

**COUNSELING 773  
FAMILY COUNSELING  
WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY**

**Term/Time/Place**

Spring 2008  
Tuesday – 2:30 p.m – 5:00 p.m.  
Tribble – DeTamble Auditorium

**Instructor**

Dr. Samuel T. Gladding

**Course Description**

This is a professional counseling course that surveys the field of marriage, couple and family counseling. By completing this course, students should become knowledgeable about the history, theories, and practices of marriage, couple and family counseling. Ethical, legal, and other professional issues related to marriage, couple and family counseling (e.g., identification and affiliation) will be covered, too.

**Course Goals**

The purpose of this course is to enable students to:

Review the general principles of family living: how families operate as a social system, develop rules for living together, and deal with the ever-changing tasks that must be met by a family going through its life cycle.

Increase students' self-knowledge and awareness of their own families and how their family histories impact their ability to counsel.

Trace significant historical developments in marriage, couple and family counseling/therapy and provide an overview of the evolving viewpoints, perspectives, values, intervention techniques, and goals of this approach to counseling/therapy.

Present the basic ideas of the major theoretical orientations within marriage, couple and family counseling/therapy.

Help students learn the beginning practices and techniques of marriage, couple and family counseling/therapy.

**Course Outcomes**

As a result of successfully completing this course, students should be able to do the following:

Trace significant historical developments in marriage, couple, and family therapy.  
Explain the function/dysfunction in their own family or origin, how this has affected their lives, and be able to recognize and discuss their own present modes of relating and communicating with others, including clients.

List and discuss the major theoretical perspectives of marriage, couple and family therapy.

Discuss the fundamental assumptions of systems theory and its application to marriage, couple and family therapy.

Demonstrate the practice of marriage, couple and family therapy at a beginning level.

Articulate what they bring to marriage, couple and family counseling situations and how this affects the therapeutic outcome.

List and describe the professional, ethical standards of the ACA and the AAMFT as applied to the practice of working with couples and families.

### **Course Policies**

There is no prerequisite for this course. Students will be expected to be on time and attend 90% of all classes as well as actively participate in the learning process. The learning in this course will take place through reading of required texts, classroom discussions, team presentations, experiential exercises, examining one's own family of origin, viewing of videotapes, and writing about the dynamics and treatment of a family from a case history perspective.

### **Required Reading**

Bledsoe, J. (1997). *Bitter Blood: A True Story of Southern Family Pride, Madness, and Multiple Murder*. New York: Signet.

Gladding, S.T. (2007). *Family Therapy: History, Theory, and Practice* (4<sup>th</sup> ed). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Shellenberger, S. (1999). *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: W.W. Norton.\* (or the 2008 edition, if available)

Napier, A.Y., & Whitaker, C.A. (1978). *The Family Crucible*. New York: Bantam.

### **Schedule of Assignments**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
January 22	Introduction to course	
January 29	Individual and Family Life Cycles; Couple & Family Systems	Gladding, Chap. 1-2
February 5	Discussion on <i>Bitter Blood</i> and healthy/dysfunctional families; introduction to genograms Assignment #1 due	Bledsoe McGoldrick, et al.
February 12	Rationale and History of Family Counseling Couple and Marriage Enrichment and Therapy Psychoanalytical/Bowen Family Theories	Gladding, Chapters 3-6
February 19	Discussion of genograms Assignment #2 due	McGoldrick, et al
February 26	Dr. Bob Nation, Guest Speaker "Marriage Enrichment & Marriage Therapy"	
March 4	Process of Family Counseling Debates on <i>The Family Crucible</i> Assignment #3 in class	Napier/Whitaker
March 11	Assignment #4 Experiential Family Theories, skills session # 1 Behavioral Family Theories, skills session # 2 Structural Family Therapy, skills session # 3	Gladding, Chap. 7 Gladding, Chap. 8 Gladding, Chap. 9

March 18	Assignment #4 (continued) Strategic/Systemic Family Theories skills session # 4 Solution-Focused Family Theory, skills session # 5 Narrative Family Theory, skills session # 6	Gladding, Chap. 10 Gladding, Chap. 11 Gladding, Chap. 11
March 25	Assignment # 5 due: “Snapshots of Family Life”	
April 1	ACA Convention (no class)	
April 8	Single Parent and Remarried Families	Gladding, Chap. 12-13
April 15	Culturally Diverse Families Addiction, Violence, Abuse, and Infidelity	Gladding, Chap. 14 Gladding, Chap. 15
April 22	Assignment #6 (case study paper due)	
April 29	Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues Research/Assessment and Current Trends Course wrap-up	Gladding, Chap. 16 Gladding, Chap. 17
May 6	Assignment #7 Final exam	(all chapters in text)

