

**Southern Methodist University
Affirmative Therapy with
Transgender Clients
HDCN 6356- Syllabus**

Instructor: Colt Keo-Meier, Ph.D.

**Fall Term 2015:
4:00 pm - 9:00 pm Fridays
8:30-5:30 Saturdays and Sundays**

Email: cmeier@smu.edu

Office Hours-before and after class and by appointment



Course Description:

This course will focus on the development of affirming professional competency to support and assist transgender and gender non-conforming clients. The diversity of ways of being a gender and the importance of language for those that are gender non-conforming, transgender, transsexual and intersex will be explored. Trans-positive practices to assist with the effects of biological, familial, social, cultural and psychological factors in shaping gender experiences and self understanding throughout the life span will be focused. Gender dysphoria and gender variance will be distinguished from sometimes co-occurring major mental health or substance misuse diagnoses. The evolving role of the therapist in coordination of care with medical needs and services related and unrelated to transition, standards of care and the medical options available that are specific to transition will be reviewed. The disproportionate rates of homelessness, HIV, substance misuse, abuse, domestic violence and other social and health care disparities will be a part of this study.

Required Text:

Beyond

Vandenburgh, R. (2011). *Transition and beyond: Observations on gender identity*. 2nd Ed. Publisher Reid Vanderburgh ISBN-13: 978-1893075382

TBTS

Erickson-Schroth, L. (2014). *Trans bodies, trans selves*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Instructor will provide required and recommended articles on Blackboard.

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you” Maya Angelou

Course Objectives

Learning Objectives	Measurable Outcome
Students will be able to describe and distinguish social constructs of physical sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.	Students will demonstrate their understanding of these terms by appropriate use and context within written content of assignments, class discussions and exams.
Students will be cognizant of treatment strategies and interventions to provide affirmative and effective treatment assisting in the development and integration of gender identity in addition to ongoing stigma management.	Students will be able to apply affirming practice strategies recall major concepts and skills in exams and class discussions.
Students will examine and think critically about cisnormative influences from the dominant culture in order to develop awareness of their own assumptions and values and to consider the impact of these influences on transgender people.	Students will be able to articulate understanding of this learning objective by engaging in self reflection and experiential activities, participation in class discussions and within written assignments and exams.
Students will understand the importance of gender affirming medical interventions for the health and well-being of many transgender individuals as well as their role in helping their clients to access medically necessary interventions.	Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the multiple types of interventions, how to write letters to assist their clients in the process of accessing transgender-specific medical interventions, and the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration through class discussions and exams.
Students will conceptualize practice implications of intersectionality, recognizing issues of power and privilege relative to intersecting identities of gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexual orientation, ability, national origin, age, and language, including the intersection of the therapist's and client's identities in the therapeutic context.	Student will demonstrate competency in written assignments, case scenario, class discussions as well as on exam by applying intersectionality in examples.
Students will examine mental and physical health disparities experienced by transgender individuals. They will develop understanding of gender minority stress theory in order to develop empathy for the range of ways that marginalization of transgender people impacts them socially, physically, and psychologically, as well as utilize a this theory as a frame work from which to conceptualize these disparities, including co-occurring major mental health diagnoses.	Students will demonstrate knowledge and evaluate critically disparities in case examples through written assignment, exam and class discussions.
Students will understand current research and evaluate their ability to provide culturally sensitive approaches in case conceptualization, diagnostic considerations, and affirming interventions informed by the transgender and gender non-conforming competencies guidelines of WPATH, ACA and APA.	Students will demonstrate knowledge by applying WPATH, ACA, and APA guidelines in written assignment, exam and class discussions.

Course Requirements

A. Reflection Paper (15 points)

Following guest panel discussions in class consisting of gender minorities and watching at least 10 online videos of transgender people sharing their personal stories outside of class time (see <http://www.transpeoplespeak.org>), you will prepare a 2-3 page reflection paper. Be sure to select online videos that represent the experience of diverse individuals and experiences. You are encouraged to watch these before the class begins.

This assignment is designed to facilitate the process of reflecting upon your own personal experience and assumptions about transgender people, particularly as they relate to your role as a practitioner.

The content should include:

1. Personal experience-A synopsis of your reaction and experience to the panel and interviewees as a whole and/or to one or more of the individuals. Name and describe at least two aspects of their lives that you related well to as well as two in which you did not personally relate.
2. Connection to the course reading and lectures-What did these discussions help you to understand about the experiences of transgender people?
3. Connection to counseling skill and future- What did you observe in the experience that may help you understand your views, beliefs, or opinions about gender minorities and the role you might play in joining the helping field?

