INSTRUCTOR: Cassie V. Comeau, Ph.D., Adjunct Professor, APCE

MEETS: January 9th & 23rd 4-10pm, Jan 10th, 11th, 24th & 25th 8-4pm; Lowry

CREDIT HOURS: Three (3) semester hours

OFFICE HOURS: By Appointment, before and after class

CONTACT INFORMATION:
   Email: cassie.comeau@unco.edu

PREREQUISITES: None

INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS: Dr. Cassie V. Comeau earned her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of Northern Colorado. Her clinical interests and areas of specialization include child psychology and play therapy, integrated health care, trauma, Latino communities, men’s issues, connection to nature and wellness.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Although every attempt will be made to follow this syllabus, the instructor reserves the right to make changes as the course proceeds. In such instances, you will be provided with as much advance notice and/or accommodations as possible.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Study general systems theory of family development and interactions. Structural, communication, analytic, behavioral and postmodern approaches to family therapy will be examined, as well as ethics, legal issues, and current research.

COURSE CONTENT: This course was designed to meet the CACREP 2009 Standards for Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling. This course provides an introduction to general systems theory of family development and interactions, developmental family cycles, as well as providing an overview of the history of family therapy. Students will be introduced to a variety of family systems theories (i.e. Communications Theory, Transgenerational Approaches, Symbolic-Experiential, Structural
Theory, Strategic Family Therapy, Social Learning Theory, Postmodern & Constructivist Approaches), evidence based interventions, and multicultural and ethical considerations for working with couples and families. This course also qualifies as a Family Studies course for licensure purposes.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION: This class is taught in a lecture/discussion/activity format. Students will be involved in learning in a variety of ways (lectures and discussion, video/DVD cases, and group processing of cases). This course is intended to be comprehensive and therefore will be intense and fast-paced. Students are informed of deadlines in advance and are expected to adhere to them.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

2) Several journal articles also will serve as required readings in addition to these texts. These specific articles are noted below both in the References List. You will be responsible for securing these readings from the UNC Library online system.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TEXTS (if you plan to work with families):

COURSE KNOWLEDGE and SKILL OUTCOMES (OBJECTIVES):
Upon successful completion of this course, students will...

1. Understand family strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations, including multicultural competencies (CACREP II.G.2.d).

2. Understand theories of family development and transitions across the life span (CACREP II.G.3.a).

3. Understand a systems perspective that provides an understanding of family and other systems theories and major models of family and related interventions (CACREP II.G.5.e).

4. Understand the use of research to inform evidence-based practice (CACREP II.G.8.e).

5. Recognize the importance of family, social networks, and community systems in the treatment of mental and emotional disorders (CACREP CMHC.C.8).

6. Know the history, philosophy, and trends in marriage, couple, and family counseling (CACREP MCFC.A.1).

7. Know the roles and functions of marriage, couple, and family counselors in a variety of practice settings and in relation to other helping professionals (CACREP MCFC.A.3).

8. Know the professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling (CACREP MCFC.A.4).

9. Understand a variety of models and theories of marriage, couple, and family counseling (CACREP MCFC.A.5).
10. Understand family development and the life-cycle, sociology of the family, family phenomenology, contemporary families, family wellness, families and culture, aging and family issues, family violence, and related family concerns (CACREP MCFC.A.6).

11. Understand the impact of crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events on marriages, couples, and families (CACREP MCFC.A.7).

12. Understand issues of marriage, couple, and family life-cycle dynamics; healthy family functioning; family structures; and family of origin and intergenerational influences in a multicultural society (CACREP MCFC.C.1).

13. Recognize specific problems (e.g., addictive behaviors, domestic violence, suicide risk, immigration) and interventions that can enhance family functioning (CACREP MCFC.C.2).

14. Understand professional issues relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling, including recognition, reimbursement, and right to practice (CACREP MCFC.C.4).

15. Understand how living in a multicultural society affects couples and families (CACREP MCFC.E.1).

16. Understand marriage, couple, and family assessment tools and techniques appropriate to clients’ needs in a multicultural society (CACREP MCFC.G.2).

17. Understand the impact of addiction, trauma, psychopharmacology, physical and mental health, wellness, and illness on marriage, couple, and family functioning (CACREP MCFC.G.3).

CACREP STANDARDS:

For each of the following standards, evaluation for students to ensure that they have gained the specified knowledge is indicated under each standard through the case conceptualization, paper, or presentation, final exam and participation.

