Course Description

This course is designed to provide first year graduate students with an acquaintance with the emergence of systems therapy as a discipline within the field of psychology, with a broad introduction to the study of the family as an ongoing, interacting social system and with an awareness of central conceptual and therapeutic issues of importance to family therapists. A central goal of the course is to help students critically to evaluate the late-twentieth century view of families as conglomerations of biologically or affectionately related individuals and to learn to perceive them as complex, systemically functioning, historically and culturally developed entities, i.e. in a manner which is more in line with the corporate identity of Israel in the Old Testament or the New Testament understanding of the church as a body of differentiated members in a dynamic relation to one another. Particular attention will be paid to the experience of Afro-American and Korean families.

Course Objectives

At the end of the course, students will be acquainted with:

- The emergence of family therapy as a discipline
- General systems theory
- Systemic models of family functioning
- The significance of developmental issues in the family life cycle
- Transgenerational transmission of family characteristics
- Basic concepts and terminology of family therapy
- Transgenerational patterns in their own family of origin
- The impact of surrounding cultures on family functioning
- Selected major areas of research and controversy in family psychology

Upon completion of the course students should be oriented to the discipline and equipped to pursue more advanced studies in family therapy.

Course Process

Part 1: General Systems Theory. This block will examine macro (general) systems theory and its relation to families, particularly to changes in a typical family life cycle

Part 2. Transgenerational transmission. The second section of the course will examine transgenerational transmission of individual and family functioning patterns. Video and class examples will be used to acquaint students with the construction of a therapeutic genogram. Each student will construct a personal family genogram.

Part 3: Cultural and Multi-cultural issues. Throughout the course, the impact of culture on family function and formation will receive attention. Families’ interactive exchange with their surrounding cultures will be considered as it impacts family functioning and the promotion of change in therapy. The contemporary discussions of general and culture-specific characteristics will receive attention. Guest lecturer will address the experience of African-American and Korean families.

Part 4: Introduction to Family Psychology. This block of block of lecture material will consider the place of family psychology among major approaches to psychology and the emergence of marriage and family (systemic) therapy as a discipline.
Part 5 Family interactions. The fourth segment of the course will present micro systems theory (transactions between individuals in relationships) with special attention to families. Examples from the class, videotapes of therapy situations, and role plays will be used to illustrate these concepts in action.

Course Assignments

1. Preparation for and appropriate participation in class sessions. (Particularly relevant if student is at a border between grades).

2. Family Genogram. (30%) Course lecture and reading material will prepare students to create a three-generational family genogram. Students may/should also consult with advanced students in the program, who have completed this assignment themselves.

Due Date: BY November 14, 4:00 PM. Place finished genogram in the box in the department office. Cover should include the last 4 digits of your ss# as an identifier, the due date and time, the actual time and date handed in and the difference between them (clearly stating whether it is early or late).

3. Paper: Exploration of a major area of research/controversy (MARC) (20%) Marriage and family therapy and counseling are developing fields. Ongoing acquaintance with the research literature and current discussions is important to practicing therapists. Students will review current (last 12 months) issues of family psychology journals and select a topic of interest that is currently being debated or explored by articles and by research in refereed journals. They will then examine the topic in contemporary journals and trace its development over the last ten years, if it goes back that far. Particular attention should be paid to major figures, theoretical approaches, points of controversy and findings. Students will then prepare a MARC paper of no less than 15 pages that reviews the development of the MARC and presents a critical summary of the current state of the discussion. A substantial bibliography is expected. Use APA style for citations.

Due Date: BY December 6, 4:00 PM. Place finished paper in the box in the department office. Cover should include the last 4 digits of your ss# as an identifier, the due date and time, the actual time and date handed in and the difference between them (clearly stating whether it is early or late).

4. Final examination (50%) Taken in exam week.

5. Prepare/Enrich Certification Seminar. (Required for MFT and M.Div. students) A Prepare/Enrich Certification Seminar will be offered on SATURDAY, November 12, 8:00AM-4:00PM at RTS in SC1. Prepare/Enrich is a singularly effective tool for pre-marital counseling. Training is necessary to be certified to use the instrument. The training fee includes certification, a manual, sample tests and a certificate for test processing worth $35 (reverses $35 of cost). Training normally costs $150. Class members’ cost at RTS is $99. You must sign up and pay the fee before October 24, the date when the materials will be ordered. The materials are non-refundable once ordered. You may sign up and pay (by check) in the MFT office. If a student is entirely unable to adjust her/his schedule to attend the seminar, they should contact Dr. Hurley immediately to locate a training seminar elsewhere in the Southeast.

Readings

Part 1. Introduction to family therapy


Nichols, M. and Schwartz, R. (2001). Family Therapy: concepts and methods. 6th Edition New York: Simon and Schuster, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4. (Chapters 14 and 15 are relevant and will be assigned for next Fall in 1PSY572. You may wish to skim them beforehand.)

**Part 2. Transgenerational transmission.**


**Part 3. Family interactions**


**Culture/multi-culture perspective**


Readings should be completed as early as possible in the course. Begin with Nichols.

The pace of the course varies from year to year. As we move through the term, you should try to be ahead of lectures. You will be asked whether you have completed the reading.
1PSY564 2005 Course Schedule

NOTE: Actual course progress may vary from projections.

08/30/05 General Systems Theory 1 and 2
Levels of Feedback
Orders of Change
Systems in everyday life

09/06/05 Family Life Cycle as System Development
"Typical" Developmental history
1. The Spousal system
2. The Parent-child system
3. Multi-family systems
4. Extra-familial issues

09/13/05 Tracing Intergenerational Relationships 1 and 2
Various uses of genograms
Constructing a personal family genogram
Readings: Transgenerational

09/20/05 Cultural and multi-cultural family experience
Korean families
African-American families

10/11/05 Reading Week - No Class

10/18/05 The Emergence of Family Psychology
Readings: Introduction

10/25/05 Micro Systems Theory 1 and 2
The Dillard Family
Pragmatics of Human Communication
Tracking Pattern and Process in Family Transactions
Assessing function as well as purpose

11/01/05 Initial Family Interview 1 and 2

11/04/05 Genogram Due (30%)

11/08/05 Prepare/Enrich Seminar  NOTE: THIS IS A SATURDAY
SC1 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

11/15/05 Catch up

11/12/05 MARC Paper due (20%)