

**University of Oregon**  
Psychology 473/573  
*Marital and Family Therapies*  
Winter 2014  
Class Location: 112 Lillis Hall

Instructor: Tiffany B. Brown, Ph.D., LMFT  
Email: tiffanyb@uoregon.edu  
Office: HEDCO 263 (College of Education; corner of 17<sup>th</sup> and Alder)  
Office Hours: Wednesday's, 1:30-3:30pm (starting week two)  
Phone: 346-2117 (office)  
GTF: Kristen Reinhardt; kreinha5@uoregon.edu  
GTF Office Hours: Tuesday's, 1-3pm, Franklin Building, Room 208 (starting week two)

*Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) deals primarily with relationships and interaction within a systemic perspective. Thus, MFT requires special conceptualization as well as procedures that are distinct from individually oriented therapies. It is the specific expertise in interpersonal relationships, interaction, and systems theory that qualifies a professional as a marriage and family therapist. –American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Glossary of Terms, pg. 17, 1990.*

**Course Description:**

This class is organized to be a survey of the distinct discipline of couples and family therapy (CFT). Students will be introduced to the history, leaders, theoretical models, vocabulary and basic techniques in the field of couples and family therapy.

**Course Objectives:**

Students in this course will be able to:

1. Develop an understanding of systemic epistemologies, including the theoretical background and history of the field of CFT.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the concepts and terms of the discipline of CFT.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the primary assumptions of the major theoretical models in CFT.
4. Begin the process of understanding the application of the key contributions of the field.
5. Understand the unique contribution of Couples and Family Therapists in mental health services.

**Required Texts and Readings:**

- I. Nichols, M. (2013; 10<sup>th</sup> Edition). Family therapy: Concepts and Methods. Pearson Education Inc. (ISBN-10: 0-205-82719-5)
  - II. Reader available through Blackboard under “Articles” in the “Course Documents” section. Students are responsible for readings assigned.
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**Course Requirements**

**Attendance & Class Participation**

Attendance is essential to successful mastery of course material and therefore attendance at every class is encouraged and expected. This class is an advanced level course, therefore, students are expected to have an *advanced* grasp of the content, participate in class discussions, bring questions to class meetings, and complete assignments on time. I will not be collecting attendance, though I expect students to attend each class meeting to demonstrate your commitment to the course content. If you miss a class, you will need to find the information that was missed through the notes online or a peer (meaning, do not contact me or the GTF expecting to receive the same amount of information via email that your colleagues received from attending class that day). The exams will include a great deal of information that can only be attained in the classroom. I encourage you to take an active role in your learning and synthesize the material that you gain in the readings, class discussions, and class lectures. It is my commitment to make class meetings worthwhile and meaningful.

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to class and to actively participate in small group and class discussions. It will be assumed that you have read the assigned readings *prior* to class, meaning that class lecture and discussion will focus on an extension of those readings as we engage in a sophisticated review of the topic of the day. I encourage you to take a very active role in the course not only for your learning, but also for the

benefit of your peers. This includes a balanced sharing of your thoughts (i.e. contributing to discussions, but not dominating), raising important questions, supporting other students' learning, actively engaging the readings, and arriving at each class session on time and prepared to discuss and engage with the material. It is important to me that our work together is focused and very active. An important part of creating a successful and meaningful learning community is being respectful in making space for all students. Each of us has an important role toward that end.

### **Written Work**

All written work in this class must include the following requirements in order to receive full credit, unless otherwise noted in the assignment expectations: a) use 12 point Times New Roman font, b) double space the paper, c) follow APA guidelines for paper formatting and citations/references, d) do not have unnecessary spaces between paragraphs, and e) be free of writing/spelling/grammar errors. You are encouraged to print your work double sided (if possible) to save paper. **Recommended:** American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

