

Abilene Approval Chart for Curriculum Changes

A = Approve I = Information Item R = Respond In Writing

Course Number: **BMFT 612: Couples Therapy II**

We would like to create a new course titled BMFT 612 Couples Therapy II. Based on student feedback, we created this course to replace BMFT 651 Sexual Therapy. Students complained that Sexual Therapy was repetitive with other courses. Concurrently, faculty and students noticed missing content in our overall program curriculum. Couples Therapy II includes the unique content from Sexual Therapy plus new content to fill in the holes. The course has been taught twice previously with positive feedback from students.

	Campus-Level Academic Review¹	A	I	R	E	N	O
	Change to a Course Include signatures from all chairs/program directors for cross-listed courses. ¹						
1.	Title (description unchanged)	A	A	A	I	I	I
2.	Description (not affecting content)	A	A	A	I	I	I
3.	Course term(s)	A	I	A	I	I	I
4.	Content (change of course outcomes)	A	A	A	I	I	A
5.	Number of credit hours	A	A	A	A	A	A
6.	Course number within the hundred	A	A	I	I	I	I
7.	Course number beyond the hundred	A	A	A	A	A	A
8.	Prerequisites	A	A	A	I	I	I
9.	Course restriction (e.g., majors only, junior standing)	A	A	A	A	A	A
10.	Level change (U to G or G to U)	A	A	A	A	A	A
11.	Cross list course	A	A	A	A	A	A
12.	Department of record	A	A	A	A	A	A
13.	Open or close a course	A	A	A	A	A	A
	Change to a Degree Plan						
14.	Educational Program — Revise	A	A	A	A	A	A
15.	Educational Program — Adopt/revise admission requirements	A	A	A	A	A	A
16.	GPA — Revise program-required GPA	A	A	A	A	A	A
17.	Minor — Revise	A	A	A	A	A	A

		V	P	U	E	S	D	F	O	S
	Full Review									
	Change to Catalog Information (for Campus)									
18.	General requirements for Bachelor's and Associate Degrees	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	A	I
19.	Policies governing academic probation and suspension	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	A	I
20.	Requirements for graduating with honors	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	A	I
	Change to a Degree Plan									
21.	Educational Program — Add or Discontinue ^{2 3}	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	I
22.	Educational Program — Discontinue (Provost-proposed)	R	-	R	A	A	A	A	A	I
23.	Minor — Add or Discontinue	A	A	A	A	A	A	-	A	I
24.	Minor — Discontinue (Provost-proposed)	R	-	R	A	A	A	-	A	I
25.	Degree — Add or Discontinue	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	I
26.	Degree — Discontinue (Provost-proposed)	R	-	R	A	A	A	A	A	I

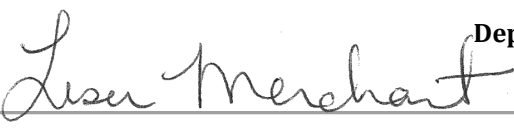
	Change to General Education Requirements for Undergraduates (System)	.	I	E	U	O	G	S	I	S
27.	Change course outcomes of an included course	A	A	A	A	A	A	-	A	I
28.	Add or drop a required course from the General Education Requirements	A	-	A	-	A	A	A	A	I
29.	Add or drop a course from a menu within the General Education Requirements	A	-	A	-	A	A	-	A	I
30.	Comprehensive revision of General Education Requirements	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	A	I

Notes

² Any change to a cross-listed course requires the signature of both department chairs or program directors overseeing the course to ensure that the courses stay in sync. This includes courses taught at other campuses (e.g. BIBL 101 and BIBO 101).

³ For undergraduate majors, a minimum of 30 hours is required. These programs must have a minimum of 6 elective hours, unless the requirements of external accrediting bodies make it impossible. Master's programs must include a minimum of 30 hours, and doctoral programs must include a minimum of 30 hours beyond the master's.

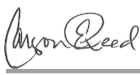
⁴ When a department/school or dean proposes closing a program, approval routing follows the typical process beginning with the department/school. An administrative proposal by the provost or senior vice president for academic affairs would follow the "provost-proposed" routing on the chart.

