

CO 714 – FAMILY COUNSELING/THERAPY
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary – Charlotte
Spring 2012

Instructor: Gregg Blanton, EdD, LMFT, LPC, LPCS, AAMFT Approved Supervisor

Contact Information: 15 Bear Knoll Dr., Asheville, NC 28805
828-299-3930
gblanton@montreat.edu

Class Schedule: February 3-4; March 2-3; March 30-31, 2012

Course Description: A clinical course designed to develop basic skills in counseling families. This course will evaluate the most applicable methods for counseling interventions with families.

Missional Goals: CO714 is in harmony with the third article of Gordon-Conwell's mission statement. This course seeks to train and equip students with the practical tools to effectively minister in the field of counseling.

Article 3: To train and encourage students, in cooperation with the Church, to become skilled in ministry. The Church and the seminary share the goal of seeing knowledge, skills and attitudes integrated in the person who ministers. Both in traditional degree programs and in continuing education, a combination of careful training and supervised experience in ministry are educational practices essential to achieving that goal.

Relation to the curriculum:

CO 714, Family Therapy, relates to the broader MACC in the following ways:

1. It utilizes theory and knowledge gained about marriages, families, children, and the systems in which they live from courses including CO610 (advanced developmental psychology), CO614 (Family systems Theory), CO770 (Psychopathology), and CO611 (theories of personality), and provides students with a context in which to develop understanding of how these apply to the treatment of families to resolve the difficulties with which they present to a family therapist.
2. It prepares students for their clinical training (CO867, CO868 and CO869) by providing them with models of family therapy and the rationales behind them, so that when they enter into practice with families presenting for treatment, they have models which they can implement to assist these families with healing and resolution of their difficulties.
3. It provides content students are required to master in order to become licensed marriage and family therapists, and contributes to the students ability to meet the curricular requirements for licensure, which is one of the key distinctives of the MACC degree at GCTS.

Course Objectives:

1. To begin development of skills in the evaluation and treatment of families.
2. To review major models of family therapy within the broad systems framework.
3. To explore the practice of various techniques and approaches of family therapy through the use of classroom lectures, videotapes of clinical applications, and role-play within the classroom.
4. To develop an integration of spirituality and family therapy within the light of Christian spiritual and theological considerations.
5. To identify issues from one's past that may impact one's work as a family therapist by exploring one's family-of-origin.

Course Requirements:

Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments and activities as described below. The successful completion of these activities will require each student to spend approximately 135 hours devoted to coursework, both in and out of class. The following chart indicates how these hours are distributed across the following course assignments. More specific descriptions of the assignments are given later in this syllabus.

Course Assignment	Expected Time Commitment	Student's Actual Time
Project 1	15 hours	
Project 2	25 hours	
Project 3	20 hours	
Project 4	15 hours	
Project 5	15 hours	
Project 6	15 hours	
Project 7	15 hours	
Project 8	15 hours	

Required Reading:

- McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Petry, S. (2008). *Genograms: Assessment and intervention* (3rd ed.). New York: W.W. Norton & Co. **ISBN-13: 978-0393702941**
- Napier, A. & Whitaker, C. (1979). *The family crucible*. New York: HarperPerennial. **ISBN-13: 978-0060914899**
- Nichols, M.P. (2009). *Inside family therapy: A case study in family healing* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon. **ISBN-13: 978-0205611072**

Course Projects:

1. After participating in numerous in-class “family therapy” exercises:
 - a) Write a 4+ page paper: First, describe how your family responded to each model of family therapy. Second, describe how the therapist implemented each model of family therapy (e.g., techniques, role). In addition, include personal reactions to each model. What did you like and dislike? What seemed like a good fit for you personally and why? What seemed effective about each model? This paper should refer to each model of family therapy examined in this course. (50 pts.)
 - b) Receive peer evaluations : Each of the members of your group will evaluate you on the following criteria: commitment to mastering family therapy skills, sustained focus, nonstop effort, commitment to helping others learn, and cooperation. These grades will be averaged to come up with a final peer grade. (50 pts.)
2. Read 1500 pages of family therapy literature. (This assignment includes required reading for this course.) Annotation is not necessary, but you should include a summary sheet, which computes the number of pages read from each source. The literature should be related specifically to family therapy. The reading cannot be a family therapy textbook.
3. After reading *Genograms*, complete the following tasks related to your family of origin:
 - a. Construct a genogram: Be sure and include three generations, beginning with your grandparents. Using yourself as the I.P., identify relationship patterns between yourself and other family members. (25 pts.)
 - b. Develop a family chronology: This will list critical life events, beginning with your grandparents. Also, include social, economic, and political events that influenced your family. (25 pts.)
 - c. Track your family through the various stages of the family life cycle. Begin with the marriage of your parents. (25 pts.)
 - d. Interpret the genogram: Using guidelines in Part 3: Genogram interpretation (pp. 297-299). (25pts.)

NOTE: Underlined terms are explained in *Genograms*

4. Using concepts and skills from *Genograms*, complete the following tasks related to the Brice family (Based on *The family crucible*):
 - a. Construct a genogram: Include the basic family structure, along with demographic information. Also, identify family relationship patterns. (40 pts.)
 - b. Demonstrate a genogram interview: Create a 3+ page script, which should be in the form of a dialogue between you (as the therapist) and members of the Brice family. Using guidelines for conducting a genogram interview (pp. 61-77), select at least 10 appropriate questions that are relevant to content from *The family crucible*. (30 pts.)
 - c. Organize the genogram information: Using the guidelines for organizing genogram information (pp. 77-78; 295-296), identify at least 8 repeated patterns and identify coincidences of dates related to the onset of the presenting problem (i.e., conflict between Claudia and Carolyn). (30 pts.)

NOTE: Underlined terms are explained in *Genograms*.

5. Using concepts and skills from *Genograms*, complete the following tasks related to the Salazar family (Based on *Inside family therapy*):
 - a. Track the family life cycle: Track critical life events (at least 10) that occurred in the Salazar's family life cycle. Organize this section around the appropriate life cycle stages. (55 pts.)
 - b. Develop tentative hypotheses: Using Jason as the I.P., identify the presenting problem/s. Then, develop numerous hypotheses related to the presenting problem/s. Suggest five hypotheses related to structure and five hypotheses related to relationships. (45 pts.)

NOTE: Underlined terms are explained in *Genograms*.

6. The personhood of the therapist is an important part of the training of the family therapist. To become an effective family therapist, trainees must be aware of influences from their own family systems. To assist in this process, Project 3 has been included in this course. Write a 4+ page paper that does the following: (a) summarizes what you learned about yourself by doing Project 3, and (b) uses this understanding to identify personal issues that you need to address as you grow as a family therapist.
7. As an outcome of this course, develop an original approach to family therapy that integrates your preferred models of family therapy with your individual worldview. Write a 4+ page paper that examines the following components:
 - a. Family therapy models: Your approach must demonstrate your knowledge of at least three major models of family therapy, models that are compatible with your

own worldview. This component focuses upon what you have learned during this course about various models of family therapy. (30 pts.)

- b. Personal worldview: Your approach must reveal your awareness of your worldview. This element of your paper focuses upon what you have learned about yourself during this course. (30 pts.)
 - c. Integration: Your approach must show the fit between your preferred models of family therapy and your own worldview. (40 pts.)
8. A therapist's spiritual and religious life provides a foundation for his/her work as a family therapist. It is important to understand the role that one's spiritual life plays in his/her own personal life and how this influences one's work. Write a 4+ page paper that describes your ideas for integrating Christian theology and spirituality into family therapy. This paper should include the following components:
- a. Personal experience: How have your own religious and spiritual experiences influenced your thinking about how to integrate Christian theology/spirituality into family therapy? (Be sure to make reference to the spiritual genogram exercise which was conducted during the course.) 30 pts.
 - b. Professional literature: Reference 7 articles from professional journals that have influenced your thinking about how to integrate Christian theology/spirituality into family therapy. (These articles can be included in Project 2.) 70 pts.

