Adler Graduate School
1550 East 78th Street

AGS Course 771:
Creating and Assessing the Therapeutic Alliance

Fall 2, 2015

1. Course Designation and Identifier

1.1 Adler Graduate School
1.2 Course number 771
1.3 Creating and Assessing the Therapeutic Alliance
1.4 1 credit
1.5 Prerequisite: <…>

2. Course Description

The course focuses on the client-therapist alliance as a major ingredient in Individual Psychology clinical practice. The course approaches the relationship between therapist and client from four inter-related perspectives: informed consent, bond, task, and goal. Students will analyze the therapeutic relationship from these four perspectives.

3. Texts, Materials and Resources (required and optional)

3.1 Required textbooks: none
3.2 Required Articles/Handouts (all available on course page)


3.3 Optional reading


4. Competencies and Learning Outcomes

**Individual Psychology Core Competencies**

- Conceptual Foundations
  - Social Interest
  - Fictionalism
  - Soft Determinism
  - Social Context
  - Idiographic/Creative Self

- Reflective Practice
- Relationship Building and Maintenance
- Culturally and Ethically Sensitive Practice

**Learning Outcomes:** Students in this course learn to:

a) Draw on their knowledge of the importance of **working collaboratively** with the client
i) A consistent philosophical and practical commitment to the notion that the client and the therapist work together to do the work
ii) Awareness that the aim of therapy is to help clients tackle their problems by harnessing their own resources
iii) Able to be explicit about expectations regarding the sharing of responsibility
iv) Able to describe the characteristics of a respectful, encouraging and collaborative working alliance

    (1) Task
    (2) Bond
    (3) Goal

b) Draw on their knowledge of therapist factors which increase the probability of forming a positive alliance

    i) Allowing the client to discuss issues which are important to them
    ii) Being flexible
    iii) Being respectful
    iv) Being warm, friendly, and affirming
    v) Being open
    vi) Being alert and active
    vii) Being able to show honesty through self-reflection
    viii) Being trustworthy

c) Identify personal factors that could interfere with forming a respectful, encouraging, and collaborative working alliance related to:

    i) Task factors
    ii) Bond factors
    iii) Goal factors
    iv) Allowing the client to discuss issues which are important to them
    v) Being flexible
    vi) Being respectful
    vii) Being warm, friendly, and affirming
    viii) Being open
    ix) Being alert and active
    x) Being able to show honesty through self-reflection
    xi) Being trustworthy

d) Draw on their knowledge of informed consent while initiating and maintaining a counseling relationship

    i) Distinguish between event model and process model of informed consent
    ii) Identify 3 phases in event model
    iii) Able to specify and enact specific elements of informed consent:

        (1) Professional Introduction
        (2) Client rights
        (3) Client responsibilities
        (4) Confidentiality
        (5) Proposed intervention description
5. **AGS Online Course Overview**

5.1 AGS one credit online courses have the same total duration as residential courses – 7 weeks (5 weeks of coursework plus two weeks for completing final assignments). You should expect to spend approximately 45 hours on all course-related activities. Your instructor will be actively available for all class activities and individual consultations for the duration of the coursework and as needed until final papers grades are submitted.

5.2 Your course instructor will respond to your questions or comments within 48 hours (barring unforeseen circumstances). You will be expected to observe the same response time—replying within 48 hours. During the class, your instructor will post specific office hours on your class webpage.

5.3 Please stay current in the class. Generally, you will be expected to complete reading assignments, submit at least two substantive postings per week (in response to the questions and/or tasks by your instructor), and – in some cases - engage in experiential activities, per syllabus. These expectations are very general, as you will find unique teaching style and specific expectations presented in each online class.

5.4 Although you will likely find that you have a lot of experience in the discussed topics, please remember that the most convincing position is the one supported by the most current and relevant research. You will find these sources in peer-reviewed journals. Use APA style and format requirements in referencing sources.

