

University of Texas at Tyler
Department of Psychology and Counseling
COUN 5380.501 Seminar in Counseling: Play Therapy
Course Syllabus: Summer II 2025
Meeting Times: Mondays and Wednesdays 11:00 am -1:45 pm
Room: HPR 262

Keren Acuna M.S., LPC-S, RPT-S

Office Location: TBD

Office Hours: By appointment only.

Appointments also available via video conferencing.

Phone: (903) 565-6514

Email: kacuna@uttyler.edu (preferred method of contact)

Course Description: This course is an introduction to the basic concepts of play therapy and child-centered play therapy. Students will learn the attitudes and skills necessary to establish and maintain facilitative relationships with children that encourage their self-expression and facilitate change. This class is also designed to give mental health professionals who desire to become Registered Play Therapists an overview of Play Therapy and review the requirements for becoming a Registered Play Therapist.

Prerequisites: None

Required Texts:

Landreth, G. L. (2012). *Play therapy: The art of the relationship*. Muncie, IN: Accelerated Development.

Recommended Texts:

Ray, D. C. (2016). *Advanced play therapy: Essential conditions, knowledge and skills for child practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Additional Required Materials:

- ✓ Video recorder- The equipment that you use for these sessions must be visible and audible to the instructor for review. If I cannot see and hear it, I cannot give you feedback.
- ✓ Access to Toys and Play Materials

Dispositions are the values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behavior toward students, families, clients, colleagues, and communities. Dispositions affect your learning, motivation, and development as well as your professional growth. The dispositions of **professionalism, counseling qualities, relationships with others, and professional development** are expected of students in all course and clinical work throughout their training and time at the university.

Course Objectives: As a step in the process of developing one's own approach to working with children in a play therapy relationship, each student will develop an integrated understanding of children's developmental needs and will acquire the necessary play therapy skills to facilitate children's expression, self-understanding, personal growth, and development. Specifically, this course is designed to help students:

1. Develop a philosophy of and approach to play therapy;
2. Develop an awareness of the child's world as viewed by the child;
3. Understand children's play and behavior;
4. Increase their sensitivity to and acceptance of children and their parents;
5. Understand the organizations that have shaped the history and profession of play therapy, to include a review of essential people, theorists and organizations;
6. Review developmental stages of children and children's play.
7. Review the most widely accepted theoretical models of play therapy and the formats in which they are most commonly offered (individual, group, etc.);
8. Be able to conceptualize a client's presenting clinical problem(s) developmentally and theoretically;
9. Identify developmentally appropriate play therapy toys and materials that can be incorporated into either a permanent or traveling play room for the purposes of both assessment and treatment;
10. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the play therapist and the play therapy in the context of the client's broader clinical (medical/psychiatric treatment) and non-clinical system (family, school, community);
11. Identify elements of the play therapy relationship, from intake to termination;
12. Demonstrate basic play therapy skills, including tracking, reflection of feelings, returning responsibility to the child, responding to efforts, and setting limits;
13. Understand the person of the play therapist and how it impacts on the unfolding relationship with the client;
14. Appreciate the legal and ethical issues that are unique to play therapy;
15. Understand issues of diversity and how they impact every facet of play therapy, from choice of materials to the relationship with the client;
16. Identify the minimal training/supervision guidelines and play therapy best practices outlined by the Association for Play Therapy

Methods of Instruction:

A combination of experiential learning, lecture, discussion, and reading will be used. Instructional methods include readings, lecture, discussion, role-playing, small group experiences, video/film analysis, demonstrations, exploratory papers, observation of play therapy sessions and supervised play therapy sessions.

Canvas: You are expected to use Canvas as an integrated part of your approach to scholarship. Plan to check Canvas regularly for all information related to this class. Canvas will include the current information and resources for the class (including the syllabus and Schedule of Classes). With any changes/additions to any documentation in this class, you will be informed through an email, and Canvas needs to be your source of current documentation for the class. If you need help, please call Canvas support or

utilize their online help forum.

Classroom Conduct: I expect you to follow the standards of good classroom behavior at all times, both in the classroom and in any outside meetings we have. Electronic devices can interfere with the student learning experience and distract the instructor. Due to the nature of material discussed in this class, voice recordings will not be allowed in this class or during supervision sessions. Cell phones should remain off or on vibrate if you need to be available to family during class. I ask that you do not use a laptop or tablet unless needed for accommodations.

Submission of class materials: Please pay close attention to the title of all documents submitted to make sure they comply with the following requirements: All documents you submit online must be titled with your name, followed by a brief name of the assignment (e.g., *Your last name* – Observation). This process helps maintain the confidentiality of students by providing a check to make sure the instructor returns papers to the right students.

