

## CPY 550

# Dynamics of Marriage, Relationship and Family Systems

Rollins College – Graduate Studies in Counseling

Fall Term 2009: September 2 – December 9

Thursday, 6:45-9:15 PM / Cornell Social Sciences, Room 229

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### Course Description:

This course examines theoretical approaches including major systems theories, strategies, and techniques of family and relationship therapy. A survey of the development of family and relationship counseling and proponents of the field are studied. Issues of conflict and ethical considerations are examined. The impact of cultural and social forces upon the family system is explored.

**Prerequisites:** CPY 530 or permission

### Course Structure:

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; 3) centralize multicultural and social justice values, experience, and knowledge in family therapy theory; 4) challenge and expand your knowledge and internal norms regarding the behavioral, social, and emotional functioning of families and their members; and 5) provide a supportive and challenging environment in which you can process thoughts and feelings about class activities and outside reading/experiences.

Be sure to complete the assigned reading before each class; otherwise, you will be unable to fully grasp the concepts presented in the classroom. Class discussions are an important part of CPY 550. You are encouraged not only to ask questions, but also to add your own experiences and perspectives to the class dialogue. **Your class participation will affect your grade.**

### Course Goals/Objectives: (Note: CACREP Standards need to be updated)

Upon successful completion of this course, each student will demonstrate the ability to do the following:

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 multifaceted 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 Texts:

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Petry, S. (2008). *Genograms: Assessment and intervention* (3rd ed.). New York: Norton. ISBN: 978-0-393-70509-6.

Nichols, M.P. (2009). *The essentials of family therapy* (4th ed.). ISBN: 978-0-205-5916-6.

## Optional Text:

Gehart, D.R. & Tuttle, A.R. (2003). Theory-based treatment planning for marriage and family therapists. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

## Required Articles (on-line: [www.burtbertram.com](http://www.burtbertram.com))

Gerson, R. (1995). The family life cycle: Phases, stages, and crises. In R. H. Mikesell (Ed.), *Integrating family therapy: Handbook of family psychology and systems theory* (pp. 91-111). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Laszloffy, T. A. (March/April 2005). Multiracial families. *Family Therapy Magazine* (pp. 38-43). Alexandria, VA: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

Luepnitz, D. A. (1988). *The family interpreted*. USA: Basic Books. Chapter 10.

Mock, M. R. (1998). Clinical reflections on refugee families: Transforming crises into opportunities. In: M. McGoldrick (Ed.). *Re-visioning family therapy* (pp. 347-359). New York: Guilford

Norsworthy, K. L. (2000). Multicultural feminist expansion in family therapy theory and practice: The search for relevance. In Press.

Wylie, M. S. (May/June 2005). Maestro of the consulting room: At 83, Salvador Minuchin is still reflecting on clinical wisdom. *Psychotherapy Networker*, 29(3), 41-50.

## Required Films: (available for viewing in Olin Library)

*A Thousand Acres*. Touchstone Pictures. (106 minutes)

*Ma Vie en Rose* (My Life in Pink). Alain Berliner, Producer. Sony Pictures. (89 minutes)

**Additional required reading will be made available during the semester.**

## Required Assignments and Learning Experiences: (Possible Points)

- 10 Points – **Class Participation & Discussion**
- 16 Points – **Quizzes on Assigned Reading** (4 quizzes / 4 points each)  
During the semester, on four occasions, class will begin with a Quiz . The Quiz will come directly from the reading assigned for that class (see Course Outline).
- 25 Points – **Genogram Project**  
A family genogram project, as outlined in this syllabus, will be completed after reading the assigned materials.
- 24 Points – **Theory Application Paper** – based around *Ma Vie en Rose* (My Life in Pink)
- 25 Points – **Comprehensive Final Exam**  
Part One: Take Home (10 Points)  
Essay and short answer – correctly apply theories to *A Thousand Acres*  
Part Two: In Class (15 Points)  
Objective questions and short answers – assess student's knowledge and understanding of theoretical principles, concepts, and issues presented in both readings and in class, throughout the term.

100 Points Possible

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THIS COURSE:**

Please read this “fine print.” You are responsible for all the information contained herein.

