

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO**  
**APCE 665**  
**FAMILY SYSTEMS**  
**Spring 2016**  
**Colorado Springs Campus**

**CREDIT HOURS:** 3 semester hours  
**INSTRUCTOR:** Nai Chieh (Geri) Tien, Ph.D., LMFT  
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**COURSE MEETING:** 1/8: 4pm-10pm 1/9: 8pm-5pm 1/9: 8pm-4pm  
1/22: 4pm-10pm 1/23: 8pm-5pm 1/24: 8pm-4pm

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

**TEXT:** Gehart, D. R. (2016). *Theory and treatment planning in family therapy: A competency-Based Approach*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning

**COURSE CONTENT:** This course was designed to meet the CACREP 2009 Standards for Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling and APA Benchmarks. 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, Analytic, 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.

**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL OUTCOMES:** 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).

**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 is therefore intense and fast-paced.

### **EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS**

All UNC counseling students are required to register for a university e-mail account. Check E-mail regularly throughout the semester.

1. Read the assigned chapters before the scheduled class meeting is extremely important. Think critically about what you read. You are not expected to *like* every theory; each of you will have biases and preferences for certain theories. You are encouraged to be open to examining different points of view. Research has not found any theory to be superior to another although some are better than others are for dealing with certain situations and issues. Be willing to share your ideas and ask difficult questions. The academic classroom should serve as an environment where diverse, and sometimes controversial, ideas can be discussed and evaluated.

2. Attend class according to scheduled dates and times; arrive on time for class. Missing class without getting prior approval will result in an unexcused absence. Each unexcused absence will result in a one letter grade deduction from your final grade. Being tardy for class (more than 10 minutes late) three or more times will be counted as one unexcused absence. Any assignments that are due the day of the missed class will not be accepted at a later date unless special condition, please discuss with the instructor beforehand if unavoidable situation.
3. This course is *not* intended to teach you how to do specific family and couples counseling techniques. Instead, you will examine and become familiar with some of the most influential theories of Systemic/Family therapy and counseling. Read with a questioning attitude rather than for absorption of facts: What is particularly challenging? What is hard for me to understand? How do these ideas relate to others covered in other classes? How does the systemic theory open up a different *world* in counseling practice? What does it mean to dwell in that world?
4. Realize that you have the rest of your career to learn a few of these theories in depth. For this course, focus on learning the conceptual bases upon which the counseling theories are explicitly, and implicitly, based so that you will have a working background in which to apply one or two theories with reasonable effectiveness.
5. Turn off all potentially disruptive electronic devices, such as cell phones, smart phones and pagers. Do not engage in text messaging during class time.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Participation (15%)  
 Reading Summaries (25%)  
 Exams (20%)  
 Case Conceptualization and Treatment Planning (20%)  
 Genogram: (20%)

**EVALUATION-GRADING SCALE:**

<b>A</b>	93-100	<b>C</b>	73-76
<b>A-</b>	90-92	<b>C-</b>	70-72
<b>B+</b>	87-89	<b>D+</b>	67-69
<b>B</b>	83-86	<b>D</b>	63-66
<b>B-</b>	80-82	<b>D-</b>	60-62
<b>C+</b>	77-79	<b>F</b>	Below 60

**ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING**

1. Participation (15%): Graduate students are expected to be responsible for regular and punctual class attendance. Because theory may only become useful to the extent that it is put into practice, students are expected to participate fully in class discussions and in practice sessions of techniques derived from selected theories. All students will be involved in classroom role-plays and experiential exercises and should be prepared to participate in class discussions and activities.

Active participation is essential and will be evaluated in the following way:

- Excellent (80-100) – Proactive participation: leading, originating, informing,

challenging contributions that reflect in-depth study, thought, and analysis of the topic under consideration as well as a demonstrated ability to listen to and build upon the ideas of others. Proactive participation may also include challenging contributions in small group contexts, for students that may have difficulty participating in large group discussions and activities.

- Satisfactory (69-79) – Reactive participation: supportive, follow-up contributions that are relevant and of value, but rely on the leadership and study of others, or reflect opinion rather than study, thought, and contemplation.
- Minimally Acceptable (48-68) – Passive participation: present, awake, alert, attentive, but not actively involved.
- Unsatisfactory (47 or less) – Uninvolved: absent, present but not attentive, sleeping, answering email, surfing the web, texting, making irrelevant contributions that inhibit the progress of the discussion

Please note active participation is expected throughout the course and needs to be meaningful in relation to your professional development as a counselor in training and your future career. There are three possibilities for the presentation or paper option, choose one: genogram, or interview, or current topic in family therapy.