	Department/School(s)
	8/18/2025
Chair Signature	Date

Chair/Program Director Signature	Date
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	College Academic Council(s)
	09/11/2025
Chair Signature	Date

Chair Signature	Date
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	Dean(s)
	09/11/2025
Signature	Date

Signature	Date
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	Teacher Education Council
Signature	Date

	Campus Academic Council:
	Abilene Undergraduate or Abilene Graduate
Signature	Date

	Provost
Signature	Date

	University General Education Council
Signature	Date

University Faculty

Abilene Faculty Senate Chair signature

Date

Dallas Faculty Council Chair signature

Date

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Signature

Date

President

Signature

Date

Abilene New Course Application

Instructions

- Consult with the Registrar's Office to confirm a course number and ask any questions about effects on related degree plans.
- Complete the New Course Application.
- Create the course syllabus. Refer to the Syllabus Checklist and consult with the Adams Center Instructional Design team with any questions.
- Submit the application and syllabus to the Adams Center Instructional Design team by email to Scott Hamm for review and recommendations.
- Submit the application and syllabus for library review to Associate Dean Mark McCallon.
- Compile the full application and attachments. This includes at a minimum the approval chart, new course application, syllabus, and letters reviewing the syllabus and library support.
- Conduct departmental vote to approve addition of the course.
- Submit to College Academic Council.
- Your college will route the application from this point. The department chair will be notified of necessary meetings with university councils.

The course developer completes this application with all relevant supporting documentation before the new course is reviewed by the department or any academic council.

Syllabus Checklist

NOTE: It is not necessary to submit this checklist with the New Course Application. The checklist is used by the Adams Center in syllabus review. All items below are required unless otherwise marked.

About the Course

- Course number and title
- Credit hours
- Semester and year
- Meeting time and place (if face-to-face)
- Prerequisite/corequisite

About the Instructor(s)

- Name and title or rank
- Office location
- Phone number(s)
- Email address
- Office hours / contact expectations

Mission Statements

- ACU mission statement
- College mission statement
- Departmental mission statement
- Personal mission statement (optional)

Unique Christian Perspective

- Description of how learning and Christian faith are integrated in the course

Course Content

- Catalog description
- Intended audience
- Outline of topics
- Format of course/types of activities
- student should expect in the course

Teaching/Learning Methods and Format of Class Sessions

- Description of the types of activities students should expect in the course

Materials

- Required and optional materials, including textbooks, etc.

Student Learning Outcomes/Measurements

- Specific outcomes stated in measurable terms
- Assignments or instruments that will be used to assess the outcomes

Assessment/Grading Criteria

- Complete and accurate details of factors and elements that will compose the final grade
- Weight or point value of all graded elements
- Grading scale with expectations for letter grades
- Extra credit opportunities (optional)

University Policies

- Special needs policy — ADA
- Academic integrity policy and link
- Title IX policy

Course Policies

Expectations and consequences regarding:

- Attendance (if face-to-face)
- Tardiness (if face-to-face)
- Participation
- Course-specific academic integrity information
- Late assignment/exam policy

Course Calendar

Calendar is not required for New Course Application, but it must be included in all syllabi distributed to students.

- Exam dates
- Assignments
- Due dates and other deadlines
- Schedule of readings and topics
- Statement to reserve right to modify the calendar as necessary

Reference

Schedule Type definitions for Section 1K.

Traditional Lecture	Traditionally formatted course that may include a variety of teaching methods.
Traditional Lab	Usually affiliated with lecture course. Provides application of knowledge and learning experiences related to lecture content.
Traditional Lecture/Lab	Traditionally formatted course that may include a variety of teaching methods, and for which a lab experience is included and graded with the lecture portion of the course. One grade for both.
Experiential Learning	Application of knowledge or a learning experience not typically connected to a lecture course. Examples include theatre workshop, field experience, practicum, internship and active research courses.
Seminar	Course in which a topic is discussed by a teacher and a small group of students. Examples include colloquia and workshops.
Studio	Application of knowledge or a learning experience that combines lecture, active learning and discussion among the teacher and students in a studio environment. Examples include art, design and music.
Thesis	Required course for students working on graduate thesis.
Dissertation	Required course for students working on doctoral dissertation.

Guidance for writing student learning outcomes in Section 3B.

	Student Learning Outcome	Measurement
	<i>Instructions:</i> Outcomes should be observable and measurable, and stated in terms of student performance. It can be helpful to complete the sentence “Students will be able to...” If the outcomes are primarily cognitive, consider using Bloom’s Taxonomy to evaluate whether the competencies are at an appropriate level for the course. In the rarer instances where affective or psychomotor competencies are used, give careful attention to measurement techniques.	<i>Instructions:</i> Detail the instrument that will be used to gather the measurement. Examples might include: written papers, quizzes, tests, verbal presentations, video, audio, portfolio artifacts, demonstrations, performances, etc. This column should indicate where you will look for evidence of the type of student work that you expect.
1	Defend dietary goals in light of current research.	Weekly Reading Journal, Research Paper
2	Examine personal values, attitudes and expectations to enhance self-awareness for greater effectiveness as a social work professional.	Field Instructor Evaluation

3	Integrate terminology from literary history into writing.	Research Paper
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Abilene New Course Application

You may delete the preceding instructional pages before submitting application.

Course ID (<i>Subject Code and Number</i>)	BMFT 612
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1. Systems and Catalog Information Complete each item.

