

Rutgers University, Graduate School of Education  
15:297:508 Family: Systems Development  
Fall 2013

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Office: GSE 310  
Course: Tues 4:50-7:30 PM  
Room: SC201  
Office Hours: Tues 2:30-4:00 PM  
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### Course Description

The origin of family dates back to prehistoric times and continues to play a major role in the socialization of children, transmission of culture, identification of role (i.e., parent, uncle, aunt, child, grandparent), supporter of economic status, and forum for intimacy. The systemic family therapist considers individual development in the context of larger family systems. From this perspective, movement in one family member will have an impact across the larger family system. To understand and effectively work with families, it is critical that the family counselor grasp a sense of the larger historical, cultural, relational, economic, and political realities that influence family development, coping, and distress (Gladding, 2007).

The course is experiential and didactic with lecture and skill-building activities offered throughout. The lecture component consists of didactic information related to assigned readings and selected topics in family counseling. Skill-building involves role-plays, mock family interviews, personal reflection activities, case discussions, and application of theory through in-class exercises.

### Course Objectives

1. To increase your personal self-awareness about your own family and what it means to work systemically (CACREP II.K.1.a; CACREP II.K.1.b; II.K.5.d; II.K.6.a; II.K.6.b; II.K.6.f. standards).
2. To increase your understanding of systemic theoretical orientations to family work and the role of the family therapist (CACREP II.K.5.a; II.K.5.b; II.K.5.c; II.K.5.d; II.K.6.a; II.K.6.c; II.k.6.d. standards).
3. To increase your repertoire of counseling skills in work with families from diverse backgrounds who present a range of issues (CACREP II.K.2.a.; II.K.2.b; II.K.2.c.; II.K.2.d; II.K.2.e.; II.K.2.f. standards).
4. To understand ethical considerations specific to working with families (CACREP II.K.1.h; II.K.3.e; II.K.5.g; II.K.6.g; II.K.8.f. standards).

5. To understand the research literature associated with different family theories and what empirical studies suggest about the effectiveness of family counseling (CACREP II.K.1.c; II.K.8.c.; II.K.8.e. standards).
6. To understand current public policy as it affects families as well as the role of advocacy (CACREP II.K.1.f; II.K.1.g; II.K.2.a; II.K.2.c. standards).
7. To understand family development and transitions through the life cycle (CACREP II.K.3.a; II.K.3.c; II.K.3.d. standards).
8. To assess family functioning from a systemic, multicultural perspective (CACREP II.K.7.f; II.K.7.h. standards).

### Class Format

The class format is divided into two parts: lecture/discussion and role-play skill-building activities. Each class will incorporate both of these activities. All classes will involve active participation from students.

### Required Reading

Clauss-Ehlers, C.S. (2006). *Diversity training for classroom teaching: A manual for students and educators*. New York, NY: Springer.

Gladding, S.T. (2007). *Family therapy: History, theory, and practice* (4th ed). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

McGoldrick, M., Giordano, J., & Pearce, J. (1996). *Ethnicity and family therapy* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). New York: Guilford Press.

### Suggested Reading

Coleman, H.L.K., & Yeh, C. (Eds.). *Handbook of school counseling*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

### Course Requirements/Evaluation

Attendance to all classes is mandatory. Any absences must be approved by the instructor in advance, failure to do so will result in a 3 point decrease in the student's grade. No late assignments will be accepted.

1.Family observation paper. You are to write a 3-page paper that describes a family you casually observe as they interact in natural surroundings (e.g., restaurant, grocery store). Your paper should detail the things you notice about who is in the family, what type of family this might be (e.g., nuclear, extended family), how family members appear to relate to one another, and qualities of health or "unhealth" in the family you observe. *The assignment is worth 20 points.*

2. Mock Family Genogram paper. With your team, you are to write a paper that describes your mock family's history incorporating theories and concepts discussed in class and the readings. Your paper is to include a family genogram that charts your mock family's experiences. The paper is to incorporate cultural aspects of your mock family and the McGoldrick reading that reflects your mock family's cultural background(s). Be sure to discuss pertinent patterns and trends identified across generations. A description of the paper will be handed out in class. *The assignment is worth 20 points.*