**Self Disclosure** – Although it is likely that you will be asked to disclose thoughts and feelings that are personal in nature in class, please remember that you are in charge of what you choose to disclose in front of classmates. You do not have to reveal any information that you choose not to reveal. I consider confidential any information that you disclose within your journals and papers or privately in conversations with me. Many students completing this class are emotionally impacted by the experience. Please feel free to consult with me along the way if you need further clarification or to process your experiences.

**Confidentiality** – In order to provide safety for all individuals in the class and to protect the confidentiality of practice clients and panel members, students will refrain from discussing all information shared outside of class. Attending this class signifies a contract to respect one another's vulnerabilities and to avoid discussing specific classmates' disclosures outside class (particularly with people not in the class) unless you are talking directly with that person.

**Respect for Individual Differences** – The Department of Graduate Studies in Counseling endorses a learning climate, which represents diversity and individual differences and encourages the open-minded exploration of differences among individuals. We do not expect all graduates of our program to think the same way, but we do expect that while they are students they will be accepting of differences and strive to understand how other peoples' perspectives, behaviors, and world views are different from their own.

**Academic Honesty and Professional Conduct** -- Students are expected to comply with the Student Conduct policies of Rollins College and with the ethical guidelines of their professional associations (e.g., American Counseling Association). All of your work should be your own. Plagiarism and using others' ideas without appropriate citation is unacceptable, and students must follow the academic honesty policies outlined in the graduate catalog.

**Instructor Availability** – If, at anytime, you wish to discuss any issue related to the class with me, particularly those related to your performance in this class, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am very willing to set up an appointment with you. Please do not wait until it is too late to help make this course a successful and rewarding learning experience for you. Your suggestions and ideas are always welcome, both during class and outside of class.

**Attendance Policy** – Attendance is required of all students registered and will be monitored. If it is impossible to attend class, notify me as soon as you know you will miss class. **The final grade will be lowered one half of a letter grade for each unarranged absence, and one letter grade for more than two absences.** Students are responsible for all assignments, lectures, announcements, and class discussions even when not present. Make-up tests will not be given. If you have a conflict with an exam date, speak with the instructor at least seven days prior to the test.

**Penalty for Late Work**: Students will forfeit one letter grade (approximately 10% of the possible points) for any assignments turned in beyond the announced deadline. Class will start on time and time agreements for class breaks will be honored. Tardiness on the part of one person disrupts the flow of learning for fellow students. Please be prepared to begin and/or resume class as agreed.

### **Cell Phones, Texting, & Laptops**

I understand the “addictive” nature of current technologies and can appreciate how tempting it is to remain constantly in contact with family and friends. However, texting in class, taking phone calls in class, and surfing the net in class are distracting to your fellow classmates and VERY distracting to me. Therefore, if you are expecting an emergency phone call or text, please see me prior to class so I'm notified of that possibility. Otherwise, **texting, phone calls, or net surfing will result in a 1% reduction of your course grade per incident.** Let me be clear, I won't mention it to you; I will assume you made the decision and are willing to pay the price.

**Accommodations** – It is the policy of Rollins College that students needing accommodations for learning or physical disabilities must first register with Dr. Karen Hater at the Thomas P. Johnson Student Resource Center. Prior to tests or assignment due dates, the student should turn in the paperwork from Dr. Hater with information about the needed accommodations. Also, prior to tests and due dates, the student must make an appointment with the professor to discuss the plan for accommodations and reach a mutually acceptable agreement based on Dr. Hater's recommendations.

**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 as follows:

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

**Incomplete Policy** – Students who are unable to complete course requirements within the time limitations of the semester are responsible for *initiating* and working out an arrangement with the professor prior to the end of the term in order to receive an “incomplete.” An agreed upon plan for completion must be submitted in writing identifying a date when work will be completed. If the incomplete is not resolved by the end of the following term, the grade will turn into an “F.”

