P-621 Theory of Marriage and Family Therapy
Spring 2011
Wednesdays 6pm-8:45pm

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Office Hour: Before and after class, and by appointment
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Catalogue Course Description

A preparation for marriage and therapy training, focusing on foundations of systems thinking and current trends in philosophical assumptions.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the course, students will be able:

- To articulate an understanding of the philosophical foundations that led to the development of marriage and family therapy as a discipline and to relate these foundations to an understanding of the nature of change.
- To relate their own ideas about dysfunction and the assessment of persons and systems with an understanding of the interaction and limitations of linear and non-linear thinking.
- To produce an anthropological statement which relates human individuals to human systems using an understanding of how belief systems based on ethnicity, culture, gender, and spirituality interact with human systems.
- To conceptualize their own model of marriage and family therapy for clinical practice and/or pastoral ministry and your role as a therapist/minister within this model.

Successful mastery of these learning objectives is dependent upon completing all class reading and assignments.

Learning Outcomes through Marriage and Family Therapy Core Competencies©

Domain 1: Admission to Treatment

1.1.1 Conceptual--Understand systems concepts, theories, and techniques that are foundational to the practice of marriage and family therapy.

1.2.1 Perceptual--Recognize contextual and systemic dynamics (e.g., gender, age, socioeconomic status, culture/race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, spirituality, religion, larger systems, social context).
Domain 2: Clinical Assessment and Diagnosis

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

2.4.2 Evaluative--Assess ability to view issues and therapeutic processes systemically.

Domain 3: Treatment Planning and Case Management

3.1.1 Conceptual--Know which models, modalities, and/or techniques are most effective for presenting problems.

Domain 4: Therapeutic Interventions

4.1.1 Conceptual--Comprehend a variety of individual and systemic therapeutic models and their application, including evidence-based therapies and culturally sensitive approaches.

4.1.2 Conceptual--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.

CLASS PROCESS

Some classes will begin with an experiential exercise that will focus on linear/non-linear thinking or the class session topic. A lecture/discussion that usually will utilize a PowerPoint presentation follows. Some class sessions will focus on a case study, film vignette, music, art, play, or other piece of literature to further expand the lecture material. In addition, some master therapist videos will be viewed to illustrate the different theoretical models.

Students will be assigned to a reflection team composed of people representing differences in ethnicity, culture, and gender. These reflection teams will be utilized for class discussion and optional class presentations.

The format of the class may be changed by the professor if it appears that another approach would better serve the learning objectives. Students are encouraged to give feedback regarding the class to the instructor during the semester.

Course documents will be posted on Inside CTS which may be used in different ways during the semester.
CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Class attendance is mandatory. Students are to contact the professor if unable to attend due to illness or emergency. No student may receive credit for a course if they miss more than one fourth of the class sessions. Extensions of deadline, if granted, must be negotiated with the instructor prior to the due date. Late written assignments will have a minus deducted from what the paper would earn if submitted on time. For example, a paper that merits a B+ would receive a B if submitted late.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Required Reading**

*Students are required to read the entire text unless otherwise indicated.*


Additional required reading on ethnicity and spirituality may be assigned during the semester. These readings will be put on reserve and posted on *Inside CTS*. 
**Supplemental Reading**


McGoldrick, Monica; Giordano, Joe; and Garcia-Preto, Nydia (Eds.). (2005). *Ethnicity and family therapy*. New York: Guilford Press.


**Written Assignments**

**Reflection Papers**

The purpose of the reflection papers is to give students an opportunity to reflect upon the foundational theories of marriage and family and how those theories influence their choice of a marriage and family therapy approach for working with clients. Each of the three papers should be one to two double-spaced pages.

1) Reflection paper on the film “Mindwalk”  
Assesses MFT Core Competency 1.1.1  
DUE: January 26

Reflection starter:  
➢ What scene in the film most challenges your view about linear thinking?

