University of Northern Colorado
Denver
APCE 695 May 17-19 and May 31st -June 2nd, 2019

APCE 695-700 # 40611

SEMINAR: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN COUPLES AND FAMILY THERAPY
Hybrid Format

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

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PREREQUISITES: APCE 665, APCE majors only or by permission.

CREDIT HOURS: 3 semester hours.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Study of current issues and research in couples and family therapy.

COURSE FORMAT:
This is a hybrid course format. Class will be face-to-face on Friday, May 17 (4-10), the morning of Saturday, May 18 (8-1pm), the afternoon of Saturday June 1 (from 12-5), and all day Sunday, June 2 (8-4). The rest of the time it will be an online format with different deadlines for assignments between the period of Sunday, May 20 through Friday, May 31, and another deadline for the final self-reflection to be decided in class (most likely June 4th 4pm). The online component will consist of viewing recorded cases and material on contemporary issues in CFT and reflecting on the clinical cases and topics. It will also include an online discussion. The first weekend of face-to-face part it will consist of training provided by the professor. The second weekend of the face-to-face part it will include presentations on contemporary issues in CFT and class discussions. Self-reflections for the material covered and different formats of learning will be required. The professor will provide mentoring electronically in-between weekends on the topics to be presented.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1. To understand the major intervention strategies in couples and family therapy.
2. To understand related issues in couples and family therapy (i.e., ethical considerations, spouse abuse, divorce mediation, etc.)
3. Explore current literature and research to develop in-depth understanding of timely topics related to the practice of family and marital counseling.
4. Review the family life cycle (i.e., becoming a couple, becoming parents, transformation during adolescence).
5. Become familiar with evidence based interventions in family therapy and Specific models.
6. Incorporate gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic level, multiculturalism to the above objectives.

**COURSE CONTENT POSSIBILITIES:**
1. Contemporary approaches and family interventions for eating disorders, alcohol use, ADHD, grief and loss, mental illness, etc.
2. Gender Issues (Women/Men/Gender fluidity and the Family Life Cycle)
3. Abuse/Domestic Violence
4. Legal and Ethical Issues AAMFT and IAMFC
5. Children and Divorce
6. Families and Major Illnesses (i.e., Families and AIDS, Cancer, etc.)
7. Extramarital Affairs
8. Aging, Families in Later Life
9. Gay and Lesbian Couples/Families
10. Multicultural Issues (i.e., The Latino Family Life Cycle, Migration, Families Living in Poverty)
11. Divorce Mediation, The Divorce Cycle
12. Becoming an adult, becoming a couple, becoming parents, etc.
13. Therapy process and outcome research/Evidence based interventions
14. Premarital Counseling or recent findings in couples' therapy.
15. Licensing LMFT, and requirements
16. Any contemporary topic related to couples and family therapy, consider your goals

This course was designed to meet the CACREP 2009 Standards for Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling. The focus of this course is on major approaches, interventions, current issues, trends, and research in couples and family therapy. Other topics addressed in the course include the family life cycle, evidence-based interventions, and multicultural considerations for working with couples and families. The course is also designed to cover family therapy methodology; family assessment; treatment and intervention methods; and an overview of major clinical theories of marital and family therapy.

**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL OUTCOMES:** Upon successful completion of this course students will:

1. 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).
2. Know the professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling (CACREP MCFC.A.4).
3. 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).
4. Understand current literature that outlines theories, approaches, strategies, and techniques shown to be effective in working with diverse family systems (CACREP MCFC.E.3).

5. Understand the effects of local, state, and national policies, programs, and services on diverse families (CACREP MCFC.E.5).

6. Know principles and models of assessment and case conceptualization from a systems perspective, including diagnostic interviews, mental diagnostic status examinations, symptom inventories, and psycho-educational and personality assessments (CACREP MCFC.G.1).

7. Understand how to critically evaluate research relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling (CACREP MCFC.I.1).

8. Know models of program evaluation relevant for the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling (CACREP MCFC.I.2).

9. Know evidence-based treatments and basic strategies for evaluating counseling outcomes in marriage, couple, and family counseling (CACREP MCFC.I.3).

EVALUATION: Letter grade based on the following requirements

1. 10%-Attendance and participation is mandatory for the face-to-face portions of the class. Regular, active, meaningful and consistent participation is significant to this course. There will also be a discussion board for the online component. It is important that you participate on the discussion board. This is a short format class; any unexcused absence will result in the loss of one letter grade. Points will be deducted for showing up late for class. Call or e mail instructor if there is an emergency. Lack of individual participation will affect your grade therefore make the choice to actively participate.