## 2. Reading Summaries (25%)

As mentioned earlier, complete the readings assigned prior to the class is extremely important, you will not be able to contribute to meaningful class discussion and comprehend the theories if you didn't read before coming to class. To help you actually understand the theory, a short summary of each chapter read is due at the beginning of each class. It is recommended for you to start the readings as early as possible, do not wait until the day before the class. Please remember:

- A. 2-3 double-space pages for each chapter.
- B. Summary is more than just bullet points, you can outline the important concepts in the chapter adding some narratives to show that you understand these concepts.

## 3. Exams (20%)

You will need to complete 2 short exams that include the theories covered each weekend. These exams are all multiple choice exams, approximately 3-5 questions from each chapter so the length of the exam is related to the amount of theories covered in each exam. You will complete these exams on Blackboard, please familiarize yourself with Blackboard before taking the exam if you've never used it before.

<https://unco.blackboard.com/webapps/login/>

- ## 4. Case Conceptualization and Treatment Planning (20%): Will be discussed and guidelines will be provided the first day of class. Papers are expected to be 6-10 typed pages, double spaced, regular font, grammatically correct, with a title page (not counted on the total number of papers) which includes name, name of professor, class title and number, and a creative title of the project. Feedback of all the assignments will be provided via email after the course is complete. Criteria for grading include thoroughness, level of insight, depth, connection to family systems and timely completion. For those presenting, adherence to timelines, clarity, eye contact with audience, creativity and enthusiasm are important.

Choose a couple/family from your personal life who has experienced one of the following issues but not be limited to, write a formal paper (APA style with a minimum of three references): Infertility and couples, Divorce and children, Schools and families, ADHD and families, Extramarital affairs, Military families, Ethnicity and family therapy etc. Include an informal paragraph in the end describing what has been useful for you as a counselor-in-training in relation to career/training. Issues must be pre-approved by instructor.

This should be a couple/family that was well known to you. Use various theories, or one theory, of counseling covered in the course to write a descriptive case conceptualization and recommend an effective treatment program for this couple/family. Mention neither the name of the couple/family nor their relationship with you. Refer to the couple/family using a fictitious name. Be as descriptive as possible using what one has learned in the course to really bring out the person's case state and character. Avoid making any moral or other judgments of neither the couple/family nor the individuals. Present the couple/family as clearly as possible as though you were writing it for the next counselor who will see the couple/family. After your description, put together what might be an effective treatment program for this couple/family. The paper will be graded according to the depth and coherence of the analysis in accordance with course material. Write it so that the reader will really get a sense of who that client is and what they are about.

5. Genogram: (20%)

Diagram: dates, occupations, causes of death, etc. Make it large enough for class to see, highlight who you are.

- Significant family events (3 to 4)
- Related gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic, family development stage issues, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual, and disability issues-patterns.
- Three Family Themes/Issues
- Psychological impact of 2 and 3
- What would you keep the same in your family?
- Reframe an experience
- What would you change in your family? What would you want different?
- 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?

For this assignment, you can choose to present your genogram in class or write a paper of your genogram. You decide for yourself how much you want to disclose, do not share anything you do not feel comfortable with; sensitive topics include: Substance abuse, incest, sexual abuse, AIDS, and domestic violence. Protect your privacy and of those close to you. Evaluation is contingent upon all questions answered, visible diagram and adherence to timeline. As the instructor, I guarantee the confidentiality between you and me if you decided to turn in a paper instead of a presentation. As a student in this course, you are asked to protect the personal information of your peers within this course and do not share other's genogram to anyone outside of this course.

***If you decided to write a paper of your genogram=>*** It needs to be double spaced, maximum 5 pages. One page for the diagram – genogram, highlight who you are, answer all questions listed above.

***If you decided to do a presentation=>*** 12-15 minutes, depending on how many students are in class, answer all questions listed above.