A	Course Developer	Lisa Merchant & Jason Martin
B	Course Instructor	Jason Martin
C	Course Title	Couples Therapy II
D	Course Abbreviation for Banner if title is more than 30 characters	Couples Therapy II
E		CBS - Biblical Studies
F		BMFS - Marriage & Family Studies
G		3
G1		3
G2		0
H	Is the course for a fixed or variable number of credit hours?	Fixed If variable, explain rationale:
I	Is the course repeatable for additional credit?	No
J	Maximum total number of credit hours a student can earn for this course	
K		<u>Lecture (LEC)</u> See Schedule Type definitions in the Reference section.

L		3
M		<u>Standard</u>
N	Maximum Enrollment	25
O	Catalog Description (50 words or less)	A topic-based approach to working systemically with couples, including premarital counseling, couple faith development, sex therapy, divorce and remarriage, and other contemporary issues. Also explores working with diverse couple structures. Couples Therapy I is a recommended pre-requisite. This course is open to students from a variety of disciplines.
P	List any prerequisites (course/s, test scores, class standing, major, etc.)	
Q	List any corequisites (these <i>must</i> be taken at the same time; note that a single requirement cannot be both a prerequisite <i>and</i> a corequisite)	
R	If the course is cross-listed, specify the subject code and course number of the other course	
S	Does this course require any additional student course fees?	<u>No</u> If yes, attach a completed course fee form .
T1	Will the course be offered in fall terms?	<u>No</u>
T2	Will the course be offered in spring terms?	<u>Yes, every year</u>
T3	Will the course be offered in summer terms?	<u>No</u>

U	First semester this course will be offered under new Course ID. <i>May not be earlier than the coming fall semester.</i>	Spring 2027
V	Is this course required for a program(s)?	<u>Yes</u> If yes, attach a completed curriculum proposal to change the program(s).
W	Should the addition of this course be retroactively applied to the degree plan it supports? <i>This is rare, and rationale should explain compelling extenuating circumstances.</i>	<u>No</u> If yes, provide rationale:
X	Has this course been offered as a Special Topics course? <i>New courses are not required to be taught as Special Topics courses prior to approval.</i>	<u>Yes</u> If yes, provide course ID, term, and enrollment: BMFT 640.02 Couples Therapy II, Spring 2024, 9 BMFT 640.01 Couples Therapy II, Spring 2025, 11 BMFT 640.01 Couples Therapy II, Spring 2026, 10
Y	List any courses in which the content overlaps the proposed course. (Course ID and Name). <i>Attach a statement from the instructor/dept chair of the existing course justifying the new offering.</i>	

2. Curriculum

- A. Explain any effects of this course on any degree plans. If the addition of the course alters program requirements, submit a separate [Approval Chart for Curriculum Change](#) to update the program.

We will add Couples Therapy II to the degree plan and remove Sexual Therapy from the degree plan.

- B. Justify the addition of this course to the current curriculum, explaining the gap it meets.

Based on student feedback, we created a new course, BMFT Couples Therapy II to replace BMFT 651 Sexual Therapy. Students complained that Sexual Therapy was repetitive with other courses. Concurrently, faculty and students noticed missing content in our program curriculum. Couples Therapy II includes the unique content from Sexual Therapy, plus new content to fill in missing content (pre-marital therapy, divorce and remarriage).

3. Course Design

A. Audience and Course Goal

1. Describe the intended audience, including prerequisite skills.
The intended audience is students enrolled in the Marriage and Family Therapy program as well as GST, Psychology, or students enrolled in other mental health programs.
2. State the overarching course goal(s) in performance terms.

Students will be able to work effectively with couples around common presenting issues.

B. Student Learning Outcomes and Measurements

	Student Learning Outcome	Measurement
1	Analyze and evaluate scholarly and non-scholarly readings and research	Reading Responses Theory of Sex Therapy Paper Theory of Marriage Paper
2	Conceptualize treatment of common couple issues	Theory of Sex Therapy Paper Theory of Marriage Paper & Discussion Couples Toolbox Presentation
3	Conduct a sexual history	BEST SEX Conversation In Class Quizzes
4	Work sensitively with a variety of couples	Reading Responses In-class quizzes Couples Toolbox Presentation Final Exam
5	Critically examine the intersection of faith and therapeutic practice	Couples Toolbox Presentation Theory of Marriage Paper & Discussion
6	Write and present professionally	All papers and presentations

C. Text and Resources

Give the full publication information of the textbook/s and other required resources and outside readings. For **combined undergraduate/graduate** courses, make two lists:

- A. full publication information; label **Undergraduate**.
- B. full publication information; label **Graduate**.

