

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Counseling Program

EDCD 658.002 – Couples and Family Counseling
3 Credits, Fall 2021

Thursdays, 4:30 – 7:10 PM

Saturday, November 6th 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Fairfax campus – Peterson Hall Room 1106

Faculty

Name: Mark R. Ginsberg, Ph.D.
Office Hours: By Appointment
Office Location: Merten 5200, Krug Hall Suite, 202 (Counseling Office)
Office Phone: Instructor 703-993-5399 Counseling Office 703-993-2087
Email Address: mginsber@gmu.edu

Prerequisites/Corequisites

B or better in EDCE 603; and in EDCE 609 or concurrent

University Catalog Course Description

Introduces major approaches to counseling couples and families. Uses case studies and simulations to facilitate transition from theory to practice.

Course Overview

This course provides a broad overview of principles, theories and methods of family counseling/therapy. The focus of the course will be on developing an understanding of family functioning and processes across the life-cycle and models for intervention with families. The course will be both didactic and experiential consisting of lectures, consideration of case studies, viewing of video segments and experiential activities.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered using a [lecture, lab, seminar, internship, and/or hybrid (2-75% online)] format.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Gain an understanding of family structures, process and functioning across the life cycle,
2. Gain an understanding of functional and dysfunctional family challenges, processes and behaviors,
3. Become familiar with the historical legacy and rich history of the field of couple and family counseling/therapy, and
4. Become familiar with the concepts, theories and methods reflective of the major systemically-linked approaches for intervention with couples and families.

Professional Standards

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP)

Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards:
None

Required Texts

- Nichols, M.P. & Davis, S.D. (2020). *The Essentials of Family Therapy (7th Edition)*. Boston: Pearson.
- Napier, A.Y and Whitaker, C.A. (1978). *The Family Crucible*. New York: Harper and Row.

Encouraged Supplemental Readings/Resources:

Bray, J.H. and Stanton, M. (2013). Handbook of Family Psychology. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Carr, A. (2016). The evolution of systems theory. Handbook of Family Therapy. New York: Routledge.

Stephen Cheung (2013). Solution Focused Family Therapy. Handbook of Family Psychology. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Datchi, C. & Saxton, T. (2016). Integrating research and practice through intervention science: New Developments in family therapy research. Handbook of Family Therapy. New York: Routledge.

Diverse Families (March/April 2014). Special Issue of the Journal of Family Therapy. Washington, DC: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

Falicov, C. J. (2016). Multiculturalism and Diversity of Families. Handbook of Family Therapy. New York: Routledge.

Goldenberg, H & Goldenberg, I. (2013). The revolution and evolution of family therapy and family psychology. Handbook of Family Psychology. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Lebow, J. (2016) Integrative approaches to couple and family therapy. Handbook of Family Therapy. New York: Routledge.

McGoldrick, N., Gerson, R. and Petry, S.S. (2008). Genograms: Assessment and Intervention. New York: Norton.

McGoldrick, M. (2011). The Genogram Journey. New York: Norton.

Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). Handbook of Family Therapy. New York: Routledge.

Walsh, F. (2016). A Family Developmental Framework: Challenges and Resilience Across the Life Cycle. Handbook of Family Therapy. New York: Routledge.

Wanless, Janine and Scharf, David E. (2016). Psychodynamic Approaches to Couple and Family Therapy. Handbook of Family Therapy. New York: Routledge.

Streaming Video Resources (Many are on the Blackboard Site):

Available through George Mason University's Fenwick Library
Alexander Street Press

Psychology/Counseling Series

A large collection of video may be streamed to your computer – search the Fenwick Library collection of videos by searching on “family therapy.” During the semester, specific videos may be assigned for viewing while others may be recommended.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., VIA).

- **Assignments and/or Examinations**

(NOTE THAT LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED)

- **Class Participation (20% of Course Grade)**
 - As this course is BOTH didactic AND experiential, it is essential and required that students attend AND participate actively in each class session – if you will need to miss a class session, please notify the instructor via email in advance of the class session
 - Students are obligated, as part of the class participation requirement, to post AT LEAST ONE comment per week and participate actively in the class On-Line Dialog that will be hosted as part of the Blackboard Site for this course,
- **Readings**
 - There are two (2) required textbooks for this course – it is expected that students will read BOTH of these books as well as other assigned supplemental readings – class presentations and discussions will be supplemental to the assigned readings. In addition, other readings and video resources also will be available as supplemental resources for the course.
- **Personal Genogram (of your own family of origin) -- DUE on October 28 (15% of Course Grade)**
 - You are to complete a personal genogram of your own family of origin of at least three (3) generations. Include in your genogram pertinent data such as sex, age, ethnicity, place of birth and significant life-cycle events. In addition to the graphic depiction of your family of origin genogram, you also are to prepare a narrative of NO MORE THAN 5 PAGES that describes your family including: family roles, structures and processes (rules). In addition, provide an overview of how you (as a family counselor/therapist) would view the significant issues and challenges your family of origin faces together with a glimpse of your initial goals, objectives and intervention plan for working with your family.
- **Group Project – (15% of Final Grade)**
 - Students will be divided into small groups. Each group will be assigned a perspective, theory or model in the field of couple and family therapy. The group is asked to a prepare case study of the application of the model with a couple or family that includes a brief clinical demonstration that includes and an associated brief presentation of what they will be/have demonstrated and how their demonstration is representative of key elements of the approach. Each member of the group should equally participate in the preparation of and participation in the presentation.