Grading:

1. Students will contract for a grade:
 - a. For an A, the student will submit 8 projects and receive an average of an A on these projects. (The student will receive a B if the average grade for the 8 projects is a B. The student will receive a C if the average grade for the 8 projects is a C.)
 - b. For a B, the student will submit 5 projects and receive an average of an A or a B on these projects. (The student will receive a C if the average grade for the 5 projects is a C.)
 - c. For a C, the student will submit 5 projects and receive an average of C on these projects.
2. Submitting fewer than 5 projects and/or averaging below a C will result in a failing grade for the course.
3. All projects have equal value.
4. Grading scale used by instructor:
A = 90-100 B = 80-89 C = 70-79

Late Work: All projects must be postmarked no later than April 28, 2012. Any work postmarked after this date will lose a letter grade. Mail all your projects to: Dr. Gregg Blanton, 15 Bear Knoll Dr., Asheville, NC 28805.

Attendance Policy: Attendance and full participation is expected during all class meetings. If you are going to miss class time you are required to notify me in advance. A student may miss up to two hours of class time without any adverse consequences. However, for **each** hour missed after the two excused hours, you can choose to have two points deducted from your final course grade or (2) submit an annotation for 150 pages of additional reading pertaining to course content.

Document Formatting and Citation Style Requirements:

All written assignments should follow APA guidelines. Assignments should be double-spaced with 1” margins on all sides of each page, and should be printed in Times New Roman 12 point type. Only hard copies will be accepted.

Class Schedule:

Feb. 3	Chapel
	Overview of course
	What makes family therapy work?
	Bowenian model
Feb. 4	Morning devotion
	MFT Competency-Based Education
	Genograms (Note: Bring <i>Genograms: Assessment and interventions</i> to class.)
	Spiritual genograms
	Experiential therapy
March 2	Chapel
	Structural model
March 3	Morning devotion
	Milan model
	Modern & postmodern mind: A comparison
	Solution-focused brief
March 30	Chapel
	Narrative approach

March 31 Morning devotion

Narrative therapy & spiritual interventions

Integrated approach (Emotion-focused family therapy)

Wrapping up

SYLLABUS ADDENDUM

Academic Standards

Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person's distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one's own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one's writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

ADA Policy

The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Cancellation of Class

In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancellation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

Extension Policy

Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the "last day to submit written work", as noted on the seminary's *Academic Calendar*, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams. However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the

“last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

Grades

Grades are posted on-line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades. Those individuals, who need an official grade report issued to a third party, should put their request in writing to the Registration Office. Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade.

Returned Work

Submitted course work will be returned to the student provided s/he provides a self addressed and postage paid envelope with his/her final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed once the grade has been assessed and issued.

References for Family Therapy

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- Eron, J., and Lund, T. 1996. *Narrative solutions in brief therapy*. New York: Guilford Press.
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- Freedman, J., and Combs, G. 1996. *Narrative therapy: The social construction of preferred realities*. New York: Norton.
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- Schwartz, R. C. 1995. *Internal family systems therapy*, New York: Guilford Press.
- Selvini Palazzoli, M., Boscolo, L., Cecchin, G., and Prata, G. 1978. *Paradox and counterparadox*. New York: Jason Aronson.
- Walsh, F., ed. 1993. *Normal family processes*, 2nd ed. New York: Guilford Press.
- Walsh, F. 1998. *Strengthening family resilience*. New York: Guilford Press.
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- Watzlawick, P., Beavin, J. H., and Jackson, D. D. 1967. *Pragmatics of human communication*. New York: Norton.
- Whitaker, C. A., and Bumberry, W. M. 1988. *Dancing with the family: A symbolic experiential approach*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
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