Required Textbooks:

Doherty, W.J. & Harris, S.M. (2017). Helping couples on the brink of divorce. APA.

- Hertlein, K. M., Weeks, G. R., & Gambescia, N. (Eds.) (2020). Systemic sex therapy (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Leonff, A. (2015). The good divorce: A psychoanalyst's exploration of separation, divorce, and childcare. Routledge.
- Skurtu, A. (2016). Pre-marital counseling: A guide for clinicians. Routledge.
- Required Readings:
- Belous, C. K., Timm, T. M., Chee, G., & Whitehead, M. R. (2012). Revisiting the sexual genogram. American Journal of Family Therapy, 40(4), 281–296.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2011.627317>
- Davis, S., & Taylor, B. (2006). From PLISSIT to Ex-PLISSIT. In S. Davis (Ed.), Rehabilitation (pp. 101129). Churchill Livingstone. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-443-10024-6.50009-8>
- Helmeke, K. B., & Bischof, G. H. (2011). Couple therapy and the integration of spirituality and religion. In J.L. Wetchler (Ed.) Handbook of clinical issues in couple therapy., 2nd ed. (pp. 247–270). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Furrow, J. L. (2017). Couple therapy and spirituality. In Foundations for couples' therapy: Research for the real world.(pp. 384–394). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315678610-38>
- Metz ME, & McCarthy BW. (2007). The “Good-Enough Sex” model for couple sexual satisfaction. Sexual & Relationship Therapy, 22(3), 351–362. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681990601013492>
- Ripley, J. S., Worthington, E. L., Jr., Kent, V. M., Loewer, E., & Chen, Z. J. (2022). Spiritually incorporating couple therapy in practice: Christian-accommodated couple therapy as an illustration. Psychotherapy, 59(3), 382–391. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pst0000411>
- Spencer, T., Seedall, R., & Gillespie, A. (2024). Achieving change in the treatment of problematic pornography use: A review of common factors. Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-024-09706-y>
- Yarhouse, M. A., & Tan, E. S. N. (2014). Sexual addiction. In Sexuality and sex therapy: A comprehensive Christian appraisal (pp. 268–293). IVP Academic.

4. Supporting Documentation

Required of all applications	
1	Approval Chart for Curriculum Changes
2	Syllabus — Attach the syllabus for the course based upon the anticipated first-semester offering.
4	Library — Submit new course application and syllabus to the Library dean's office. Attach the Library's memo.
Attach if applicable	

5	Content Overlap — Include one document for each course you listed in Section 1Y. Attach statement from instructor/dept chair of existing course justifying the new offering.
6	Departmental Resources — List the resources that support the course and are available only through the department, if applicable. Attach the list of the holdings and the location(s).
7	Resources — List resources (other than library or departmental resources) that are needed to support this course (computers, lab equipment, other technology, etc.). Attach a complete list of all items and indicate possible sources or estimated cost of each. List the sources of any needed funds.
8	Expenses — List additional expenses needed to implement this course (full-time or part-time faculty, graduate or lab assistants, student employees, travel, special student costs, room renovation, storage facility, etc.). Attach a complete list of all items, the estimated cost of each and the source of the funds.
9	Justification — Attach any documents to which you refer in Section 2B.

Abilene Christian University
College of Biblical Studies, Room 104
Monday 8:00-10:50 AM

Spring 20XX
BMFT 640.01
3 credit hours

Couples Therapy II

Jason Martin, Ph.D., LMFT-S, LPC-S
CBS 274, Box 29454
Office: 325-674-2092; Cell: 713-458-0572
Email: jason.martin@acu.edu

Office Hours:
Mon 5:00 – 8:00 PM
Tues/Wed/Thur 1:00 – 4:00 PM

Mission

The mission of Abilene Christian University is to educate men and women for Christian service and leadership around the world. The mission of the College of Biblical Studies is to provide leadership preparation and resources for effective worldwide ministry in the cause of Christ. The mission of the Department of Marriage and Family Studies is to equip students to strengthen family relationships and solve personal and relational problems through child and family services or therapeutic intervention while cultivating Christian leadership and character in each student. The graduate program in Marriage and Family Therapy accomplishes this mission through:

- Introducing students to a broad range of therapeutic models;
- Providing an exceptional clinical training experience;
- Exploring Christian principles related to the practice of Marriage and Family Therapy;
- Encouraging students to cultivate their own spiritual beliefs and worldviews;
- Equipping students to work with diverse and marginalized communities;
- Encouraging development of professional identity and leadership; and
- Creating a culture of research.

Course Description

A topic-based approach to working systemically with couples, including premarital counseling, couple faith development, sex therapy, divorce and remarriage, and other contemporary issues. Also explores working with diverse couple structures. Couples Therapy I is a recommended pre-requisite. This course is open to students from a variety of disciplines.

