

Department of Graduate Psychology
James Madison University

PSYC 668: Couple and Family System Therapy

Instructor:

Email:

Office hours:

"Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way," Tolstoy.

Course Description -A study of the dynamics of couple and family living, focusing on social change, social stratification, mate selection, marriage, divorce, child rearing, sexuality and individual behavior, and its effect on the family structure.

At the completion of the course students will be able to:

- explain ways cultural worldviews shape self, family relationships/dynamics, and the family life cycle;
- discuss major family theories, key constructs and associated intervention techniques noting the influence of ecological and cultural context on family process, structure, and functioning;
- discuss the influence of culture in various theoretical approaches and the therapeutic encounter/intervention,
- describe the impact of the healthcare environment on the therapist role and the relevance of integrative theoretical approaches (integrated behavioral health primary care and medical family therapy),
- relate methods and intervention techniques with a variety of family problems and
- state the major results regarding process and outcome research in family therapy.

To accomplish these objectives, the format of the class will combine lecture/discussion and experiential activities. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class and to contribute to class discussions in an informed manner. You will be working in dyads and small groups and, of course, your active participation is essential to the success of the course and your own learning.

Required Text

Nichols, M.P., & Davis, S.D. (2021). *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods*.
(12th ed). Pearson.

Supplemental Reading Materials

- Attachment Article.

- Ghosts in the Nursery.
- The Gottman Institute - <https://www.gottman.com/>
- The Yellow Wallpaper.

Course Format - Every class session will be structured in a similar manner and will include a combination of experiential learning, lecture/videos, discussion, and reading.

Class Participation and Student Conduct - Each student is expected to attend **ALL** class meetings. If you feel that there are circumstances that will inhibit your ability to be fully present for this class, please let me know as soon as the situation arises, so that I can coordinate with you taking the course at a time when you can be successful.

Course Delivery and Faculty Expectations - Counseling Programs faculty expect that students will demonstrate professional and appropriate behavior in the classroom. This includes arriving to class on time, participating in class discussions and completing assignments in a timely manner. Best practices suggest that online learners should designate a spot within their home or office that mimics the experience of being present in class. Kitchen tables, desks, or designated table/chair configurations are seen as professional and then also invite you into a professional interaction within the course. Also consider the sounds within your environment. If you have any environmental sounds, be sure to place yourself on mute. And if you have anyone else in the house or office who could inadvertently hear anything, headphones are best practices and necessary for HIPAA.

Expectations and Guidelines for Online Learning for JMU Counseling Programs - Online learning will take place in either Canvas and Zoom. Make sure you: Understand how to use the JMU Canvas system: <https://canvas.jmu.edu/> Maintain proper access to reliable, high-speed internet so that you can watch videos and see course content, as well as submit assignments such as online quizzes and discussion question responses. If you do not have access to reliable, high-speed internet at home, you are able to use the resources on the JMU campus to access the course and complete required assignments

Technology Requirement - It is expected that you have proper access to reliable, high-speed internet so that you can watch videos and see course content, as well as submit assignments such as online quizzes and discussion question responses.

Intellectual Property -Course materials prepared by the instructor, including the content of all lectures, are the property of the instructor. This material may not be reproduced, displayed, sold, modified or distributed without the express prior written permission of the copyright holder. Students may not participate in the distribution, sharing, or accessing of course material via the Internet or other means (including but not limited to assignments, exams, recordings and notes of the lectures, or other instructor-provided materials) without the written permission of the instructor, except between students who are both currently enrolled in this specific course.

Assignments -The course is designed to be *student-centered* which means active participation is critical. It is expected that all students will come to class prepared. This also means completing all assigned readings before coming to class.

Expectations for Class Participation: As your instructor I expect “Excellent Participation” as defined below. Poor participation will not be tolerated and students will be dismissed for the remainder of the class. **Note: Activity on CANVAS and the supplemental learning systems will be monitored by the teacher of record. If participation is not evidenced in these systems, the student will be deducted participation points resulting in a lower course grade.**

Excellent Participation	Average Participation	Poor Participation
Contributions in the class that indicate one has read and is up to date in counseling theories/ skills, leads discussion, offers pertinent and succinct information without dominating the conversation, invites others in the class to participate in the discussion, and is open to sharing how one is affected by their profession.	Reacts to the contributions of others, responds when called upon by the instructor or peers, shows that one is following the class discussions yet does not contribute often and does not lead conversations.	Absent and/or disregard and disrespect for peers and the instructor. This also includes non-verbal relational aggression (e.g., eye rolling).

Display of Professionalism: Your identity as a School Counselor and Clinical Mental Health Counselor, carries with it a great deal of responsibility. Whether you are helpful, ineffective, or even harmful pertains primarily to issues of competence and professionalism. It is assumed that a student’s behavior in class is generally an indicator of their future behavior as a helping professional. Thus, students are appraised based on professionalism displayed during within class. Students display professionalism, and build competence by arriving on time for class, by engaging fully in class lectures and activities, and by demonstrating professional attitudes, and professional character. These factors are evaluated based on one's ability to convey warmth, genuineness, respect, and empathy in interactions with classmates, and the instructor. Students need to be able to demonstrate the ability to accept and integrate feedback, be aware of their impact on others, accept personal responsibility, and be able to express feelings appropriately.

