Learning Objectives

1. Examine and critically evaluate the theory and practice of the field of marriage and family therapy through the contextual lenses of culture, gender, sexuality, race, class and spirituality

2. Acknowledge and appreciate the contribution of your own unique contextual experience and how this has contributed to your worldview

3. Increase your ability to acknowledge and appreciate multiple perspectives and worldviews in addition to your own

4. Review current trends in the field of sex therapy

5. Tolerate our anxiety and fear about this journey into new territory

Marriage & Family Therapy Clinical Core Competencies

- (1.2.1) Recognize contextual & systemic dynamics (e.g., gender, age, socioeconomic status, culture/race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, spirituality, religion, larger systems, social context)

- (1.3.1) Gather & review intake information, giving balanced attention to individual, family, community, cultural, and contextual factors

- (2.1.1) Understand principles of human development, human sexuality, gender development; psychopathology; psychopharmacology; couple processes; and family development and processes (e.g., family, relational, and system dynamics)

- (2.1.6) Understand the strengths and limitations of the models of assessment & diagnosis, especially as they relate to different cultural, economic & ethnic groups

- (2.3.6) Assess family history and dynamics using a genogram or other assessment instruments
• (2.4.3) Evaluate the accuracy and cultural relevance of behavioral health and relational diagnoses

• (4.1.1) Comprehend a variety of individual and systemic therapeutic models & their application, including evidence-based therapies & culturally sensitive approaches

• (4.1.2) Recognize strengths, limitations, and contraindications of specific therapy models, including the risk of harm associated with models that incorporate assumptions of family dysfunction, pathogenesis or cultural deficit

• (4.3.2) Deliver interventions in a way that is sensitive to special needs of clients (e.g., gender, age, socioeconomic status, culture/race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, personal history, larger systems issues of the client).

• (4.4.1) Evaluate interventions for consistency, congruency with model of therapy & theory of change, cultural & contextual relevance, & goals of the treatment plan

• (4.4.6) Evaluate reactions to the treatment process (e.g., transference, family-of-origin, current stress level, current life situation, cultural context) and their impact on effective intervention & clinical outcomes

Course Requirements

Required Texts:

ISBN: 1-59385-020-4

ISBN: 978-1-59385-427-0

ISBN: 9780789036698

ISBN: 0-393-70381-9
Recommended Texts:


Description of Assignments

**Cultural Genogram Group Presentation & Reaction Paper:** 20 points

As therapists training in a mental health profession, we have an ethical and moral obligation to stay in touch with our own processes (particularly when entering into unfamiliar and sometimes uncomfortable areas). During this course, you are asked to participate in a process designed to focus on how you are feeling, thinking and reacting to the class material. Students will form small groups of four people per group. They will meet during class time through the first half of the semester to take turns presenting their cultural genogram to their group. Group members will act as supportive witnesses to each member’s cultural genogram presentation, and will facilitate discussion of material presented. Each person will then turn in written reaction paper at scheduled due date (class #7, 12 March 2013).


This article describes the process of constructing the cultural genogram as a way to increase both cultural awareness and sensitivity – key elements in the development of multicultural competency. This assignment will consist of three parts: 1) constructing a cultural genogram, 2) a 30-45 minute presentation of your cultural genogram to your group, and 3) a written reaction paper. Students will sign-up for genogram groups on the first day of class.

The construction of the cultural genogram involves the following elements:

1. Begin by defining your *culture of origin* (refer to page 229)

2. Identify the major *organizing principles* of each group that comprise your *culture of origin*
3. Identify pride/shame issues for each group associated with your culture of origin.

4. Create symbols to represent these constructs that include the use of color to identify different groups, and to depict how each group contributes to the cultural identity of each individual.

5. Identify intercultural marriages (or “unions”). Explore how divergent cultural issues were/are negotiated in these relationships, and trace the intergenerational consequences of intercultural unions.

6. Create a cultural framework chart.

7. Construct at least a 3-generation cultural genogram.

8. Consider questions 1-20 in Table 1 (page 232) in preparation for your group presentation.

9. Be prepared to consider and discuss facilitation questions from Table 3 (page 35) during your presentation.

Be prepared to address questions and comments from fellow group members during your presentation.