6. **Course Outline**

   a) Unit 1: **Orientation**
      
      i) **Resources**
         
         (1) Lecture: Therapeutic Relationship
         (2) Reading: Garrison, 2006 (11 pp)
         
      ii) **Tasks**
         
         (1) Introduce Self on database (audio or video)
         (2) Conceptual Forum 1: **Mental Health Definition**
         (3) Self Exploration 1: **Cultural and Life Style Identity**

   b) Units 2: **Informed Consent**
      
      i) **Resources**
         
         (1) Lecture: Informed Consent
         (2) Reading: Pomerantz & Handelsman, 2004 (5 pp)
         (3) Reading: Garrison & Eckstein, 2013 (12 pp)
         (4) Reading: Darchuk, et. al., 2000 (22 pp)

      ii) **Tasks**
(1) Conceptual Forum 2: Positioning Metaphors
(2) Skill Demonstration 1: Professional Introduction
(3) Skill Demonstration 2: Confidentiality
(4) Self-Exploration 2: Working Alliance Inventory

c) Units 3: Bond

i) Resources

(1) Lecture: Bond
(2) Reading: Carlson, Watts & Maniacci, 2006 (ch. 4) (16 pp)
(3) Reading: Fluckiger, et al., 2012 (8 pp)

ii) Tasks

(1) Conceptual Forum 3: Care
(2) Skill Demonstration 3: Client Responsibilities
(3) Self-Exploration 3: Therapy Skills

d) Units 4: Task

i) Resources

(1) Lecture: Task
(2) Reading: Horvath, et al., 2011 (7 pp)
(3) Reading: Nikelly & Dinkmeyer, 1971 (4 pp)

ii) Tasks

(1) Conceptual Forum 4: Curative Factors
(2) Skill Demonstration 4: Agenda Setting
(3) Self-Exploration 4: Misalliances

e) Units 5: Goal

i) Resources

(1) Lecture: Goal
(2) Reading: Case from Brown & Barlow, 2011 (ch. 1) (16 pp)
(3) Reading: Norcross & Wampold, 2011 (5 pp)
(4) Reading: Tryon & Winograd, 2011 (7 pp)

ii) Tasks

(1) Conceptual Forum 5: Meaning
(2) Skill Demonstration 5: Problems and Goals
(3) Self-Exploration 5: Encouragement

7. Assessment/Evaluation Procedures
(Detailed descriptions of these assignments are also available on Moodle)
7.1 Grading

A  90-100 points
B  80-89 points
C  70-79 points
R  Retake- Needs more time or instruction to master the requirements of the class
NC Quality of work or participation falls below minimum expectations, including:
  • Not attending class.
  • Not properly notifying registrar of a withdrawal
  • Missing class periods in excess of the number allowed by AGS’s course
  attendance policy (see section 9 below)
  • Not resolving a grade of incomplete within 45 days after the last class
  meeting (not the assignment due date) and an agreed upon extension has not
  been arranged by the student and instructor. The Incomplete turns to No
  Credit (NC) and the course must be repeated at full price.

7.2 Conceptual Track Original Forum Postings

Original posts are graded on a scale of 0-4 points. Responses posted after the deadline
will have two points deducted for every late post. **You can earn a maximum of 20
points in this required activity.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Grading Criteria</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Comments a) are accurate and relevant; b) demonstrate original thinking; c) use appropriate scholarly support; d) are well written, with no significant grammar and punctuation errors and no violation of “netiquette”. Four point comments contribute substantially to the course discussions and stimulate additional thought and further discussions about the topic discussed in the particular unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>Comments lack at least one of the above qualities, but are above average overall, with regard to their content, and make a good contribution to our understanding of the issue being discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Comments lack two or three of the required qualities. Comments which are based upon personal opinion but not supported by scholarly research or personal experience and/or comments violating important “netiquette” rules often fall within this category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Comments present little or no new information, lack three or more of the above qualities. However, one point comments may provide important social presence and contribute to a collegial atmosphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>The comment lacks all four qualities or in violation of AGS academic integrity policy</td>
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7.3 Conceptual Track Peer Responses

Peer responses can earn 1.0 point per each peer response (with the total of 2 points per forum, and **a maximum of 10 points per course**). Peer responses are graded on accuracy, relevance,
presence of scholarly support, and delivery (including compliance with major grammar and punctuation rules and netiquette). Peer responses posted after deadline will be not be graded.

In these responses, you will a) bring another aspect to the discussion, add a new insight to already offered ideas; b) find additional scholarly support for your classmate’s position and demonstrate that you have done some good additional reading on the issue; c) reply to a group of your classmates by comparing or contrasting their stated positions, or probing, offering a counterthought; or d) integrate your classmates’ observations into your original position (whether supportive or not).

In meeting at least one of the above (a-d) requirements, a good peer response will bring the discussion to an advanced level and will parallel what you might observe in a live scholarly debate. While offering a good challenge in your peer responses, please don’t forget that validation and respect are two integral rules in any scholarly conversation.