2) Reflection paper on “Beyond Technique”  
Assesses MFT Core Competencies 2.4.2, 4.1.1  
DUE: February 9

Reflection starter:  
➢ What theory best fits your worldview and why?

3) Reflection paper on philosophical foundations readings  
Assesses MFT Core Competencies 1.1.1, 2.4.2  
DUE: March 16

Reflection starter:  
➢ Select a reading from Bateson, von Bertalanffy, Watzlawick, etc., Bowlby, or Gergen and Gergen.  
➢ Cite a concept in the reading and how it serves as a foundation for one of the MFT theories in “Beyond Technique”.

**GRADING rubric**

- Is accurate mastery of the film/reading evident?  
- Does the critique of the film/reading illustrate introspective thinking?  
- Do the person and profession of the writer emerge in the paper?
Clinical Case Paper  
20 points  DUE March 2
Assesses MFT Competencies 1.2.1, 2.1.6, 2.4.2

The purpose of the clinical case paper is to give students an opportunity to integrate clinical practice with the theoretical foundations of marriage and family therapy. Practicum students will select a case—couple or family—to present clinically from one of the therapeutic models discussed in “Beyond Technique.” Pre-practicum will select a couple or family from one of the following films to present clinically—“On Golden Pond,” “Soul Food,” “Tortilla Soup,” or “The Joy Luck Club.”

The clinical case paper should have the following sections within 5-8 pages:

- Description of the couple or family not to exceed 1-2 single-spaced pages.
- Assessment and discussion of the couple or family with the five philosophical issues in “Beyond Technique.”
- Impact of ethnicity, gender, and spirituality on couple or family.
- Identify any of the philosophical foundations readings that connect with this therapeutic model.
- Challenges in working with the couple or family given your worldview and spirituality.

GRADING RUBRIC
- Does the paper illustrate mastery of the therapeutic model and philosophical issues?
- Does the paper integrate clinical practice and person/profession of the therapist?

Cybernetic Epistemology Position Paper  
10 points  DUE: March 23
Assesses MFT Core Competencies 1.1.1, 2.4.2

In Bradford Keeney’s introduction to “Aesthetics of Change,” he says “. . . how easy it is to get caught in an either/or trap.” (Page 3)

Discuss this statement in the light of Keeney’s understanding of cybernetic epistemology through the following points within 3-5 double-spaced pages:

- In what ways do you agree and disagree with Keeney?
- How does your response to Keeney’s book impact your understanding of linear and non-linear thinking?

GRADING RUBRIC
- Does the paper reflect mastery of the Keeney book?
- Does the paper reflect an ability to integrate theoretical material?
- Does the paper reflect an ability to be critical as well as self reflective?
Integrative Clinical Case Paper  

**Assesses MFT Core Competencies 1.2.1, 2.1.6, 2.4.2, 3.1.1, 4.1.1, 4.1.2**

The purpose of the integrative clinical case paper is to build on the same clinical case in the earlier clinical case paper and reflect on it from an integrative model of marriage and family therapy. Students will use the framework from “The Practice of Family Therapy” to write a similar paper as that exercise within 5-8 pages.

The clinical case paper should have the following sections within 5-8 pages:
- Description of the couple or family not to exceed 1-2 single-spaced pages.
- Assessment and discussion of the couple or family from Hanna’s integrative model.
- Impact of ethnicity, gender, and spirituality on couple or family.
- Identify any of the themes in chapters 3 and 4 of Hanna that connect with this clinical vignette.
- Challenges in working with the couple or family given your worldview and spirituality.

**GRADING RUBRIC**
- Does the paper illustrate mastery of the therapeutic model and philosophical issues?
- Does the paper integrate clinical practice and person/profession of the therapist?

