The University of Oklahoma  
College of Continuing Education  
Advanced Programs – Course Syllabus

Course Title:  
Working with Divorcing Families

Course Number:  
HR 5113-120

Course Description:  
Designed to prepare students for work with families experiencing separation, divorce and remarriage. Course will provide students with current information concerning divorce as well as options for helping children and adults cope with divorce in a constructive way.

Class Dates, Location and Hours:  
Dates: July 6-8 & 13-15, 2012  
Location: OCCE, Norman, Oklahoma. Classes are held at the Thurman White Forum Building of OCCE, 1704 Asp Avenue.  
Hours: Fri 5:30-9:30 p.m.; Sat 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sun 1:00-5:00 p.m.  
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: June 7, 2012

Site Director:  
Cathy Yeaman. Assistant: Jan Plavchak. Phone: 405-325-3333; Fax: 405-325-9148; email: apnorman@ou.edu

Professor Contact Information:  
Course Professor: Dr. Avraham (Avi) Scherman  
Mailing Address: 4105 Beechwood Drive  
Norman, OK 73072-5016  
Telephone Number: (405) 360-2787  
E-mail Address: ascherman@ou.edu  
ascherman@cox.net  
Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail to students before and after the class sessions. On-site office hours are half an hour before and after each class session, by appointment.

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:  
Student materials are available at the Follett/AP Bookstore located in the Oklahoma Memorial Union, 900 Asp Ave., Norman, OK. Orders can be placed online at www.oklahomaunion.bkstr.com or by telephone at 866-369-9713 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-5960 (outside the U.S.). E-mail orders may be sent to oklahomaunion@bkstr.com. Representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST on Friday. Summer hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST. Faxed orders may be placed 24 hours a day to 866-223-5607 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-7140 (outside the U.S.).


Note: The Follett/AP Bookstore is the Advanced Programs contractual textbook provider. Should text changes become necessary after publication of the course syllabus, Advanced Programs will facilitate text returns/refunds only for texts purchased through the Follett/AP Bookstore.

**Course Objectives:**

With the increase in the frequency of divorce in the United States there is a higher demand for mental health services to cope with this situational crisis. The American Associations of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) is growing and gaining momentum. More and more programs are accredited by AAMFT, and family related courses are added in mental health programs, such as psychology, counseling and social work. The area of crisis in the family is receiving increased attention, as schools, parents and communities are becoming more aware of the size of this problem and as they begin to search for ways to help children cope better with this stressful situation. Mental health workers were not trained in the past in working with this population. In order to remedy this situation, universities and various organizations are offering courses and workshops designed for those mental health workers working with children and adults experiencing divorce.

This course is designed to present a comprehensive source for professionals, as well as lay persons in the community, on the subject of divorce and separation. We will explore treatment and intervention modalities with clients experiencing loss through divorce. It summarizes almost thirty years of personal work I have done in this area both in the applied and research area. It also integrates all major contributions mentioned in the professional literature.

Upon completion of the course the student will be able to:

a. Understand the effects of divorce on children and adults.
b. Develop a repertoire of strategies designed to facilitate coping with the divorce crisis.
c. Understand legal and custody implications of divorce.
d. Become familiar with the concerns and interventions with children and adults following remarriage

**Course Outline:**

I. Introduction to the course
   a. HK Chapters 1, 2
   b. WB Chapter 1

II. The legal elements of divorce.
   a. WB Chapters 16 -20

III. The divorce: Adults
   a. WB Chapters 2, 12

IV. First two years: Adults
   a. HK Chapters 3 – 5
   b. WB Chapters 13 - 15
   c. WB Chapters 21, 27
   d. MA Chapters 1 – 14

V. Parenting issues
   a. WB Chapter 25 – 26

VI. Long term impact on adults
   a. HK Chapters 12, 13
VII. The divorce: Children
   a. WB Chapters 3 – 11

VIII. First two years: Children
   a. HK Chapter 6
   b. WB Chapters 22

IX. Children at the six year mark
   a. HK Chapter 7

X. Teens and young adults
   a. HK Chapters 10, 11
   b. WB Chapter 33

XI. Remarriage: Adults and Children
   a. HK Chapters 8, 9
   b. WB Chapter 28 – 32
   c. MA Chapter 15

Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

1. Since this is a combination of an experiential class as well as cognitive, I would expect full attendance and participation. It is your experience and the experiences of others shared in the class that would serve as a catalyst to your learning. These cannot be acquired through reading. After reading prepare four cases for class discussion (not all cases will be discussed). These cases should cover the following topics:
   - Children Issues
   - Adults concerns and problems
   - Issues associated with remarriage
   - Legal consideration

To follow is an example of an adult’s concerns:

I am going through an emotionally rough divorce. Out of the blue, my wife announced that she no longer was in love with me and wanted a divorce. I honestly did not see it coming. For the kids’ sake, I agreed to let her keep the house etc, and keep the kids’ routine as normal and consistent as possible. After all is said and done, I will lose my wife, my kids, my dog my house, the town I love, and everything I was involved in inside the community. With the child support and alimony I am legally being forced to pay, I cannot afford to live in the town as it is a very elite "high rent" area. I will barely be able to afford a "low level" apartment within 1/2 hour of the town. I definitely will not be able to afford a car payment or the insurance on a car, so I do not know how I will be able to "pick up the kids" on an every other weekend basis, let alone "do" anything with them without transportation. I would love to "move on" with life, but even with getting a second job at night, I find that at the end of the month, after the rent, utilities, bills, child support and alimony are paid, I barely have money for food, let alone anything left to actually ask someone out on a date. I am 45 years old, and have nothing to offer someone as far as dating etc.

