
Portland State University
Marriage and Family Therapy Tract
Family Life Cycle and Transitions

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Spring Qtr., 2012
Counseling Psychology 574; 3 Qtr. Hrs.

COURSE SYLLABUS

"The greatest burden a child can ever bear is the un-lived portion of their parents' lives."

--- Carl Gustav Jung

"It is impossible to achieve the exalted goals of the democratic dream and the free and full development of every person so long as the basic unit of society, the family, is undemocratic and unfree".

--- Letty Cottin Pogrebin

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines family life through the lens of Family-Life-Cycle-Development (FLCD) theory, a quintessential systemic-contextual model. In it, individual and family behavior and events are seen as dynamic and teleological, rather than passively adaptive. The FLCD approach provides a frame of reference for assessment and intervention in family therapy in that it provides a contextual field in which to consider presenting and on-going problems as related to the tasks and challenges of reorganization at any of the nodal-points the family is experiencing. This course will begin using the "imagined middle-class American family" as a point of reference and move through several variations including the very re-thinking of this highly touted, fictional American icon that has definite benefits as well as significant shortcomings. Included throughout, emphasis will be placed on issues surrounding diversity and divergence from this "norm-form". We will look first at what family is and how it is supposed to function. Then we will look at the effects of such divergences as divorce, blended families, genderization, ethnicity, minorities, gay-lesbian pair-bondings, economics, politics, chemical dependencies, mental illness, counter-cultures, political climate, and others.

While I am interested in your absorption of the objective material in the course, that centering around family life development, I am also going to emphasize a fuller realization and more specific understanding of yourself as both a product of your own particular family-of-origin (f.o.o.) as well as a creator of your present life. We will do this by looking at significant events, situations and relationship dynamics that may have led you into a choice to become a therapist. As such, the course will be about you as well as about family life development theory, per se. There is much to learn from the Self!

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- 1.) To assimilate and demonstrate family life cycle concepts
- 2.) To review and become more facilitative with the three generation family genogram
- 3.) To increase awareness of personal family-of-origin contexts and dynamics
- 4.) To apply knowledge of family life cycle issues, themes, and principles to your own family-of-origin so as to understand more fully and clarify your own vocational objectives and styles;
- 5.) To widen the scope of the therapeutic lens to include the greater environments of individuals and their families rather than only looking at their issues, problems, or pathologies from an individual-isolated perspective
- 6.) To clarify and deepen the ideas and processes of systems-thinking and to identify the interplay of the "self-in-the-system" and the "system-in-the-self"
- 7.) To comprehend the notion that, in reality, ALL therapy is family therapy

III. COURSE PROCESS

Many modalities will be used in class including model-building, lecturattes, seminar-type discussion, small and large group experientials, videos, case studies, film-clips, poetry, and even music, etc.

IV. READING

There is more reading than there is time! Yet the books are interesting and quite readable. The main book is Carter and McGoldrick's **The Expanded Family Life Cycle, 4th Ed.** (Required). Start with the first three chapters and then Chap. 26. Then, read selectively until you've got a good digest of the many specific topics within the other twenty-six chapters. In **The Making of a Therapist** by Cozolino, (also Required) read at will (I will also have a few copied chapters out of a book called **The Therapist's Own Family**, by Titelman, (Optional), a book you'd also want except for the price!. But don't start reading in Cozolino's book before you have done Phase One of the written assignment, a topic we will cover today. Further, I am requiring Maggie Scarf's book, **Intimate Worlds** . In it, I would like you to familiarize yourselves with the Beavers Family Assessment Model, as we will be referring to it during the course of the class. Bowen and Kerr's **Family Assessment**, (Optional) while optional, is a landmark source for this and other family systems courses. Read at will in this volume, especially his stuff on inter- generational family transmission, chronic anxiety, and differentiation of self. The **Annual Editions on the Family** (Optional) is an excellent source of a variety of important family/parenting issues (and it's cheap). Other books of high recommendation are: **Being A Brain-Wise Therapist** by Bonnie Badenoch, **The Mindful Therapist**, by Dan Siegel, and **Necessary Losses** by Judith Viorst.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There is only one written requirement for this course, yet is it composed of two phases. The first phase I will give you today and the rest next week. Today's assignment is: to write two or three pages on the topic of what you think therapy is and what therapist attributes are most important to carry this work through. Spell out in personal position and/or informed-opinion form what you think it is to be a therapist and to do the work of therapy. Give attention to how therapy is different from conversation and intimacy and how this may make it easier or harder.

