Course Description
This course will explore the historical conceptual shifts in the field of marriage and family therapy as prompted by postmodern thinking. Beginning with a brief historical overview of MFT, the epistemology of postmodern thinkers will be discussed. After these theoretical foundations, Milan systemic therapy, solution-focused therapy, narrative therapy, and collaborative language systems therapy will be explored. Finally, attention will focus on the implications of postmodern thinking for integrative models of therapy.

Method
Lecture by the professor and class discussion will comprise the first part of the class period. The last part of the class will focus on master tapes of the model being discussed and/or demonstration of the model by the professor. In addition, students will have the opportunity to participate in each theoretical model through role plays. Experiential exercises will be integrated into the classes periodically. An additional weekly emphasis will be the discussion of the interaction between that model and the diversity concerns of culture and spirituality.

Each theoretical approach students will make student presentations that may be the product of a student team depending on class size. These presentations should emphasize knowledge of the theoretical model, application to clinical practice, sensitivity to cultural/spiritual issues, and creativity.

Written assignments will include regular reflection papers, outline of student presentation, and a major theoretical paper or project. No exam will be given.

All students are required to read the three required texts. Each student will read one book from each theoretical approach as assigned.

Class Expectations
Class attendance is mandatory. Students need to contact the professor in case of absence due to illness before the class. In an emergency, the professor must be contacted within 24 hours after the class. Excessive absences will adversely affect the grade. Class meeting times may be renegotiated with the class due to the professor’s attendance at professional conferences and off-campus class clinical experience for students.

Class participation is an important part of class. Reading and reflection upon the week's assignment is essential for informed participation. Questions are always welcome and are critical for the learning process. The class will use Blackboard as part of class participation. Links to postmodern therapy websites will be found on Blackboard.
Description of Written Assignments

**Reflection paper**—The reflection paper (1-2 pages) should critique the book’s theory with a brief response to how diversity issues of culture and spirituality are addressed by the book. Students are expected to do library research in finding appropriate materials addressing diversity issues. Students will not be responsible for a reflection paper on the books used in the student presentation.

**Student presentation**—The student presentation will likely be a team project which should address a specific debate that emerges in MFT with a specified theoretical position. The professor will present possible topics two weeks prior to the presentation. All students on the presentation team will receive the same grade.

**Major paper**—A major research paper of 20 pages will be due at the time of the final exam. Each student will present the professor with a one page description of the proposed paper for approval by October 8. This deadline includes a required consultation with the professor.

**GRADING GUIDELINES**

The final grade will be based on class attendance, participation in class and Blackboard, reflection papers, student presentation, and final paper/project according to the following guidelines:

**Class attendance and participation (20%)**—The class follows the Seminary policy on class attendance as outlined in the student handbook. Participation is expected through class discussion and Blackboard interaction.

**Reflection papers (20%)**—The reflection papers of 1-2 pages focus on the student’s understanding of what the question or author is saying to him/her and how it affects his/her understanding of therapy.

- What are the challenges postmodernism through post-structuralism or social constructionism offer to marriage and family therapy? Due: September 27
- Reflection on a Milan systemic book. Due: October 4
- Reflection on solution-focused/solution-oriented therapy book. Due: October 18
- Reflection on narrative therapy book. Due: November 8
- Reflection on collaborative therapy book. Due: November 29

**Student presentation (30%)**—The student presentation needs to be 45 minutes through 1 hour 15 minutes. Length does not necessarily equal quality. Students need to integrate the readings into a presentation that utilizes either clinical material, role play, or some other experiential exercise. Technology can be used or not used in the presentation.

**Final paper/project (30%)**—The final paper or project needs to reflect serious grappling with the implications of postmodernism in the therapeutic milieu. Readings in addition to those assigned are to be integrated in the paper.
Required Texts

Texts to be Assigned

Milan Systemic Therapy

Solution-Focused/Solution-Oriented Therapies
Books by William O’Hanlon.

Narrative Therapy

Collaborative Therapy
Schedule

August 30—A Conceptual History of Marriage and Family Therapy

September 6—Conceptual History (cont.)
Reading: Beels

September 13—Philosophical Foundations of Postmodern Therapy
Reading: Foucault, pp. 6, 25, 58, 80, 126, 145, 208, 319, 338, 370, 392 (selections beginning with these pages)

September 20—Philosophical Foundations of Postmodern Therapy (cont.)
Reading: Gergen

September 27—Milan Systemic Therapy (cont.)
Reading: Boscolo

October 4—Solution-Focused/Solution-Oriented Therapy
Reading: deShazer or O’Hanlon

October 11—No Class

October 18—Solution-Focused/Solution-Oriented Therapy (cont.)
Reading: deShazer or O’Hanlon

October 25—No class
Professor at training

November 1—Narrative Therapy
Reading: Freedman/Combs or White/Epston

November 8—Narrative Therapy (cont.)
Reading: Freedman/Combs or White/Epston

November 15—Collaborative Therapy
Reading: Andersen or Anderson

November 22—No Class

November 29—Collaborative Therapy (cont.)
Reading: Andersen or Anderson

December 6—Implications of Postmodernism for Integrative MFT Models
Readings: Reserve readings

December 13—Final Exam Time—Make-up Class
Due: Final Paper/Project