**Cultural Genogram Reaction Paper Instructions**

After completing your cultural genogram & presenting it to your small group, you are asked to write a reaction paper describing your experience. Please reflect on and address the following questions:

1. What are your family’s beliefs and feelings about the group(s) that comprise your culture of origin? What parts of the group(s) do they embrace? What parts do they reject? How has this influenced your feelings about your cultural identity?

2. What aspects of your culture of origin do you have the most comfort “owning”? The most difficulty “owning”?

3. What groups will you have the easiest time working with, and why? What groups will you probably have the most difficulty working with, and why?

4. What did you learn about yourself and your cultural identity? How might this influence your tendencies as a therapist?

5. Was this exercise valuable, worthwhile? Why or why not?
6. What was your experience of working together in your small group? What challenges did you face, and how were these challenges addressed? How did this group experience benefit you, and other group members?

7. Please address anything I did not ask about that you would like to share with me.

Sexual Genogram Group Presentation & Reaction Paper: 20 points

Students will remain with original small group of four people. They will meet during class time through the second half of the semester to take turns presenting their sexual genogram to their group. Group members will act as supportive witnesses to each member’s sexual genogram presentation, and will facilitate discussion of material presented. Each person will then turn in written reaction paper at scheduled due date (class #12, 22 April 2013). Details regarding paper content will be provided separately.

Sexual Genogram Group Presentation Instructions

Drawing from your previously constructed genogram, reflect on the following questions regarding your experience of sexuality in your family-of-origin:

- What were the overt/covert messages in your family-of-origin regarding sexuality?
- Regarding masculinity? Regarding femininity?
- Who was the most open sexually? Who was conspicuously silent in the area of sexuality?
- What questions have you had regarding sexuality in your family tree that you have been reluctant to ask? Who might have the answers? How could you discover the answers?
- What were/are the secrets in your family regarding sexuality?
- How would you change your family experience to resemble what you wish would have occurred regarding messages and experiences of sexuality, masculinity and femininity?

· adapted from Weeks & Hof (1987) Integrating sex & marital therapy: A clinical guide; pp. 48-49

Meet together in your small groups & take turns presenting your genogram, now with an emphasis on sexuality (e.g., sexual orientation, infidelity, experience with infertility, pregnancy outside of & within marital relationships, sexual trauma, etc). Due to the often sensitive nature of personal sexual experience, please share only the information you are comfortable sharing with your group. Be aware that this experience may stir up emotional/cognitive/behavioral stuff for you that you might want to process in your personal therapy. Please contact course instructor should this occur, and/or if you would like to discuss professional resources available for further assistance.
Sexual Genogram Reaction Paper Instructions

After completing your sexual genogram & presenting it to your small group, you are asked to write a reaction paper describing your experience. Please reflect on and address the following questions:

1. What are your family’s beliefs and feelings concerning sexuality? What aspects are approached in an open manner? What is relegated to the realm of secrecy? How has this influenced your feelings about your sexual identity?

2. What aspects of sexuality does your family-of-origin have the most comfort “owning”? The most difficulty “owning”? How is this congruent with your culture-of-origin? In what ways is it incongruent with your culture-of-origin?

3. What sexual issues do you think you will have the easiest time working with, and why? What sexual issues will you probably have the most difficulty working with, and why?

4. What did you learn about yourself and your sexual identity? How might this influence your tendencies as a therapist?

5. Was this exercise valuable, worthwhile? Why or why not?

6. What was your experience of working together in your small group? What challenges did you face, and how were these challenges addressed? How did this group experience benefit you, and other group members?

7. Please address anything I did not ask about that you would like to share with me.

Please reflect and expand on the following questions. Be sure to integrate course material in your discussion.