2. 10% - 1 to 2-page outline of your presentation along with PowerPoint slides and evaluation form in hard copy turned in to professor day of presentation. The outline needs to summarize the major points of the readings and questions and/or issues for class discussion. Make sure to include the references of your readings in APA style. I will be working with you in-between classes to provide mentoring on the material, format, etc. Please email a draft of the outline of your presentation and slides by Friday May 24th by 5pm so that I can give you feedback. The final agreed upon outline of the presentation and references needs to be provided to the professor as a hard copy the day of the presentation. The final PowerPoint slides for the presentation and references need to be e mailed to the professor by May 31st at 3pm. Feedback will be provided. A hard copy of the final slides need to be turned in to the professor the day of the presentation. Evaluation form to be provided in class needs to be turned in to professor day of presentation (fill out name and topic). Guidelines for the presentations will also be discussed in class.
3. **Successful presentation** Saturday & Sunday, June 1 or 2 during the second weekend of selected topic/s i.e., see course content for topic ideas, that is, a) readings are contemporary, preferably within last 5 years even though for classic work can be different, b) readings are from a systems perspective, c) readings are in couples and/or family therapy, d) presentation is clear, creative and time efficient, e) student makes eye contact with audience, reading is to be avoided, f) for the experiential component short essay questions pertaining to the material to be distributed to class for discussion, email instructor a week in advance or a case or a few minutes of a film to include as part of their presentation and discussion. Case studies on the topic and working in groups on the case highly recommended. PowerPoint or overhead transparencies are required for a short overview of about 20 minutes-no more than 14 slides, discussion and evaluation of literature as a companion to practice is the major goal for the presentation. It is mandatory that you review and evaluate with class participation the literature on your topic. The day of your presentation student and professor can be co -leading the discussion. Depending on the number of students in the class, decisions will be made on the length of the presentations. A major goal of this class is to prepare students to learn to evaluate and use literature and research in practice; to prepare trainees to become consumers of literature and research in the practice of CFT. Therefore, implications for CFT are important to highlight in the presentation. **During the first Friday decisions on topics will be discussed.** Be prepared to discuss options and commit to a topic. You can also email me the topic of your choice before class via email and include in the subject “APCE 695 Denver”. Please use your UNC email account. Please keep in mind that in the two weekends in-between classes I will serve as a mentor in the preparation of your presentation.

4. 10% - Each student making a presentation needs to turn in an electronic copy of their final paper by Saturday at 11am on June 1st on the chosen topic with references (APA style, the most current edition). For MA students the page limit is min 10 pages max of 20 pages not including title page and references. For doctoral students the page limit is 25 not including title page and references. Paper needs to include an intro to the topic, the importance of the topic for CFT, an integration of at least 5 references, a section on implications for clinical practice and a last page of a personal conclusion/closure statement. Paper needs to reflect an understanding of the topic in depth, and show an advanced level of integrating the literature. Paper ought to be double-spaced, 12-point font and 1” margins. Title page needs to include name, instructor’s name, class name and number, date and title. Accurate spelling, syntax and grammar expected. This is a formal paper, not a self-reflection one except for the last page. If papers are late points will be subtracted, make the choice to turn in the paper on time. Grading will be based on thoroughness, significance, accuracy, relatedness to course content and expectations, adherence of paper requirements and style. Papers receiving an A will be exceptional and you will be mentored. Turn in two hard copies of the final paper and also email the paper by the deadline. Please keep in mind that I will serve as a mentor for your paper provided you contact me electronically in-between the two weekends.
5. 10% x 2 weekends = 20% - Write two reflection papers one at the end of the first half of class and one at the end of the second half of class. Outline and deadlines will be provided in class. This is an informal type of paper. More will be discussed in class.

6. 20% x 2 weekends = 40% - Four assignments for the online component based on streamed recording from the UNC Library. You will download the recording, watch it and write a reaction paper. Cases and topics include: Grief and loss in the family system, divorce, cultural competency, and working with couples. Depending on student interest I am flexible to work with other topics that can be streamed from the UNC library. Each of the recordings is an hour to an hour and a half. An outline will be provided for the reaction papers the first day of class.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:
FROM THE FOLLOWING VOLUMES PROFESSOR WILL PROVIDE READINGS OR POST ON CANVAS. I will bring the first day of class and copies can also be made.

Recommended readings for class:


GRADING SCALE:

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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.

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/

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.