Standard G.2: Social and Cultural Diversity
studies that provide an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues, and trends in a multicultural society, including all of the following: case conceptualization, final

Standard G.2.d
individual, couple, family, group, and community strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations, including multicultural competencies: conceptualization, final

Standard G.3: Human Growth and Development
studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels and in multicultural contexts, including all of the following: case conceptualization, final, or formal paper or genogram project or presentation

Standard G.3.a
theories of individual and family development and transitions across the life span case conceptualization, final

Standard G.5: Helping Relationships
studies that provide an understanding of the counseling process in a multicultural society, including all of the following: Case conceptualization, genogram, final
Standard G.5.e
A systems perspective that provides an understanding of family and other systems theories and major models of family and related interventions
genogram project or presentation, case conceptualization, final

Standard G.8: Research and Program Evaluation
Studies that provide an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation, including all of the following:

Standard G.8.e
The use of research to inform evidence-based practice: case conceptualization, final, paper

Standard C.8
Recognizes the importance of family, social networks, and community systems in the treatment of mental and emotional disorders: genogram, case conceptualization, final

Standard A.1
Knows the history, philosophy, and trends in marriage, couple, and family counseling: case conceptualization, final

Standard A.3
Knows the roles and functions of marriage, couple, and family counselors in a variety of practice settings and in relation to other helping professionals: case conceptualization, final

Standard A.4
Knows the professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling.
case conceptualization, final

Standard A.5
Understanding a variety of models and theories of marriage, couple, and family counseling.
genogram project or presentation, case conceptualization, final

Standard A.6
Understanding family development and the life cycle, sociology of the family, family phenomenology, contemporary families, family wellness, families and culture, aging and family issues, family violence, and related family concerns
case conceptualization, final

Standard A.7
Understands the impact of crises, disasters, and other-trauma-causing events on marriages, couples, families, and households.
Genogram, case conceptualization, final

Standard C.1
Understands issues of marriage, couple, and family life-cycle dynamics; healthy family functioning; family structures; and family of origin and intergenerational influences in multicultural society.
genogram project or presentation, case conceptualization, final
Standard C.2
Recognizes specific problems (e.g., addictive behaviors, domestic violence, suicide risk, immigration) and interventions that can enhance family functioning.
case conceptualization, final

Standard C.4
Understands professional issues relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling, including recognition, reimbursement, and right to practice: final

Standard E.1
Understands how living in a multicultural society affects couples and families.
case conceptualization, formal paper, genogram project or presentation, final

Standard G.2
Understands marriage, couple, and family assessment tools and techniques appropriate to clients’ needs in a multicultural society. genogram project or presentation, case conceptualization, final

Standard G.3
Understands the impact of addiction, trauma, psychopharmacology, physical and mental health, wellness, and illness on marriage, couple, and family functioning.
genogram project or presentation, film conceptualization, case conceptualization, final

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/ASSIGNMENTS: All written assignments should be submitted using standard APA format (sixth edition). Unless indicated otherwise, please submit all assignments electronically via the e-mail provided in this syllabus. All assignments are due at the end of class on the respective dates posted in this syllabus. Any assignment turned in later than the posted time will receive a 10% reduction in the total points possible for that assignment for each day that it is late. Exceptions will be made only in cases of documented family or personal emergencies. Out of courtesy, please do not submit assignments during class time; instead, wait until designated breaks or after class.

1) Class Attendance/Participation (10 points): Please plan to attend all course meetings in their entirety and meaningfully engage in all course discussions and activities. Your attendance and degree of participation will be tracked by the instructor. This class is highly collaborative in nature, so failure to do so potentially impacts the learning of the whole group. Meaningful engagement means that your comments are additive to the discussion at hand, do not detract from the conversation, and are not focused solely on personal issues.

You are expected to notify the instructor, via email, of any need to be absent from class. If you suspect that regular attendance of this class may be difficult for you, then please consider taking it at another time. Lack of participation, tardiness, or any unexcused absences will result in a loss of points and may result in a course grade reduction of at least one letter grade. “Incompletes” are to be completed in the next academic term.

Please read the assigned readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss during class. Lecture and small group discussion times will highlight the materials assigned for that day. Students are responsible for all of the material in the assigned readings, as not everything in the readings can be discussed during class time.
2) **Genogram creation and presentation (or paper) (30 points)** 15-30 minute presentation, depending on how many students are in class. Students may present their genogram or on a topic related to a current issue in Family Systems/Counseling/Therapy. Decisions will be made the first weekend of class. All presentations should be ready by Friday (January 23rd) of the second weekend. Students who choose to write a topic paper will present their findings.

**Topic Paper Guidelines:**
Choose a topic impacting family systems and make a presentation with a minimum of three references. Topics may include but not be limited to the following: Infertility and couples, Divorce and children, Schools and families, ADHD and families, Extramarital affairs, Military families, Ethnicity and family therapy, etc. Topics can be book chapters not covered in class i.e., Psychoeducational Family Therapy, Research or training or professional issues, Becoming a Family Therapist: Training and Supervision, Professional Issues and Ethical Practices. Include an informal statement in the end of the presentation and describe what has been useful in relation to career/training. What was challenging about the material? Topics must be pre approved by instructor and need to be declared by afternoon on the first Saturday. All topic papers must include at least 4 references. Have a handout for the class with the outline and the three references. You are advised to use journals such as *The Family Journal, Journal of Marital and Family Therapy.* Papers should be around 5-8 pages in length and must be in APA style.