### **Basis of Evaluation**

Assignment 1	15%
Assignment 2	15%
Assignment 3	15%
Assignment 4	15%
Assignment 5	10%
Assignment 6	15%
Assignment 7 (final exam)	15%

### **Course Requirements**

**Assignment #1.** Write a 1000 to 1500 word (4-6 pages typed) reaction report to Jerry Bledsoe’s *Bitter Blood*. In your report:

Discuss the healthy and dysfunctional aspects of each of the major families in the book, e.g., Sharp, Lynch, Klenners, Newsom.

Note major events that led up to the tragedies at the end of this story, e.g., Fritz’s pretending to be in medical school, Susie Sharp Lynch relationship style, etc.

Briefly discuss at least three ways the tragedies described in the book could have been avoided. Be specific.

Come prepared to discuss your paper in class on **February 5<sup>th</sup>**. Paper must be in **APA style**. (15% of final grade). Small group discussion leaders for the day will be: Doyle, Martin, Shaw, Buffington, Kayiales, Rodriguez-Pastor.

**Assignment #2.** Draw a three generational genogram of your family based on what you have learned from the McGoldrick, et al. text on genograms. Write a 1000 to 1500 word (4-6 typed pages) paper discussing patterns you have discovered in your family and insights you have gained from this assignment. Be prepared to share your findings with at least one classmate in class on **February 19<sup>th</sup>**. Paper should include at least the *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)

reference and must be in **APA style**. Questions you should ask and answer in this assignment are at the end of this syllabus. (15% of final grade)

**Assignment #3.** An in-class discussion on *The Family Crucible* will take place on **March 4<sup>th</sup>**. The topic: “Whitaker and Napier in *The Family Crucible* were exemplary in treating the Brice Family. Their strategies and actions should be followed whenever possible in working with families.”

Half of the class (Alexander through MacDonell) will take the affirmative side of this position, argue for it. The rest of the class (Martin through Varner) will take the negative side of this position, i.e., argue against it. Everyone is to turn in a 500 word paper at the end of the class with your argument for or against the exemplary nature of Whitaker and Napier in treating the Brice Family. You may write your paper in a bullet format instead of a narrative.

(15% of final grade)

**Assignment #4.** Explain a family counseling theory and its accompanying techniques that you and your group are assigned using a power point presentation and brochure handout format. You should include an annotated bibliography of at least 6 current and classical books and articles in your brochure. Demonstrate to the class four specific skills of the theory covered using videotaped vignettes originated by you and your partners and, if necessary, using other students to play the role of family members. Presentations should be approximately 35 to 40 minutes in length and may not run over 45 minutes without receiving a penalty. Because this is a group project, group members will anonymously evaluate each other along with the professor’s evaluation and a grade will be assigned accordingly. (15% of final grade) **March 11<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>**.

#### Assignment of Students and Theories for Skills Demonstration

<u>Date</u>	<u>Theory</u>	<u>Team</u>
March 11	Experiential Family Theories #1	Alexander, Meltsner, Stanciu, Varner, Khawaja,
March 11	Behavioral Family Theories #2	Buffington, Miller-Gorham, Throckmorton, Hemphill, MacDonnell
March 11	Structural Family Theory #3	Cox, Patishnock, Tison, Harper, Nantz,
March 18	Strategic & Systemic (Milan) Family Theories #4	Hatcher, Rodriguez-Pastor, Davis, Hutson, Rich,
March 18	Solution Focused Family Theory #5	Lyons, Rogers, Doyle, Kayiales, Selip,
March 18	Narrative Family Theory #6	Martin, Shaw, Evans, Kegel, Seyfi,

**Assignment #5.** Snapshots of a family – **March 25<sup>th</sup>**. Write five (5) 100 word or less “snapshots” of times in your family-of-origin or family-of-procreation. These times can be of mundane events, tragedies, or celebrations. They should describe as well as convey feeling. (See example at end of syllabus). Write a 500 word (2 page) write up of what you learn from your snapshots, i.e., the way you functioned in relationship to one or more members of your family. Turn both the snapshots and reflections in. Small group discussion leaders for the day will be: Tison, Varner, Kegel, Seyfi, Stanciu, Hatcher.