### **Concepts Through Application (45 points)**

There are several concepts across the course that requires application to fully understand “how it works.” For this reason, students will learn these concepts through application. In class, we will discuss the concepts of context, action maps, and solution talk. Students will apply these ideas in their own life through interviewing others and bring back to class via reflection. Each interview should last 30-45 minutes. Students can interview the same person for each of these exercises, or choose to “mix it up” and find different people to participate. Each exercise is worth 15 points. Each reflection should be 3-4 pages and need to include the following three sections:

- a) Detail whom you interviewed and any important information about the “set up” of the application. Discuss the problem/concern as discussed by your interviewee and review what happened in your interview and be specific. (~1/2 page)
  - b) What would a person miss about the person/problem/situation if they did not apply the concept and engage in a similar process that you did. What makes this process important as a Couples and Family Therapist? Include information from class and/or the readings in your response. (~2 pages)
  - c) Review your personal reflection of the process—What did you notice about yourself and/or about your relationship with the person you interviewed? What was it like for you to apply this concept in “real life?” (~1 page)
- The three application assignments for this course will be:*

1. **Context:** Students will interview someone in their life and ask about their *context* in relation to a *problem/concern*. First, ask this person about a current problem in their life that they are willing to share. Get information about the problem, including how long has it been a problem, who is involved, what is their position on the problem, and what has the person done on their own to solve the problem? Next, review the *context* surrounding this problem. What do we need to know about the person to best understand this problem? For example, if the person shares that they are dealing with a decision of whether or not to drop out of school, what do we need to understand about their *context* to best understand this situation? “Zoom out” and understand how this problem makes sense for this person.
2. **Action maps:** Students will interview someone and gain insight to a problem cycle, called an action map. What is the problem and what happens at the level of interaction regarding this problem? For example, if the problem is about a recent argument with a friend, what did the interactional cycle look like? Build an action map and include this map in your assignment that you turn in.
3. **Solution talk:** Students will interview someone about a problem or difficulty and have the conversation twice. First, only comment on how the problem is a problem. Discuss the problem formulation, how bad it is, how it's affecting the person, etc. Essentially, engage in problem talk. Next, attempt to only comment with solution talk as outlined in the solution focused section of the course. Identify what has worked, amplify those conditions, explore exceptions, and ask a scaling question. The purpose of this application is to experience the difference between problem and solution talk.
4. **Treatment Goals: (Graduate students only)**. Students will choose one therapeutic model discussed in class and develop treatment goals for a presenting problem. Given one of the existing interviews for the previous applications, that detailed a problem/area of concern, graduate students will develop 3 main goals (that are specific to the model) that match the problem situation. In essence, if this situation were to present in therapy, what would this model focus on in the therapy room? Make the goals very practical and clear (i.e. Clients will increase differentiation in order to.....). Next, in terms of your model, describe how you think it would affect the dynamics of your system if you did focus on these goals in therapy. Do not follow sections a and b above, though please include section c.

*Your assignments do not need a cover page, but do need to have your name and date at the top. Please also add the application and concept under your name and date (i.e., "Application 1: Context). In your paper, provide headers to detail sections a-c as discussed above.*

### **Bowen Family Therapy Genogram and Reflection (75 points)**

Students will learn the core assumptions of Bowen family therapy during week 4. Part of this discussion will be an overview of how (and why) to construct a family genogram with clients and how to utilize this information in both assessment and intervention. To further understand the concepts, students will construct their own family genogram (including at least 3 generations). Your genogram is an opportunity to examine family patterns and explore themes within your system. Students will have the opportunity to share their genogram with another student on the day it is due, though you can choose to share as little or as much as you would like in that discussion in order to protect your privacy. Only the instructor and GTF will see the genogram in its entirety. In addition to the genogram, students will turn in a 5-6 page response paper (double spaced) that answers these sections (use headers in your paper to organize these sections):

