

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, 2009
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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, case study reviews, 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
8/27	Systems theory and concepts	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 1-2; <i>N.</i> , Ch. 1
9/3	Systems theory and concepts	<i>N. & S.</i> , pp. 60-76; <i>N.</i> , Ch. 2-3
9/10	Genogram construction and interpretation	<i>N.</i> , Ch. 4-5
9/17	The family life cycle	<i>N. & S.</i> , pp. 76-80; <i>N.</i> , Ch. 6
9/24	Family therapy process and techniques	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 7-8
10/1	Bowen family system theory	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 5; <i>N.</i> , Ch. 9

Date	Topic	Reading
10/8	Experiential family therapy	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 8; <i>N.</i> , Ch. 10
10/15	Spring break, no class	
10/22	Structural family therapy	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 7; <i>N.</i> , Ch. 11
10/29	Strategic and Systemic therapies	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 6; <i>N.</i> , Ch. 12
11/5	Cognitive-Behavior Family therapy	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 10; <i>N.</i> , Ch. 13
11/12	Narrative & Solution-focused therapy	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 11-13
11/19	Paper sculpture presentations	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 14; <i>N.</i> , Ch. 14
11/26	Thanksgiving, no class	
12/3	Paper sculpture presentations	<i>N. & S.</i> , Ch. 15

REQUIREMENTS

1. Finish all assigned reading.
2. Construction and presentation of your family genogram with interpretation.
You will receive instructions in class on how to construct your family genogram. You will present your genogram and your interpretation of it in your process group.
 - a. Construct a **three**-generation genogram of your family with *Genopro* software. (If you are or were married, do not include your present or former spouse's family of origin.) This software is free but only works on PC computers, not on MAC computers. If you do not own a PC computer, the *Genopro* software is installed on the computers in the library. 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: One genogram presentation per week in your process group during the month of October. A copy of your genogram and a brief outline of you interpretation should be emailed to Dr. Coupland on the date of your presentation.

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 19 or December 3. 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 19 or December 3 in class.

4. Case study review and questions.

In the third hour of the classes head from September 17 to November 12 case studies will be provided with questions associated with them. In groups of three, you will discuss and type out your responses to the questions and email them to Dr. Coupland’s email address at scoupland@rts.edu by the end of class. The intent is to apply your conceptualization and technique skills as related to the topic discussed in class that day. Each group member will receive the same grade.

5. Weekly quizzes.

There will be a weekly quiz given the last 10 minutes of each class beginning on August 27 and ending November 12. The quizzes will be based on the required reading for the lecture topic being covered in class that day, and the material covered in the class that day. The quizzes will consist of 5 multiple choice questions, and each quiz is worth 10 points. If you are not satisfied with your quiz grade, you may retake the same quiz during the 10 minute period prior to the next class. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. There is no make up permitted for missed quizzes.

GRADING

Family genogram and interpretation: 50 points

Paper sculpture and interpretative presentation: 50 points

Case studies and questions: 80 points

Weekly quizzes: 100 points

Required reading: 20 points

Total possible points: 300 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 = 291-300 points	C+ = 249-257 points	D- = 210-215 points
A- = 282-290 points	C = 240-248 points	F = 209 points and below
B+ = 273-281 points	C- = 234-239 points	
B = 264-272 points	D+ = 225-233 points	
B- = 258-263 points	D = 216-224 points	

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.