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**LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE**

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**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND COUNSELING  
CPSY 504: INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY THERAPY  
SPRING, 2008**

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Time & Day: Wednesdays 5:30 p.m. -8:45 p.m.

Location: John R. Howard Hall, Room 135

Instructor: Tatiana Meléndez, M. A., Doctoral Candidate.

E-mail: [tatianam@lclark.edu](mailto:tatianam@lclark.edu)

Office: Rogers Hall/ Office hours: By appointment

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

Overview of the fundamental assumptions and ideas of general systems theory and the basic premises of theoretical orientations within family therapy. Participants explore the application of course material to their work setting or training track. This course is not clinical in nature and is not designed to train or prepare participants to conduct family therapy.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course includes an overview of the foundational concepts and approaches in marriage, couple, and family therapy (MCFT). The course emphasizes history and trends in the field along with contemporary research and debates. Students will apply systems, social constructionist, and critical social thought to work within their chosen professional fields. A critical contextual understanding of how intersecting identities/social locations (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, nation of origin) and societal/global systems of privilege and oppression shape family well-being is emphasized throughout.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students in this course will:

1. Learn the history of marital, couple, and family therapy; the primary professional state, national, and international associations; and the core competencies (as defined by AAMFT) required to practice family therapy.
2. Understand principles of theory construction and model building and how these influence the extent to which theories and models developed within particular cultural contexts are applicable for clients from contrasting cultural contexts.
3. Consider the dynamics of power and social location relative to developing,



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researching, and applying field knowledge and theory, with attention to how family therapy has the potential to contribute to social inequities and social control. Recognize issues of power and privilege relative to own and clients' social locations and how these influence therapy, problems and solving problems.

4. Understand concepts and theories that are foundational to the practice of marriage, couple, and family therapy, as well as trends in the field. These include: first and second order cybernetics; patterns of interaction; Bowen's core systems concepts; Minuchin's structural approach; MRI problem formation/principles of brief therapy; feminist critique of general systems theory; social constructionist/post modern paradigm; and critical theory and family therapy.
5. Develop a beginning knowledge of marital, couple, and family life cycle dynamics, healthy family functioning, family structures and development in a multicultural society and world, with particular attention to how systems of power and privilege influence family life.
6. Learn and practice several methods (e.g., sculpting, genograms, structural maps) for assessing family dynamics, family of origin/intergenerational influences, history, and cultural heritage to identify patterns, understand belief systems, and identify strengths/resilience.
7. Gain an understanding of couple and family healthy functioning and life cycle development across cultural contexts, life worlds, and family forms. And apply principles of family and couple life cycle development from culturally and contextually situated perspectives.
8. Practice skills in conceptualizing problems systemically, developing therapeutic alliance with multiple members of a system, and interviewing from a relational perspective (e.g., using relational questions, identifying verbal and nonverbal relational patterns, enacting communication between systems members).
9. Explore, compare, and contrast in depth the theory and interventions associated with at least two major models of family therapy.

### **PARTICIPATION IN THE LEARNING COMMUNITY**

Students are required to attend and actively participate in all scheduled class meetings. This includes being on time, being prepared, following through on group projects, and otherwise engaging with colleagues as fellow professionals. Becoming a family therapist involves looking closely at ourselves, our values, beliefs, and biases. This can be a very personal, and sometimes emotional, process. Treating colleagues with respect, listening deeply to their experiences, and being open to diverse world views encourages a

collaborative milieu of care in which we can all challenge ourselves and each other to critically examine and develop our skills and perspectives. In order to prepare for each class, students should carefully read and study all assigned materials to be ready to discuss, debate, and apply the content of readings. Class discussion and interaction with colleagues are fundamental to the process of learning to be a therapist and all sessions include necessary information. Therefore, if you must miss a class, fellow students and the instructor may ask you to contribute to learning community in another way. For example, you may be asked to write a brief summary about, and personal reactions to, the required readings and/or provide abstracts from additional related readings for course participants. According to the Lewis & Clark Counseling Psychology attendance policy, missed class periods may result in lowered final grades and students who miss two class periods may be failed.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY/SPECIAL ASSISTANCE**

Lewis & Clark College adheres to a nondiscriminatory policy with respect to employment, enrollment, and program. The College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap or disability, sexual orientation, or marital status and has a firm commitment to promote the letter and spirit of all equal opportunity and civil rights laws.

### **SPECIAL ASSISTANCE**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability and/or you have emergency medical information to share please make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **Major Paper**

Choose two major approaches in family therapy. Use these theories to guide you in interviewing a family unit about their family. This paper should outline the theories (assumptions, goals, techniques) you chose and why, a description of the interview (participants and process), and a detailed analysis of your experience applying these theories. The paper should include excerpts from the interview, so you will need to audiotape or take detailed notes. You will also include a section that will address how this interview may have been different had you interview someone from a different social and economic location.

