Mazza, Murray, Comtois et al., 2008
     - Clarkin, Levy, Lenzenweger, et al. 2007
     - Zanarini, 2009
     - DBT Manual Distress Tolerance

6. **Emotion Regulation Skills and Interpersonal Effectiveness**
   - **Lecture:** Teaching Emotion Regulation and Interpersonal Effectiveness
   - **Readings:**
     - Selby, et al., 2009.
     - DBT Manual Emotion Regulation
     - DBT Manual Interpersonal Effectiveness
7. ** Basics about Couples Therapy and Sex Therapy  
   READINGS By: Carolyn & Juliana = Couple Therapy

8. ** Premature Ejaculation – Erectile Dysfunction  
   READINGS By Maggie = PE; Jessica = ED

9. ** Bio-psychological Basis of Desire and HSDD Treatment  
   READINGS By Carolyn & Juliana = HSDD

10. ** Female Sexual Arousal Disorder and Sexual Pain  
     READINGS By Maggie = Pain; Liz = FSAD

11. ** Female Orgasm Disorder – Theoretical Model and Treatment  
     READINGS By: Jessica = FOD