

**PRE 956**

**THEORY OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY COUNSELING**

**Spring 2008**

**LINE# 83688**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Tamara Coder Mikinski, Ph.D.  
JRP – Room 638  
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**SCHEDULE:** Fridays 9:00 to 11:50 – 250 Regnier Hall - Edwards

**DESCRIPTION**

Welcome to PRE 956! This course, Theory of Marriage and Family Counseling, is an examination of counseling with couples and families from a Counseling Psychology perspective that emphasizes strengths, human development, education, and remediation. This course will provide a survey of contemporary systems of marital (couples) and family counseling. Consideration of marital/couple and family function/dysfunction, theoretical models of family interaction, models of counseling practice and methods, and research on marital/couples and family counseling. Prerequisite: Graduate student status as an advanced master's student or doctoral student in the counseling psychology program or written permission of instructor.

**COURSE PURPOSE**

The Counseling Psychology program faculty determines which courses belong in each program, as well as the course objectives for each course. Individual instructors determine how best to meet those objectives through the use of assignments and in-class activities. The focus of this course is on understanding and counseling with couples and families, functional and dysfunctional. Initially we will examine the history and current status of couples and family therapy, culture, treatment effectiveness, and ethics. We will then study major theoretical models of couple and family therapy, as well as research supporting these approaches. We will also examine and explore common issues faced by couples and families.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- \*appreciate the role of couples and families in society
- \*understand the field of couples and family therapy, its history and present direction
- \*understand major theoretical models of couples and family therapy
- \*articulate case conceptualization and treatment considerations based on case material
- \*research and present summary findings on contextual factors (e.g. race, gender, age) related to couples and families and common treatments

**DISABILITY STATEMENT**

The staff of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), 135 Strong, 785-864-2620 (v/tty), coordinates accommodations and services for KU courses. If you have a disability which affects the full expression of your abilities, you may request accommodation in KU classes and should contact SSD as soon as possible. Please also see me privately in regard to this course.

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS**

I love this course and this material! IT IS VALUABLE!!! I use my knowledge of couples and family therapy theory everyday as a psychologist! I hope to make the course interesting and highly applied in nature. Therefore, I will be using a variety of media, as well as, a gracious guest lecturer or two throughout our time together.

## REQUIRED TEXT

Gladding, S.T., Family therapy: History, theory, and practice. (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Pearson: Columbus, OH.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

The course is graded A-F. Plus/Minus grading is available for use with this class and will be used. Course grades will be based on the following:

**ACTIVITY #1 – (20%) You will have two options for this activity – select ONE. A word about this assignment - your personal life is your personal life, I am your instructor and not your therapist, and as a faculty member and as a psychologist, it is my intention to be very respectful of that boundary. It is natural in a course like this for you to apply what you are reading and learning to your own personal situation. I expect that to happen. However, I do not require or expect you to share you personal history and life with me or your classmates unless you choose to do so and it is relevant to the topic we are studying. Thus, there are two options for this assignment – one which will require only scholarly engagement with the material you are reading and one which gives you the option of a more personal application. Should personal concerns arise during the course, I or any of the program faculty aim to be very supportive and willing to provide you with appropriate referrals.**

*Option One: Book Talk – You will read and review for the class a book of clinical use in the field of couples or family therapy. I will provide a list of suggestions, however you are also welcome to approach me with your own ideas. You will give the class a five minute oral summary and review of the book and you will turn into me a ONE PAGE written version. You may still want to read the McGoldrick chapter but just not share your personal application of the material.*

*Option Two: You will read the book by Monica McGoldrick, You Can Go Home Again, and answer the questions on pages 124-125 – This will be turned into me for credit and will not be shared with the class. This is for those of you who want to do a personal application of what we are learning.*

**TAKE HOME TEST – (20%) – You will be asked to respond in essay format to questions which will ask you to apply and integrate the knowledge you have gained thus far in the course.**

**COUPLE OR FAMILY CASE PRESENTATIONS WITH ACCOMPANYING CONTEXTUAL FACTORS PRESENTATIONS: (30%)** Each student will be a member of a work group (probably 2-4 people). Each work group will be assigned a couple or family issue for which they will develop a vignette with supporting materials. **You will turn your vignette into me on March 28<sup>th</sup>. I will provide feedback to you and I will then provide a TWIST to your couple or family situation and return it to you.** You will need to indicate how you will respond to the couple or family now and from which theoretical orientation you will be drawing. Just present one treatment option as your classmates will be generating some on their own. You will write up your response to the twist and turn it into me by the date of your presentation.

The work group will be responsible for presenting the case to the class (including the twist I will provide), and leading the class discussion about the case. While the background material for the couple or family issues may have already been presented, the work group should supplement the case presentation with brief lecture, demonstration, or video vignette. The work group will also present a summary of what the literature says are contextual factors (e.g. race, gender, age) related to the situation and common treatments of that disorder. **You will be required to turn into me whatever notes you use for your presentation (outline, PowerPoint notes, etc.) but will NOT be required to write it up as a paper.**

**ACTIVITY #2 – CASE CONCEPTUALIZATION AND TREATMENT PLANNING: (20%) You will select one of the cases presented in class and respond to the couple or family, as well as, the TWIST situation. You will explain how you would proceed with this couple or family and provide THREE different theoretical conceptualizations which you have further researched and provide accompanying treatment strategies. This project write-up will be due no later than NOON on STOP day on May 9th. It should be no more than ten pages in length and please use APA style with a**

**reference page. It is to be turned into me personally or placed in my mailbox on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of JRP Hall.**

**Contribution to a Healthy Classroom Learning Environment: (10%):** I need you to be a positive, team learner! At the heart of a functional couple or family (and couples/family therapist) is the ability to communicate and problem solve, thus, I need you to come to class ready to learn, think, and contribute in a respectful way.

*The primary mission of the School of Education is to prepare leaders in education and human services fields. As stated in the School Code*

*Within the University, the School of Education serves Kansas, the nation, and the world by (1) preparing individuals to be leaders and practitioners in education and related human service fields, (2) expanding and deepening understanding of education as a fundamental human endeavor, and (3) helping society define and respond to its educational responsibilities and challenges.*

*The components that frame this mission for our initial and advanced programs are Research and Best Practice, Content Knowledge, and Professionalism. These interlocking theme build our Conceptual Framework.*