B. Two Interviews (20 points)

Your task is to complete two interviews: one with a transgender person and one with a cisgender person whose life has been significantly impacted by a transgender person. The instructor will assign your interviewees to you on the first day of class along with their contact information. Interviews can be conducted over the phone or online video conferencing. You will be discussing the results of your interview with your classmates. Specific interview questions will be provided on a handout on Blackboard, but you should freely edit or omit certain questions to fit the circumstances, language, and comfort level of both the persons you are interviewing and yourself.

You should inform the interviewee that you are doing this interview as an assignment for a transgender affirmative graduate class. You must schedule with the interviewees at least two weeks in advance so they have time to plan their schedules. Inform the interviewees that they are free to decline to answer any question or topic during the interview. Also inform the interviewees that their names and other identifying information (such as occupation) will be omitted or disguised in your summary for the class discussion.

With the interviewees' permission, you may take notes during the interview so that you can recall what was said and summarize it for purposes of discussion in class. Keep in mind that you are not doing "therapy" or "formal research" in these interviews, but are simply gathering some information for a class assignment. You can ask simple clarifying questions in order to understand the interviewee's first response to your questions, but do not probe for unspoken feelings beyond the content that the interviewee spontaneously offers. Also, do not give

interpretations, analysis, or commentary on the material. You are there to learn, not teach or do therapy. Just try to get the story from the interviewees' perspectives and in their own words.

Write about your experiences interviewing (4-6 pages) and be prepared to discuss what you have learned with your classmates. In your written assignment, discuss what you have learned about the process of interviewing a transgender person and a cisgender person who is impacted by transgender people. Discuss your reactions as the interviewee revealed information about their family of origin, or social relationships. How has this assignment changed how you might conduct a clinical assessment? Were you surprised at what people revealed? Tie in content from class and your readings on transgender narratives and learning to listen to transgender people's stories.

C. Reaction Paper (20 points)

Watch two films: **Boys Don't Cry** and **Solider's Girl**.

The purpose of this activity is to give you an opportunity to learn about experiences of trauma of the transgender community and to reflect on the experience. These films are both based on true stories.

This is an individual assignment, and as such, you should plan to watch these films independently.

After watching these films, write a 5-page reaction paper.

The paper should address the following topics but can include others:

1. Short description of the movies (1 point)
2. How might watching these movies be of value for transgender clients or family members? Would you recommend either or both of these films to a transgender client or family member and under what circumstances? If you would not recommend it, explain why not. (3 points)
3. What aspects of these films would you consider affirming of transgender people? What kind of impacts would you expect these films to have on transgender people? What would you suggest to the filmmakers to make their films even more inclusive? (6 points)
4. What are your personal and professional reactions to the experience? Include and strongly address cisgender privilege you observed in yourself. How will this inform your practice with transgender clients and their families? (5 points)

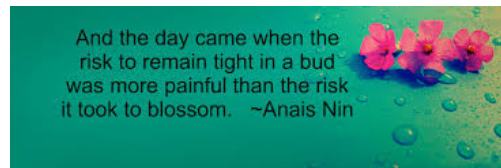
D. Practice Letters Supporting Gender Affirming Medical Interventions (15 points)

In this assignment each group will write a fictitious letter for a transgender person in order for the client to receive gender affirming medical treatment (hormones or surgical procedures). The instructor will assign each group a fictitious client.

You will need to use the **WPATH standards of care, the appendix from Lev's Transgender Emergence, and sample letters provided by the instructor as guides**. You will create this on professional letterhead from your school or the letterhead from your current placement.

E. Final Exam: in class –closed book and notes (30 points)

The exam will be cumulative. It will cover all lectures, textbook readings, class discussions and guest speaker topics. It may consist of essay questions, multiple choice and short answers.