- **Paper -- DUE ON NOVEMBER 18 (25% of Course Grade)**
 - Prepare a paper of NO MORE THAN 10 PAGES (12 FONT) IN LENGTH that provides a review of a central issue, theory or method in the family counseling/therapy field. You should review the relevant historical literature and recent research, provide a thorough discussion of the selected issue and suggest directions for future study and/or research. In addition, as part of your paper, describe a fictional “case study” of how the chosen model is applied within the context of a family-focused intervention.

- **Final Examination -- DISTRIBUTED BY EMAIL ON NOVEMBER 22 AND DUE ON DECEMBER 2 (25% of Course Grade)**

There will be a take-home final examination for the course, which will be due NO LATER than the final class session on December 2.

Other Requirements

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

APA Format: Students in Counseling & Development courses are expected to use APA style (6th ed.) for written papers.

Electronic Devices

Turn off and put away all electronic communication devices during class. Cell phones, pagers, and other communicative devices are not allowed in this class, unless specific class activities include internet-based activities. Please keep them stowed away and out of sight. Engaging in activities not related to the course (e.g. gaming, email, chat, text, etc.) is prohibited and will result in a significant deduction in your participation grade. **Notify the instructor prior to class if you have an emergency situation that requires accommodation.**

Attendance

In accordance with the policies of the Counseling and Development Program, on-time attendance at every class meeting is expected. Late arrival to class will be considered an absence. Attendance is required for all classes. Excused absences are permitted for illness, religious holidays, or emergency situations only; documentation is required for the absence to be considered excused. Work-related absences are not considered excused.

Course Requirements

Each student is expected to: (1) attend each class, (2) complete all reading assignments before class, (3) arrive on time and stay for the entire class period, (4) participate in discussions and in-class work groups, (5) regularly check GMU email, and (6) submit or access documents via Blackboard or TK20 as assigned.

Assignments

Unless otherwise noted, the assignments for the course are to be **submitted in class on the due date**. Late assignments will not be accepted. Additional assignments and/or assessments may be added at the instructor’s discretion.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a violation of both the George Mason University code of honor and the expected professional dispositions of the Counseling & Development Program. The GMU English

Department has developed the following statement regarding plagiarism: “Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinion, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through the use of accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or end notes; a simple listing of books and articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting. Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions to this include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writer's own insights or findings from their own field research, and what has been termed common knowledge. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious, and what is common knowledge for one audience may be so for another. In such situations, it is helpful to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being reader friendly. In other words, writers provide a citation for any piece of information that they think their readers might want to investigate further. Not only is this attitude considerate of readers and establishes credibility, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will never be guilty of plagiarism.”

The performance-based assessment for this course is the PAPER that is due on November 15.

Grading

Final Grade Matrix:

Assignment	Points
Class Participation	20
Personal Family of Origin Genogram	15
Group Project	15
Paper	25
Final Exam	25
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	100

In accordance with the George Mason University Grading Policy, the following grades may be achieved:

A [100-94]; A- [93-90]; B+ [89-87]; B [86-84]; B- [83-80]; C [79 - 70]; F [69 and below]

Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

Students must adhere to program professional dispositions:

<https://cehd.gmu.edu/assets/docs/forms/Professional%20Dispositions.pdf>

Professional Dispositions Assessment

Professional Dispositions are assessed in all required courses. The minimum score (benchmark) is based on the level of the course, as described below.

