

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Counseling Program

EDCD 797.002 – Gestalt Counseling
1 Credit, Fall 2021

Saturday, October 16th & Sunday, October 17th 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM
Fairfax campus – Aquia Building Room 346

Faculty

Name: Jesse A. Rabinowitz, Ph.D.
Office Hours: Professor lives out of town, so office hours by appointment, remotely
Office Location: Krug Hall Suite, 202 (Counseling Office)
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Prerequisites/Corequisites

B or better in EDCD 603

University Catalog Course Description

Advanced topics in education

Course Overview

This course will provide students with an introduction to the theory, principles, and practices of Gestalt Therapy. The course will be a balance of lecture and experiential work, with an emphasis on the here-and-now experimental approach for which Gestalt Therapy is known. Students will be invited to participate in self-exploration in a safe group environment in order to maximize their felt-grasp of the principles beyond a simple cognitive understanding. The course will cover the gestalt model of holistic/holarchic organization of the person/environment field, homeostasis and imbalance in humans, the need/awareness/excitement/contact/withdrawal cycle, the facilitation of, and impediments to, healthy contact, the gestalt therapeutic environment and client/therapist relationship, the principles that guide the therapy process, the use of here-and-now attention and experiments to illuminate, explore, and improve contact, and how gestalt can be integrated into different practice settings & populations.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered using a [lecture, lab, seminar, internship, and/or hybrid (2-75% online)] format.

Learner Outcomes

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Understand the rudiments of Gestalt theory and practice
2. Experience and practice Gestalt working processes
3. Understand how Gestalt therapy can promote healing with a variety of populations and issues

4. Conceptualize how they might incorporate Gestalt theory and practice into their own unique approaches and styles of counseling.

Professional Standards

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) 2016

Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards:

EDCD 797 is a special topics course and meets the requirement that all master's students take 2-3 credits of special topics course work. This 1-credit course will contribute to counseling students' knowledge of a particular population of clients.

EDCD 797 fulfills the requirements of the following professional organizations

Virginia Department of Education requirement for school counseling licensure that candidates understand the knowledge, skills and processes of individual counseling. Virginia Department of Health Professions requirement that Licensed Professional Counselor candidates complete graduate study in theories and techniques of counseling and psychotherapy. Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) core requirement described in Section II.K.e: Helping relationships: An understanding of counseling and consultation processes. American Counseling Association Code of Ethics requirement that counselors establish counselor education and training programs that integrate academic study and supervised practice.

Required Texts

Students will be provided with an extensive handout covering the course material, as well as additional documents and links.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., VIA).

- **Assignments and Examinations**

Unless otherwise noted, the assignments for the course are to be submitted in an electronic form to the professor's email address (jrabinow@gmu.edu).

I. Gestalt Theory Paper (30% of total grade)

Articulate:

A definition of gestalt therapy

The gestalt model of holistic/holarchic organization of humans in their environments

The need/awareness/excitement/contact/withdrawal cycle

An understanding of good contact and how psychopathology is described in gestalt terms

A description of the therapeutic environment and working methods of gestalt therapy

II. Self-Reflection Paper (40% of total grade)

Describe your experiences of the class, what you noticed freshly about yourself and how you noticed it, your reactions to the work and to gestalt therapy, noteworthy experiences that occurred for you during the class, and how you think this class may have altered your ideas about therapeutic work.

III. Participation (30% of total grade)

- Students are expected to demonstrate a high level of participation consistent with graduate-level education. Students are expected to: be on time and present for the duration of the class; demonstrate engagement (ask questions, share thoughts); be respectful and attentive; and demonstrate preparedness for each class meeting. Although self-exploration and process work are not required of any participant, students are invited to view the class as an opportunity to work on themselves individually, in dyadic pairs, and in the larger group.

- **Other Requirements**

Attendance: In accordance with the policies of the Counseling and Development Program, on-time attendance at every class meeting is expected. Late arrival to class will be considered an absence. Due to the short nature of this class, **any unexcused absences will result in loss of course credit.** Attendance is required for all classes. Excused absences are permitted for illness, religious holidays, or emergency situations only; documentation is required for the absence to be considered excused. Work-related absences are not considered excused.