Some questions:
   - Is it wise to move out of the house before the divorce decree?
   - What are some financial considerations following divorce?
   - What should be some ground rules for dating following divorce?
   - How to deal with the sense of loss following divorce?

Each of these four one page papers should be ready for the first class meeting and it should include a paragraph describing the case and the questions that should be explored. (20% of the grade)
2. Read all the texts before class. After you have completed your readings write three short papers in bullet form (each paper no longer than three pages). This portion will account for 30% of the grade.
   a. You are talking with an adult contemplating divorce. Based on your readings offer ten suggestions that will help this person in the divorce process.
   b. Offer ten ideas that will help children better cope with the divorce. These ideas could be implemented by parents, children or in the community. Identify the age level these ideas are directed to.
   c. You have accepted a job as director of outreach services for your community. Your board wants you to develop a pamphlet that will serve as guidelines for remarriage success. Come up with creative ideas on how to do it. The pamphlets are going to presented on Saturday to the whole class.

3. Have ready for the first class meeting reactions of a divorced parent to the following questions (prepare notes for yourself for discussion purposes). (20% of the grade)
   a. Who was/were the person(s) you consulted with once you had learned of the impending divorce?
   b. How did you tell your children about the family separation?
   c. What were the children's reactions cognitively and emotionally?
   d. In what ways did the divorce have an impact on your career?
   e. If you were to advise a recently divorced person on how to better cope with the divorce, what three things would you recommend?

4. An open book final exam that will look for integration. (30% of the grade)

Grading: This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

NOTICE: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.
POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution’s policy regarding “I” (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy.

Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any “I” (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on “financial aid probation.” If the “I” grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student’s Financial Aid may be suspended make the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Honesty

Honesty is a fundamental precept in all academic activities and … [you] have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty. Academic misconduct in any form is inimical to the purposes and functions of the University and is therefore unacceptable and is rigorously proscribed. Academic misconduct includes:

- cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; assisting others in any such act; or attempting to engage in such acts.

All acts of academic misconduct will be reported and adjudicated as prescribed by the student code of the University of Oklahoma. All students should review the “Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity” found at http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity

Accommodation Statement

The College of Continuing Education [Advanced Programs] is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your OU Site Director.

Course Policies

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course. Advanced Programs does not provide duplicating services or office supplies.

Copyright

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: http://www.goou.ou.edu/
INSTRUCTOR VITA

Avraham (Avi) Scherman

Education

- Ph.D., Michigan State University - 1972
- Oklahoma Licensed Professional Counselor #73
- Approved Supervisor #73

Current Positions

- Department of Educational Psychology
- Professor of Counseling Emeritus

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses

- HR 5013  Current Problems in Human Relations
- HR 5433  Group Counseling in Human Relations
- EIPT 5430  Group Process in Education
- HR 5113  Working with Divorcing Families
- EIPT 6493  Divorce Related Counseling
- HR 5100  Family counseling

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest

Avraham Scherman, Professor of Counseling a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in the State of Oklahoma, joined the faculty of the University of Oklahoma in the Fall of 1974. He is teaching Advanced Programs classes since 1975. He received his bachelor's degree from the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel, and his master's and doctoral degrees from Michigan State University. Prior to his appointment at OU, he was a teacher and principal of a high school in Israel, and on the Faculty of the University of Hartford for two years. He is the author of numerous publications in the area of crisis in the family, intervention with children of divorce and support systems available to the child in crisis. In addition, he has a small private practice where he sees clients and conduct support and growth groups.

Representative Publications and Presentations

Publications:


Presentations:

• 1999 Exploration of roles grandparents can play in the extended family. Paper presented at the Oklahoma Counseling Association Mid-Winter Conference, Oklahoma City, OK, February
• 2002 Robbins, R., Lynn, L., Scherman, A., & Wilson, J. Native American Grandparents’ Involvement with their Grandchildren During Times of Crisis in the Family. Paper presented at the Oklahoma Association of Teacher Education Annual Conference, Edmond, Oklahoma, November
• 2004 Roles grandparents can play when crisis occur in the family. Paper presented at the Oklahoma Counseling Association Mid-Winter Conference, Oklahoma City, OK, February
• 2005 Grandparents as a support system for their grandchildren in US, Panama, and South Korea. Paper presented at the Oklahoma Counseling Association Mid-Winter Conference, Oklahoma City, OK, January

Representative Honors and Awards Received

• 1981 Regents' Teaching Award. University of Oklahoma, April.
• 1985 Associate Distinguished Lectureship Award, University of Oklahoma, October.
• 1986 Counselor of the year - Oklahoma, Central region, October.
• 1986 Associate Distinguished Lectureship Award. University of Oklahoma, October.
• 1987 Associate Distinguished Lectureship Award. University of Oklahoma, August.
• 1988 Associate Distinguished Lectureship Award. University of Oklahoma, August.
• 1989 Oklahoma Association for Counselor Education and Supervision – President.
• 1996 Oklahoma Counseling Association - President Elect.
• 1996 Oklahoma Association for Counselor Education and Supervision President.
• 1997 Oklahoma Counseling Association - President.
• 2000  Rufus G. Hall Faculty Award - College of Liberal Studies, University of Oklahoma
• 2004  Regents' Superior Teaching Award. University of Oklahoma, April

Major Professional Affiliations

• American Association for Counseling and Development.
• Association for Counselor Education and Supervision
• Oklahoma Association for Counseling and Development