Course Requirements

1. Given the amount of learning involved in class, your **participation is critical** to successful completion of the course;
2. Actively participate in weekly discussions, activities, and course assignments;
3. Act and present yourself in a professional manner;
4. Complete all indicated readings and written assignments;
5. Actively and openly communicate so that we can make this course a learning experience for all of us.

Assignments/Projects:

A. Three Generation Family Genogram:

Create a 3-generation genogram of your family. Include the following, where applicable, for each family member:

- Age, birth date, marriage, divorce, separation, and death
- Personality characteristics
- Strengths, skills, and abilities

- Challenges and self-defeating behaviors
- Highlight various relationships in terms of closeness or distance using standard genogram markings
- Alliances, collusions, and/or triangles, with an explanation of function or purpose served.

Write a 350- to 700-word reflection on how genograms may be used in family therapy. Include the following:

- Describe the insights you learned about your family from constructing the genogram.
- Describe how you may use this intervention with families and when it may be most beneficial.
- Describe any strengths or limitations related to this intervention.

Include a minimum of 2 sources. **Format** your reflection according to APA guidelines.

B. Couple/Family Assessment, Conceptualization, and Treatment (ACT) Assignment:

Over the course of the semester, student will work with one couple or family for a series of assignments.

- Assessment:** Students will conduct an assessment of a couple or family. This assessment will include a completed assessment form (found in Canvas), written documentation of the assessment, and a personal reflection.
- Conceptualization:** Students will conduct a case conceptualization of the selected couple or family they conducted an assessment on. This conceptualization will include application of a couples/family theoretical lens, written documentation of the conceptualization, and a personal reflection.
- Treatment:** Students will prepare a treatment plan for the selected couple/family. This assignment will include a completed treatment plan that can be linked to an appropriate theory and a reflection.

C. Simulation Activity: In groups of 4 or 5, students will develop a simulation activity to be implemented on the class. Students will facilitate their simulation activity on the class.

Course Assignment	Due Date	Points Available
Three Generation Genogram	9/29	100
Class Participation	On-going	<i>Ten points deducted for non-participation for each class meeting.</i>
ACT Assignment	9/15 10/20 11/17	300
Simulation Activity	On-going	200
Total		600

C. Rubric and Grading Scale: All assignments must be completed to earn a final grade. Grades will be based upon total point accumulation in the course:

Grading Scale

A = 100-94%	C+ = 79-75%
A- = 93-90%	C = 74-70%
B+ = 89-87%	D = 69-60%
B = 86-84%	F = 59 - 0%
B- = 83-80%	

All late assignments will receive a 5% grade reduction per day.

VII. Grading -The grade you receive for each assignment, and for the course, is the grade you earn. In order to pass this course, all assignments must be completed in alignment with the guidelines below. If you have questions about grading, you must see the course instructor as your questions arise; not after you have handed in your work or earned your grade. **All assignments are due prior to the beginning of each class period via Canvas.**

Written Work

All written work must be typed and follow APA format. Every document you submit needs to include a title page. Graduate level work needs to be typed double-spaced on one side of a page. **Assignments that do not follow this established criterion will be given back to the student to do again.**

Writing style should be formal, without use of contractions, slang, or abbreviations. The guide for the style is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (6th ed.)*. You may visit <http://www.apastyle.org/> for more information. Be sure to carefully proof read all work before submitting it for evaluation. Students are expected to display good writing skills in all written work. You will be given a grading rubric for each assignment at least two weeks before the deadline.

Late Assignments - Assignments will be penalized ten (10) points for each late day. Assignments will not be accepted after five (5) days and will average as a “zero.” Students can view assignment due dates in the syllabus itinerary, as well as the course web site.

University and Departmental Policies

Counseling Programs Academic Policies: Over the years, we have deeply appreciated the tremendous sense of commitment that our counseling students have demonstrated in their work with us. As members of the James Madison University faculty, we are required to provide information in our syllabi regarding attendance, academic honesty, adding/dropping courses, inclement weather, religious accommodations, and disability accommodations. Therefore, we have adopted the following general academic policies to apply to all our Counseling Programs courses. Of course, in addition to these guidelines, individual faculty members may use their syllabi to inform you of more specific policies and expectations for particular courses.

Academic Integrity: It should come as no surprise that we expect you to be committed to academic honesty, which is absolutely essential for the success of any learning community, but especially one with the mission of training ethical counselors. If you are unfamiliar with the specifics of the JMU academic honor code, you can read it at: <http://www.jmu.edu/honor/code.shtml#TheHonorCode>. You are expected to understand the boundaries of plagiarism and to adhere to a policy of academic honesty.