7.4 Skill Demonstration Track

Each skill demonstration is an audio or video recording in which the student presents specified information as if they were talking to a client. A checklist of essential and desireable elements for each skill is available on the course page and is used in the evaluation of each recording. Students have the opportunity to view/listen to the recordings of their fellow students.

7.5 Self Exploration Track

The personal track papers are opportunities for self exploration and identification of personal factors which may limit the ability to form a therapeutic alliance. These papers are evaluated on the level of insight demonstrated and the application of the conceptual framework of therapeutic alliance to personal history and functioning.

7.6 SPT

The special project is an analysis of the therapeutic alliance of a recorded therapy session. The analysis will be evaluated on the level of insight into the dynamics of alliance and the application of the conceptual framework of therapeutic alliance to the interactions in the video. Discussion of specific instances of task, bond, goal alignment, and encouragement evident in the video is expected.

7.7 Summary of points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual track forums</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4 points for original responses, 2 points for peer responses)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Demonstration track</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Exploration track</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Project</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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8. Online Discussions or Activities

Online classes provide an opportunity for open and insightful dialogue. As in any dialogue, these discussions demonstrate many facets of diversity, including diversity of values, opinions, and experiences. We view these differences as welcomed and needed attributes of a scholarly
discussion. Acknowledgement of and respect for these differences is a sign of mature scholarly debate.

Following are guidelines governing online discussions:

8.1 Faculty members monitor discussions and intervene when requested or deemed necessary.

8.2 NEVER post to the courseroom content:

- That is known to be illegal,
- That is potentially harassing, threatening, or embarrassing,
- That might be offensive and might be received as disrespectful in any way.
- That is vulgar or sexually explicit

8.3 The tone of the exchange is one of respect for individual differences. If you disagree with an opinion expressed by a classmate or instructor, respond in a scholarly manner, arguing about the subject of discussion vs. the person who posted it.

8.4 Students are encouraged to not overuse exclamation marks!!!!!!, CAPITAL LETTERS, or other marks of emotional reaction that may be received as yelling, etc.

8.5 Online communication presents a significant level of ambiguity, as verbal content of communication is not well supported by its non-verbal (including contextual) components. If a student feels threatened or offended by a statement made by another student during online portion of a class, please address the issue immediately with the other student(s) to clarify their position and your reaction. If this does not work, contact your class instructor so actions can be taken if necessary.

8.6 During online discussion, follow the same rules concerning protection of confidential information as you would follow in face-to-face discussion. Confidential client information is not appropriate in forum postings. Further, mental health related issues pertaining to you or your family members must be used with caution, if at all.

8.7 Be aware that some agency-specific information, such as descriptions of programs that have been developed or specialized treatment approaches, may potentially be a subject of copyright law. Although it is not always possible to know whether information is protected, the minimum expectation is to always identify and credit the source of information.

8.8 If the expectations in professional communication or other expectations specific to unique nature of online scholarly activities are not met, the concerning issue will be addressed with involvement of Program Director (or Academic VP, if needed or determined by the PD as requiring higher level of intervention). A student or a faculty member may raise the issue.

8.9 Any off-list communication between student and faculty will be conducted through Moodle, or redirected to Moodle of a student starts it via conventional private e-mailing.

9. **Special Project Time (SPT)**

Special Project Time (SPT) allows students the opportunity to integrate course materials. SPT is meant to be a self-contained experience, requiring at least 10 hours to complete.
SPT experiences may be constructed in such a way that they pertain to students’ unique degree plans. This is done in consultation with the course instructor.

SPT specifics for this course are posted on Moodle.

10. **Writing Guidelines including APA Format**

10.1 All written assignments in courses at the Adler Graduate School, including those submitted in online courses, must be in APA format unless specifically noted by the course instructor (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition), 2009, American Psychological Association. ISBN 1-4338-0561-8).

10.2 Strict APA publication rules in Online Peer Discussions might prove difficult, if not impossible, to maintain. Following the “letter” of the Manual (i.e., not using “I”, or passive voice, keeping proper margins, or complying with headings requirements) may be either difficult or counterproductive in forums such as peer discussions. However, it is still important to adhere to the “spirit” of the APA Manual (i.e., grammar, orderly presentation of ideas, reducing bias in language, and presenting scholarly statements and arguments).

10.3 Prior to submitting a response, please proofread carefully. Grammar and spelling errors may make your response difficult for other students to appreciate.

10.4 Please keep in mind that, while the internet offers a lot of exciting and up-to-date information, not all internet sources are considered scholarly. For example, Wikipedia is not an academically peer-reviewed source. Rather, it is an “anybody-reviewed” source and, therefore, can’t be used in presenting your argument in AGS classes-related tasks.