Next week, I will build on this question in such a way as to examine both your past and your future. For today, just concentrate on the objective work and world of being a therapist. In final form, the entire paper would not typically be longer than ten to twelve pages, the second phase also being highly subjective and individualized rather than research/academic. I'll need the final form at our last class on Monday, 04 June, 2012, or by E-mail attachment formatted in doc., pdf, rtf, or docx. On the Cover Page, PLEASE INCLUDE your name, regular mail address, phone number, and e-mail address. If you don't want to put such personal information on the Cover Page, give it to me personally.

E-Mail/Attachments are fine. Just send a separate message telling me you sent it that way so I can reply whether it got through or not. Send them in the above stated formats. E-mail address and phone number are:

mihaloew.mft@juno.com. And/or mihaloew.mft@gmail.com

1-360-220-1002 (cell)

Please, no faxes. Grading will be based upon: class participation-- 40%, the paper-- 60%

I am looking forward to being with you in this course, as I think it is so basic to our understanding of ourselves. And as we look into and through our own families of origins, we come to understand families in general. Everyone experiences family life in some form. These experiences form the crucible of our perceptions of life itself. So, keep in mind, whether you plan to work with families or not, **ALL therapy is family therapy**, as no one becomes an adult without having been in one. Counter-transference is as real as transference itself! We never know what we are looking at unless we know what we are looking through. And what we are looking through is our own selfhood, consciously or unconsciously.

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COURSE OUTLINE

- "The psychology of the individual is not ignored but is simply placed in a larger context. Traditional psychological concepts are seen to (only) describe rather than account for human behavior."Murray Bowen
- "Tolstoy had it backwards."Maggie Scarf
- "What we know is surrounded by what we don't know."Albert Einstein
- "The urge to resist and rebel arise from the desire, not for superiority, but for equality"Alfred Adler

Week One: Monday, 02 April, 2012- Introduction and Orientation

1. Course Orientation and Requirements: Phase I of Assignment
2. Evolutionary Format to Contextualize Our Thinking; "Sawblade Model" and Video: Powers of Ten
3. Developmental Theory Applied To The Theory of Family Life Cycle Development (FLCD)
4. Nodal Points, Events, and Transitions
5. The Definition of Family

Week Two: Monday, 09 April, 2012- The Structure and Function of Family Life

1. The Genogram; the Three Relational Types and the Four Relational Movements; Family Mapping
2. Tasks and Functions of Family; a Delphi Model Experiential
3. Overview of Family "Normality"; Homeostasis vs. Morphogenesis; a Jungian-Minuchin Amalgam
4. Ethnic Considerations on Differentiation of Self; Ascribing Personal and Social Value
5. Traits of Healthy Families; The "Clan" vs. "Life's Longing For Itself"; Survival or Growth
6. The Choice-Points Questionnaire Guide; Preparation for the Final paper; Phase II

Week Three: Monday, 16 April, 2012-- The Dynamics of Family Function; Differentiation and Preparation For Life Tasks

- 1.) Family Form and Family Function; The Family Drama Triangle; the Issue of Contagion and Cutoffs
- 2.) The Work of Murry Bowen; the Concept of Differentiation of Self From Family of Origin
- 3.) The Problem and Process of Anxiety
- 4.) Decade Events Experiential; Merging and Surging, Holding and Folding

Week Four: Monday, 23 April, 2012-- Intergenerational and Cultural Processes

1. Family Evolutionary Role-Play Experiential
2. Core Intergenerational Issues of Unfinished Business; the Stuff of Therapy
3. Feminist Considerations on Differentiation of Self; a Model of Morphology

Week Five: Monday, 30 April, 2012– Issues of Child and Personality Development

1. Major Shapers of Individual Personality; Mechanism vs. Teleology
2. Adlerian, Freudian, and Jungian Notions of Maturation/Individuation
3. The Teleology of Behavior; an Adlerian/Dreikursian-Nagy Amalgam
4. Erickson's Eight-Stage Model of Human Development

Week Six: Monday, 07 May, 2012-- Adolescence

1. Typical Adolescent Development; The Nature of Counter-Dependence; A Model and Experiential
2. A Parent-Teen Relationship Model
3. The Nature of Authority and the Fundamental Tasks of Adolescing
4. Political Models of Family Management; Mythology of Rule-Making
5. The Four Ways Teens Leave Home

