SYLLABUS

CPY 550
Dynamics of Marriage, Relationship, and Family Systems
Fall Semester, 2007
CLASS SESSIONS:  Wednesdays, 4:00-6:30 P.M.

Kathryn L. Norsworthy, Ph.D.
Cornell Room 239
PH: 407 646-2132
Email: knorswor@rollins.edu
Office Hours: By appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

This first course in family and relationship counseling will offer you an opportunity to explore the field of family and couples counseling from a multicultural, theoretical, developmental and historical perspective. We will begin by examining the criteria necessary for culturally/socio-politically grounded theories of family development and family/couples therapy. After contextualizing the evolution of the field and the major theories, we will study cybernetics and systems theory, the major contemporary theories of family therapy, and legal/ethical factors in family therapy.

Class sessions will be devoted to guided group discussions and activities, lecture, video presentations and demonstrations. The goals of the course are to 1) increase your understanding of systems theory; 2) increase your conceptual knowledge of the major theories of family counseling and therapy; centralize multicultural and social justice values, experience, and knowledge in family therapy theory; 3) challenge and expand your knowledge and internal norms regarding the behavioral, social, and emotional functioning of families and their members; and 4) provide a supportive and challenging environment in which you can process thoughts and feelings about class activities and outside readings/experiences.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will:
1. Articulate awareness of the historical roots and development of the field of family therapy (CACREP II.K.5.c).
2. Understand a systems perspective and the important tenets, concepts, models, and therapeutic processes of the major theories of family/relationship functioning (CACREP II.K.5.d).
3. Compare, contrast, and critique important assumptions and concepts of major theories (CACREP II.K.5.c and CACREP II.K.5.d).
4. Conceptualize contemporary models of family and relationship development within a multicultural and socio-political context (CACREP II.K.2.c).
5. Recognize the nature of biases, prejudices, processes of intentional and unintentional discrimination, and other culturally supported behaviors that are detrimental to the growth of relationships and families (CACREP II.K.2.d).
6. Advocate for socially just practices in order to facilitate wellness and growth in individuals, relationships, and families (CACREP II.K.2.d).
7. Challenge and expand personal norms, attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and awareness regarding the behavioral, social, and emotional functioning of families and their members (CACREP II.K.2.b and CACREP II.K.2.d).
8. Evaluate and apply theories of family and couples therapy in analysis of case material from a multi-faceted perspective (CACREP II.K.5.c).
9. Consider and appreciate the needs of families through various developmental stages and transitions across the life-span (CACREP II.K.3.a).

**REQUIRED READINGS**


**Optional Text:**


**E-Reserves – Required and recommended (Olin Library webpage):**


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Two exams will be administered during the semester. Exams include short answer and longer discussion questions aimed at assessing students' knowledge and understanding of theoretical principles, concepts and issues presented in readings and in class discussions/lectures.

2. Each student will complete a family genogram project as outlined on pages 6 & 7 of this syllabus. References: McGoldrick, Gerson, & Shellenberger: *Genograms: Assessment and intervention (2nd Ed.)*; Hardy & Laszloffy (1995), The cultural genogram: Key to training culturally competent family therapists; Kuehl (1995), The solution-oriented genogram: A collaborative approach. **Due date: October 24.**

3. Students will pair into three different teams during the semester. During three different class meetings, each team will bring in a pre-selected 10 to 12 minute clip or set of clips from the assigned movies. We will use the clips and the films at large as a reference point for our class discussion of the theory(s) under study that day. The team members will take the lead in describing how they see the theoretical concepts/dynamics, cultural factors, sociopolitical context, other identity variables, and any additional ideas from the course readings represented in their selected film scenes and the film at large.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

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<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>30 points</td>
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<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>30 points</td>
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<td>Genogram</td>
<td>25 points</td>
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<td>Film clip assignments</td>
<td>15 points</td>
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**Method of Evaluation and Grading** – Final grades will be based on a point accumulation basis. Students earn points via exams, class presentations and projects, class participation, and other assignments. Points will be converted into a percentage score. Grades will be assigned, according to the following percentages:

- A = 94-100% of total points
- A- = 90-93% of total points
- B+ = 87-89% of total points
- B = 84-86% of total points
- B- = 80-83% of total points
- C+ = 77-79% of total points
- C = 74-76% of total points
- C- = 70-73% of total points

I welcome and encourage feedback and discussion. If you wish to meet outside the regular class time, please feel free to schedule an appointment.
ATTENDANCE, ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES, TESTS, AND INCOMPLETES

Regarding attendance, students who miss two class periods (two weeks of class) will receive a one-letter grade deduction. Students missing more than two classes will likely need to drop the class and take it at a later date when circumstances are more conducive to regular attendance.