Major Theoretical Paper  

**Assesses MFT Core Competency 1.1.1, 1.2.1, 2.1.6, 2.4.2, 3.1.1, 4.1.1, 4.1.2**

Students will write a major paper (15-20 double-spaced pages) outlining their personal/professional assumptions that leads to creating their own marriage and family theory to practice in a clinical/ministry setting. This paper should include at least the following: 1) personal philosophical assumptions and spiritual values, 2) anthropological statement that defines what the human person is and relationship to human systems, 3) what constitutes dysfunction, 4) the nature of change 5) role of the therapist/minister in this theory, 6) criteria for assessment of person/system, and 7) approaches/techniques of this theoretical approach.

**GRADING RUBRIC**
- Does the paper reflect mastery of the course reading?
- Does the paper reflect an ability to integrate theory with clinical practice?
- Does the paper reflect an ability to identify a marriage and family therapy theory that fits with the student’s worldview and spirituality?

OR

Creative Arts Project  

**Assesses MFT Core Competency 1.1.1**

Students may in consultation with the instructor create a project that uses some art form such as film, visual art, music, drama, or dance in illustrating the tension between linear and non-linear thinking or illustrating some elements of the major theoretical paper.
described above. Students must submit a 1-3 pages proposal and prospectus of what the project would involve. PowerPoint or a class presentation may be utilized.

A grading rubric must be created as part of the proposal.

**PROPOSAL DUE: February 23**

**Class Attendance and Participation**

Students can earn up to 5 points based on regular class attendance and participation in class discussion.

**BONUS OPTION**

Students can earn 5 points by completing the following assignment by April 15:

Select a piece of visual art, drama, literature, or music and reflect on how that artistic experience enables you to reflect more deeply upon the connection between linear and non-linear thinking. A grade will not be assigned to this bonus option.

**Grading**

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

- **A:** 95-100 points
- **A-:** 90-94 points
- **B+:** 87-89 points
- **B:** 83-86 points
- **B-:** 80-82 points
- **C+:** 77-79 points
- **C:** 73-76 points
- **C-:** 70-72 points
- **D+:** 67-69 points
- **D:** 63-66 points
- **D-:** 60—62 points
- **F:** Below 60 points

**Class Schedule**

**January 19** — *Introduction to Class Content and Process*

*Context of Marriage and Family Therapy*

View “Mindwalk.”

**Being a Person and Therapist**

**January 26** — *Beliefs and Self of Therapist*

Reading: Simon—Introduction; chapters 1, 2, and 3

**DUE:** Reflection Paper #1

**February 2** — *Beliefs and Self of Therapist*

Reading: Simon—chapters 4, 5, 6, and 8
Thinking Family

February 9 — Philosophical Foundations -- Anthropology and General System Theory
Reading: Bateson – Part III and von Bertalanffy Chapters 2 and 9
DUE: Reflection Paper #2

February 16 — Philosophical Foundations -- Communication Theory
Reading: Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson

February 23 — Philosophical Foundations -- Attachment Theory and Social Constructionism
Reading: Bowlby, chapter 12 and Gergen and Gergen, Part IV
DUE: Creative Arts Project Proposal

March 2 — Epistemology and Cybernetics of Family Therapy
Reading: Keeney—Introduction and chapters 2 and 3
DUE: Clinical Case Paper

March 9 — NO CLASS — READING WEEK

March 16 — Epistemology and Cybernetics of Family Therapy
Reading: Keeney — chapter 4, 5, and 6
DUE: Reflection Paper #3

Practicing Family

March 23 — Integration of Theory
Reading: Hanna — chapter 3
DUE: Cybernetic Epistemology Position Paper

March 30 — Integration of Practice
Reading: Hanna — chapters 4

April 6 — Beginning Assessment and Plan
Reading: Hanna — chapters 5 and 6

April 13 — Discovering Interventions
Reading: Hanna — chapters 7 and 8
DUE: Integrative Clinical Case Paper

April 20 — EASTER RECESS

April 27 — Creating a Systemic Frame
Reading: Select readings on ethnicity, gender, and spirituality

May 4 — DUE FINAL PAPER/PROJECT
Class will meet for final conversation and fellowship