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CO 670: Marriage and Family Therapy **Final Syllabus Version as of 09-Aug-2002**

Family systems theory provides a course framework for exploring marital and familial issues. Special emphasis is given to the role of the counselor. Procedures and techniques for both preventative and remedial interventions are investigated.

This course will introduce the basic concepts in marriage and family therapy to you, and equip you with basic systemic counseling skills [that's systemic not systematic]. We will give special emphasis to theological and biblical foundations for marriage and family processes. To quote Clark Pinnock: "Theologians and scientists both exegete God's world, which we have been given to study and appreciate." (Flame of Love, p. 65) The particular part of God's world that we want to exegete is the world of family relationships. To that end, we will be focusing on the relational truths of Scripture and the relational reality of marriages and families. Family systems theory, or systemic thinking, will give us valuable tools for this "exegesis."

COURSE GOALS

By the end of this course you will be able to....

1. . . . conceptualize theological and biblical foundations for marriage and family life.
2. . . . identify key family systems concepts.
3. . . . analyze marital and family dynamics.
4. . . . apply intervention strategies to dysfunctional relationships.
5. . . . evaluate the meaning of family systems concepts for your own setting.

Grading Policy

Attendance: If you miss **more than** 5 classes throughout the semester, you will receive a failing grade.

Late assignments: Your grade will be lowered by one-third for every day that your assignment is late unless **prior** arrangements are made with me. In other words, plan ahead. Assignments can be submitted during the appropriate class period [Wilmore] or e-mailed to me prior to the **beginning** of class on the day that the assignment is due [Orlando]. Papers that are e-mailed to me after class will be considered late. Late papers will receive a grade and no written comments.

Incomplete policy: A grade of "I" denotes course work has not been completed due to an **unavoidable** emergency, which does not include failure to turn in course work or attending to church work or other employment. See the Asbury Seminary Catalog for further clarification.

Required Texts

Friedman, E. H. (1985). Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue. New York: Guilford Press. ISBN: 0-87630-881-7

This is the foundation text for this course. You may find this challenging reading if family systems terms are new to you. Friedman's insights into the processes of family and church are worth the price of the book - especially chapters 8 & 9.

Guerin, P.J., Jr., Forgarty, T. F., Fay, L.F., Kautto, J. G. (1996). Working with Relationship Triangles. New York: Guilford Press.

Guerin, et al. adds some meat and bones to many of Friedman's principles. I found this book very engaging, and very practical!

McGoldrick, M. & Gerson, R., & Shellenberger, S. (1999). Genograms in Family Assessment (2nd Ed.). New York: Norton.

Stanley, S., et al. (1998). The Lasting Promise. Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 0-7879-3983-8

Dr. Stanley's work is based on his love of the LORD and his years as a researcher on marital commitment. This is intended for couples – premarital and married. Research suggests that the most efficient way to prevent divorce is through sound, structured premarital counseling. The Christian PREP model equips couples with specific skills that, when practiced, will help couples fight for their marriage.

Visher, E.B. & Visher, J. S. (1996). Therapy with Stepfamilies. New York: Brunner/Mazel. ISBN: 0-87630-799

I think that you will find this text very helpful as you work with remarried families with children. Consider it a good guide for some pre-remarital counseling too!

Course Packet of Readings and Handouts. You buy this from the bookstore and it contains selected required readings for this class and course handouts.

Course Requirements

Take Home Comprehensive Final Exam. Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 [30%]

Due: Tuesday, Dec. 10 by NOON.

You will receive a series of essay question that will span the scope of this course. You may consult with course mates, but you must write your own final exam [open book]. The exam will be due on the designated “final exam” period. Your take home final must be typed-double spaced. Exams that are neither typed nor double-spaced will receive an automate grade reduction of 1/3 the final grade.

Individual Genogram Analysis. Goals: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 [30%]

Due: Thursday, Oct. 31 at the beginning of class.

You will analyze your own family according to the principles discussed in the McGoldrick and Gerson text.

- a. **Construct your family's basic genogram.** [Ex. M, G, & S, pg. 23-26, 192]
- b. **Create your family's pattern of functioning.** You may want to photo copy the basic genogram and then add the symbols [Ex. M, G, & S, pg. 26-32, 192]
- c. **Construct your family time line.** Begin with the earliest significant date which should be your parents' birth OR earlier. Briefly discuss the impact of the most significant events on your family. [Ex., M, G., & S, pg. 33-34]
- d. **Written analysis:**

Your written analysis will include all of the categories found on pg. 195-196 in the McGoldrick text. You will **also** include the following.

- Select **two** laws of family life (Friedman). Identify and describe the application of these two laws in your family. Be sure you not only name the law but also summarize what it means in a sentence or two. Then provide an adequate narration of how your

family exemplifies these laws. [You can add this to your answer under III. Pattern Repetition Across Generations, A. Patterns of Functioning.

- Select a triangle in your family. Choose **two** of the laws of triangles that Friedman discusses. Name the law. Define each law in your own words and clearly describe how your family triangle exemplifies each law. **Then** clearly analyze this triangle in terms of structure, movement, process and function (Guerin, et al.). [You can add this to your answer under III. Pattern Repetition Across Generations, B. Patterns]

Several format requirements.

1. Paginate
2. Use a heading between each of the major areas that you are to address in the narrative section of the paper.
3. Check for typographical errors.
4. You do not need a reference list for this paper.