Assignment due dates: Students will receive full credit for all assignments turned in on time. Turning in the genogram assignment late will compromise your grade. If you need to turn this assignment in late, you must make arrangements with me prior to the due date. A new due date will be set, and no further extensions will be granted.

Tests need to be taken the day of class.

Incompletes: I do not assign incomplete grades when students simply do not turn in assignments or complete tests by the last day of class. Grades are computed based on what has been turned in with outstanding assignments receiving no credit. Incompletes are strongly discouraged and in the event that it is warranted, arrangements must be made in writing before the last day of class, following the policies and procedures outlined in the graduate catalog and the student handbook. The student needs to initiate the process.

ACCOMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Rollins College is committed to equal access and does not discriminate unlawfully against persons with disabilities in its policies, procedures, programs or employment processes. The College recognizes its obligations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to provide an environment that does not discriminate against persons with disabilities.

If you are a person with a disability on this campus and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodations in order to participate in your classes, please make timely arrangements by disclosing this disability in writing to the Disability Services Office at (box 2613) - Thomas P. Johnson Student Resource Center, 1000 Holt Ave., Winter Park, FL, 37289 or call 407-646-2354 for an appointment.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

As graduate students I am sure that you are already aware that your code of ethics, the college Academic Honor Code, and the academic honesty policies outlined in the graduate catalog, reminding you that all of your work should be your own and that when using others’ ideas, appropriate citation is necessary. You are responsible to follow these academic honesty guidelines and to include the college honor code statement posted in every classroom on all assignments that you turn in or complete in class.
# OUTLINE OF CLASS DISCUSSION/READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS/ASSIGNMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 5</td>
<td>Getting acquainted Review of course and requirements Definitions of the family Historical roots of family therapy</td>
<td><strong>Movies</strong>: The Family Stone &amp; My Family (on reserve at Olin) Coontz (1992) – On e-reserve. N &amp; S: Ch. 1, 2, 3</td>
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<td>Sept. 12</td>
<td>Family development models Fundamental concepts</td>
<td>McGoldrick et al book N &amp; S: Ch. 4</td>
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<td>Sept. 26</td>
<td>Bowenian family therapy</td>
<td>N&amp;S, Ch. 5</td>
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<td>Oct. 3</td>
<td>Exam I</td>
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<td>Oct. 10</td>
<td>Structural family therapy</td>
<td>N&amp;S, Ch. 7</td>
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<td>Oct. 17</td>
<td>Experiential family therapy</td>
<td>N&amp;S, Ch. 8</td>
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<td>Oct. 24</td>
<td><strong>GENOGRAM ASSIGNMENT DUE</strong> Debrief genogram experiences</td>
<td><strong>Movies</strong>: Ma Vie en Rose; 2nd film to be announced (On reserve at Olin)</td>
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<td>Oct. 31</td>
<td>Psychoanalytic family therapy</td>
<td>N &amp; S: Ch. 9</td>
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<td>Nov. 7</td>
<td>Cognitive-behavioral family therapy</td>
<td>N&amp;S, Ch. 10</td>
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<td>Nov. 14</td>
<td>Strategic family therapy Solution focused family therapy</td>
<td>N&amp;S, Ch. 6 &amp; 12</td>
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Teams 3 & 4 present movie clips

Nov. 21  Thanksgiving break

Nov. 28  Narrative family therapy       N&S, Ch. 13 & 14
Integrative approaches
Teams 5 & 6 present movie clips

Dec. 5  Exam 2

GENOGRAM ASSIGNMENT

In doing this genogram we are focusing on family strengths and resilience, though issues and concerns may be discovered and described. This genogram project will be an opportunity to more deeply understand yourself personally and as a counselor within a multigenerational, multicultural, socio-political context. This project is a typical, traditional part of a family therapy training program. I hope you will also use the assignment an opportunity to learn, practice, and understand the value of this powerful therapeutic tool.

