UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO  
COURSE OUTLINE  
APCE 665 – FAMILY SYSTEMS  

APCE 665-700 # 2430  
March 29-31, April 12-14, 2019; F: 4-10, S: 8-5, N: 8-4  
Spring 2019  
Denver Lowry  

PROFESSOR: Dr. Lia Softas-Nall, Professor Counseling Psychology  
AAMFT Clinical Member and Approved Supervisor  
Licensed Psychologist  
Nationally Certified Counselor  

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CREDIT HOURS: 3 semester hours  

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  


Required readings posted on CANVAS:  

  Review carefully definitions of equality, impact of myth of equality, implications for counseling. Come prepared to class to discuss the above.  

- Ethnicity and Family Therapy-McGoldrick, Giordano, and Garcia. Skim through the ppt, to be mostly used in class discussions for different ethnic groups.  

- Satir reading-In her Own Words: Virginia Satir. Review conceptualization, goals, techniques, process, and role of therapist.  

- Johnson reading-The Path to a Secure Bond: Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy by Johnson and Greenman. Review conceptualization, goals, techniques and role of therapist.  

- Gottman reading-The Marriage Clinic, chapter on The Assessment of Marriage by Gottman. Skim through it to have a sense of how assessments for couples look like.
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](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.

DISABILITY RESOURCES: It is the policy and practice of the University of Northern Colorado to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that present barriers to your inclusion or to an accurate assessment of your achievement (e.g. time-limited exams, inaccessible web content, use of videos without captions), please communicate this with your professor and contact Disability Support Services (DSS) to request accommodations. Office: (970) 351-2289, Michener Library L-80. Students can learn more about the accommodation process at [http://www.unco.edu/disability-support-services/](http://www.unco.edu/disability-support-services/)

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.

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).

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: All cell phones and pagers are to be turned off during class time. No text messaging during class. If a student has a particular need (is on-call for work or has children at home) he or she is expected to notify the instructor prior to the beginning of class so that accommodations can be made. Laptops are welcomed as long as students are using them only for note taking, no surfing the web or e-mailing will be allowed. Due to numerous student complaints, any student found misusing his or her computer will be asked to shut it down. Also due to the fact that taking pictures of PowerPoints is distracting to other students and possibly the instructor please take notes rather than pictures. Taping of the class is not permitted. Not following any of the instructions may result in significant drop of participation points.
**Recommended readings**: Chapters and Articles (referred to in class)


COURSE CONTENT: This course is designed to meet the most recent CACREP 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, Analytic, Symbolic-Experiential, Structural Theory, Strategic Family Therapy, Social Learning Theory, and 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).

Knowledge of all standards is evaluated by the two exams, papers, presentations, self-reflections and class participation.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION: Methods include and are not limited to: readings, lecture, discussion, presentations, papers, exams, group activities. 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.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND METHODS OF EVALUATION

TWO EXAMS (100 points each): There will be an exam at the end of each weekend. The exam will be based on information from the book, readings posted on CANVAS, lectures, group work, and class discussions. The exams will consist of multiple-choice questions, and short essays.

TWO SELF-REFLECTIONS (50 points each): At the end of each week students will have an opportunity to reflect on what has been most useful and meaningful in terms of awareness.

PARTICIPATION (75 points). Attend class and actively participate in class discussions. Be present when class starts and ends (and for all that happens in between). There is a lot to cover. If you think you must miss any of this class, consider taking it another time. Tardiness in coming back from breaks or any other tardiness will result in a total course grade reduction of at least one letter grade.

It is expected that you participate in a professional manner and your interpersonal interactions are respectful to others, as well as you maintain a professional attitude. Self-awareness (e.g. self-assessment, self-care, openness to feedback) will also be needed to actively participate in class. In accordance with the student handbook, the “Professional Counseling program faculty members systematically review the progress of each student each semester.” You should expect that your performance and professional conduct related to this class to be incorporated into the review process.
Class content is expected to be relevant and meaningful to your professional training, which implies your continued active engagement with the material and taking responsibility to fit materials into your area of future expertise.