Research Paper Goals 2, 3, 4 [25%]

Due Nov. 21 by the beginning of class

Research Paper: Select one of the following topics

Affairs
 Domestic Violence
 Gender and Marriage
 Homelessness & Families
 HIV/AIDS and Families
 Incest
 The Impact of Mental Illness on Families
 Single-Parent Families
 Step-Families

Write a 10-12 page research paper. Your paper format should adhere to either APA [this is mandatory if you are a MAC or MAPC student] or Slade [if you are M.Div.] Your paper must have a minimum of 10 scholarly references. Popular magazines [e.g., Times] are in addition to your scholarly references. You may not use the required reading texts as any of your references.

Counseling Practice and Reflection Paper Course goals: 4,5 [15%]

Due Dec. 3 by the beginning of class

Practice. Recruit a “couple” of friends to let you try your hand at counseling them. They are free to role play. The techniques that you will practice include: Speaker-Listener Technique, Problem Discussion Technique, and Caring Days. **You may not use classmates or family members as your role play couple.**

Feedback. Each person in your couple will complete a feedback form. Turn your practice couple’s feedback form in along with your reflection paper.

Reflection Paper. Your reflection paper includes your thoughts on your application of each of the three techniques in your counseling sessions. Each session will probably **last only 20 minutes** in length. You will audio-tape each session and listen to them prior to writing your paper. You will need to have your clients agree to let your audio-tape their session. After you are done, listen to your own work. Write a 6 page (**double-space and typed**) reflection paper based on your experience (both live and taped). Answer these questions:

- a. What was it like to use each technique? [areas of comfort, discomfort, skill development] 1 page
 - b. What did I learn about myself as a counselor as I listened to the audio-tape? [things done well & areas of improvement]. What did I learn about myself as a counselor as I gained more experience over the course of the semester? 1 page
 - c. Overall evaluation of yourself as a counselor. In what areas did you excel? Where do you need to work? 1 page
 - d. For each technique, interact with course material from our texts. In what ways did you observe theory in the lives of your 'clients?' Provide supporting documentation from the session and from the texts. 3 pages
- Your grade is based on the depth of your analysis not on your perfection of the skill. Surface level analysis will receive surface level grades ☺

Practice Counseling Guidelines

Following these helpful guidelines as you practice the new counseling techniques.

1. Let your practice couple know that you are practicing AND that they can stop participating at any time.
2. Keep your focus on learning a skill, NOT analyzing your friends. You will ask them for feedback on how they experienced the technique and your instructions.
3. Audio tape your practice sessions WITH YOUR PRACTICE COUPLE'S PERMISSION. As you listen to your own voice, you will learn much about yourself and your delivery of new skills.
4. Have fun.

Remind your "practice couple" to talk about safe things with you. You want to protect them (and you) from getting in over their heads. Also, ask them to stick with "realistic" topics for them. In other words, they shouldn't give you the HARDEST thing they can imagine.

Weekly Schedule for Fall 2002

Week	Dates	Module	Reading	Assignment Due
1 & 2	Sept. 3 & 5 Sept. 10 & 12	Basic Systemic Concepts	Friedman Intro., Ch 1, 2; Guerin Ch 1, 2	
3	Sept. 17 & 19	Theology of Relationships	Pinnock (packet); Friedman Ch. 8, 9; Stanley Ch. 1, 14;	
4 & 5	Sept. 24 & 26 Oct. 1 & 3	Becoming a Triangle Doctor	Guerin 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13; Friedman pg. 35-39; Ch. 3	
6 & 7	Oct. 8 & 10 Oct. 15 & 17	Family-of-Origin Influences	McGoldrick, et al.; Guerin 10 Friedman p. 31-34, 69-70 91-9, Ch 12	
8 & 9	Oct. 22 & 24 Oct. 29 & 31	Communication & Conflict	Gottman; Stanley Ch. 2-5 Friedman pg. 78-84 & 86-99; Guerin Ch. 8;	Class canceled on Oct. 24 Genogram due Oct. 31
10	Nov. 5 & 7	Hidden Issues & Commitment	Guerin Ch. 9; Stanley, Ch. 6-10;	
11	Nov 12	Divorce	Guerin, p. 216-221; Whiteside;	Class canceled on Nov. 14. Research Paper due Nov. 21
12 & 14	Nov. 19 & 21 Dec. 3 & 5	Stepfamilies	Whiteman; Visher book	Counseling Reflection, Dec. 3
Final Exam is due on Tuesday, Dec 10 by NOON.				

Recommended Texts

- Brown, J. H. & Brown, C. S. (2001). Marital Therapy: Concepts & Skills for Effective Practice. Pacific Coast, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Collins, G. (1995). Family Shock: Keeping Families Strong in the Midst of Earthshaking Change. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House.
- Dinkmeyer, D., McKay, G., & McKay, J. New Beginnings: Skills for Single Parents & Stepfamily Parents. Champaign, IL: Research Press. ISBN: 0-87822-286-3
- Gottman, J. (1994). Why Marriages Succeed or Fail. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Gottman, J. & Silver, N. (1999). The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work. New York: Random House. ISBN: 0-609-80579-7
- Hargrave, T. D. (2000). The Essential Humility of Marriage. Phoenix, AZ: Zeig, Tucker, & Theisen, Inc. ISBN: 1-891944-36-3
- Jacobson, N. & Gottman, J. (1998). When Men Batter Women: New Insights into Ending Abusive Relationships. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Kroeger, C. C., & Beck, J. R. (1996). Women, Abuse, and the Bible: How Scripture Can be Used to Hurt or Heal. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- McCullough, M., Sandage, S., & Worthington, E. L. (1997) To Forgive Is Human. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Papernow, P. L. (1993). Becoming a Stepfamily: Patterns of Development in Remarried Families. Jossey Bass.
- Stanley, S. (1998). The Heart of Commitment. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Walsh, F. (Ed.) (1999). Spiritual Resources in Family Therapy. New York: Guilford.
- Worthington, E. L. (1989). Marriage Counseling. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.