11. **Attendance and Participation Policy**

Since courses are structured according to an intensive five-week format, regular and punctual attendance is of prime importance. Students are expected to attend all class meetings. When a student is unable to attend class, it is a courtesy to notify the course instructor in advance using the e-mail or phone information provided at the end of this syllabus.

The AGS one credit courses are divided into **five units. One unit is equal to** one evening class session, ½ of a weekend day session, one unit/posting in an online class or, roughly, 3 ¼ hours of class time. In a one credit class, if a student misses more than 1 class units, the decision whether to allow a grade or issue a retake is left to the discretion of the instructor. Students who miss two class sessions will automatically receive a grade of NC (No credit) for the class and are expected to retake the class at full price.

In **online classes**, the student fulfills the class session or unit by complying with posting and other submission deadlines

It is the instructor’s prerogative to allow or not allow make up work or to deduct points or issue a lower grade based on missed class sessions.
Specific courses may have **additional attendance requirements** based on the structure of the course. Those specifics are listed here:

11.1 At the beginning of each course, please complete or update your student profile on Moodle and get familiar with your classmates and the instructor by visiting their profile information.

11.2 You are expected to attend all the course learning activities. In the AGS asynchronous online courses, you attend the class by complying with posting and other submission deadlines.

11.3 In one credit courses, you will have one deadline per week during the five weeks of coursework. For each week, and in conjunction with online instruction and other learning activities, your course instructor will announce a discussion question or a topic corresponding with a unit in the course outline. You will have until Friday night (11:59 PM CST) to submit your original response.

11.4 Unless instructed differently for some experiential exercises, your original response will be at least 350 words, with at least one scholarly reference. Through discussions supported by in-text citations and other references, your response will reflect critical thought related to the topic and specific assignments for that unit.

11.5 Typically, you will then have until Sunday night (11:59 PM CST) to respond to at least two of your classmates’ postings (two responses per week minimum). You will see occasional variations from that common practice, depending on specific needs in your classes. Your course instructor will provide you with more specific information.

11.6 You can post your peer responses at any time after your own original post is submitted. Your course instructor will acknowledge your participation and will grade the quality of it by responding to your original posting, whether individually or in a summary format.

11.7 It is the AGS attendance policy that student have to attend at least 80% of the class sessions in order to be eligible for a letter grade. Online attendance is posting on time. Not complying with posting deadlines or not posting at all will be counted as a missed class.

**Questions or appeals** about the implementation of the attendance policy may be directed to the Academic Vice President.

12. **Participation Disclaimer**

Active participation in class discussions/exercises/demonstrations is expected.

As with other AGS courses, in this course, individual students must determine for themselves the level of personal disclosure/intimacy that is appropriate for them.

Faculty members and students do not disclose confidential, personally identifiable information concerning their clients, students, research participants, organizational clients, or other recipients of their services.
Whenever confidential information/material is used in any AGS course, students and faculty members are expected to observe AGS policy concerning the handling of confidential information/material. Full descriptions of these policies are readily available on Moodle main page.

13. **Academic Integrity Policy**

Honesty and trust among students and between students and faculty are essential for a strong, functioning academic community. Consequently, students are expected to do their own work on all academic assignments, tests, projects, and research/term papers. Academic dishonesty, whether cheating, plagiarism, or some other form of dishonest conduct may result in failure for the work involved. Academic dishonesty could also result in failure for the course and, in the event of a second incident of academic dishonesty, suspension from the Adler Graduate School. Here are examples of academic dishonesty:

- **Cheating** - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit.
- **Fabrication** - Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- **Facilitating academic dishonesty** - Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of academic integrity.
- **Plagiarism** - The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgment.

14. **Nondiscrimination Clause**

The Adler Graduate School is an equal opportunity educator and employer. The Adler Graduate School does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, or physical disability in the employment of faculty or staff, the admission or treatment of students, or in the operation of its educational programs and activities. The institution is committed to providing equal education and employment opportunities in accordance with all applicable State and federal laws.

15. **Learning Accommodations (including students with disabilities)**

If a student in this course has a documented learning disability, tell the instructor during the first week of class. The instructor needs to know on the front end so that he or she can work with you. The Adler Graduate School is committed to helping all students be successful, as best as can be reasonably accommodated. Documenting a learning disability occurs at the student’s expense. When documented appropriately, the Adler Graduate School makes all reasonable accommodations.

16. **Instructor Contact Information**

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Rocky.Garrison@alfredadler.edu