Student Learning Objectives & Outcomes

The faculty of the MFT program have identified Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that will be accomplished by graduates of the program. In addition to the SLOs identified by the department, the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) has identified nine Foundational Curriculum Areas (FCAs) to be included in graduate MFT study and five Developmental Competency Components. **The content of this course addresses FCA 2: Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families and FCA 8: Contemporary Issues.** This course also meets Texas State Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy requirements for Human Development, Gender,

Multicultural Issues, and Family Studies.

Competency	COAMFTE Developmental Competency Component	Measure
Analyze and evaluate scholarly and non-scholarly readings and research	Knowledge of MFT profession	Reading Responses Theory of Sex Therapy Paper Theory of Marriage Paper
Conceptualize treatment of common couple issues	Knowledge of MFT profession	Theory of Sex Therapy Paper Theory of Marriage Paper & Discussion Couples Toolbox Presentation
Conduct a sexual history	Practice of Systemic Therapy	In-class quizzes BEST SEX Conversation Paper
Work sensitively with a variety of couples	Awareness, knowledge and skill to responsibly serve diverse communities	Reading Responses In-class quizzes Couples Toolbox Presentation Final Exam
Critically exam the intersection of faith and therapeutic practice		Couples Toolbox Presentation Theory of Marriage Paper & Discussion
Write and present professionally		Theory of Sex Therapy Paper Theory of Marriage Paper & Discussion

Required Textbooks

Doherty, W.J. & Harris, S.M. (2017). *Helping couples on the brink of divorce*. APA. (Not for 2026)

Hertlein, K. M., Weeks, G. R., & Gambescia, N. (Eds.) (2020). *Systemic sex therapy* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Leonff, A. (2015). *The good divorce: A psychoanalyst's exploration of separation, divorce, and childcare*. Routledge.

Skurtu, A. (2016). *Pre-marital counseling: A guide for clinicians*. Routledge.

Recommended Textbooks

Schnarch, D. M. (1991). *Constructing the sexual crucible: An integration of sexual and marital therapy*. W W Norton & Co

Other Required Readings

(Provided by the instructor)

Belous, C. K., Timm, T. M., Chee, G., & Whitehead, M. R. (2012). Revisiting the sexual genogram. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 40(4), 281–296.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2011.627317>

Davis, S., & Taylor, B. (2006). From PLISSIT to Ex-PLISSIT. In S. Davis (Ed.), *Rehabilitation* (pp. 101-129). Churchill Livingstone. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-443-10024-6.50009-8>

Helmeke, K. B., & Bischof, G. H. (2011). Couple therapy and the integration of spirituality and religion. In J.L. Wetchler (Ed.) *Handbook of clinical issues in couple therapy*, 2nd ed. (pp. 247–270). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

- Furrow, J. L. (2017). Couple therapy and spirituality. In *Foundations for couples' therapy: Research for the real world*. (pp. 384–394). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
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- Metz ME, & McCarthy BW. (2007). The “Good-Enough Sex” model for couple sexual satisfaction. *Sexual & Relationship Therapy*, 22(3), 351–362.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14681990601013492>
- Ripley, J. S., Worthington, E. L., Jr., Kent, V. M., Loewer, E., & Chen, Z. J. (2022). Spiritually incorporating couple therapy in practice: Christian-accommodated couple therapy as an illustration. *Psychotherapy*, 59(3), 382–391. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pst0000411>
- Spencer, T., Seedall, R., & Gillespie, A. (2024). Achieving change in the treatment of problematic pornography use: A review of common factors. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-024-09706-y>
- Yarhouse, M. A., & Tan, E. S. N. (2014). Sexual addiction. In *Sexuality and sex therapy: A comprehensive Christian appraisal* (pp. 268–293). IVP Academic.

Course Requirements

1. Participation & Attendance (8 points)

Students are expected to attend and participate every class period. Students are permitted one unexcused absence. Students missing more than one class will lose 2 attendance points and will lose 4 attendance points if they miss more than two class periods. Students who miss more than 3 classes, excused or unexcused, may be dropped from the course.

Students who are late to class (arriving after lecture or class discussion has begun) may be subject to a tardy. 4 tardies may count as an absence. If the student is more than 30 minutes late for a given class session, they may be counted as absent regardless.

Participation in class discussion is a critical part of this requirement, being a critical part of learning. Students are expected to engage in discussion, offering relevant thoughts, perspectives, and questions. This kind of engagement is important in therapy, and doing so in class is good practice. Students may lose either 2 points (minimal/infrequent) or 4 points (no engagement) by the end of the semester due to lack of engagement.