Class attendance and participation: Since this course is highly experiential, all students are expected to attend and participate in the class activities. Please note that attendance is crucial to your success in this class and that missing class, in whole or in part, will result in a decrease in the number of points you will earn during the semester. Students should come to **ALL** classes! Students who miss more than one class will not be able to earn an A in the class. Students who miss more than two classes will not be able to earn a B in the class. Parts of classes are counted including arriving late to class will be considered missing a part of a class. Missing one of the supervision classes or the micro-practicum is equivalent to two missed classes.

Observe a child at play for 30 minutes outside of the class. You may observe the child, aged 3 - 9 years old, in a park, at McDonalds, or in a neighborhood. You should observe a child you do not know. You should NOT speak with the child during this experience. Immediately following your observation, respond to the following questions in an approximately a two-page, double spaced document:

- What did the child **do** during your observation? Focus on specific behaviors.
- If you could have responded one time to the child, what would you have said? Use quotes for what you could have actually said.
- What do you think that the child was feeling during that time?
- Other things you'd like to share.

Play experience with a child: You will have the opportunity to apply the skills you are learning by conducting three (2) play sessions with a typically developing child. The purpose of this requirement is to give you an experience using play therapy skills with children aged 3 - 9 years old and to give you a chance to critique your work.

You will meet with the same child for two (2) 30-minute sessions. If a session ends before you have seen the child for 30 minutes, you will need to add additional sessions to make sure you have seen the child for at least 1 hour during the semester. You may not have 2 sessions in one day. You must (1) obtain written permission from the child's

parent/guardian (in Handbook), (2) provide the play materials, and (3) video record each of your play sessions to share with your supervision group and to upload. When you tape the sessions, you should try to include yourself and the child in the video so that you can observe yourself, as well as the child (with the understanding that the child will move around, so you cannot guarantee that). No one else should be in the room with you while you are playing with the child. While you will only present a 10 consecutive minute segment in class, you should also have available the entire session so that you can provide it to the instructor if requested.

To avoid dual relationships, your client should be a child who is not personally close to you. For this experience, you should work with a **high functioning** child – one not currently exhibiting any behavioral/emotional problems at this time (i.e., no history of counseling). Learning to work with children using a child-centered approach is difficult, so...for the first time, I want you to work with an “easy” child. However, if you find the child needs more assistance, you are required to talk to the class instructor immediately, so appropriate referrals can be made.

The focus will be on your skills, not on the child’s issues. This will prepare you to work with children exhibiting challenging behaviors in future clinical settings.

Share with the parents/guardians (1) your goals and your behaviors as you play with their children, (2) that while the child’s behaviors in the session will be confidential, you will be able to share with them themes/general observations about their child, (3) that you will share two (2) 10-minute segments in your small group supervision sessions, (4) that the evaluation will be regarding your way of being with the child and will not focus on the child, and (5) and that most children love these play sessions because they get the focused, warm attention of a caring adult. Feel free to share with parents materials from the class.

Group Supervision Experience of Play Sessions

You will share your play session videos in group supervision sessions with the instructor.

For all supervision sessions, you will present a **10-minute video recorded segment** from your play sessions and receive feedback from the instructor and your peers. ****Remember: There is no perfect counselor, and, therefore there is no perfect counseling session! Take some risks-you’ll learn more if you try what we discuss in class, share your struggles in supervision, come to supervision with an open mind, and allow yourself to be human.*** Be sure to test your equipment prior to videotaping your work, since credit for your work is dependent on your ability to show the video clips in small group supervision.

Supervision Sessions

Prior to supervision

1. Submit **Play Therapy Skills Checklist**
2. Submit **Session Reflection**

3. Submit **video of session** (instructions are in your “My Media” folder in Canvas).

Do not work ahead... this means to wait until you receive feedback on your session before conducting your next session.

Chapter Readings: For each class, bring the following points and questions you generate based on the readings assigned in Landreth’s book each week:

1. Summarize 2 key points/themes/topics of interest to you. Each key point should focus on the information you read (the content) and the reason this interested you.
2. Generate 2 (thoughtful) questions/issues/concerns you are left with after the readings.

Paper on CCPT: The purpose of this paper is to reflect on your understanding, overview, and overall interest in Client Centered Play Therapy. The content of your paper should include an in-depth discussion (1) compare and contrast Landreth’s approach and another modality (Adlerian, Cognitive Behavioral, Gestalt... etc.) to play therapy, (2) the impact of CCPT on your interest in play therapy and (3) how do you see yourself using the CCPT modality in your current or future work with clients. The paper should be no less than 4 pages.

Evaluation: Grades will be assigned on the basis of demonstrated competence in the skills of counseling and mastery of the content of the course. To earn an “A” in the class, students must demonstrate “Meets Expectations” on the Play Therapy Skills Checklist for the typescript presented at the final supervision based on demonstration of a variety of skills, taking opportunities to respond in a variety of ways presented in the final segment, appropriateness of responses, and non-verbal presence (genuineness, authenticity).