3. Understanding substance abuse and recovery paper. You are to attend an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meeting to learn about addiction and its impact on family systems. After you attend the meeting, write a 4-page paper that provides a reflection of what you learned about substance abuse, its impact on families, the recovery process, and your own reaction to the meeting. *The assignment is worth 20 points.*

4. Mock family counseling case presentation. You will have the opportunity to present with your team on the family you "counseled" during the course of the semester. This presentation will include a review of the treatment plan you cultivated with your group as well as a discussion about themes relevant to the family, critical issues, and recommendations for future interventions. *The presentation is worth 20 points.*

5. Treatment plan. You will design a treatment plan with your team that is based on your mock clinical interviews. Discussion about treatment plan development will be reviewed in class. *The treatment plan is worth 15 points.*

6. Class participation/Skill building. This requirement is based on: 1) your willingness to complete homework assignments; 2) demonstration of readings in class; and 3) ability to demonstrate significant skill as a family counselor through skill-building activities. *Skill building is worth 5 points.*

#### Academic Integrity

Note that the course corresponds with principles of academic integrity which means that students are not to plagiarize their work, use material without citing it, and submit similar work from another course for this course. See <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

## Course Schedule and Readings

### **Part 1. Understanding Families**

September 3 Class 1: INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS FAMILY?  
Gladding Chapter 1  
Definition of Family Exercise; Clauss-Ehlers, Chapter 7  
Mock Family Interview Activity: Getting to Know Your Family

September 10 Class 2: MOCK FAMILY OUTING

September 17 Class 3: WHAT MAKES A HEALTHY FAMILY?  
Life Cycle Development  
Gladding Chapter 2  
*Review of Family Observation paper*

### **Part 2. Therapeutic Approaches**

September 24 Class 4: PSYCHODYNAMIC & BOWENIAN  
FAMILY COUNSELING  
Gladding Chapter 5  
*Review of Mock Family Genogram Paper*  
Genogram Handout  
First Clinical Interview  
**Family Observation paper due**

October 1 Class 5: THE FAMILY THERAPY PROCESS  
Educational transitions throughout the lifespan  
Gladding Chapter 4  
Content and Process Exercise  
Second Clinical Interview

October 8 Class 6: STRUCTURAL & STRATEGIC FAMILY  
COUNSELING & DISCUSSION OF TREATMENT PLANS  
Gladding Chapter 8 and 9  
Video & Discussion: *Tres Madres*  
Third Clinical Interview

### **Part 3. Unique Issues in Family Therapy**

October 15 Class 7: CULTURALLY DIVERSE FAMILIES  
Gladding Chapter 13  
Clauss-Ehlers Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5  
Video and Discussion: *Eye of the Storm*

- October 22 Class 8: REMARRIED FAMILIES  
Gladding Chapter 12  
Fourth Clinical Interview  
**Mock Family Genogram paper due**
- October 29 Class 9: TREATMENT PLANS  
Break-Out Groups to Design Treatment Plans  
**1<sup>st</sup> Draft of Treatment Plans due in class**
- November 5 Class 10: SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN FAMILIES  
*Review of Understanding Substance Abuse and Recovery paper*  
**Treatment Plans returned by professor with comments**
- November 12 Class 11: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN FAMILIES  
Gladding Chapter 12  
Clauss-Ehlers Chapter 13  
Fifth Clinical Interview
- November 19 Class 12: WORKING WITH COUPLES  
Video and Discussion: *The Angry Couple*  
**Final Treatment Plans Due**
- November 26 No class. Thursday classes held on Tuesday due to Thanksgiving.
- December 3 Class 13: CHILD ABUSE IN FAMILIES  
Clauss-Ehlers Chapter 12  
Gladding Chapter 14  
Definition of Abuse Exercise  
Sixth Clinical Interview
- December 10 Class 14: Final Clinical Interview  
**Understanding Substance Abuse and Recovery paper due**
- December 17 Class 15: IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS ON COUNSELING  
WORK WITH MOCK FAMILIES  
**In-class Presentations**