2. Reading Responses (2 point each, lowest 2 grades dropped, 20 points total)

For each week's readings, students will summarize their individual reactions into a three-part response paper. Part of graduate education is learning to read materials, recognize important points, analyze them, and apply them to your practice as a Marriage and Family Therapist. Reading responses are designed to help you achieve this end.

Even though there is a reading response due each week of the semester (14 total), only the top 10 will count towards the grade. Therefore, students may choose to skip up to 4 reading responses without penalty. Responses are due in class by **8:00 am** on the date listed in the schedule. Responses are informal and brief (less than 1 page), and include the following sections:

- 1. Important points:** Any points or quotes that you might want to use again or remember for a later paper or application. They can be short and bulleted.

2. **Critical reaction:** What did you think of the readings? This is not a summary; it is your analysis of the readings. This should be a healthy paragraph (4-5 sentences minimum) that gives your impressions and perspective.
3. **Discussion Questions:** Record two (2) questions to either discuss with the class or about which you would like clarification.

Reading Responses submitted less than 24 hours before class may not have their discussion questions addressed.

3. In-class quizzes (5 points each, lowest grade dropped, 20 points total)

At the beginning of 5 class sessions, there will be a timed, in-class quiz about the material covered in the previous 2-3 class sessions. These quizzes will be 5-10 questions and take 5-7 minutes at the beginning of class. Anything discussed in class since the last quiz may be covered. This is meant to gauge comprehension and retention of the material. Only the top 4 grades will count, and the lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

4. BEST SEX Conversation (12 points)

Students will assess a couple (preferably a client) using the BEST SEX Conversation template and write a 3- to 5-page paper that includes a summary of the system and interview, an assessment of and recommendations for “acceleration,” and an evaluation of the conversation process. Keeping the EXPLISSIT model in mind, students should begin by asking permission and with the “first session interview” questions before proceeding to the BEST SEX Conversation. Students should also offer limited suggestions, specific suggestions, and/or intense therapy. In addition to the paper, students will also submit a sexual genogram for the couple.

5. Theory of Sex Therapy Paper (10 points)

Students will write a 5- to 7-page theory of sex therapy paper that explains the student’s understanding of sexual health, sexual dysfunction, and treatment of sexual issues. Students can take a broad approach and explore how they would use one of the models covered in class (or another model) and explore how they would conceptualize and treat a specific sexual issue (e.g., low desire, pornography addiction, sexual trauma...). The paper should be supported by 5-7 academic sources. Students may NOT use class lectures as sources, instead finding primary sources. This is a formal paper adhering to APA style guide and should have an introduction, conclusion, headings, cover page, and appropriately formatted reference page. Grades will be based on the student’s demonstration of the following competencies: ability to develop a cogent theory of sex therapy based on scholarly literature and the ability to write/present a clear, organized, and professional paper.

6. Theory of Marriage Paper & Discussion (10 points)

Each student will write a paper reflecting their theory of marriage. The student will answer the following questions in 250-500 words each:

1. What is the purpose of marriage and monogamous coupling?
2. What are the qualities of a healthy marriage?
3. What are signs of an unhealthy marriage?
4. When—if ever—should couples end the relationship?
5. Why do couples generally have problems?

6. What is the role of therapy in helping a couple overcome challenges? What do you see as the goal or purpose of couples counseling?
7. What has influenced how you answer these questions? (personal experience, faith, observations, and academic study)
8. How do you see yourself working with couples who would answer these questions differently than you?

Students should draw from their personal, religious, or spiritual worldviews and from scholarly or model-specific sources. Students must use at least one scholarly and one religious/spiritual source. **These papers will be used as a guide for in-class discussion at the end of the semester. Be prepared to engage with the rest of the class about your own theory and that of your peers.**

7. Couples Toolbox (8 points)

Every student will be responsible for teaching an experiential couples' activity to their peers to add to everyone's toolbox. Students do not need to invent the activity. Instead, students can use an activity they already know, borrow one from a supervisor, find one on the internet, or draw from a textbook. However, students should not choose an activity that everyone already knows or has already been covered in another class. Each activity presented should address one of the major topics addressed in this course (*Divorce & Remarriage, Sex Therapy, Premarital Counseling, or Faith & Spirituality*). Activities must be approved by the instructor, and no more than 3 student presentations will address the same major topic, so **first come, first approved**. Presentations will be given in two groups. See Canvas for specific requirements and presentation dates.

8. Final Exam (12 points)

The final exam will be a timed exam covering all material from the course. This will be online, on your own, but students are not allowed to work with others or discuss the exam questions once you have begun the exam. A study guide will be provided 2 weeks prior to the exam due date.

Grading

Grades are awarded based on point accumulation. Each assignment has a maximum number of points that can be earned by successfully completing the assignment. Partial points will be awarded for meeting some (but not all) of the standards identified for each project or assignment. Earning less than a C in a graduate course necessitates that it be re-taken to graduate if it is part of your degree plan.