Papers should be professionally written, 10-15 pages in length, double spaced, 12pt font, organized into sections with appropriate headings, and referenced according to APA 5 guidelines. The Lewis & Clark Writing Center has prepared a brief guide to APA referencing: [http://www.lclark.edu/dept/wstudio/objects/apa\\_style.pdf](http://www.lclark.edu/dept/wstudio/objects/apa_style.pdf)

Thorough consideration of all areas of the paper = 20 points  
Clarity and organization of ideas = 5 points  
Use of extensive literature = 20 points

Writing and referencing according to APA 5 = 5 points  
Total 50 points

This paper is due on April 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Contextual Genogram**

You will be asked to complete an analysis of your extended and intergenerational family relationships by completing a genogram which includes family relationships, trends across generations, cultural influences (e.g., socio-political, historical events; ethnic group values, beliefs, traditions and experiences; national and regional contexts), and social locations and experiences relative to intersecting identities (e.g., race/racism, class/classism, gender/sexism, sexual orientation/heterosexism & homophobia, immigration/anti-immigration sentiment, abilities/ableism). Specific instructions for completing the assignment will be given in class. This assignment is worth 20 points

### **Reaction papers**

Each student will complete two, 3-4 page reaction papers.

One of these papers must be based on a field experience (e.g., visit to the court, an AA meeting, Children's Services). This paper should include 1) a brief description of the setting and/or case, 2) patterns of interaction that you identified during your observation, 3) how you think the social location (e.g., race, class, social position, gender, nation of origin) of those involved shaped the interaction, and 4) a description of your own reactions and biases. The other must be based on the original writing of one of the founders of family therapy (e.g., Bateson, Bowen, Auserwauld, Weakland, Fische, Watzlawick, Haley, Minuchin, Satir). You may read as little as one article or chapter or as much of the theorists work as you would like to. This paper should summarize what you read and include your personal reactions to the ideas presented. You may turn in either paper first and each is worth 10 points = 20 points in total.

### **Active participation**

Every week, you will be asked to prepare something for next class that demonstrate your reading understanding such as reading summary, leading a discussion, etc. 10 points total.

### **Practice and conceptual skills**

Each week class participants will focus on a primary concept and/or practice a core relational work skill that can be applied in multiple work contexts.

### **GRADING**

93-100 = A	83-87 = B	73-77 = C
90-92 = A-	80-82 = B-	70-72 = C-
88-89 = B+	78-79 = C+	

“A” grades will be reserved for particularly outstanding work. Grades on the border may be determined by attendance and demonstration of completing readings prior to each class session.

## TEXT

Nichols, M. & Schwartz (2008). *Family Therapy Concepts and Methods, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition*, Boston: Pearson Education.

Additional Readings per Course Schedule Below: Most readings can be found full text on-line through the Lewis & Clark library. Methods for obtaining copies of book chapters and other readings not available on line will be discussed in class.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **WEEK 1 – January 9: Introduction to Family Therapy – Systems Theory**

#### Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz, Introduction (pp.1- 9).

Kaslow, F. (2000). Continued evolution of family therapy: the last twenty years. *Contemporary Family Therapy, 22(4)*, 357-386.

#### Conceptual Skills:

Openness and Curiosity

### **WEEK 2 – January 16: Introduction to Family Therapy – Systems Theory**

Nichols, & Schwartz, Chapters 1 & 4.

Dallos, R., & Draper, R. (2005). *An introduction to family therapy: Systems theory and practice*. NY: McGraw Hill.

#### Conceptual Skills:

Systems theory

First & second order cybernetics

Circular causality

Feedback loops

### **WEEK 3 – January 23: Intergenerational Legacies- BOWEN**

#### Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz, Chapters 5

Foster, M., Jurkovic, G.J., Ferdinand, L., & Meadows, L. A. (2002). The impact of the



genogram on couples: A manualized approach. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 10, 34-40.

Practice skills:

Completing a genogram

**WEEK 4 – January 30: Basic Techniques, Ethics & Structure of Family Therapy; STRUCTURAL**

Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz, Chapters 2, 3 & 7

Practice & Conceptual skills:

Mapping systems

**WEEK 5 – February 6: The Feminist Critique**

Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz: Chapter 11

Featherstone, V. (1996). A feminist critique of family therapy. *Counseling Psychology Quarterly*, 9(1).

Haddock S., Zimmerman, T., MacPhee, D. (2000). The Power Equity Guide. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 26(2).

Knudson-Martin, C., & Mahoney, A. (2005). Moving beyond gender: Processes that create relationship equity. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 31(2), 235-46.

Conceptual Skill:

Recognizing gender as shaping interaction

**WEEK 6 – February 13: SOLUTION FOCUSED**

Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz, Chapter 12

Burwell, R., & Chen, Ch. P. (2006). Applying the principles and techniques of solution-focused therapy to career counseling. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 19(2), 189- 203.

Walsh, F. (2002). A family resilience framework: Innovative practice applications.