Week Seven: Monday, 14 May, 2012-- Family Assessment

1. Family Life Through the Lens of Object Relations and Attachment Theory; Bowlby-Ainsworth, Winnicott, Mahler, Klein, and Siegel
2. The Beavers-Timberlawn Questionnaire; The Beavers "Pants Model"

Week Eight: Monday, 21 May, 2012– Role-Play and Video Examples

1. Faculty Roll-Play Demonstration of Typical Family Therapy Approaches
2. Discussion for Identification of Family Therapy Themes and Issues
3. Application of Assessment Tools

Week Nine: Monday, 28 May, 2012-- Major Divergences of Dysfunctional Family Life

1. Major Disruptions of Functional Family Life; The Nature of Stress
2. A Dialectic Stress Analysis Model
3. Addictions, Poverty, Marginalization, Axis II Parents; Domestic Violence; Delinquency
4. Unquestioned Nuclear Family Constituency; Divorce and Blended Families

Week Ten: Monday, 04 June, 2012–Family Film Festival

1. Assessment of Family Life Development Issues In Domestic and Cross-Cultural Perspectives
2. Discussion of Relevant Factors in the Study, Analysis, and Therapeutic Handling of Various Family Dynamics

Week 11: Monday, 11 June, 2012– Applications and Role Play Simulations (Final papers Due)

1. Case Conceptualization; Micro-Family and Family In Context Considerations
2. Class Role Play and Application

STANDARDS FOR MARITAL, COUPLE, AND FAMILY
COUNSELING/THERAPY PROGRAMS

A. FOUNDATIONS OF MARITAL, COUPLE, AND FAMILY COUNSELING/THERAPY

1. history of marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy including philosophical and etiological premises that define the practice of marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy;
2. structure and operations of professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentialing bodies pertaining to the practice of marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy (e.g., the International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors);
3. ethical and legal considerations specifically related to the practice of marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy (e.g., the ACA and IAMFC Code of Ethics);
4. implications of professional issues unique to marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy including recognition, reimbursement, and right to practice;
5. the role of marital, couple, and family counselors/therapists in a variety of practice settings and in relation to other helping professionals; and
6. the role of racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage, nationality, socioeconomic status, family structure, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and spiritual beliefs, occupation, physical and mental status, and equity issues in marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy.

B. CONTEXTUAL DIMENSIONS OF MARITAL, COUPLE, AND FAMILY
COUNSELING/THERAPY

1. marital, couple, and family life cycle dynamics, healthy family functioning, family structures, and development in a multicultural society, family of origin and intergenerational influences, cultural heritage, socioeconomic status, and belief systems;
2. human sexuality issues and their impact on family and couple functioning, and strategies for their resolution; and
3. societal trends and treatment issues related to working with diverse family systems (e.g., families in transition, dual-career couples, and blended families).

C. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR MARITAL, COUPLE, AND FAMILY COUNSELOR/THERAPISTS

1. family systems theories and other relevant theories and their application in working with couples and families, and other systems (e.g., legal, legislative, school and community systems) and with individuals;
2. interviewing, assessment, and case management skills for working with individuals, couples, families, and other systems; and implementing appropriate skill in systemic interventions;
3. preventive approaches for working with individuals, couples, families, and other systems such as pre-marital counseling, parenting skills training, and relationship enhancement;
4. specific problems that impede family functioning, including issues related to socioeconomic disadvantage, discrimination and bias, addictive behaviors, person abuse, and interventions for their resolution; and
5. research and technology applications in marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy.

PROGRAM POLICY STATEMENT:

The counseling profession requires a high level of personal integrity, self-awareness, and personal maturity. Being present and engaged in classroom activities, as well as demonstrating professionalism in classroom behavior, is expected at all times as a Master's student in Counselor Education.

All students are expected to actively participate in creating a respectful learning environment in the classroom. Arriving late for class, leaving early from class, being back late from break, the ringing of cell phones, etc. detracts from the learning experience of students and faculty alike. Do not ask for special considerations in these regards.

Demonstrating good professional conduct is extremely important and will be continuously monitored and reviewed by the faculty in assessing your development as a professional counselor. Formal occasions for feedback in this regard occur at your First Years Student Review and during Practicum and Internship. Concerns and deficiencies will be brought to your attention and used by faculty in assessing your overall academic/ professional progress in the Program.

All students in the program must demonstrate behavior that is consistent with the Ethical Standards put forth by the American Counseling Association (ACA; <http://www.counseling.org/resources/ethics.htm>) Failure to do so can result in termination from the program.