(10% of final grade)

**Assignment #6.** Based on a case study to be handed out in class, each student is to select one approach to family therapy (not already done in your group) and indicate how a therapist operating from that theoretical framework would conceptualize and treat the family described in the case study. The research should include a minimum of five sources other than your textbook. The paper should be 1500 words and must **include a genogram**. It must be written in **APA style** and should be divided into the following sections:

*Family Dynamics* – What is happening in this family and how? What patterns do you see? .

*Assessment*—How would the theoretical approach you have chosen explain this family's dysfunction? How would this theoretical approach describe a healthy family?

*Goals and Techniques*—What specific techniques might a counselor operating from this perspective use to help change the family and for what reasons?

*Outcome*—How would the family be different and function differently after treatment if it were successful? Be specific. (20% of final grade)

Due date: **April 22<sup>nd</sup>**.

(15% of final grade)

**Assignment #7.** A final exam will be given on **May 6th**. The exam will be multiple choice and cover all the chapters in the Gladding text.

(15% of final grade)

### **Office Hours**

Almost anytime but definitely all day (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) Monday through Friday. Telephone: 758-4882 (office). E-mail: [stg@wfu.edu](mailto:stg@wfu.edu).

Office: 114 Tribble Hall.

### **Example of a Family Snapshot: Humor with my Son**

Sam Gladding

Humor is more than fun. It edifies, enlivens, and leaves indelible memories. I discovered this anew in frolicking with my then 6-year old, Tim. After playing "tickle bear" and making up silly words with him one evening, I told him it was time for bed. He was not resistant but insisted I kneel before he lay down.

I bowed whereupon he immediately ran to his Lego box and brought out a flimsy, multicolored, block-connected, sword. Gently tapping me on the head and shoulders he said:

"I dub thee 'Sir Laughs-A-Lot'"

I still wear the title with pride.

## Questions to Use in a Genogram Interview

(source: Michele Thomas (1992) *An Introduction to Marital and Family Therapy*.  
Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall)

1. Can you tell me the names and ages of the family members for at least three generations on both sides of the family who are presently living?
2. When were these individuals born, married, separated, or divorced? Give specific dates including day and year, if possible.
3. Who passed away in the family? Of what? When were they born, married, separated, or divorced?
4. What jobs did family members hold?
5. What were the educational levels of family members?
6. What were the ethnic/cultural and religious backgrounds of family members? How have these traditions been passed on in the family?
7. Where did family members live? In what city and state? When and where did they move? For what reason?
8. How did people get along in the family? Who was close to whom? Did anyone not speak to another family member? What happened in these cases?
9. Which family members were very successful at what they did?
10. Which family members used alcohol or drugs, were arrested, had mental problems, committed suicide or had other serious problems?
11. What illnesses are found in the family? How did family members cope with them?
12. Can you tell me any special life events that happened – positive, neutral and negative?
13. Are there any stories which have been passed down through the generations in our family?
14. Are there any family themes which seem to repeat in our family?
15. As an elder of the family, is there any advice that you would give to me as a younger member of the family?

## Questions to Answer in Writing an Analysis of a Genogram

(source: Michele Thomas (1992) *An Introduction to Marital and Family Therapy*.  
Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall)

1. How healthy were family members in your genogram? What were the most common health problems on each side of your family and in your family of origin? What did family members do to prevent or treat such problems?
2. What type(s) of family structure (i.e., single parent, nuclear, remarried) were repeated in the genogram?
3. What family themes have been carried down through the generations?
4. What occupations occur most frequently in your family?
5. What stages of the family life cycle have been easier for your family to cope with? most difficult?
6. What life events have affected family functioning throughout the generations of your family?
7. Where are triangles present in your genogram? Where are relationships close, distant, conflicted, or fused? Where are there emotional cut-offs?
8. What patterns are repeated such as educational or work success, religious commitment, alcohol or drug use, or other behaviors?
9. How large were the families in your genogram? Do some families stand out as larger or smaller when looking at the genogram? What stresses might have occurred due to family size or family imbalance?
10. Since you are a dynamic active organism according to systems theory, what could you do to change any patterns that disturb you? What would you like to pass on to your children some day?

## Peer Group Evaluation Form

Name of Rater: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Fellow Student Being Rated: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

In comparison with my fellow group members, I would rate this member of my group as follows (circle one) :

- A      A--      B+      B      B--      C+      C      C--      D+      D      D--      F

The reason for my rating is as follows. Please give a one to three sentence response.

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