*Family Relations, 51, 130-137.*

Practice skill:

Finding strengths-discovering hope

**WEEK 7 – February 20: EXPERIENTIAL**

Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz, Chapters 6

Greenberg, L.S., & Warwar, S. H. (2006). Homework in an emotion- focused approach experiential therapy. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration, 16, 178- 200.*

Leitner, L. M. (2007). Theory, technique, and person: Technical integration in experiential constructivist in psychotherapy. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration, 17, 33- 49.*

Practice skills:

Sculpting

De-escalating conflict

**WEEK 8 – February 27: STRATEGIC**

Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz, Chapters 8

Gardner, B.C., Burr, B. K., & Wiedower, S. E. (2006). Reconceptualizing strategic family therapy: Insights from a dynamic systems perspective. *Contemporary Family Therapy, 28, 339- 352.*

Nelson, J. A. (2006). For parents only: A strategic family therapy approach in school counseling. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 14, 180-183.*

Practice skills:

Sculpting

De-escalating conflict

**WEEK 9 – March 5: Social Constructionist Paradigm- NARRATIVE**

Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz, Chapter 13

Shalif, Y. (2005). Creating Care-Full listening conversations between members of

conflicting groups in Israel: Narrative means to transformative listening. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 24(1), 35-52.

Keeling, M., & Nielson, R. (2005). Indian women's experience of a narrative intervention using art and writing. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 27(3), 435-452.

Practice Skills:  
Reflecting

### **WEEK 10 – March 12: Culturally Centered & Critical Family Therapies**

Readings:

Akinyela, M. (2005). Testimony of hope: African centered praxis for therapeutic ends. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 24(1), 5-18.

Hernandez, P., Almeida, R., & Dolan-Del Vecchino, K. (2005). Critical consciousness, accountability & empowerment: Key processes for helping families heal. *Family Process*, 44, 105-115.

Mcdowell, T. (2005). Practicing with a critical multicultural lens. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 24(1) 1-4.

Walgrave, C. (2005). "Just therapy" with families on low income. *Child Welfare League of America*, March/April, 265-276.

Boyes-Watson, C. (2005). Seeds of change: Using peacemaking circles to build a village for every child. *Child Welfare Journal*, 84(2), 191-208.

Conceptual Skills:  
Understanding culture and power as shaping experience

**DUE: Either of the two reaction papers**

### **WEEK 11: March 19: Common Change Factors**

Readings:

Fraser, B. (2002). The common factors that connect all approaches to family therapy. *ANZJFT*, 24(4), 225-227.

Debate articles - read in the following order:

Sprenkle, D. & Blow, A. (2004). Common factors and our sacred models. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*.

Sexton, T., Ridley, C., & Kleiner, A. (2004). Beyond common factors: Multi-level process models of therapeutic change in marriage and family therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*.

Sprenkle, D., & Blow, A. (2004). Common factors are not islands - They work through models: A response to Sexton, Ridley, & Kleiner *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*.

Practice Skill:

Considering multiple points of view

**WEEK 12 – March 26: Spring Break**

**WEEK 13 – April 2: Family Life Cycle**

Readings:

Carter, B., & McGoldrick, M. (2005). Overview: of family cycle, individual, family, and social perspectives in *The Expanded family life cycle: Individual, Family and Social Perspectives*. Chapter 1.

Carter, B., & McGoldrick, M. (2005). Lesbians, gay men, and the family life cycle in *The expanded family life cycle: Individual, Family and Social Perspectives*. Chapter 20

Falicov, C. (2005). Emotional transnationalism and family identities. *Family Process*, 44, 399-406.

Conceptual skills:

Recognizing trends and unique pathways for family change over time

**DUE: CONTEXTUAL GENOGRAM**

**WEEK 14 – April 9: Multiple Embedded Systems & Patterns of Interaction**

Readings:

Boyd-Franklin, N., Smith Morris, T., & Bry, B. (1997). Parent and family support groups with African American families: The process of family and community empowerment. *Cultural Diversity & Mental Health*, 3(2), 83-92.

Cox, K. (2005). Examining the role of social network intervention as an integral component of community-based, family-focused practice. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 14(3), 443-454.

Garcia, M. & McDowell, T. (in press). The mapping of social capital. *Journal of marital and family therapy*.

Practice skills:

Social Network Mapping

**DUE: Major paper**

<b>WEEK 15- April 16: Integrating Family Theory</b>
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Carlson, J., Sperry, L., Lewis, J. (2005). *Family Therapy Techniques*. New York, NY: Routedge. (Chapters 2, 4, & 5)

Practice & Conceptual skills:

Reading non-verbal communication

<b>WEEK 15 – April 23: Comparing &amp; Evaluating Approaches to Family Therapy</b>
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Readings:

Nichols & Schwartz, Chapters 15 & 16

Conceptual skill:

Using feedback

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\*\* The attached Course Objective Evaluation Sheet must be filled out and turned in at the end of the semester.