**SPOKESPERSON/LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY (25 points).** Cases will be given to be worked on in small groups and students are expected to be prepared to discuss in depth during class period. There will be 5-6 questions asked per case. Be prepared to lead a group discussion and to be the spokesperson for the case/group. It is your responsibility for full credit to: ensure you have a turn as the spokesperson for your group; keep the group focused on the task; summarize; and present to the larger class the findings and observations of the group. When presenting, the spokesperson can glance at notes and needs to make eye contact with the class. It is important to integrate the textbook and CANVAS materials with the case. Please review the guidelines before leading the group. I will be serving as a consultant during the discussions. Openness to feedback will be part of the evaluation. The task of the group discussion will be to conceptualize, design interventions, and plan goals based on a theoretical model. Following the language of the model is one of the tasks for the group and the spokesperson/leader.

**PAPER or PRESENTATION (100 points).**
Commit to one of the following four options early in the first weekend:
- Genogram paper or genogram presentation or topic paper or topic presentation

**Topic option**

The topic needs to be related to Family Systems. 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 use the literature appearing on this syllabus even if it is before the last 3-5 years. The purpose of the topic option is to help you gain more knowledge and awareness on a topic of your interest that can be helpful in working with families and family members in treatment. If you already know the topic you want to focus on you can email me.

It is important that the topic is based on professional literature. Make sure to check and include literature from the following journals: *The Family Journal* and the *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*. Both journals are accessible and online from the UNC library. Include an overview of the topic, how it relates to family systems, the impact, and implications for counseling. Make sure the topic is from a systemic, strength based perspective, and non pathologizing. Implications are really important, that is, making recommendations for counselors who will be working with family systems related to your topic.

The topic needs to be approved in advance by Dr. Softas. Use 5-6 articles from professional journals from the last 3-5 years. If the topic is related to the readings on this syllabus you may do so regardless of when they were published. You may email the articles you researched to Dr. Softas for feedback and maximizing your chances you are on target with the literature search. If you do not hear back soon, please do not hesitate to remind me.
Choose option A or B below, that is, paper or presentation.

A. Topic paper option

Paper needs to be APA format (running head, text of paper, references), 5 pages max (not including title page nor reference page), double spaced, regular font and margins, number pages, grammatically correct, printed, and stapled. Title page needs to include name, name of professor, class title and number, date and a title of the project. Criteria for evaluation include staying consistent with APA style, formatting instructions, depth of information on overview and implications. The outline is as follows: Overview, importance and impact of topic on family systems, implications for counseling, a short statement of what was learned that was useful and eye opening. At the end of the paper (and included in the 5 pages) write a half page to one page of reflection of what was useful and eye opening from the information and how come. Following instructions, quality of writing, APA style, depth, connection to family systems, determine grade earned. Turned in on due date or miss points.

B. Topic presentation option

Same instructions as the topic option above, and the paper except it will be an oral presentation. No formal paper required. Before the presentation email slides to professor. At the time of the presentation hand in to the professor a copy of the PowerPoint slides and references. The time limit will be 12-15 minutes and going over will have an impact on evaluation. The outline is the same as the paper: Overview, importance and impact on family systems, implications for counseling and a short statement of what was learned that was useful and eye opening. PowerPoint slides need to only highlight information, more like an outline than a narrative. Bullet points work well. More than 8-9 slides probably indicate you will be exceeding the time limit. Evaluation will be based on following the outline and instructions especially on the time limit, depth of material, looking at the audience during the presentation rather than reading from notes. Include on the slides the reference the information came from, can be in smaller font than the outline.

Genogram option

The genogram is an option to examine one’s family of origin and gain awareness, as well as understand family systems concepts in greater depth. The experience of exploring one’s family may enhance understanding of working with individuals systemically who are facing family concerns, or working directly with families and couples in therapy. All self-disclosure in class or in the assigned paper is voluntary and students have the option of choosing a topic as their project, not mandatory to work on their genogram. Any identifying family information on the genogram may be disguised or omitted, and disclose only what you are comfortable disclosing. Make sure you understand the implications of disclosing sexual misconduct. Contacting one's family of origin is completely optional in relation to this assignment. Expect that if family knows of the genogram you may be asked questions. The following outline/questions are required for the paper or presentation. The outline has been prepared by Dr. Softas for training purposes. Ethical considerations will be reviewed in class and are also covered below. Training on the construction of the genogram will be provided in class.
Provide the following information on the paper or presentation in the order they are outlined. All points need to be addressed.