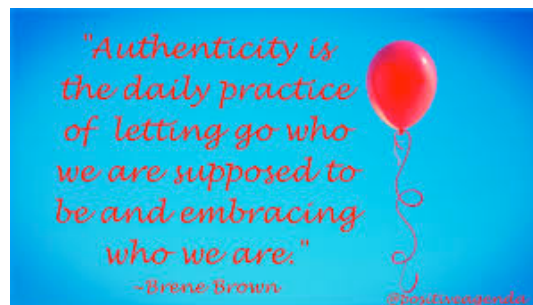
Class Schedule

Session/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments
[1] Friday	Syllabus and Introductions	Syllabus	
PM Session	Gender 101 and Cultural Competency Training Deconstructing Sex and Gender Exploration of Personal Bias Guest Speaker	Beyond Intro, Preface, 1, 2 TBTS 1 Diamond (2011) <i>Recommended:</i> <i>Meier (2013)</i>	Interviews Assigned Due the next Friday PM Session
[2] Saturday AM Session	Trans Across Culture and Time Health Care Treatment Film: Diagnosing Difference	Beyond 4 Lev Ch. 2, 5 (2004) Benson (2013) Lev (2005) Donatone (2013) <i>Recommended:</i> <i>Drescher (2009)</i>	
[3] Saturday PM Session	Gender Identity Development Clueing in and Coming out Health Disparities and Minority Stress Guest Speakers	Beyond 5 TBTS 6, 7 Erickson-Schroth (2013) Mizock (2011) Hendricks (2012) Bockting (2013)	

[4] Sunday AM Session	Gender Transition Therapist's Role Guest Speaker Adjusting to Transition	TBTS 8, 12, 13 Beyond 8, 9, 10	
[5] Sunday PM Session	Guest Panel 1 Guidelines and Standards of Care	ACA Guidelines APA Guidelines WPATH p 8-32	Reflection Paper Due Friday PM Reaction Paper Due Friday PM
[6] Friday PM Session	Coping and Stigma Management Preventing Trans Suicide	Beyond 13 TBTS 14, 15 Riggle (2011) <i>p4-10</i> Budge (2013a) <i>p545-546 & p554-555</i> Budge (2013b) Nadal (2014) <i>p76-78</i> Mizock (2014) Recommended: <i>dickey (2010)</i> <i>Heck (2013)</i> <i>Mizock (2008)</i>	
[7] Saturday AM Session	Evaluating Transition Readiness Writing Support Letters In Class Group Assignment	Beyond 6 Murad (2010) <i>p216, 228-229</i> Keo-Meier (2015) WPATH SOC <i>Criteria for Medical Interventions</i> Coolhart (2008) Recommended: <i>Colizzi (2014)</i>	Letter Writing Due Saturday PM
[8] Saturday PM Session	Experiences of Families and Partners Guest Panel 2	Beyond 3, 15, 16, 19 TBTS 16, 18 Brown (2009) Samons (2009)	

[9] Sunday **Intersections of Identities** Beyond 14
AM Session Race/Ethnicity TBTS 2, 3, 4, 5
Reconciling Gender and Spirituality
Guest Speaker

[10] Sunday **Working with Families of Young Children** Beyond 17, 18
PM Session Guest Speaker Hidalgo (2013)
Lev (2013)
Coolhart (2012)
Course Evaluation
Final Exam *Recommended:*
Vanderburgh (2009)
Olson (2011)
Case (2013)



COURSE GRADING STRUCTURE

Task	Possible Points
Reflection Paper – Panels and Videos	15
Two Interviews – Trans and Cis	20
Reaction Paper – Films	20
Letter Writing	15
Final Exam	30
TOTAL	100

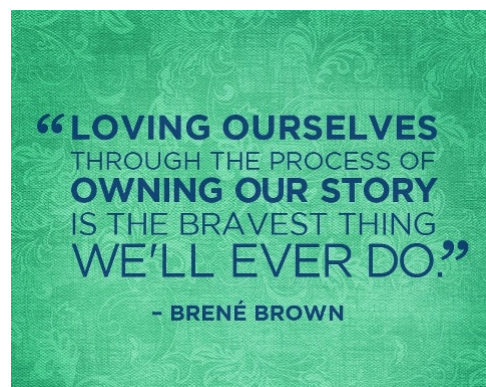
*As I look back on what I've learned about shame, gender, and worthiness, the greatest lesson is this: If we're going to find our way out of shame and back to each other, vulnerability is the path and courage is the light. To set down those lists of what we're supposed to be is brave. To love ourselves and support each other in the process of becoming real is perhaps the greatest single act of daring greatly. –**Brene Brown***

SMU GRADING SCALE

Grade	Performance Description	Percentage Points
A	Exceptional	93 – 100
A- B+	High Pass	90 – 92 87 – 89
B B-	Pass	83 – 86 80 – 82
C+ C C- D+ D D- F	Failure, any C or below	77 – 79 73 – 76 70 – 72 67 – 69 63 – 66 60 – 62 59 >