**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” on an assignment to expulsion from the University. Student Handbook: <http://www.unco.edu/dos/handbook/index.html>

**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.

**ACCOMODATIONS 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.

**DIVERSITY 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. Furthermore, as stated by UNC, “The University will not engage in unlawful discrimination in...educational services against any person because of race, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, or veteran status. It is the University’s policy to prohibit discrimination in...educational services on the basis of sexual orientation or political affiliation.” (See [http://www.unco.edu/hr/AAEO\\_TitleIX.htm](http://www.unco.edu/hr/AAEO_TitleIX.htm) ). Please visit the CEBS Diversity and Equity Committee website for more information on our commitment to diversity (<http://www.unco.edu/cebs/diversity>)

**SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY:** The University of Northern Colorado prohibits and will not tolerate sexual misconduct or gender-based discrimination of any kind. UNC is legally obligated to investigate sexual misconduct (including, but not limited to sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, and intimate partner violence). If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a faculty member, they have an obligation to report it to UNC’s Title IX Coordinator. “Disclosure” may include communication in-person, via email/phone/text message, or through in/out of class assignments. If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, please contact the UNC Counseling Center (970-351-2496) or the Assault Survivors Advocacy Program (970-351-4040). If you would like to learn more about sexual misconduct or report an incident, please visit [www.unco.edu/sexualmisconduct](http://www.unco.edu/sexualmisconduct).

**COURSE CONTENT AND DEADLINES:  
(TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic/Chapters</b>	<b>Readings/Assignments (Summary of the chapters are due at the beginning of the class)</b>
<b>Jan 8<sup>th</sup></b>	-Competency and Theory in Family Therapy -Research and Ethical Foundations of Family Theories -Philosophical Foundations of Family Therapy Theories	Chapters, 1,2,4 <b>Assignments Due:</b> <b>-Summaries of chapter 1,2,4</b>
<b>Jan 9<sup>th</sup></b>	-Systemic Therapies: MRI and Milan -Strategic Therapy -Structural Family Therapy	Chapters 5, 6, 7 <b>Assignments Due:</b> <b>-Summaries of chapter 5,6,7</b>
<b>Jan 10<sup>th</sup></b>	-Satir's Human Growth Model -Symbolic-Experiential Family Therapies -Theory-Specific Case Conceptualization and Treatment Planning	Chapters 8, 9, 3 <b>Assignments Due:</b> <b>-Summaries of chapter 8,9,3</b> <b>-Finish Exam 1 by 11:59pm</b> <b>January 17<sup>th</sup> (including chapter 1-9)</b>
<b>Jan 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	-Intergenerational and Psychoanalytic Family Therapies -Cognitive-Behavioral and Mindfulness-based couple and Family Therapies	Chapter 10, 11, <b>Assignments Due:</b> <b>-Summaries of chapter 10, 11</b>
<b>Jan 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	-Solution-Based Approaches -Narrative Therapies -Collaborative Therapy and Reflecting Teams	Chapter 12, 13, 14 <b>Assignments Due:</b> <b>-Summaries of chapter 12,13,14</b>
<b>Jan 24<sup>th</sup></b>	-Genogram presentation -Evidence-Based Treatments in Couple and Family Therapy -Evidence-based Group Treatment for couples and Families -Cross-Theoretical Case Conceptualization and Integration	Chapter 15, 16, 17 <b>Assignments Due:</b> <b>-Summaries of chapter 15,16,17</b> <b>-Case Conceptualization and Treatment Program paper is due Jan 31<sup>st</sup></b> <b>-Finish exam 2 by 11:59pm Jan 31<sup>st</sup> (including chapter 10-17)</b>

