

PSY568 Introduction to Marriage and Family Therapy

Reformed Theological Seminary–Orlando
Thursdays, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., 3 credit hours
Fall Semester, 2008
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PURPOSE

This course is designed to familiarize the student with a family systems framework and a broad range of established family systems models that have shaped the practice of couple and family therapy. Theory and technique will be reviewed to assist the development of process skills necessary for addressing the multiple dynamics associated with counseling couples and families. It will provide opportunities to increase the student's personal and professional growth.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of the completion of this course, students will:

1. Develop a systemic perspective in understanding and assessing family dynamics.
2. Become familiar with basic concepts and techniques of established models of family therapy.
3. Demonstrate skills pertinent to family counseling.
4. Examine his/her family experience through genogram and paper sculpture construction and interpretation.
5. Feel more confident in his/her ability to identify family dynamics and effectively work with families.

LEARNING FORMAT

Lecture, small group interaction, watching recorded family therapy sessions, genogram and paper sculpture construction, and reading.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Nichols, M. P., & Schwartz, R. C. (2008). *The essential elements of family therapy (4th ed.)*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Nichols, M. P. (2008). *Inside family therapy: A case study in family healing (2nd ed.)*. Needham Heights, Allyn and Bacon.

SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading
8/21	Systems theory and concepts	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 1-4; <i>N.</i> , Ch. 1
8/28	The family life cycle	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 2-3; <i>N.</i> , Ch. 2
9/4	Genogram construction and interpretation	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 9; <i>N.</i> , Ch. 6
9/11	Bowen family systems theory	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 5; <i>N.</i> , Ch. 3
9/18	Experiential family therapy	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 8; <i>N.</i> , Ch. 7
9/25	Genogram presentations	<i>N.</i> , Ch. 4-5

Date	Topic	Reading
10/2	Genogram presentations	
10/9	Structural family therapy	N. & S., Ch. 7; N., Ch. 8
10/16	Spring break, no class	
10/23	MRI and Strategic therapy	N. & S., Ch. 6; N., Ch. 9-11
10/30	Milan/Systemic family therapy	N. & S., Ch. 10
11/6	Narrative & Solution-focused therapy	N. & S., Ch. 11-13; N., Ch. 12
11/13	Paper sculpture presentations	N., Ch. 13-14
11/20	Paper sculpture presentations	N. & S., Ch. 14-15; N., Ch. 15

REQUIREMENTS

1. Finish all assigned reading.
2. Presentation of your family genogram with interpretation.
You will receive instructions in class on how to construct your family genogram. What you will present in class is:
 - a. A **three**-generation genogram of your family constructed with *Genopro* software. (If you are or were married, do not include your present or former spouse's family of origin.) Use separate layers to underscore different family patterns and issues. This will make the genogram more clear and help in the interpretative process.
 - b. An interpretation of your family genogram. Use the interpretative format described in the text (available on reserve in the library) below to help you identify and highlight family patterns and issues in your genogram. You are also responsible to discuss how you have seen and/or hope to see these patterns redeemed.
 - c. Your genogram must be constructed using the proper symbols and structure.

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Petry, S. (2008). *Genograms: Assessment and intervention* (3rd ed.), New York: W. W. Norton.

Due date: September 25 or October 2 in class.

3. Paper sculpture and presentation.
The goal of the paper sculpture is to create a figurative picture that encapsulates the relational dynamics of your family at a certain time frame of your life. This sculpture allows you to reflect on your family system's characteristics and may give you a different perspective on your family as a group and your role in the family. There is no right or wrong way to do a paper sculpture. Use your imagination.
 - a. Decide what family you want to sculpt. You may sculpt your family of origin, or, if you are married and have children, your family of procreation.
 - b. Pick a time period on which to focus (e.g., my preteen years; my junior year in high school; when my children were four and six years old, etc.)
 - c. Create paper shapes and/or select objects or pictures for all persons/things you wish to include. Shapes/objects/pictures should be made for all persons and things who or which had/have a significant effect on the family. Think in terms of size, color, texture, etc.
 - d. Arrange the shapes/objects/pictures so that they express the family relationships as you see them. Consider the meaning of the proximity of the shapes/objects/pictures to one another. When you are satisfied with the arrangement, secure them in place. (Note: a

piece of paper with a few magazine clips attached to it does not reflect the level of creativity expected for this project.)

- e. This sculpture will not be turned in, but will be presented to the class on November 13 or 20. You will have 20 minutes for your presentation.
- f. Address the following in your presentation:
 - i. Identify the time period in your life that is represented by your sculpture.
 - ii. Identify who or what the shapes/objects/pictures the are (age, sex, relationship to you, why included), why you arranged them as you did, the meaning of any connecting or boundary lines, and any special uses of size, shape, color, texture, proximity.
 - iii. Describe the family dynamics depicted in your paper sculpture.
 - iv. What were the roles of the family members?
 - v. How did you respond to these dynamics at the time of the scene?
 - vi. How has your response to these dynamics changed since then (if applicable), and/or how would like to see it changed?
 - vii. How have you sought to “honor your father and mother,” and love the other family members depicted in your paper sculpture.

Due date: November 13 or 20 in class.

4. Complete take home examination. Due date: December 3.

GRADING

Family genogram with interpretative presentation: 50 points

Paper sculpture and interpretative presentation: 50 points

Take home examination: 80 points

Required reading: 20 points

Total possible points: 200 points

Course grades will be determined by adding points from the family genogram with interpretative presentation, the paper sculpture and presentation, the in-class technique demonstrations, the take home examination, and the required reading. Grades will be based on the following scale:

A = 194-200 points	C+ = 166-171 points
A- = 188-193 points	C = 160-165 points
B+ = 182-187 points	C- = 156-159 points
B = 176-181 points	D = 140-155 points
B- = 172-175 points	F = 139 points and below

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

If you should miss a class, you are expected to contact another student regarding the information covered.

All assignments will be due on the date specified in the syllabus. Late genograms or paper sculptures will not be accepted. For each day the take home exam is late, 10 points will be deducted from the score of the assignment. Use APA style for the take home exam.

Plagiarism/cheating will result in the failure of the course.