Reflection Paper Rubric

15 points possible	5 or 4 points	3 or 2 points	1 or 0 points
<p>Depth of Thought and Reflection of experience</p> <p>5 points - 33.3%</p>	<p>Provides a brief summary of stories that resonated with the writer.</p> <p>Author makes succinct, insightful comments and conclusions based on the experiences and connected these to future counseling experiences.</p>	<p>Readers are introduced to the overall topic.</p> <p>Remarks show some degree of reflection, though not all thoughts are supported in the body of the paper.</p>	<p>Neither implicit nor explicit reference is made to topic.</p> <p>No indication author applied much thought to the paper.</p>
<p>Ties to textbook and/or lecture material</p> <p>5 points - 33.3%</p>	<p>Writer integrates material from textbook and/or lectures well and throughout the paper.</p>	<p>There is some attempt on the author's part to utilize textbook and/or lectures within the content.</p>	<p>There are no examples from the writer's experience expressed in the content tied to the textbook or lectures</p>
<p>Clarity of Writing and Mechanics</p> <p>5 points - 33.3%</p>	<p>Writing is crisp, clear, and succinct.</p> <p>No spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors are present.</p>	<p>Writing is generally clear, but unnecessary words are occasionally used.</p> <p>A few spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors are made.</p>	<p>It is hard to know what the writer is trying to express.</p> <p>Misspelled words, incorrect grammar, and improper punctuation are frequent.</p>



Interview Paper Rubric

20 points possible	Points
Provide a summary of the interview process (using pseudonyms for each person interviewed) including the most significant moments in each interview	5 4 3 2 1 0
There is discussion of what the writer has learned from the interview experience and thoughtful comparison of the two interviews.	5 4 3 2 1 0
Author integrates relevant material from textbook and/or lectures well and throughout the paper.	5 4 3 2 1 0
Writer discusses their own reactions to what was revealed in the interviews as well as how the interview experiences impact their future clinical interactions	5 4 3 2 1 0

Reaction Paper Rubric

15 points possible	Points
There is a clear description of the films watched	1 0
There is an informed explanation of how this film is of value and consideration of what clients it may or may not be recommended to	3 2 1 0
There is demonstration of understanding of concepts of minority stress and resilience and the importance of social support.	6 5 4 3 2 1 0
There is evidence of deep reflection and reaction to one's own cisgender privilege and impact on therapeutic approach.	5 4 3 2 1 0

Letter for Medical Interventions Rubric

15 points possible	Points
Uses professional formatting including letterhead, address, greeting, and signature.	5 4 3 2 1 0
Author integrates relevant material from the vignette throughout the letter.	5 4 3 2 1 0
Includes all components recommended by the WPATH Standards of Care 7th Edition. Uses examples provided as a guide.	5 4 3 2 1 0

Final Exam Essay Question Rubric

Score	Content	Organization	Development	Use of Language
4	Answer is appropriate to the question. Content is factually correct.	Clear sense of order. Begins with a thesis or topic sentence. Supporting points are presented in a logical progression.	Develops each point with many specific details. Answers question completely.	Uses technical or scientific terminology appropriately and correctly. No major grammatical or spelling errors.
3	Answer is appropriate to the question. Content may have one or two factual errors.	May lack a thesis sentence, but points are presented in a logical progression.	Each point supported with some details and evidence. All important points included.	Accurate word choice. No more than 2 major errors and a few minor errors.
2	Content relates peripherally to the question; contains significant factual errors.	Logic of argument is minimally perceivable. Points presented in a seemingly random fashion, but all support argument.	Sparse details or evidence. Question only partially answered.	Ordinary word choice; use of scientific terminology avoided. Some serious errors (but they don't impair communication).
1	Content unrelated to question.	Lacks clear organizational plan. Reader is confused.	Statements are unsupported by any detail or explanation. Repetitious, incoherent, illogical development.	Limited vocabulary; errors impair communication.

Attendance:

Brevity of the course mandates required attendance for EVERY class. Successful course completion depends upon experiencing and contributing to distributed intelligence. Because this is a weekend course, two classes are contained in both Saturday and Sunday class days. Missing a class or reporting late for the start, return from breaks or early departure from class will result in a 3-point deduction from the overall points available and impact the overall grade. A student missing more than two classes or 9 hours may, at the instructor's discretion:

- a) Receive a grade of Incomplete if the requirements to do so have been met (see the policy on Grades of Incomplete contained in this syllabus)
- b) Receive a failing grade for the course
- c) Drop or withdraw from the course. (This option may have a financial and/or financial aid impact. Student should refer to the Add/Drop Policy and the Withdrawal Policy for the Counseling program which can be found at Academic Calendar then consult with the Program Specialist if they believe this option is a possibility.)