Reaction Papers 10 points each (total of 20 points)

As therapists training in a mental health profession, we have an ethical and moral obligation to stay in touch with our own processes (particularly when entering into unfamiliar and sometimes uncomfortable areas). During this course, you are asked to write two reaction papers focusing on how you are feeling, thinking and reacting to the course material. You will be given a format to follow for each reaction paper. Papers are due by the beginning of the specified class meeting. In order to earn the full 10 points for each reaction paper, the following criteria must be met:

1. Papers must be turned in by the beginning of class on the designated due date (5 points will automatically be deducted if papers are turned in late. Late
papers will not be accepted for partial credit after the end of the following class meeting – i.e., 1 week grace period for late papers)

2. All parts of the question must be answered in full.
3. Papers must include integration of course readings.

You may also use this format to provide class feedback, discuss ways you are integrating course material into your professional work or personal life, or anything else you feel is important that you would like to share. The content of your reaction papers will only be viewed by the instructor (unless your permission is given for any additional use), and returned to you with comments, questions, feedback & musings. This assignment is an invitation to “dialogue” about important contextual issues in the field. **(recommended page length:** 3-5 double-spaced, typed pages per reaction paper). **The first paper is due at the beginning of class #5, 19 February 2013. The second paper is due at the beginning of class #10, 9 April 2013.**

**Reaction Paper #1 Instructions**

Please reflect and expand on the following questions. **Be sure to integrate course material in your discussion.**

Describe an experience where you were exposed (willingly or unwillingly) to people/experiences/views different from your own. In what ways did you feel challenged? What did you learn about yourself?

What are your key “strengths” that you bring to working with people from diverse backgrounds? What personal/familial “prejudice” or “bias” are you currently aware of that inform your worldview? What do you suspect are your clinical “blind spots” (i.e., unconscious thoughts, values, influences & opinions that you hold – **try asking a trusted colleague, friend or family member to help identify “blind spots”**)

Describe an experience when you felt “invisible”. What contributed to your experience of invisibility? If you could replay that experience, how would you handle things differently?

Hardy & Laszloffy (1998) make the claim that “All individuals are socialized in a pro-racist society; therefore, to some degree, we all internalize some pieces of this [pro-racist] ideology (i.e., a generalized belief that espouses & supports the superiority of Whites). As a result, the question is not ‘Do I manifest a pro-racist ideology?’ but rather ‘How do I manifest a pro-racist ideology?’” If you were to accept this premise, reflect on the ways in which you could be described as manifesting a “pro-racist ideology”. What examples can you draw on from your professional and/or personal life that illustrate this concept?

Feel free to share comments about the class and/or reading material!
Reaction Paper #2 Instructions

Please reflect and expand on the following questions. Be sure to integrate course material in your discussion.

Monica McGoldrick discusses how the invisibility of her mother’s life made her husband and children’s lives visible (p. 219). She states that “I have come to realize it was not my mother who was inadequate, but the yardstick by which I measured her.” She quotes U.S. Supreme Court justice, Ruth Bader Ginsburg as stating, “I would like to be the kind of woman my mother would have been, had she lived in different times.” Who were the “unsung sheros” in your own life? In what ways did they sacrifice themselves to boost your own visibility? What lessons can you learn from these experiences? What legacy would you like to pass on to the next generation of females? Of males?

Harry Aponte (1994) emphasizes the importance of recognizing & working with values in clinical work, especially when working with cultural differences between clients and helping professionals. He notes that poor families are especially vulnerable and states, “Poor families, accustomed to being dependent upon social agencies and medical authorities, are often conditioned to giving up control over their lives. They learn to respond to the expectations of those who have power to give them money, housing, medical care, and education. They frequently lack confidence in their ability to self-direct their lives, a self-doubt often fed by the authorities.” In what ways have you seen this play out in your own experience, professionally and/or personally? What do you think are key elements in working with impoverished families in an effective manner? What are some current barriers to effective service delivery? What needs to happen in order to transcend these barriers?

What messages have you absorbed from your own cultural learning that impacts your worldview regarding class? From a “self-of-the therapist” perspective, in what ways do issues of class challenge you clinically?…personally? How might you begin to address these challenges? What resources do you bring that will assist your work across class differences?