Index Person: When completing the genogram assignment, identify yourself as the index person and complete the genogram with your family. As an alternative, you may choose to ask someone else to be the index person and construct the genogram on his/her family.

Focus: The focus of this genogram project is on family strength and resilience, though challenges and concerns may be included. **DO NOT** make the genogram problem-focused even though McGoldrick, Gerson & Shellenberger describe its use from that perspective.

Construction: Construct the genogram as described in Chapter 2 of McGoldrick, Gerson, and Shellenberger (1999). This will be turned in with your narrative. Please include the following:

- Two previous generations (This means the genogram will have at least three generations: The index person, his/her parents, and his/her grandparents.) If the index person has children and grandchildren, they should be included in the genogram, too. If the index person is married or in a significant relationship, the significant other and his/her immediate family (parents, siblings, children) should also be included.

- Symbols as illustrated in Chapter 2 of McGoldrick, Gerson, and Shellenberger (1999) to indicate the nature of the relationships among family members. You may use some or all of these symbols as practice. Be sure to draw a double circle or double square to represent yourself as the index person. Do not forget to include the current date on your genogram.

- Notes on the genogram drawing about people, events, etc. next to the relevant person or generation. To complete this part, you may find it useful to review the questions from the
section on “The Genogram Interview” (pp. 53-60) as you construct the genogram. You (or the index person whom you are working with) may wish to call, write, or interview other family members to obtain the information necessary to complete this assignment; however, this is optional. Remember to include notes (a label, a word or two) about the strengths of each family member who is known to or has a connection with the index person.

Analysis: Once you have drawn your genogram, use Chapters 3-6 as a guide for interpreting and understanding your family map. Thoroughly review these chapters in light of the information already gathered about the family and based on what you observe when you examine the completed genogram and the information you have gathered.

Also, analyze the genogram and who you are (or who the index person is) in the context of the family based on the discussions on race/ethnicity, class, gender, spiritual tradition, sexual orientation, family life cycle, etc. as presented in the assigned writings of Coontz (1992); Dunn & Dawes (1999); Gerson (1995); Hardy & Laszloffy (1995); Kuehl (1995); McGoldrick (1994), and Norsworthy (2000).

Genogram Project: Written Narrative
Using your genogram and your accompanying analysis as described above, write a paper about your interpretation following the outline below (15 to 20 pages typed, double-spaced; using APA style formatting):

I. Briefly introduce the contemporary family, beginning with the index person (if you are the index person, please use the first person “I”). Discuss the sociopolitical, cultural, economic, etc. issues for the contemporary family and any other variables that might be useful in understanding the present day situation. (Suggestion: Do NOT spend a lot of time and paper space describing demographic details that can be observed on the genogram.)

II. Using the data gathered and the analyses you have made based on the above directions AND using suggestions in Chapters 3-6 (McGoldrick, Gerson, & Shellenberger, 1999) as a guide to facilitate your understanding of the genogram (do not attempt to address everything in these chapters), discuss your analysis of the genogram. Include, but do not limit, discussion of:

A. What do you understand about yourself in the context of this multigenerational family?
B. What impact does the historical, cultural (race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, spiritual tradition, etc.), and idiosyncratic aspects of the information gathered have on your self-understanding?
C. Do you notice any family lifecycle issues in the past or currently that have influenced your family and/or interface with question D?
D. What intergenerational patterns, dynamics, and/or themes have you identified that influence you or others in your contemporary family?

III. Discuss your reflections on the process of completing this assignment. What did it mean to you? What did you learn?
Remember to base your responses on a strengths and resiliency perspective. (Cont’d – pg. 8)

FINAL REMARKS REGARDING GENOGRAM PROJECT:

Please remember that you are in charge of what you choose to disclose in this project. You do not have to reveal any information that you choose not to reveal. I consider any information that you disclose confidential.

Most students completing this project find the experience emotionally impactful. We will be checking in during class to see how everyone is doing. Please feel free to consult with me along the way if you need further clarification or to process your experience in doing this project.

And have fun!!!