Assignment Points	
Participations & Attendance	8
Reading Responses (2 pts each)	20
In-Class Quizzes (5 pts each)	20
BEST SEX Conversation	12
Theory of Sex Therapy Paper	10
Theory of Marriage Paper & Discussion	10
Couples Toolbox Presentation	8
Final Exam	12
Total	100

Grading Scale
A = 92-100 points
B = 84-91.9 points
C = 76-83.9 points
F = 75.9 points or less

Course & University Policies

Late Assignments, Make-Up Exams, & Extra Credit

Assignments (other than Reading Responses) may be submitted up to one week late with a 20% penalty. Other than significantly extenuating circumstances, no assignments will be accepted more than 1 week late. Neither extra credit (other than the Writing Center bonus) nor make-ups will be available in this course. The variety of assessment procedures is designed to take different learning styles into account. If your grade is not at the level that you would like, please speak with the professor as soon as possible to discuss ways in which to improve performance in the course.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is demonstrated by behavior that honors the learning environment, regardless of setting, context, location, or modality. ACU's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at <https://acu.edu/office-of-the-provost/academic-policies/>. Any action that involves plagiarism or other dishonest acts will result in a grade of zero for the assignment and will be reported to the department Chair. If the student has questions regarding academic dishonesty, it is vital to ask. Please note that plagiarism includes failing to cite sources, failing to use quotations marks around a direct quote, overusing a single source, and re-submitting work from another class.

Departmental Generative AI Policy

When and how students may use generative AI is determined by each faculty member for each course. If students use generative AI, they must cite their use according to APA Style Guide, which can be found here: <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>. Failing to cite and/or unauthorized use of generative AI is considered a violation of the academic integrity policy. If you use AI, you must save the prompt and response in case faculty decide to review it.

The following are examples of acceptable uses of generative AI in this course:

- Brainstorming paper topics
- Finding sources
- Personalized tutoring; asking about concepts you'd like explained in a different way
- Editing for grammar, writing mechanics, and punctuation
- Seeking writing feedback on a paper for which you wrote the original draft

The following are examples of unacceptable uses of generative AI for this course:

- Asking AI to draft an outline for you
- Asking AI to draft a paper for you
- Using AI to make edits to your writing in ways that substantively change the voice of your work (in other words, using AI to write in ways that you cannot write on your own)
- Using AI to answer quiz, exam, or homework questions
- Using AI to write discussion posts or annotations
- Using AI to hide plagiarism or to mislead readers about the authorship of your submitted work

ADA Compliance Policy

Abilene Christian University is dedicated to removing barriers and opening access for students with disabilities in compliance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The ACU website provides more information at <https://acu.edu/accessibility-statement/>. Please contact me to discuss any approved accommodations that you require for this class.

Title IX Policy

At ACU, we strive to comply with all applicable legal requirements prohibiting, preventing, and responding to sexual misconduct against any member of the ACU community. The full Title IX policy and process can be found at <https://acu.edu/human-resources/title-ix-and-sexual-misconduct-information/>.

Use of Technology/E-Communication

Students are encouraged to take notes by hand, as this has been found to increase retention over typed notes. However, students may use their laptops and other devices for class purposes. It is inappropriate to check email, chat, and engage in other non-course related activities during class lectures and discussions. Any students who choose to engage in these activities may be asked to leave class. It is also expected that the ringers on all mobile devices will be turned off/silenced during class time.

Texts and emails from students about class assignments, meetings, etc. are welcomed. Please note, however, that the professor is not available 24 hours per day. Please allow 24-48 hours for a response.

Paper Specifics

- All papers should follow the 7th edition of the APA Publication Manual and Style Guide regarding formatting, references, and in-text citations. Papers should not simply use the APA Manual for reference formatting. Students should also follow the professional writing conventions described in the APA Manual.
- Although APA prefers Times New Roman for print documents, I can't stand that typeface, so I request that papers be submitted in a sans serif typeface, such as Calibri, Arial, or Helvetica.
- Unless otherwise stated, papers should conform to a typical five-paragraph essay format, including an introduction with a thesis or purpose statement, paragraphs with topic sentences exploring discrete topics, and a conclusion.
- Papers will be graded for grammar, writing mechanics, and clarity in addition to content.
- Where length of the paper is indicated, the length always refers to the content of the paper, not including a cover page, reference section, or abstract. Points may be deducted for papers that are either shorter or longer than the indicated length.
- **Students are strongly encouraged to have their papers reviewed by the ACU Writing Center (<https://acu.mywconline.com>) prior to submission. Providing proof of the meeting will result in 3 points added to the Final Exam grade.**

University Resources

The university also has several resources in place to support the ACU community both in this class and all aspects of university life.

