



LEWIS & CLARK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & COUNSELING

MCFT563: Treatment Issues in MCFT: Applying Critical Social Theory to Family Therapy Practice

Time & Day: Thursday, July 9, 9am-1pm (2pm-5:30 pm or TBA); July 16 9am-5:30pm

Place: Howard, Room 260 (CAS campus)

Instructor: Teresa McDowell, Ed.D.

Office hours: Call CPSY office 503-768-6060 to schedule an appointment

Contact Information: teresamc@lclark.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class provides a survey of the application of critical social theories to the practice of family therapy. This includes exploration of critical and social constructionist views on power; the relevance of human rights to clinical practice; the impact of patriarchy on family dynamics; feminist neo-Marxist perspectives on family and social class; critical race theory as a framework for anti-racist family therapy practice; and the potential contribution of queer theory to liberation based healing. Participants are introduced to the concept of 3rd order, transformative change, learn a new technique for family mapping based on critical geography, and are invited to consider de-colonizing therapy practice.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Participants will

1. Gain a better understanding of the value of critical social theory in the practice of liberation-based family therapy,
2. Expand their understanding of the dynamics of power in family relationships based on social context,
3. Have working knowledge of 3rd order change as a transformative paradigm, and
4. Practice using at least one practical tool for applying critical social theory in therapy.

ASSIGNMENTS

Class Preparation

Participants are expected to complete the assigned readings and to synthesize and apply them in class. Classroom discussions are an opportunity to bring up questions about the assigned readings, deepen one's understanding of the issues under study, and integrate course material with one's own personal and professional experience. **(10 points)**

Family Cartography Exercise and Paper

Class participants will work in pairs to complete a family of origin cartography. This can be done between 2-5:30pm on July 9th or at another arranged time. The assignment must be completed and turned in on **July 16th**. **(30 points, DUE 7/16 in class)** Specific instructions for completing this map will be offered in class.

Along with the map itself, participants are to complete a 5 to 8 double spaced page paper describing their map, briefly addressing the following questions (**60 points, DUE 7/16 in class**):

- Describe the setting – physical environment, town and neighborhood - in which you grew up.
- What kinds of social interactions were available to you in this setting? Where were you and your family able to go and not go in this setting? How safe did you feel? What level of privacy and personal space did this setting provide?
- How did this setting affect your family life? You as an individual?
- Describe the power dynamics in this setting. Include race, class, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, nation of origin, language and any other signifiers that are relevant.
- How did these power dynamics affect you and your family? In what ways did you and/or your family members participate in the oppression or marginalization of others? How were you and your family oppressed or marginalized?
- Describe the physical environment and climate in the area in which you were raised.
- How did the climate affect your family life? You as an individual?
- Describe the home in which you lived.
- What kinds of social interactions were available to you in and around your home? In what areas of the home did you spend the most time and why? Where were you able to go and not go in your home and why? How safe did you feel in various spaces in your home? What level of privacy and personal space did this setting provide?
- Who was in your family? Who had the most power? How was the power enacted?
- How do these power dynamics reflect the broader power dynamics in your community?
- Describe the climate(s) in your family. Who controlled the climate and how?
- How did this climate affect relationships in the family? How did this climate affect you as an individual?
- What spaces on your map reflect sites of oppression? Describe the relationships in these sites.
- Where are sites of resistance? Describe the relationships in these sites.
- How did you and/or your family resist oppression? Where, what and how did you learn to resist oppression?
- What types of resiliency did you develop as a result of this geography?

GRADING

A = 93-100

A- = 90-92

B+ = 88-89

B = 83-87

B- = 80-82

C+ = 78-79

C = 73-77

C- = 70-72

NOTE: Late assignments will be graded down 5 points per day.

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.

| COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Date/Time | Topics | Readings |
| Jan 9 AM | 1. Power in the practice of family therapy 2. Human rights and family therapy 3. Space, Place and Just Practice | McDowell, T. (2015) <i>Applying Critical Social Theory in Family Therapy Practice</i> . Chapters 1 & 6 McDowell, Libal & Brown (2012). Human rights in the practice of family therapy: DV as a case in point. <i>Journal of Feminist family therapy</i> , 24,1-23. <i>Suggested reading:</i> Dolan-Del Vecchio, K. & Lockard, J. (2004). Resistance to colonialism as the heart of family therapy practice. <i>Journal of Feminist Family Therapy</i> , 16(2), 43-66. |
| Jan 9 PM or TBA | Family Cartography Exercise | Class participants will work with a partner to complete a family cartography map. This will allow each to be an interviewer and interviewee. |
| Jan 16 AM | 1. Patriarchy in practice with families 2. Social class and family therapy 3. Queer theory in liberation-based practice | McDowell, T. (2015) <i>Applying Critical Social Theory in Family Therapy Practice</i> Chapters 2, 3, 5 <i>Suggested Readings:</i> Garcia, M & McDowell, T. (2010) Mapping social capital: A critical contextual approach for working with low status families. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i> , 36(1), 96-107. Zrenchik, K. & McDowell, T. (2012). Class and classism in family therapy praxis: A feminist neo-Marxist approach. <i>Journal of Feminist Family Therapy</i> , 21, 104-120. |
| Jan 16 PM | 4. Critical race theory and anti-racist family therapy 5. Third order change: a (not so new) concept in systems work | McDowell, T. (2015) <i>Applying Critical Social Theory in Family Therapy Practice</i> Chapters 4, 7 |