What are the attitudes and beliefs about gay men and lesbians in your family-of-origin? In what ways do you share these attitudes and beliefs? In what ways do you differ? What would you like our class to address in discussing sexual orientation?

Feel free to share comments about the class and/or reading material!

Course Reading Worksheets: 2 points each week for total of 20 points
Students will complete a reading worksheet on each assigned reading for class that week for a total of 10 classes (there are 14 classes in the course). The format involves listing chapter citation, and then listing 3 ideas from this reading that caught your attention and a brief explanation of why (so for example, if there are 4 required readings for a particular class, you cite each reading & then list 3 points under each along with a brief explanation of why this caught your attention…which in this example would then include 12 bullet points in total)
* (Late reading worksheets will receive credit up to 2 classes beyond the due date, and then no credit will be given for an assignment turned in more than 2 weeks late.)

* Reading Worksheets are due the beginning of each class meeting (starting with class #2 on 29 January 2013).

Class Attendance and Participation

Students can earn up to 10 points based on regular class attendance and participation in class discussion, experiential exercises and role plays. Since much of the learning for this course takes place through experiential practice, it is essential that you consistently attend class and fully participate each week during course sessions. **An additional note regarding class attendance is warranted:**

*In order to realistically meet course objectives, class attendance is required.*

Seminary policy is very specific regarding expectations for class attendance. According to Seminary policy, students are required to **notify the course instructor in advance of any absences**. No student may receive credit for a course if they miss more than \( \frac{1}{4} \) of the class sessions. (that means that if you miss more than three classes, you will automatically fail this course) For every absence exceeding two, **ten points** will be subtracted from your final grade. Therefore, if you miss more than two classes this semester, 10 points will automatically be deducted from your final grade (e.g., if you had 97 points total but miss 3 classes, you will now have 87 points....which is the difference between an A and a B+!)

**Final Project:**

This is an opportunity to unleash your creativity and reflect on what you’ve learned this semester in a “right-brained”, nontraditional way! Draw from your talents & passions to create a symbolic expression of what you learned from this class. For example, you could write a poem, paint a picture, compose a song, or cook a special dish. For the more practical-minded, you could develop a clinical tool or therapeutic intervention, etc….

* This project is due during the last class meeting (7 May 2013).

Grading and Attendance

Grades will be determined by the number of points accumulated out of a total of 100 possible points.

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**Course Schedule**

22 January *(Session 1)*: Orientation and Organization: Syllabus Overview

29 January *(Session 2)*: It’s All About Context!

**Readings:**
  *Chapter 1: Overview: Ethnicity and Family Therapy*
- Read the chapter(s) that discusses your family’s cultural origin

5 February *(Session 3)*: Embracing a Strengths Perspective!

**Readings:**
12 February (Session 4): The Impact of Race, Gender & Social Class in America: Stereotypes, Prejudices – Power and Privilege

Readings:

19 February (Session 5): Gender Revisited

Reaction Paper #1 due

Readings:

26 February No Class! (Reading Week)

5 March (Session 6): Gender (Cont’d)

Readings:
- Dolan-Del Vecchio, K. (2008). Dismantling white male privilege within


12 March (Session 7): Clinical Implications

Cultural Genogram Paper due

Readings:


19 March (Session 8) Let’s Talk About Sex! What is Sex Therapy?

Historical & Current Trends/Critical Evaluation

Readings:

26 March  No Class!!!  (Easter Recess)

2 April (Session 9)  Sex Therapy (cont’d)

Readings:


9 April (Session 10)  Brief Systemic Sex Therapy Models

*Reaction Paper #2 due*

Readings:

handbook of brief sex therapy (pp. 126-149), New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.

16 April (Session 11): Special Topics

Readings:

23 April (Session 12): Sexual Orientation: Demystifying Gay and Lesbian Sex

Sexual Genogram Paper Due

Readings:

30 April (Session 13): Sexual Orientation (Cont’d)

Readings: TBA

7 May (Session 14): Synthesis: Putting It All Together

Final Project Due
- Students will take turns sharing their final project with fellow students and course instructor