**Genogram Guidelines:**
The genogram is a self-awareness and practical skill building project.

**Diagram:** dates, occupations, causes of death, etc. You will be given a model (Strauss Family). Make it large enough for class to see, highlight who you are.
1. Significant family events (3 to 4)
2. Related age, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic, family development stage issues, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual, and disability issues-patterns.
3. Three Family Themes/Issues
4. Psychological impact of 2 and 3
5. What would you keep the same in your family?
6. Reframe an experience
7. What would you change in your family? What would you want different?
8. What from this family information may impact you as a counselor/therapist, both in terms of vulnerability and strength? What have you learned that is useful to your future career?
9. What have I learned from this project?

Family member’s identity can be protected when sharing by using a different name. Students should not only pay attention to the structure and they should also pay attention to the relational patterns between members. Consider discussing your reaction to the experience and the insights you have learned regarding your family or origin. Discuss how this newfound knowledge could impact your work as counselor. Genogram is meant to be an in-depth exploration of how your family of origin experiences, messages, etc., influence your development as a professional counselor.
3) **Family Structure and Children’s Health - Case Conceptualization (30 points):**
   - **Due Sunday 25th by end of class**
   - Peruse the information provided in the following Center for Disease Control publication:
   - Pick 2-3 family health related statistics or trends from the publication that interest you.
   - Further research these trends/statistics in the academic literature, minimum 3 sources
   - In a 2-3 page summary discuss:
     1. Possible etiology and common causal/risk factors of trends
     2. How you would approach treatment of a family with these factors (i.e. what counseling model would you opt for and why, what might be possible barriers to effective treatment, what would be realistic goals
     3. Ethical issues
     4. Important contextual, community, social, economic, political, personal or cultural issues related to treatment and the trend

4) **Final Exam (30 points; Due via e-mail 1/31/14 by 12pm):** The cumulative, take-home final exam will be distributed in class on January 25th. It may include (a) a short answer section; (b) a short essay section; and (c) multiple choice

**BREAKDOWN OF TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE:**
- Attendance/Participation: 10 points
- Genogram or paper: 30
- CDC Case Conceptualization: 30
- Final Exam: 30
- Total Points Possible: 100 points

**EVALUATION/GRADING SCALE:**

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COURSE SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE):
It is expected you have read the chapters assigned before each weekend

First weekend of class:
- **Part 1: Fundamentals of Family Psychology**
  - Adopting a Family Relationship framework Ch-1
  - Family Development: Continuity and Change Ch-2
  - Gender, Culture, and Ethnicity Factors in Family Functioning, Ch-3
  - Interlocking Systems: the individual the family and the community Ch-4
- **Part 2: The Development and Practice of Family Therapy**
  - Growth of Family Therapy Ch-5
  - Professional issues and Ethical Practices Ch-6
  - Human Validation Process Model. Ch-9, pp. 257-266
  - Emotionally Focused Therapy Ch-9, pp267-271
  - Symbolic-Experiential. Ch-9, pp. 240-248
  - Psychodynamic Approaches. Ch-7 especially Objects Relations
  - Transgenerational Approach. Ch-8

Second weekend of class:
- **Genogram and other topic presentations and all papers due**
  - Structural Family Therapy. Ch-10
  - Strategic Family Therapy. Ch-11
  - Behavioral/Cognitive. Ch-12
  - Solution-Focused Brief Therapy Ch-13
  - Narrative Therapy Ch-14
  - Evaluations

  **Case Conceptualization Due Sunday**

**ACADEMIC CONDUCT:** Cheating on examinations, submitting work of other students as your own, or plagiarism in any form will result in penalties ranging from an “F” or “U” on an assignment to expulsion from the University.

**PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT:** Students are expected to adhere to the appropriate code of ethics for their particular program. Any behavior which is deemed unethical will be grounds for dismissal from the program.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** All cell phones and pagers are to be turned off or set to vibrate mode during class time. No writing or checking text messages during class. If a student has a particular need (is on-call for work or has children at home) s/he is expected to notify the instructor prior to the beginning of class so that accommodations can be made.

**ACCOMMODATIONS STATEMENT:** Students who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services, voice/TTY (970) 351-2289, or fax (970) 351-4166, or visit [www.unco.edu/dss](http://www.unco.edu/dss) as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

**INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT:** The College of Education and Behavioral Sciences (CEBS) supports an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, appreciated, and recognized as a source of strength. We expect that students, faculty,
administrators and staff within CEBS will respect differences and demonstrate diligence in understanding how other peoples’ perspectives, behaviors, and worldviews may be different from their own. Please visit the CEBS Diversity and Equity Committee website for more information on our commitment to diversity (http://www.unco.edu/cebs/diversity).

**ADDITIONAL READINGS – JOURNAL ARTICLES:**


**Readings Relevant to School Counseling and Family Systems**


**PLEASE READ and PRINT THIS SYLLABUS and BRING TO CLASS THE FIRST DAY.**

**MAKE SURE TO SAVE A COPY OF ALL SYLLABI FOR YOUR RECORDS AND FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE SUBMISSION TO LICENSURE BOARDS***