Bias Education and Response Team (BERT)

Bias incidents affect our ability to work with, instruct and learn from each other. For more information about the reporting process of bias incidents at ACU, see <https://acu.edu/dean-of-students/reporting-violations/>

SOAR (Student Opportunities, Advocacy, and Resources)

SOAR partners with faculty, staff, parents and students to assist ACU students and connect them to resources available to support their path to success. For more information about SOAR or to make a SOAR recommendation, see <https://acu.edu/soar-program/>.

Mental Health Resources

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. Abilene Christian University is committed to supporting students addressing any of these concerns.

You can contact the [Medical and Counseling Care Center](#) at counseling@acu.edu, or by calling 325-674-2626. In addition, you can access free confidential counseling services through the Timely Care app by downloading their app on any device. **In a crisis contact the National Suicide Prevention Hotline open 24/7 by dialing 988, or call the Police at 911.**

Another wonderful resource to help you learn how to manage your stress as a student can be found in your Compass app. The Wellness Badge is designed to help you understand how to manage your stress and how to do so on our campus. Completing each of the pathways earns you a chance at incentives, and completing the entire badge will earn you 200 chapel points. You can find the badge in your Compass app.

Course Outline and Schedule

(Schedule Subject to Change)

Week	Topics/Modules	Readings & Assignments Due
January 13 Week 1	Introduction/ Discernment Counseling/ Theory of Divorce	Leonoff 1-2 Reading Response 1
January 20 Week 2	MLK Jr. Day	<i>No class</i>
January 27 Week 3	Discernment Counseling	Doherty/Harris 1,4-6,13(skim 7-12) Reading Response 2
February 3 Week 4	Divorce & Children	Leonoff 3-5 Reading Response 3 Quiz 1
February 10 Week 5	Post-Divorce Relationships	Leonoff 6-8 Reading Response 4
February 17 Week 6	Sex Therapy: Attitudes, Expectations, & Positivity	Hertlein et al. 2-3, 11 Schnarch 3 Reading Response 5 Quiz 2
February 24 Week 7	Sexual Problems: DSM Diagnoses	Hertlein et al. 4-5, 8-9 Reading Response 6
March 3 Week 8	Sexual Problems: Porn, Addiction, & Desire Problems	Hertlein et al. 13, 17 Spenser et al. (2024) Yarhouse (2014) Reading Response 7
March 10 Week 9	Spring Break	<i>No class</i>
March 17 Week 10	Models of Sex Therapy: Assessment, Intersystem, Good Enough Sex Models	Belous et al. (2012) Hertlein et al. 1 Metz & McCarthy (2007) Reading Response 8 Quiz 3
March 24 Week 11	Models of Sex Therapy: EX-PLISSIT, Crucible Model	Davis & Taylor (2006) Schnarch 2, 5-6 <i>Secrets of a Passionate</i>

		<i>Marriage</i> audio Reading Response 9
March 31 Week 12	Premarital Counseling	Entire Skurtu book (or selected chapters TBD) Reading Response 10 Quiz 4 BEST SEX Conversations due
April 7 Week 13	Diverse Couple Structures	Hertlein et al. 12, 16 Reading Response 11
April 14 Week 14	Faith & Spirituality in Couple Relationships	Helmeke & Bischof (2011) Furrow (2017) Reading Response 12 Quiz 5
April 21 Week 15	Theory of Marriage Discussion	Theory of Marriage Papers due
April 28 Week 16	Couples Toolbox Presentations	Toolbox Presentations
May 5 Week 17	Finals Week	Final Exam (due May 7, 1 PM)



August 25, 2025

Jason Martin, Ph.D., LMFT-S, LPS-S
Professor, Department of Marriage and Family Studies
Abilene Christian University
jason.martin@acu.edu

Re: Couples Therapy II (BMFT 612)

Dear Dr. Martin,

Thank you for submitting Couples Therapy II (BMFT 612) to us for review. I have reviewed it based on the ACU Syllabus Guidelines. I found the syllabus to meet all aspects of the checklist.

Please note that this letter is intended as a reference, which will be read by the department chair and council members, who may also have questions or comments of their own. If you have any questions, please feel free to let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Scott E. Hamm", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Scott E. Hamm,
Assistant Director, Adams Center
Director of Pedagogical Partnerships

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

LIBRARY

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: August 15, 2025
TO: Dr. Lisa Merchant
FROM: Mark McCallon, Associate Dean for Library Services
RE: Course Application for BMFT 612 – Couples Therapy II

After reviewing the course application and syllabus, the library is able to support the proposed course. Please contact your Librarian Liaison, Ethan Lewis (edl16b@acu.edu), if additional library resources are needed for the course. Thank you for the opportunity to evaluate the syllabus and course proposal.