Class Requirement	Points
Chapter readings (20 points per week/8 weeks)	160
Observation of child at play	100
Play Session 1	220
Play Session 2	220
CCPT paper	300
TOTAL POINTS	1000

Organization Website:

<http://www.a4pt.org>

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Additional or substituted topics may be added dependent on students' needs/preferences and time

Date	Topic	Assignment Due (specific readings to be determined each week)
7/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction/Review Syllabus • RPT Guidelines • Experiential Activity • History of Play 	Landreth Chapters 1, 2 and 4
7/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning of Play • Rationale for Play • Overview of CCPT Principles • Playroom Materials and Toys/Structure 	Observation Due Landreth Chapters 5, 8, 9
7/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating Responding • Be-With- 4 Healing Messages • Tracking/ Acknowledging Non-verbal Behaviors • Reflection of Content and Feelings • Limit Setting 	Landreth Chapters 6, 10, and 11 Consent Forms Due
7/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC8 Guiding principles 	Landreth Chapter 3 Sign up due for micro-practicum
7/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Supervision 1 	VIDEO 1 DUE Landreth Chapter 7
7/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play Therapy Themes • Issues in Play Therapy 	Landreth Chapters 12, 13, and 14 Paper on CCPT due
7/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Supervision 2 • Play Therapy Session Summary form 	VIDEO 2 DUE
7/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking Parents to Play Therapy: Parent Intakes 	Landreth Chapters 16 and 17
8/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Filial Therapy/CPRT • Overview of Theoretical Approaches 	
8/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termination of Counseling 	Chapter 15

Note: The syllabus is a guide and outline for the progression of the class. Changes may be made for due dates, assignments, and other items based on student input and to insure students' learning needs are addressed. The priority is to facilitate students' personal and professional development including attainment of applied skills.

IX. University Policies:

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the

extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability Services

In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodation must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services counselor. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services office in UC 3150, or call (903) 566-7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

(i) “Cheating” includes, but is not limited to:

- copying from another student’s test paper;
- using during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed “crib notes”. The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructor has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
- paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or information about an unadministered test, test key, homework solution or computer program;
- falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of U. T. Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and,
- misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

(ii) “Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit.

(iii) “Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

X. CEP Vision and Mission and Program Standards

Vision

The College of Education and Psychology is nationally recognized and respected for its academic programs and opportunities. It is a center of academic excellence, scholarly inquiry, and public service. The College prepares leaders to meet the critical challenges of the 21st Century, to make significant contributions to local and global communities, and to work toward individual and cultural equity.

Mission

The mission of the College of Education and Psychology is to provide a positive environment that fosters the acquisition of knowledge and skills. The mission is individually and collectively realized through a community of scholars that contributes to knowledge through scholarly inquiry; organizes knowledge for application, understanding and communication; and provides leadership and service. Additionally, the College is committed to affirming and promoting global perspectives, cultural diversity, and respect for individual differences as a means of enhancing learning, service, and scholarship.

Technical Support

If you experience technical problems or have a technical question about this course, you can obtain assistance by emailing itsupport@patriots.utttyler.edu or call 903.565.5555.

When you email IT Support, be sure to include a complete description of your question or problem including:

- The title and number of the course
- The page in question
- If you get an error message, a description and message number
- What you were doing at the time you got the error message

You may also visit the Help Link on Canvas

Plug-ins and Helper Applications

UT Tyler Canvas courses use Java, JavaScript, browser plug-ins, helper application and cookies. It is essential that you have these elements installed and enabled in your web browser for optimal viewing of the content and functions of your Canvas course. Always ensure that you are using the most update version for the browser you choose to access the online learning content.

NOTE: Mozilla Firefox is the recommended browser for Canvas. (URL: <http://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/>)

- **Adobe Reader** allows you to view, save, and print Portable Document Format (PDF) files. (URL: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>)
- **Java Runtime Environment (JRE)** allows you to use interactive tools on the web. (URL: <http://www.java.com/en/download/>)
- **Adobe Flash Player** allows you to view content created with Flash such as interactive web applications and animations. (URL: <http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>)
- **QuickTime** allows users to play back audio and video files. (URL: <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>)
- **Windows Media Player** allows you to view, listen and download streaming video and audio. (URL: <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/products/windows-media-player>)
- **RealPlayer** allows you to view and listen to streaming video and audio. (URL: <http://www.real.com/>)

Netiquette Guide

"Netiquette" is network etiquette, the do's and don'ts of online communication. Netiquette covers both common courtesy online and informal "rules of the road" of cyberspace. Review and familiarize yourself with the guidelines provided.

(URL: <http://www.learnthenet.com/learn-about/netiquette/index.php>)