- I. Write an introduction that discusses the Bowen model with a summary of the overall approach and model assumptions. (~1.5 pages)
- II. Write a description of your family in terms of the major concepts of the Bowen approach. This is not an entire family history, but rather a description that emphasizes an analysis of relationships from a Bowenian perspective. Next, choose three of the following concepts and briefly define the concept and then provide a thorough example that you see within your system to demonstrate your understanding of this concept. Concepts to choose from: Triangles; Differentiation of Self; Nuclear Family Emotional System; Multigenerational Transmission Process; Emotional Cutoff; Sibling Position. (~ 3 pages)
- III. What was it like to explore your family in this exercise? What did you learn? Provide a personal reflection on your process. (~1 page)

The genogram (40 points) itself will be graded on whether it contains significant contextual details, thorough relationship lines, and portrays 3 generations (we will cover the key components of a genogram in class, too). The response paper (35 points) should include these elements in addition to the paper requirements detailed in the course requirements: a) include a title page that includes your name and date and follows APA title page expectations, b) include three main headers as outlined above, c) use bold type to indicate the concepts discussed in section two. You will find a grading rubric on blackboard for each part of the assignment.

### **Celebrations of Knowledge (180 points)**

In effort to assess your knowledge across the term, we will have three class periods dedicated to celebrating what we have learned thus far in the course. You will be given the class period to respond to multiple choice questions that cover the material to date. In these class periods, students are not allowed to use their notes or reading materials and will be responsible for coming to class prepared to celebrate their knowledge. Each celebration of knowledge will be worth 60 points and will include approximately 30 multiple-choice questions. I do not provide review sheets. You are responsible for making your own review sheets by regularly coming to class and discovering what is punctuated as important by way of lecture and our class discussions. I encourage you to keep a running list of topics that are emphasized in each section. I will also regularly share in class what you should focus on within your readings to prepare for these celebrations. I will provide you with a scantron, you provide the writing instrument and knowledge.

### **(573 Students only) Major Paper (60 points)**

Graduate students in the course will be expected to complete a major paper (12 pages minimum). Your paper should focus on the contributions of a prominent leader in the field (i.e. Madanes, Satir, Bateson, Jackson, Haley, Weakland, Watzlawick, White, de Shazer, Berg, Dolan, Bowen, Tomm, O'Hanlon, Cecchin, Fisch, Minuchin, Whitaker) OR a major concept that is unique to the field of couples and family therapy (i.e. unique goals and challenges of couples therapy, working with children in family therapy sessions, medical family therapy). If you have a topic in mind that you'd like to propose, please email me your idea so we can explore whether it fits the scope of this assignment. Ultimately, I'd like this paper to be something that you are interested in as it relates to the field of couples and family therapy. Your paper should include a review of the fundamental literature of your topic or theorist and include *at least* 10 peer-reviewed references from major publications. Do not use the text for the class as a reference. The paper should reflect your understanding of the subject based on lectures, assigned readings, and your own library work (e.g. journal articles). The theoretical assumptions and/or therapy techniques associated with this topic should be included. Please let me know of your choice of topic, via email, by week 3. We can correspond

about how to adequately prepare for this assignment. The assignment is intentionally broad as I would like you to consider what is most interesting as it applies to your personal studies. We can discuss how to build specifics once you have an idea as to what you would like to formally explore.

Specifically, papers will be graded for completeness, grammar and spelling, APA formatting, but most importantly for your critical thinking and sophistication of your ideas. Papers should include: a) Clear description of the topic/idea/concept; b) an integrated review of the fundamental literature of this topic (what has historically been written about this topic and how does that apply to therapy); c) what is the role of this concept in the work of family therapists?

### Course Evaluation

Outside of exceptional circumstances (e.g. medical emergency), any assignment turned in beyond the deadline will be reduced in score by 25% for each day it is late. In addition, I DO NOT accept assignments via email, no exceptions (this includes the GTF). All assignments are to be turned in at the beginning of class on the day it is due.