Level of Assessment	CMHC	SC	Minimum Score
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Basic	602, 609, 606, 601, 525, 603, 604, 656 654, 652, 658	602, 606, 609, 601, 525, 603, 604, 656 613, 611, 626	2
Intermediate	608, 750, 660, 628, 619, 610, 797	608, 751, 660, 628, 619, 610, 797	3
Advanced	792, 793	794, 795	4

Professional Dispositions assessments are scored as follows:

- 4: Consistently Evident** – The student demonstrates the disposition all or almost all of the time. This rank is considered exceptional, particularly for students who are at the beginning of their program. Students who are advanced in the program (i.e., in their last year of the program and enrolled in Internship I or II) should expect to achieve this rank.
- 3: Frequently Evident** – The student demonstrates the disposition often or most of the time. It is expected that students in the middle of the program (i.e., usually the second year for full time or third year for part time students) will achieve this rank. This reflects that they have moved beyond the initial phase of counselor training and are developing well towards being a professional counselor.
- 2: Sometimes Evident** – The student demonstrates the disposition sometimes or inconsistently. It is expected that students at the beginning of the program (i.e., first year for most students) will achieve this rank. Students at the beginning of the program are expected to be developing towards these professional dispositions as a part of their counselor training and preparation for their future as a professional counselor.
- 1: Seldom Evident** – The student demonstrates the disposition rarely or not at all. In some instances, this may also indicate a harmful demonstration of professional disposition(s). Students at the beginning of their program may achieve this rank, which can be developmentally appropriate as they learn the expectations for students and future professional counselors. Should this occur, students should expect to meet with their advisor, who will assist them in addressing the area of concern.
- N/A: Not Applicable** – An instructor or supervisor may use this to note that they did not have the opportunity to observe the disposition or that it was not relevant in the given context. This is most likely to occur at the beginning of the program when some dispositions may not be germane to the particular class.

Class Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	Course Objective	READING & ASSIGNMENT(S) DUE
August 26	Course Introduction Course Expectations Family Development Across the Life Cycle Family Structures and Processes	1,2	Acquire Textbooks and Begin Reading
September 2	Historical Roots and Legacy of Family Counseling/Therapy Systems Theories and Concepts Development and Use of the Genogram	3	Nichols Chapter 1, 3 & 14 Milhausen, R & Neustifter, R. Diversity in Today's Families, (March/April 2014), <u>Diverse Families</u> . Special Issue of the Journal of Family Therapy. Washington, DC: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Falicov, C.J. Multiculturalism and Diversity of Families. In Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). <u>Handbook of Family Therapy</u> . New York: Routledge.
September 9	Family of Origin Family Assessment Beginning Phase of Family Intervention & Treatment Genograms and Their Role in Family Counseling/Therapy	1,2,3 & 4	Nichols Chapters 2 Review Dyadic Adjustment Scale Resources (on Bb Site) Bray, J. H. Couple and Family Assessment. In Bray, H. & Santon, M. Handbook of Family Psychology. (2013) Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. Walsh, F. A Family Developmental Framework: Challenges and Resilience Across the Life Cycle. In Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). <u>Handbook of Family Therapy</u> . New York: Routledge.
September 16	NO CLASS – Yom Kipur Holiday		
September 23	Structural Models of Family Counseling/Therapy	1,2,3 & 4	Nichols Chapter 6 Calapinto, J. Structural Family Therapy. In Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). <u>Handbook of Family Therapy</u> . New York: Routledge

			<p>Watch Salvador Minuchin Video (on Bb Site)</p> <p>A Terrific Additional Video, in which Dr Minuchin engages in an interview about his theory and life, can be found in the Alexander Street Collection in the Fenwick Library and at the following link: http://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/2542823</p>
September 30	Strategic Models of Family Counseling/Therapy	1,2,3 & 4	<p>Nichols Chapter 5</p> <p>Watch Maurizio Andolfi Video (on Bb Site)</p> <p>Group 1 Project</p>
October 7	Experiential Models of Family Counseling/Therapy Clinical Practice In-Class Laboratory	1,2,3 & 4	<p>Nichols Chapter 7</p> <p>Napier and Whitaker, <i>The Family Crucible</i></p> <p>Watch Carl Whitaker Video (on Bb Site)</p> <p>Group 2 Project</p>
October 14	NO CLASS		
October 21	Bowenian and Psychodynamic Models of Family Counseling/Therapy Genogram Project DUE	1,2,3 & 4	<p>Nichols Chapters 4 & 8</p> <p>Magnavita, J.J. Psychodynamic Family Psychotherapy: Toward Unified Relational Systematics. Pages 240-257. In Bray, H. & Santon, M. Handbook of Family Psychology. (2013). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.</p> <p>Wanlass, J & Scharf, D.E. Psychodynamic Approaches to Couple and Family Therapy. In Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). <u>Handbook of Family Therapy</u>. New York: Routledge.</p> <p>Watch Scharf Video (on Bb Site)</p>
October 28	Solution Focused and Brief Therapy Models of Family Counseling/Therapy	1,2,3 & 4	<p>Nichols Chapter 11</p> <p>Cheung, S: Solution-Focused Brief Therapy. In Bray, H. & Santon, M. Handbook of Family Psychology. (2013). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. (Fenwick Library E-Reserves on Bb Site)</p> <p>Watch Insoo Berg and Steve DeShazer Video (on Bb Site)</p> <p>Group 3 Project</p>
November 4	Behavioral and Educational Models	1,2,3 & 4	Nichols Chapter 9