Missing due times and dates for required work:

All required course work that is not turned in by the stated time and date will be subjected to point deductions. A full 10% of available points will be deducted for any tardy work that was turned in with a 24 hour notice made to the instructor. Missing a deadline without prior tardy work notice to your instructor will result in a 15% point loss. Additionally, 5% point losses will occur for each class period that passes without the required work. This will be waived if the student was hospitalized during at least 50% of the time between course weekends.

Confidentiality and Integrity:

To maintain a safe and supportive learning environment, student discussions regarding sensitive course information (i.e. personal experiences, comments, reactions) must occur only in class or privately with other current class members. Student will display respect and integrity toward all persons, frame course endeavors (e.g., lecture, discussion, assignments) particularly regarding personal issues of a delicate and/or controversial nature (e.g. high risk behavior, drug or alcohol history, etc.). All Counseling students will demonstrate behavior consistent with the Ethical Standards forwarded by the ACA in their code of ethics; failure to do so may result in termination from the Department.

Classroom Etiquette:

Class instruction begins at scheduled time. Please be ready to begin promptly. We will have brief scheduled breaks but you will not have time to leave campus. Please bring all food and drinks you may wish to have each day and there are vending machines. You may use computers in-class for note taking, not for audio/video recording or internet surfing. There will be no phone text use and all phones should be turned off or in vibrate position. Leaving class for non-major emergency phone use is considered an early departure in grading. Be respectful of the instructor and others with your questions, reflections, and contributions. No children or guests may attend in-class sessions or the guest panel event due to the confidential nature of our discussions. Please address your concerns about course content, instructor behavior, or peer encounters first with the instructor by scheduling an in-person meeting. You may always appeal to the Program Director as a second or tandem approach.

Inclement Weather:

Class will always be held unless SMU in Plano campus is closed due to weather. Please check your email in the event of major weather in our area.

Statement Regarding Grades of Incomplete (I):

A student may receive a grade of I (Incomplete) if at least 50 percent of the course requirements have been completed with passing grades, but for some justifiable reason, acceptable to the instructor, the student has been unable to complete the full requirements of the course. At the time a grade of I is given, the instructor must stipulate in writing to the student and to the University registrar the requirements and completion date that are to be met and the grade that will be given if the requirements are not met by the completion date. The maximum period of time allowed to clear the incomplete grade normally is 12 months. If the Incomplete grade is not cleared by the date set by the instructor or by the end of the 12-month Policies and Procedures 25 deadline, the grade of I will be changed to the grade provided by the instructor at the time the Incomplete grade was assigned or to a grade of F if no alternate grade was provided. The grade of I is not given in lieu of a grade of F or W, or other grade, each of which is prescribed for other specific circumstances.

If the student's work is incomplete, poor quality and not acceptable, a grade of F will be given. The grade of I does not authorize a student to attend the course during a later term. Graduation candidates must clear all Incomplete grades prior to the deadline in the Official University Calendar, which may allow less time than 12 months. Failure to do so can result in removal from the degree candidacy list and/or conversion of the grade of I to the grade indicated by the instructor at the time the grade of I was given. For graduate students, a maximum of two (six hours) concurrently held grades of Incomplete in courses other than thesis is allowed. If this maximum is reached, the student will be allowed to take only one three-hour course per term until the Incomplete total is reduced. Students who accumulate a total of three grades of Incomplete in courses other than thesis will be put on probation and not allowed to enroll further until the total is reduced.

Disability Accommodations:

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) at 214-768-1470 or <http://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS> to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4; an attachment describes the DASS procedures and relocated office.)

Religious Observance:

Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. Academic Integrity: Students are reminded of the SMU Honor Code as referenced in the Student Handbook. Intellectual integrity and academic honesty are both the foundation and the goals for this program. Please reference and review the university policies on the responsibilities, policies, and penalties regarding academic honesty. http://www.smu.edu/studentlife/PCL_05_HC.asp

Academic Integrity:

Students are reminded of the SMU Honor Code as referenced in the Student Handbook. Intellectual integrity and academic honesty are both the foundation and the goals for this program. Please reference and review the university policies on the responsibilities, policies, and penalties regarding academic honesty. http://www.smu.edu/studentlife/PCL_05_HC.asp

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:

Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity will be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work.