Area of Evaluation	Points Possible
Concepts Through Application Papers (3 @ 15 points each)	45
Genogram Assignment (Paper @ 35 pts; Genogram @ 40 pts)	75
Celebrations of Knowledge (3 @ 60 points each)	180
<b>TOTAL (473 undergraduate students)-----&gt;</b>	<b>300</b>
Concepts Through Application (Treatment Goals)	15
Major Paper	60
<b>TOTAL (573 graduate students)-----&gt;</b>	<b>375</b>

### LETTER GRADES

<b>A+</b>	97-100%	<b>C+</b>	77-79
<b>A</b>	94-96	<b>C</b>	74-76
<b>A-</b>	90-93	<b>C-</b>	70-73
<b>B+</b>	87-89	<b>D</b>	64-69
<b>B</b>	84-86	<b>D-</b>	60-63
<b>B-</b>	80-83	<b>F</b>	<59

### Policies

#### Respect for Diversity

In order to thrive and excel, a culture must honor the rights, safety, dignity, and well being of all members no matter their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, national origin, religious beliefs, or physical and cognitive ability. The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect in understanding that each individual is unique. To the extent possible and appropriate, this course will explore these differences in a safe, positive, and supportive environment. Some of the readings in this class do not adequately address diversity so we will be discussing how we might be able to make clinical practices more sensitive to diversity.

It is the policy of the University of Oregon to support and value diversity. To do so requires that we:

- Respect the dignity and essential worth of all individuals
- Promote a culture of respect throughout the University community
- Respect the privacy, property, and freedom of others
- Reject bigotry, discrimination, violence, or intimidation of any kind
- Practice personal and academic integrity and expect it from others
- Promote the diversity of opinions, ideas and backgrounds which is the lifeblood of the university

### **Cell Phones & Laptops**

Due to the fact that cell phones (e.g., text messaging, internet surfing) are disruptive to others in the classroom, cell phone use is prohibited during class time. Cell phones must be silenced and text messaging and cell phone internet access is not allowed during class. If you have an exceptional circumstance (e.g., ill child), and need to be on “standby” for a possible cell phone call, please let me know and set your cell to vibrate and exit the classroom if you receive a call. If an alternate learning ability requires the use of a laptop, please contact me on the first day of class about this. Additionally, if you use a laptop to take notes during class, please seek the permission of those around you. Typing notes during class can be very disruptive for people sitting near you – be sure that those around you are not distracted by your note taking. Computer laptop internet surfing and/or chatting is prohibited during class. Bottom line, be respectful.

### **Learning Accommodations**

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of this course that create barriers to your participation. If you have a documented disability, please provide your notification letter and meet with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations. Students without a documented disability who are experiencing learning difficulties are encouraged to consult the *Accessible Education Center* (<http://aec.uoregon.edu/>) in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu). In addition, tutoring services and study skills training are available through the University Teaching and Learning Center (68 PLC; 346-3226; <http://tlc.uoregon.edu/>).

### **Student Conduct**

All students are subject to the regulations stipulated in the UO Student Conduct Code (<http://www.uoregon.edu/~conduct>). This code represents a compilation of important regulations, policies, and procedures pertaining to student life. It is intended to inform students of their rights and responsibilities during their association with this institution, and to provide general guidance for enforcing those regulations and policies essential to the educational and research missions of the University.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

In the event the University operates on a curtailed schedule or closes, UO media relations will notify the Eugene-Springfield area radio and television stations as quickly as possible. In addition, a notice regarding the University’s schedule will be posted on the UO main homepage (in the “News” section) at <http://www.uoregon.edu>.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

UO employees, including faculty, staff, and GTFs, are mandatory reporters of child abuse when the employee has “reasonable cause to believe any child with whom the employee comes in contact has suffered abuse or that any person with whom the employee comes in contact has abused a child.” UO employees, including faculty, staff, and GTFs, also are mandatory reporters of prohibited discrimination when the employee obtains “credible evidence that any form of prohibited discrimination by or against students, faculty or staff is occurring.” “Prohibited discrimination” includes discrimination, and discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment and sexual assault. This statement is to advise you that that your disclosure of information about child abuse or prohibited discrimination to a UO employee may trigger the UO employee’s duty to report that information to the designated authorities. Please refer to the following links for detailed information about mandatory reporting:

- <https://hr.uoregon.edu/policies-leaves/general-information/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect/presidents-message>
- <http://around.uoregon.edu/mandatoryreporting>

### COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic(s)	Readings	Assignments DUE
1	1.6.14	Introductions; Syllabus		
1	1.8.14	Overview of Couples and Family Therapy; Historical perspectives; Concept of Context	<input type="checkbox"/> © Intro, Ch. 1, & Ch. 2	
2	1.13.14	Systems theory; Cybernetics	<input type="checkbox"/> ® Becvar (1982), "Systems Theory and Family Therapy: A Primer"	<i>Start of blackboard entry prompts</i>
2	1.15.14	Fundamental concepts and theorists of family therapy	<input type="checkbox"/> © Ch. 3 <input type="checkbox"/> ® Jackson (1967), "The Myth of Normality" <input type="checkbox"/> ® Jackson (1965), "The Study of the Family"	
3	1.20.13	<i>No Class, Martin Luther King Holiday</i>	<i>No readings</i>	
3	1.22.14	<i>Celebration of Knowledge</i>	<i>No readings</i>	Celebration of Knowledge #1; Paper topics DUE for grad students (email me directly)
4	1.27.14	Overview of therapeutic models; Bowen therapy; Genogram introduction	<input type="checkbox"/> © Ch. 4 <input type="checkbox"/> ® Nelson, 2003, pp. 255-293	
4	1.29.14	Genograms	<input type="checkbox"/> ® McGoldrick, Gerson, & Petry (2008), "Genograms: Assessment and Intervention"	Context Application DUE
5	2.3.14	Structural therapy	<input type="checkbox"/> © Ch. 6 <input type="checkbox"/> TBA	
5	2.5.14	Strategic therapy; Concept of action maps <i>Guest Speaker: Jason Roberts</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> © Ch. 5 <input type="checkbox"/> ® Jackson (1954), "The Question of Family Homeostasis" <input type="checkbox"/> ® Bobrow & Ray (2004)	
6	2.10.14	Model application	<i>No readings</i>	
6	2.12.14	<i>Celebration of Knowledge</i>	<i>No readings</i>	Celebration of Knowledge #2
7	2.17.14	Experiential therapy ---- The Satir model	<input type="checkbox"/> © Ch. 7 <input type="checkbox"/> ® Lum (2002) <input type="checkbox"/> ® Banmen (2002)	Bowen Assignment DUE
7	2.19.14	Solution-Focused therapy; Concept of solution talk	<input type="checkbox"/> © Ch. 11 <input type="checkbox"/> ® Stith et al. (2012) <input type="checkbox"/> TBA	
8	2.24.14	Influence of The Gottman Institute; Couples Therapy	<input type="checkbox"/> ® Gottman Website Handout <input type="checkbox"/> ® Gottman & DeClaire (2001) (Chs 1-3; "How We Connect Emotionally;" "Step One: Look at Your Bids at Connection;" "Six Bid Busters and How to Avoid Them" (one packet of reading)	Action Map Application DUE
8	2.26.14	Guest panel—Therapists in the Community	<i>No readings</i>	
9	3.3.14	Couples Therapy continued	<input type="checkbox"/> TBA	Treatment Goals Application Due (Grad students only)
9	3.5.14	CFT Application--90x30 project <i>Guest Speaker: Jeff Todahl</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Review 90x30 website ( <a href="http://90by30.uoregon.edu">http://90by30.uoregon.edu</a> ) specifically the entire content in the 'about us' and 'prevention' tabs	
10	2.27.14	Model application	<i>No readings</i>	Solution Talk Application DUE
10	3.4.14	<i>Celebration of Knowledge</i>	<i>No readings</i>	Celebration of Knowledge #3
Finals Week		No class meeting	Term Papers Due for grad students; Turn into my mailbox in HEDCO, suite 240 by 5pm on 3/19/14	

© = Chapter from the Nichols text; ® = Reserved reading available on Blackboard

Note: The course schedule is subject to change as deemed necessary by the professor (i.e. adding additional articles to read).