**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.

Save syllabi for submission to licensure boards.
Schedule of meetings

1st weekend May 17-19

Friday 4-10 face-to-face
Introduction and review of requirements
Topic presentations by instructor

Saturday
8-1 face-to-face Instructor presents and training is provided
The rest of the day Online-Available during class time until 5 for online activities

Sunday
Online-Available during class time until 4 for online activities
Assignment deadlines and on line discussion deadlines TBA

2nd weekend June 31-June 2nd

Friday
Online-Available during class time until 9:30pm for online activities

Saturday
Paper Due
9-12 If needed some online and optional meetings with instructor-Available during class time until 12 for online activities

1-5 Presentations face-to-face

Sunday
Presentations and reflection, class face-to-face
Skills to develop in conducting literature searches:

- **Skills to develop**: use of computers to access databases; read, understand and evaluate research; synthesize research with one’s counseling practice; foster curiosity and ‘fun’ for stimulating, interesting findings; and supplement services to clients by the use of research.

- **Short cuts**: electronic journal articles—supplement with *The Family Journal: Counseling and Psychotherapy for Couples and Families*, and *the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*; use of metanalyses or reviews of literature; read abstracts—may not include important details; peer-reviewed and prestigious journals may be of higher quality. The UNC library has both of these journals.

- **Conducting searches**:

  **Too few articles**: brainstorm alternative keywords, i.e. bicultural, multicultural, biracial couples, and effective couples’ therapy.

  **Too many articles**: conduct more selective searches, i.e. anorectic female adolescents, family therapy, and evidence based interventions.

**Criteria**: Family therapy journal, reputation of journal, contemporary (sometimes older, “classic” types of work accepted), availability either through the internet, UNC library or its electronic journals, my personal journals include *The Family Journal: Counseling and Psychotherapy for Couples and Families*, and *the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*.

Psychological research PsychINFO ([http://www.apa.org/psycinfo](http://www.apa.org/psycinfo))
Steps to do a search ([http://www.apa.org/psycinfo/training/searchsteps.html](http://www.apa.org/psycinfo/training/searchsteps.html))
Advanced tips ([http://www.apa.org/psycinfo/training/tips.html](http://www.apa.org/psycinfo/training/tips.html))

Free database-The Campbell Collaboration-social work, education, and criminal justice ([http://www.campbellcollaboration.org](http://www.campbellcollaboration.org))

Google Scholar ([http://www.scholar.google.com](http://www.scholar.google.com)) journal articles on the internet

Evidence Based Mental Health ([http://ebmh.bmjournals.com](http://ebmh.bmjournals.com))


Internet resources:
Centre for Evidence Based Mental Health website: ([http://cebmh.warne.ox.ac.uk/cebmh/education/appraisal/index.html](http://cebmh.warne.ox.ac.uk/cebmh/education/appraisal/index.html))
For experimental studies CONSORT ([http://www.consort-statement.org/revisedstatement.htm](http://www.consort-statement.org/revisedstatement.htm))
First search for metanalyses or literature reviews. If not available, check for trends or patterns, careful not to overemphasize results of any one study.
**Implications-Application:**
What are the implications for counseling? Is information useful clinically? How can information be applied to particular case? How do findings apply to the real world? If the setting is different do findings still apply? Does research apply to family/clients one is working with or does it differ in a significant way? Does it address families from diverse ethnic or racial backgrounds? Is gender an issue? Whether and how treatment needs to be adapted to fit the clients/family, especially to become more culturally friendly. Requesting from the authors useful instruments and manuals included in the study and not published.


**INTEGRATING RESEARCH AND CLINICAL PRACTICE IN MFT**

- **Long term benefits**
  Demonstrate effective practice to insurance providers and insurance panels by being able to present their clinical skills and include data demonstrating the effectiveness of those skills. Be prepared to advocate for their clients with data, treatment plans, client progress, and if necessary additional therapy sessions. In other words, increase evaluation of one’s own practice. Important to respond to or at least know how to look for an answer to questions such as “If the family asked you how you know your model may be helpful with their presenting concern, what would you say?” (Hodgson et al, 2005).
  - Develop skills to question the counseling process; discuss advantages and disadvantages of empirically supported treatments (EST); and emphasize change.
  - Challenges include overemphasizing empirically based treatments at the expense of non evidence based therapy theory driven models; emphasis on common factors may diminish emphasis on specific models.
  - Goals: Familiarize with EST models; common factors vs. therapy models debate; learn how research and clinical skills complement each other and become educated consumers of research and how to integrate it into practice and make it part of one’s clinical philosophy.