Adding/Dropping Classes: Students are responsible for registering for classes and for verifying their class

schedules on e-campus. Students must drop classes before the schedule “add/drop deadline.” Students may not register to take this class after the add deadline, per JMU policy. No exceptions will be made to these deadlines. For more details and information on block courses, refer to the Registrar's Web site at www.jmu.edu/registrar/.

Attendance: If you need to miss class, it is your responsibility to talk with me about supplemental assignments that can be completed to make up for the absence. If you need to miss class, you are responsible for obtaining any material distributed during the class.

Disability Accommodations: We believe that cultural diversity also includes differences based on physical abilities. Therefore, we believe that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate provision of accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disability Services, the designated office on campus to provide services for students with disabilities. The office is located in Wilson Hall, Room 107; you may call 540-568-6705 for more information.

Religious Accommodations: Cultural diversity enriches our learning community and is an essential component of our counselor education programs. Therefore, reasonable and appropriate accommodations will be provided to students requesting them on grounds of religious observation. Students should notify me by no later than the end of the Drop-Add period the first week of the semester of potential scheduled absences and determine with the instructor if mutually acceptable alternative methods exist for completing the missed classroom time, lab or activity. Contact the Office of Equal Opportunity (<http://www.jmu.edu/oeo/>) at (540) 568-6991 if you have additional questions.

Confidentiality and Title IX: Title IX addresses not only gender discrimination, but also sexual harassment and sexual violence, because they create a hostile educational environment. We are committed to creating a safe haven and an open atmosphere in this learning community. The personal information you share in your written assignments, class discussions, experiential activities, and counseling practice sessions enriches the learning experience for everyone. We want to let you know that, as educators, we are mandated by Title IX to report any suspected sexual harassment or sexual assaults of students. This mandate does not require identifying you and we are dedicated to addressing these concerns with sensitivity and consideration for your privacy and wellbeing. If you do want to report any event, the Title IX Coordinator is Amy Sirocky-Meck, Madison Hall 4035, sirockam@jmu.edu, 540-568-5219. You may also file a report with Title IX online at <https://www.jmu.edu/access-and-enrollment/titleIX/index.shtml>.

Furthermore, we also will take necessary action to respond to any disclosures of dangerousness to self or others. For more information on resources and reporting options, refer to the Title IX website: <https://www.jmu.edu/access-and-enrollment/titleIX/index.shtml>

Inclement Weather: Inclement weather may lead to the cancellation of a class. If you are unsure of the weather conditions on campus, you may call the JMU Weather Line at 540.433.5300. You may also listen to the JMU radio station at 1610 AM or other local radio and television stations which inform the public when classes are cancelled. For details about JMU's cancellation policy, go to <http://jmu.edu/JMUpolicy/1309.shtml>

Course Content Outline

Course Schedule	Topics	Readings/Assignments
Class 1 8/25/22	Course Overview What is Family/Couples Counseling? Evolution of Family Therapy.	Nichols & Davis: Introduction & Chp 1. System Charter.
Class 2 9/1/22	Fundamentals of Family Therapy. <i>Assessment Activity.</i>	Nichols & Davis: Chp 2. <i>The Yellow Wallpaper.</i>
Class 3 9/8/22	Basic Techniques.	Nichols & Davis: Chp 3. <i>Attachment Article.</i> Teacher Developed Simulation Activity.
Class 4 9/15/22	Bowenian Family Therapy. <i>Genogram Activity.</i>	Nichols & Davis: Chp 4. (ACT) Assessment Portion Due.
Class 5 9/22/22	Strategic Family Therapy.	Nichols & Davis: Chp 5.
Class 6 9/29/22	Structural Family Therapy. <i>Conceptualization Activity.</i>	Nichols & Davis: Chp 6. Genogram Assignment Due.
Class 7 10/6/22	Experiential Family Therapy.	Nichols & Davis: Chp 7.
10/13/22	Fall Break	No Class
Class 8 10/20/22	Psychoanalytic Family Therapy.	Nichols & Davis: Chp 8. <i>Ghosts in the Nursery Article.</i> (ACT) Conceptualization Portion Due.
Class 9 10/27/22	Cognitive Behavioral Family Therapy.	Nichols & Davis: Chp 9.
Class 10 11/3/22	Post-Modernism Movement. <i>Treatment Activity.</i>	Nichols & Davis: Chp 10. Read 3 articles about the 4 Horsemen (<i>you choose</i>) <i>https://www.gottman.com/blog/category/column/the-four-horsemen/</i>
Class 11 11/10/22	Tailoring Treatment.	Nichols & Davis: Chp 11. Student Developed Simulation Activity.
Class 12 11/17/22	Solution-Focused Treatment.	Nichols & Davis: Chp 12. (ACT) Treatment Section Due. Student Developed Simulation Activity.
11/24/22	Thanksgiving Break	No School

Class 13 12/1/22	Narrative Therapy.	Nichols & Davis: Chp 13. Student Developed Simulation Activity.
Class 14 12/8/22	Comparative Analysis/Research.	Nichols & Davis: Chp 14 & 15. Student Developed Simulation Activity. Systems Evaluation Due.
Class 15 12/15/22	Wrap-Up.	