## Schedule of Classes and Assignments

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic Area</b>	<b>Reading/Assignments Due</b>
1	9/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Systems Theory</li> <li>• Multicultural and feminist considerations for family/couples therapy and theory</li> <li>• Distribute syllabus</li> </ul>	Dr. Kathryn Norsworthy – Guest Faculty
2	9/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Introductions Collaborative Definition of Family</li> <li>• Review course and requirements</li> <li>• Revisit multicultural/feminist considerations in light of assigned reading</li> </ul>	<u>Text</u> Nichols, Chapters 1 & 2 <u>On Dr. B's Website</u> Gerson (1995) Laszloffy (2005) Luepnitz (1988) Norsworthy (2000)
3	9/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundation &amp; Evolution of the Field</li> <li>• Fundamental Concepts</li> </ul>	<u>Text</u> Nichols, Chapter 3 & 4
4	9/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genograms</li> <li>• Bowen Family Systems</li> <li>• Strengths and Resiliency Model</li> </ul>	<u>Text</u> McGoldrick, Gerson, & Petry (ENTIRE BOOK)
5	9/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genogram Project – Class Discussion</li> <li>• Family Development Models</li> </ul>	<u>Assignment Due: Genogram Project</u>
6	10/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bowen Family Systems Therapy PowerPoint</li> <li>• Immigrant Families Class Discussion</li> </ul>	<u>Text</u> Nichols, Chapters 5 <u>On Dr. B's Website</u> Mock (1998)
7	10/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structural Family Therapy PowerPoint &amp; DVD</li> <li>• Strategic Family Therapy PowerPoint</li> </ul>	<u>Text</u> Nichols, Chapters 6 & 7 <u>On Reserve</u> Wylie (2005)
8	10/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiential Family Therapy PowerPoint</li> <li>• Psychoanalytic Family Therapy PowerPoint</li> <li>• Cognitive-Behavioral Family Therapy PowerPoint</li> </ul>	<u>Text</u> Nichols, Chapters 8, 9, & 10
9	10/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Classic Family Therapy Integration of Learning</li> </ul>	<u>Text</u> Nichols, Chapters 1-11
10	11/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent Developments in Family Therapy</li> <li>• Solution Focused Therapy PowerPoint &amp; DVD</li> </ul>	<u>Text</u> Nichols, Chapter 12 <u>Assignment Due</u> <b>Theory Application Paper</b>
11	11/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrative Family Therapy PowerPoint &amp; DVD</li> </ul>	<u>Text</u> Nichols, Chapters 13
12	11/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrative Therapy</li> <li>• Comparative Analysis</li> </ul>	<u>Text</u> Nichols, Chapter 14 & 15 <b>Distribute Final Exam: Part I</b>
	11/25	No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday	
13	12/02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application to Practice</li> <li>• Family Research</li> <li>• Course Evaluation</li> </ul>	<u>Text</u> Nichols, Chapters 16
14	12/09	Final Exam: Part II	<u>Assignment Due: Final Exam (Part I)</u>

## Genogram Project

The Genogram Project will be an opportunity to explore yourself within a multigenerational, multicultural, socio-political context. This project is a typical, traditional part of a family therapy training program. One goal of this project is for you to learn, practice, and understand the value of the genogram as a useful assessment and therapeutic tool. Another goal is to provide you with an opportunity to personally explore who you are as a counselor in relation to your work with clients.

**Index Person:** In constructing the genogram, identify yourself as the index person and complete the genogram on your family. This approach is the preferred focus of your genogram project. As an alternative, you may choose to ask someone else to be the index person and construct the genogram on his or her family.

**Focus:** The focus of this genogram will be on *family strengths and resilience*, though issues and concerns may be discovered and described. DO NOT make the genogram problem-focused even though McGoldrick, Gerson, and Petry (2008) describe its use from this perspective in their book.

**Construction:** Construct the genogram as described in McGoldrick, Gerson, and Petry (2008). 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 too should be included in the genogram. 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 McGoldrick, Gerson, & Petry (2008) to indicate the nature of many 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 might be facilitated by reviewing for yourself (or the index person you choose) the questions from the section on “The Genogram Interview” as you construct the genogram. You (or the index person 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 the information in the book 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 readings and class discussion.

## Genogram Project: Written Narrative

Using your genogram and your accompanying analysis as described above, write a paper about your interpretation following the outline below (*10 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. (*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 McGoldrick, Gerson, & Petry, 2008 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 your discussion to:
  - 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 may have influenced your family and/or that 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.*

**Note:** 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 do disclose confidential.

Caution: Most students completing this project are emotionally impacted by the experience. I will be checking in during class to see how everyone is doing. Please feel free to consult or meet with me privately in the process of completing this assignment if you need further clarification or to discuss your experience in doing this project.

...and have FUN with this assignment.

Most students report that it is a very interesting revealing experience!