**\*This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to accommodate instructional and/or student needs.**

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

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

### SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

- Softas-Nall, L., Cardona, B., & Barritt, J. (2015). Challenges and diversity issues working with multilingual and bilingual couples and families: Implications for counseling. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*.
- Softas-Nall, L & Hanna, F. (2012). Counseling & psychotherapy with difficult clients/family members: An interview with Fred Hanna. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 20, 1-5.
- Woodson, C., Softas-Nall, L. & Johnson, B. (2012). Family Chaos and Readiness to Change Problematic Alcohol Use. *Journal of Human Social Sciences*. 12, 2, 19-28.
- Bean, H., Softas-Nall, L. & Mahoney, M. (2011). Reflections on Mandated Reporting and Challenges in the Therapeutic Relationship: A Case Study with Systemic Implications. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*. 19, 3, 286-290.
- Petrogiannis, K. & Softas-Nall, L. (2010). The Family of Origin Scale in Greece. *International Journal of Psychological Studies*. 2, 1, 3-11.
- Cardona, B. & Softas-Nall, L. (2010). Family Therapy with Latino families: An interview with Patricia Arredondo. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*. 18(1), 73-77.
- Softas-Nall, B. (2008). Family Therapy. In Leong, F.T., Altmaier, E.M., & Johnson, B. (Eds). *Encyclopedia of Counseling: Volume 1*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA. 1, 203-207.
- Softas-Nall, B., Beadle, M. Newell, J. & Helm, H. (2008). Attitudes of family therapists on the disclosure of extramarital affairs. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*. 16, (4), 328-337.
- Softas-Nall, B. & Sukhodolsky, D.H. (2006). Family in the United States: Social context, structure, and roles. In Georgas, J. et al. (Eds.), *Families Across Cultures*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. **Book received award by APA's Division in International Psychology.**
- Williamson, J., Softas-Nall, B., & Miller, J. (2003). Grandmothers raising grandchildren: An exploration of their experiences and emotions. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 11(1), 23-32.
- Baldo, T. and Softas-Nall, B. (2002). There's no place like home: Redefining commitment. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 10(2), 210-212.
- Softas-Nall, B., Baldo T. and Williams, S. (2001). Family-of-origin, personality characteristics, and counselor trainees' effectiveness. *Psychological Reports*, 88(3), 854-856.
- Softas-Nall, B. and Baldo, T. (2001). The unexpected cotherapist. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 9(2), 191-192.
- Softas-Nall, B. and Baldo, T. (2000). Dialogues within a Greek family: Multicultural stories of a couple revisited. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 8(4), 396-398.
- Softas-Nall, B., Baldo, T. and Tiedemann, T. (1999). Gender based solution-focused genogram case: He and she across the generations. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 7(2), 177-180.

- Baldo, T. and Softas-Nall, B. (1998). Family sculpting in supervision of family therapy. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 6(3), 231-234.
- Softas-Nall, B. and Francis, P. (1998). A solution-focused approach to a family with a suicidal member. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 6(3), 227-230.
- Softas-Nall, B. and Francis P. (1998). A solution-focused approach to suicide assessment and intervention with families. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 6(1), 64-66.
- Softas-Nall, B., Baldo, T., and Jackson, S. (1997). Facilitating the transition from individual sessions to systemic family sessions: Issues of supervision and training. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 5, 257-262.
- Softas-Nall, B., Baldo, T., and Williams, S. (1997). Counselor trainee perceptions of Hispanic, Black and White teenage expectant mothers and fathers. *Journal for Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 25(4), 234-243.
- Family Play Therapy
  - Gil, E. (1994). *Play in Family Therapy*. NY: Guilford.
- Structural Family Therapy
  - Minuchin, S., Nichols, M., Lee, W. (2007). *Assessing Families and Couples: From Symptom to System*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
  - Minuchin, S., Lee, W., Simon, G. (1996). *Mastering Family Therapy: Journeys of Growth and Transformation*. NY: John Wiley & Sons.
  - Minuchin, S., Nichols, M. (1993). *Family Healing: Strategies for Hope and Understanding*. Washington, D.C.: The Free Press.
- Human Validation Therapy
  - Satir, V. (1989). *Conjoint Family Therapy (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.)*. Palo Alto, CA: Science & Behavior Books.
  - Banmen, J. (Ed.). (2006). *Application of the Satir Growth Model*. Wendel, NC: Avanta: the Virginia Satir Network
  - Satir, V. (1988). *The New People Making*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books.
- Emotionally Focused Therapy
  - Johnson, S. (1996). *The practice of Emotionally Focused Marital Therapy: Creating Connection*. Levittown, PA: Brunner/Mazel.
  - Johnson, S. (2008). *Hold me tight: Seven conversations for a lifetime of love*. NY: Hachette Book Group.
- Narrative Therapy
  - White, M., Morgan, A. (2006). *Narrative Therapy with Children and their Families*. Australia: Dulwich Centre Publications.
  - White, M. (2007). *Maps of Narrative Practice*. NY: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Solution-Focused Therapy
  - O'Hanlon, B., Weine-Davis, M. (2003). *In Search of Solutions: A New Direction on Psychotherapy*. NY: Norton.