Course Requirements: Each student is expected to: (1) attend each class, (2) arrive on time and stay for the entire class period, (3) participate in discussions and in-class exercises (4) submit assignments by the end of day on the Sunday one week after the class.

- **Grading**

In accordance with the George Mason University Grading Policy, the following grades may be achieved:

A [100-97]; A- [96-94]; B+ [93-91]; B [90-87]; B- [86-84]; C [83-80]; F [79 and below]

Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

Students must adhere to program professional dispositions:

<https://cehd.gmu.edu/assets/docs/forms/Professional%20Dispositions.pdf>

Professional Dispositions Assessment

Professional Dispositions are assessed in all required courses. The minimum score (benchmark) is based on the level of the course, as described below.

Level of Assessment	CMHC	SC	Minimum Score
Basic	602, 609, 606, 601, 525, 603, 604, 656 654, 652, 658	602, 606, 609, 601, 525, 603, 604, 656 613, 611, 626	2
Intermediate	608, 750, 660, 628, 619, 610, 797	608, 751, 660, 628, 619, 610, 797	3
Advanced	792, 793	794, 795	4

Professional Dispositions assessments are scored as follows:

- **4: Consistently Evident** – The student demonstrates the disposition all or almost all of the time. This rank is considered exceptional, particularly for students who are at the beginning of their program. Students who are advanced in the program (i.e., in their last year of the program and enrolled in Internship I or II) should expect to achieve this rank.
- **3: Frequently Evident** – The student demonstrates the disposition often or most of the time. It is expected that students in the middle of the program (i.e., usually the second year for full time or third year for part time students) will achieve this rank. This reflects that they have moved beyond the initial phase of counselor training and are developing well towards being a professional counselor.
- **2: Sometimes Evident** – The student demonstrates the disposition sometimes or inconsistently. It is expected that students at the beginning of the program (i.e., first year for most students) will achieve this rank. Students at the beginning of the program are expected to be developing towards these professional dispositions as a part of their counselor training and preparation for their future as a professional counselor.
- **1: Seldom Evident** – The student demonstrates the disposition rarely or not at all. In some instances, this may also indicate a harmful demonstration of professional disposition(s). Students at the beginning of their program may achieve this rank, which can be developmentally appropriate as they learn the expectations for students and future professional counselors. Should this occur, students should expect to meet with their advisor, who will assist them in addressing the area of concern.
- **N/A: Not Applicable** – An instructor or supervisor may use this to note that they did not have the opportunity to observe the disposition or that it was not relevant in the given context. This is most likely to occur at the beginning of the program when some dispositions may not be germane to the particular class.

Class Schedule

Class	Date	Topic(s)	Assignments
1	Saturday, October 16 th , 2021	Gestalt theory and principles: Holism/Holarchy Needs Attainment Awareness & Contact	
2	Sunday, October 17 th , 2021	Gestalt Process: Therapeutic Process Therapeutic Relationship Experiments in Contact Integration of Gestalt into student's practice	Assignments 1 & 2 due October 24th, 2021

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Counseling Program Mission Statement

The Counseling Program is committed to preparing counselors who promote the social, psychological, physical, and spiritual health of individuals, families, communities, and organizations in order to contribute to the advancement of global well-being. The program strives for national and international excellence in implementing a counseling perspective which provides a foundation in basic counseling skills and focuses on social justice, multiculturalism, international, advocacy and leadership. It is our belief that a global perspective on development across the life span, and an understanding and appreciation of multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice are integral to the preparation of professional counselors, requiring that professional counselors are prepared to assume leadership roles, be proactive change agents and become advocates for social, economic and political justice. The program is committed to accomplish this mission by working through interdisciplinary teams as well as promote the interconnectedness of teaching, research, service and professional practice. Through this mission faculty will facilitate a continued tradition of international, national and regional leadership through the development of collaborative partnerships and projects, research, publications, presentations, consultation, and training.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/>.