

# SS5825: MARITAL PREPARATION, ENRICHMENT AND THERAPY

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## Effective Term

Semester A 2026/27

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

Marital Preparation, Enrichment and Therapy

### Subject Code

SS - Social and Behavioural Sciences

### Course Number

5825

### Academic Unit

Social and Behavioural Sciences (SS)

### College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

### Course Duration

One Semester

### Credit Units

3

### Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

### Medium of Instruction

Other Languages

### Other Languages for Medium of Instruction

English, supplemented by Cantonese / Putonghua in live demonstration, skills rehearsal, and role-play exercises as situation requires.

### Medium of Assessment

English

### Prerequisites

Nil

### Precursors

Nil

### Equivalent Courses

Nil

### Exclusive Courses

Nil

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

This course explores evolving social dynamics and relationships in contemporary Hong Kong and other Chinese societies, including premarital sex, cohabitation, marriage, and divorce. Students will analyse marital challenges, learn premarital counselling, marriage enrichment, and couple therapy approaches, and develop skills to support individuals and couples in navigating intimate partnerships.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

| CILOs |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Weighting (if app.) | DEC-A1 | DEC-A2 | DEC-A3 |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1     | Investigate changes in people's beliefs and attitudes toward pre-marital sex, marriage, divorce, re-marriage, and non-marital intimate relationship in contemporary Hong Kong and other Chinese societies.                                                  | 20                  | x      | x      |        |
| 2     | Describe and critically examine the practice of major approaches to pre-marital counselling, marriage enrichment, and couple therapy practiced by professionals in Hong Kong and other Chinese societies.                                                   | 20                  | x      | x      | x      |
| 3     | Conceptualize what is learnt in individual and conjoint counselling sessions with distressed couples, as informed by theories of marital distress and a critical understanding of the socio-cultural context in which the marriage institution is situated. | 30                  |        | x      | x      |
| 4     | Demonstrate competence to conduct pre-marital and re-marital counselling, marriage enrichment programme, and marital therapy.                                                                                                                               | 30                  |        | x      | x      |

#### A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

#### A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

#### A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

| LTAs |                  | Brief Description                                                                 | CILO No.   | Hours/week (if applicable) |
|------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| 1    | Class Discussion | Classroom discussions organized around intellectual input given in mini-lectures. | 1, 2, 3, 4 |                            |

|   |                           |                                                                                                                                                            |      |  |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--|
| 2 | Student-led Workshop      | Conduct student-led workshops to explore and develop the practice aspects of marriage work, addressing specific themes that coordinate with lecture input. | 2, 4 |  |
| 3 | Study Video Demonstration | Study video demonstration (of master therapists and local practice) of premarital counselling and couple therapies.                                        | 3, 4 |  |

**Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)**

| ATs |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | CILO No. | Weighting (%) | Remarks ("-" for nil entry)                     | Allow Use of GenAI? |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1   | <p>Student-led Workshop</p> <p>Students design and conduct workshops to facilitate collaborative inquiry among classmates to explore/develop the practice aspects of marriage work and parent education, addressing specific themes that coordinate with the pacing of lecture input.</p> | 3, 4     | 40            | AI may be allowed for generating initial ideas. | Yes                 |

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |            |    |   |    |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----|---|----|
| 2 | <p>Term Essay</p> <p>A 3,000-word free-title paper to address either: (a) lecture topics and the student-led workshop linked to these lecture topics, in which the student is a member of the audience; or (b) the social world of couples and parents (refer to the recommended textbook Family Life, Couples and Kids) -- grounded on empirical data of the qualitative kind, including autobiographical inquiry, and connect empirical data to theoretical work, the contemporary socio-cultural context, social policy context, and dominant discourses that construct the reality of family life.</p> | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 50 | - | No |
| 3 | <p>Participation</p> <p>Quality of participation in terms of contribution to collaborative learning in classroom discussions and student-led workshops.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 10 | - | No |

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)**

**Assessment Task**

1. Student-led Workshop (Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

**Criterion**

- Ability to conceptualize what is learnt in individual and conjoint counselling sessions with distressed couples, as informed by theories of marital distress and a critical understanding of the socio-cultural context in which the marriage institution is situated
- Ability to demonstrate competence to conduct pre-marital and re-marital counselling, marriage enrichment programme, and marital therapy

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence of achievement of the criteria

**Good**

(B+, B, B-) Good evidence of achievement of the criteria

**Fair**

(C+, C, C-) Fair evidence of achievement of the criteria

**Marginal**

(D) Limited evidence of achievement of the criteria

**Failure**

(F) Insufficient evidence of achievement of the criteria

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**Assessment Task**

2. Term Essay (Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

**Criterion**

- Ability to investigate changes in people's beliefs and attitudes toward pre-marital sex, marriage, divorce, re-marriage, and non-marital intimate relationship in contemporary Hong Kong and other Chinese societies
- Ability to describe and critically examine the practice of major approaches to pre-marital counselling, marriage enrichment, and couple therapy practiced by professionals in Hong Kong and other Chinese societies
- Ability to conceptualize what is learnt in individual and conjoint counselling sessions with distressed couples, as informed by theories of marital distress and a critical understanding of the socio-cultural context in which the marriage institution is situated
- Ability to demonstrate competence to conduct pre-marital and re-marital counselling, marriage enrichment programme, and marital therapy

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence of achievement of the criteria

**Good**

(B+, B, B-) Good evidence of achievement of the criteria

**Fair**

(C+, C, C-) Fair evidence of achievement of the criteria

**Marginal**

(D) Limited evidence of achievement of the criteria

**Failure**

(F) Insufficient evidence of achievement of the criteria

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### Assessment Task

3. Participation (Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

#### Criterion

- Ability to demonstrate competence in terms of contribution to collaborative learning in classroom discussions and student-led workshops.

#### Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence of achievement of the criteria

#### Good

(B+, B, B-) Good evidence of achievement of the criteria

#### Fair

(C+, C, C-) Fair evidence of achievement of the criteria

#### Marginal

(D) Limited evidence of achievement of the criteria

#### Failure

(F) Insufficient evidence of achievement of the criteria

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### Assessment Task

1. Student-led Workshop (Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

#### Criterion

- Ability to conceptualize what is learnt in individual and conjoint counselling sessions with distressed couples, as informed by theories of marital distress and a critical understanding of the socio-cultural context in which the marriage institution is situated
- Ability to demonstrate competence to conduct pre-marital and re-marital counselling, marriage enrichment programme, and marital therapy

#### Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence of achievement of the criteria

#### Good

(B+, B) Good evidence of achievement of the criteria

#### Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Fair to limited evidence of achievement of the criteria

#### Failure

(F) Insufficient/poor evidence of achievement of the criteria

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### Assessment Task

2. Term Essay (Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

#### Criterion

- Ability to investigate changes in people's beliefs and attitudes toward pre-marital sex, marriage, divorce, re-marriage, and non-marital intimate relationship in contemporary Hong Kong and other Chinese societies
- Ability to describe and critically examine the practice of major approaches to pre-marital counselling, marriage enrichment, and couple therapy practiced by professionals in Hong Kong and other Chinese societies

- Ability to conceptualize what is learnt in individual and conjoint counselling sessions with distressed couples, as informed by theories of marital distress and a critical understanding of the socio-cultural context in which the marriage institution is situated
- Ability to demonstrate competence to conduct pre-marital and re-marital counselling, marriage enrichment programme, and marital therapy

#### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence of achievement of the criteria

#### **Good**

(B+, B) Good evidence of achievement of the criteria

#### **Marginal**

(B-, C+, C) Fair to limited evidence of achievement of the criteria

#### **Failure**

(F) Insufficient/poor evidence of achievement of the criteria

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### **Assessment Task**

3. Participation (Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

#### **Criterion**

- Ability to demonstrate competence in terms of contribution to collaborative learning in classroom discussions and student-led workshops.

#### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence of achievement of the criteria

#### **Good**

(B+, B) Good evidence of achievement of the criteria

#### **Marginal**

(B-, C+, C) Fair to limited evidence of achievement of the criteria

#### **Failure**

(F) Insufficient/poor evidence of achievement of the criteria

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## **Part III Other Information**

### **Keyword Syllabus**

Evolving relationship dynamics. Romantic love. Alternatives to marriage. Marriage dissolution and mediation. Foundations and goals of pre-marital and re-marital counselling. Utilizing modern pre-marital and re-marital inventories. Philosophy and concepts of marriage enrichment. Models of couple relationship development. Practice of marriage enrichment programmes. Nature of marital problems. Approaches to couple counselling. Healthy relationship dynamics. Divorce counselling and reconciliation.

### **Reading List**

### **Compulsory Readings**

| Title |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. (Eds.). (2006). Couples, kids, and family life. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.<br>Chan, A. et al. (Eds.). (1997). Casebook on family mediation and couple counselling – ‘Conflict and Harmony’ series. Hong Kong: The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council. |

### Additional Readings

| Title |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | Bachand, L. L., & Caron, S. L. (2001). Ties that bind: A qualitative study of happy long-term marriages. <i>Contemporary Family Therapy</i> , 23(1), 105-121.<br>Bachand, L. L., & Caron, S. L. (2001). Ties that bind: A qualitative study of happy long-term marriages. <i>Contemporary Family Therapy</i> , 23(1), 105-121.         |
| 2     | Chambers, D., & Gracia, P. (2021).. John Wiley & Sons.<br>Booth, A., Crouter, A. C., & Clements, M. (Eds.). (2001). <i>Couples in conflict</i> . New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.                                                                                                                                  |
| 3     | Larson, J. H. et al. (2002). A review of three comprehensive premarital assessment questionnaires. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i> , 28(2), 233-239.<br>Larson, J. H. et al. (2002). A review of three comprehensive premarital assessment questionnaires. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i> , 28(2), 233-239. |
| 4     | Metcalf, L. (2023). <i>Marriage and family therapy: A practice-oriented approach</i> . Springer Publishing Company.<br>Mace, D. (1982). <i>Close companions: The marriage enrichment handbook</i> . Winston-Salem, NC: Acme.                                                                                                           |
| 5     | Olson, D. H. (2019). PREPARE/ENRICH enrichment program. In <i>Encyclopedia of Couple and Family Therapy</i> (pp. 2310-2316). Cham: Springer International Publishing.<br>Markman, H., Stanley, S., & Blumberg, S. (1994). <i>Fighting for your marriage</i> . San Francisco: Jossey Bass.                                              |
| 6     | Wright, H. N., & Roberts, W. (2015). <i>Before You Say “I Do” : A Marriage Preparation Guide for Couples</i> . Harvest House Publishers.                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 7     | Bachand, L. L., & Caron, S. L. (2001). Ties that bind: A qualitative study of happy long-term marriages. <i>Contemporary Family Therapy</i> , 23(1), 105-121.                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 8     | Booth, A., Crouter, A. C., & Clements, M. (Eds.). (2001). <i>Couples in conflict</i> . New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 9     | Chambers, D., & Gracia, P. (2021). <i>A sociology of family life: Change and diversity in intimate relation</i> . John Wiley & Sons.                                                                                                                                                                                                   |