	of Family Counseling/Therapy		Epstein, N.B., Dattilo, F.M. & Baucom, D.H. Cognitive Behavioral Couple Therapy. In Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). <u>Handbook of Family Therapy</u> . New York: Routledge. (On Reserve in the Fenwick Library) Group 4 Project
November 11	Contemporary and Emerging Models of Family Counseling/Therapy	1,2,3 & 4	Nichols Chapters 12 & 13 Ruddy, N. and McDaniel, S. Medical Family Therapy. In Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). <u>Handbook of Family Therapy</u> . New York: Routledge. (On Reserve in the Fenwick Library) Group 5 Project
SATURDAY November 13	Clinical Practice Laboratory 10 AM – 4:00 PM	4	Clinical Practice Laboratory Session
November 18	Integrative Models of Family Counseling/Therapy Convergence of the Field PAPER DUE TAKE HOME FINAL DISTRIBUTED	1,2,3 & 4	Nichols Chapters 10 & 13 Lebow, J. Integrative Approaches to Couple and Family Therapy. In Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). <u>Handbook of Family Therapy</u> . New York: Routledge. (Fenwick Library E-Reserves on Bb Site)
Nov 25	Thanksgiving – NO CLASS		
December 2	Clinical Practice Session Course Conclusion/Finale TAKE HOME FINAL DUE	4	

Group Project Topical Assignments

Group 1 – Structural

Group 2 – Strategic

Group 3 – Experiential

Group 4 – Bowenian

Group 5 – Behavioral

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Counseling Program Mission Statement

The Counseling Program is committed to preparing counselors who promote the social, psychological, physical, and spiritual health of individuals, families, communities, and organizations in order to contribute to the advancement of global well-being. The program strives for national and international excellence in implementing a counseling perspective which provides a foundation in basic counseling skills and focuses on social justice, multiculturalism, international, advocacy and leadership. It is our belief that a global perspective on development across the life span, and an understanding and appreciation of multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice are integral to the preparation of professional counselors, requiring that professional counselors are prepared to assume leadership roles, be proactive change agents and become advocates for social, economic and political justice. The program is committed to accomplish this mission by working through interdisciplinary teams as well as promote the interconnectedness of teaching, research, service and professional practice. Through this mission faculty will facilitate a continued tradition of international, national and regional leadership through the development of collaborative partnerships and projects, research, publications, presentations, consultation, and training.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per

University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/>.

Assessment Rubric(s):

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR THE PAPER (Due on November 15):

Criteria					TOTAL POINTS
Review of Literature & Research	Poor Review of the Research Literature – Incomplete and Not Current. 2 Points	Marginal Review of the Research Literature – Provides a Review that is missing important elements and/or is not fully current. 5 Points	Good Review of the Research Literature – Provides a Review that is Comprehensive and Complete, yet is missing one or more key and critical elements and perspectives. 8 Points	Excellent and Comprehensive Review of the Research Literature that is both comprehensive and current. 10 Points	10 Points Maximum
Discussion of Topic	Discussion is superficial and without depth. It is not linked sufficiently to the research literature or provides useful, relevant applied examples. 0 Points	Discussion is of interest and reasonable depth yet lacks either sufficient connection to the research literature or relevant applied examples. 2 Points	Discussion is of sufficient depth, is linked to the research literature and cites applied examples – at least 1 key element is missing from the discussion. 4 Points	Discussion is an excellent synopsis of the issue with links to the research literature and uses multiple applied examples. 5 Points	5 Points Maximum
Identification of Directions for Future Study	Paper lacks discussion of directions for future study. 0 Points	Paper Includes limited discussion of directions for future study that are NOT consistent with the research literature and/or not highly relevant. 2 Points	Paper includes a good discussion of directions for future study that are linked sufficiently to the research literature yet lacks clarity and is incomplete or does not use sufficient logic. 4 Points	Paper includes an excellent and comprehensive discussion of directions for future study that are linked fully to the research literature and are clear and complete in its logic. 5 points	5 Points Maximum

Fictional Case Study	Poorly conceived case Study. (If Case Study is Not Included in the Paper, 0 Points for this Section) 2 Points	Acceptable, yet marginal, case study with some limited applied samples of the application of Couples and Family Counseling theories and methods. Case study is not fully relevant to the topic AND not sufficiently comprehensive to be fully applicable, illustrative or relevant to Couple and Family Counseling topic and method. 5 Points	Good case study with modest applied examples of the application of Couples and Family Counseling theories and methods. Case study is relevant to the topic yet not sufficiently comprehensive to be fully applicable, illustrative or relevant to Couple and Family Counseling topic and method. 8 Points	Excellent case study with clear and well-formulated applied examples of the application of relevant Couples and Family Counseling theories and methods. 10Points	10 Points Maximum
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