Diagram: dates, occupations, causes of death, etc. You will be given a model (Strauss Family). Make it large enough for class to see if presenting, highlight who you are. (For paper option the diagram can be one page.) The diagram needs to include grandparents, parents, your generation, and if any children or grandchildren.
- Give an overview of the family, highlight in color who you are on the diagram
- Cover gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic, family development stage-please cover your stage or any other pertinent family cycle to your genogram, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual, and disability issues-patterns.
- Significant family events (3 to 4)
- Three Family Themes/Issues
- Psychological impact of significant family events and/or themes
- 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/psychologist, both in terms of vulnerability and strength?
- What have you learned that is useful to your future career?
- Within time limit of about 12-15 minutes

Note: Students may ask professor to further review on the Ethical Considerations of conducting the Family Genogram as a class project. Decide how much you want to disclose; sensitive topics may include: Substance abuse, incest, sexual abuse, AIDS, and domestic violence. Use your judgment in protecting your privacy and of those close to you. Be sure to understand Title IX information included on this syllabus. Evaluation is contingent upon all questions answered, visible diagram, highlighting who you are, and adherence to timeline. Diagram can be on a large enough poster or on a ppt slide and projected.

Other outlines for presentations may be followed, please request from instructor, ie gender genograms, cultural/ethnic genogram, or spiritual genogram.

You are reminded that you have a choice to do a genogram or a topic presentation, how much to disclose, it is not required that you contact family members for information, and there will be a group processing at the end of all genograms (no processing of individual ones). Choose option A or B, that is paper or presentation.

A. Genogram paper option

Answer all questions on the syllabus pertaining to the genogram. Page limit is 4-pages, double-spaced, regular font and margins, include all questions (these can be a smaller font), give an overview at the beginning. One page for the diagram, and one for the title page (your name, my name, class number and title, date and name of project) which do not count in the 4-pages. Therefore, the paper can be a total of 6-pages including the diagram and title page. Criteria for
grading includes meeting these instructions and answering all questions in a meaningful and sensitive manner. Make sure to include questions with the answers. Paper needs to be printed and stapled and turned in on due date or points will be deducted.

B. Genogram presentation option

Diagram needs to be large enough for the whole class to see, highlight who you are. Give an overview and answer all questions in 12-15 minutes. Evaluation will be based in answering all questions, ready diagram following all instructions, highlighting who you are, and within time limits. Answers are expected to be meaningful, sensitive, and respectful.

All papers, topic and genogram, due the Friday of the second weekend at 4pm. Presentations will take place the second Friday.

SUMMARY POINTS VALUE:

TWO EXAMS (100 points each-total 200 points)
SELF-REFLECTION (50 points each-total 100)
PAPER or PRESENTATION (100 points)
PARTICIPATION (75 points)
SPOKESPERSON/LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY (25 points)
Total possible points 500

EVALUATION-GRADING SCALE:

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

**SAVE A COPY OF ALL SYLLABI FOR YOUR RECORDS AND FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE SUBMISSION TO LICENSURE BOARDS**
COURSE CONTENT AND DEADLINES:

It is expected that students have reviewed the chapters assigned before each weekend and the material posted on CANVAS. Student performance in the class and making it useful for one’s future as a professional counselor depends on coming prepared to class.

Goldenberg 9th edition

FIRST WEEKEND:

Part 1: Fundamentals of Family Systems
Adopting a Family Relationship framework Ch-1
Family Development: Continuity and Change Ch-2
Diversity in Family Functioning Ch-3

- Ethnicity ppt posted on CANVAS
- Reading posted on CANVAS: Couples, Gender and Power-The Myth of Equality
  Systems Theory and Systemic Thinking Ch-4
  Part 2: The Development and Practice of Family Therapy
  Origins and Growth of Family Therapy Ch-5
  Professional issues and Ethical Practices Ch-6
  Human Validation Process Model. Ch-9, pp.240-248

- Reading posted on CANVAS: Satir-In her Own Words
  Emotionally Focused Therapy Ch-9, pp248-251
- Reading posted on CANVAS: Johnson-The Path to a Secure Bond
  Symbolic-Experiential. Ch-9- pp. 226-233
  Transgenerational Approach. Ch-8

Sunday afternoon Exam 1-Midterm and Self-Reflection

SECOND WEEKEND OF CLASS:

- Genogram, topic presentations and all papers due
  Structural Family Therapy. Ch-10
  Behavioral/Cognitive. Ch-12

- Reading posted on CANVAS: Gottman-The Assessment of Marriage
  Social Construction I-emphasis on Solution-Focused Brief Therapy Ch-13
  Social Construction Models: Narrative Therapy Ch-14
  Overview
  Evaluations
  Sunday afternoon Exam 2-Final and Self-Reflection