

**Marriage and Family Research
PCs 381-3
Spring 2015**

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“There are three kinds of lies: Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics.”

Benjamin Disraeli (or Mark Twain depending on preferred authority)

“If sufficiently tortured, data will confess to anything.”

Unknown

“87.6% of all statistics are made up on the spot.”

Unknown

Course Description

This course is a study of empirical research methods and their application to pastoral counseling and marriage and family therapy. Students completing the course will develop skills to understand common MFT research methods, including quantitative and qualitative research designs, how research methods are applied, and how these are used for evidence-based practice in pastoral counseling/marriage and family therapy and the dialogue between religion and mental health.

Objectives and Expected Student Learning Outcomes

<u>By the end of the semester, students will:</u>	<u>Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) & MFT Competencies (MFTC:)</u>	<u>Assessment Signature Assignments</u>
Be able to describe dominant research methods in marriage and family therapy	SLO 1: ...able to conduct multicultural, evidence-based therapy... MFTC: 6.1.1 Know the extant literature, research and evidence-based practice. MFTC: 6.1.2 Understand research and program evaluation...relevant to MFT & mental health services	Quiz & Final Examination
Know how to conduct literature searches through appropriate databases	SLO 1: ...able to conduct multicultural, evidence-based therapy... MFTC: 6.1.1 Know the extant literature, research and evidence-based practice.	Clinical Research Review*
Be able to interpret research in journal articles and to evaluate conclusions drawn from these data.	SLO 1: ...able to conduct multicultural, evidence-based therapy... MFTC: 2.1.7 Understand concepts of reliability and validity and how these influence clinical decision-making MFTC: 6.1.1 Know the extant literature, research and evidence-based practice. MFTC: 6.1.2 Understand research and program evaluation...relevant to MFT & mental health services MFTC: 6.3.3 Critique...research and	Journal Article Critiques* Clinical Research Review*

	assess quality of ...studies	
Be able to articulate a basic understanding of how statistics are used in research methods	SLO 1: ...able to conduct multicultural, evidence-based therapy... MFTC: 2.17 Understand concepts of reliability and validity and how these influence clinical decision-making...	Journal Article Critiques* Clinical Research Review* Final Examination
Be able to discuss the current literature related to evidence-based practice	SLO 1: ...able to conduct multicultural, evidence-based therapy... SLO 2: ...demonstrate a broad knowledge of systemic theory and MFT Treatment models and flexibly apply these to evidence-based practice. MFTC: 3.1.1 Know which models, modalities, techniques are most effective for presenting problems MFTC: 4.1.2 Recognize strengths, limitations, contraindications of specific therapy models MFTC: 6.1.1 Know the extant literature, research and evidence-based practice. MFTC: 6.3.2 Use current MFT and other research to inform clinical practice	Clinical Research Review* Classroom Debate/Presentation*
Be able to state a position related to evidence-based practice	SLO 1: ...able to conduct multicultural, evidence-based therapy... SLO 2: ...demonstrate a broad knowledge of systemic theory and MFT Treatment models and flexibly apply these to evidence-based practice. MFTC: 6.1.1 Know the extant literature, research and evidence-based practice. MFTC: 6.3.2 Use current MFT and other research to inform clinical practice	Classroom Debate/Presentation*
		*Assessed by Class Comprehensive Rubric
Multicultural Therapy Definition: Multicultural Therapy, according to D. W. Sue and Torino (2005, p 3) "...can be defined as both a helping role and process that uses modalities and defines goals consistent with the life experiences and cultural values of clients, recognizes client identities to include individual, group, and universal dimensions, advocates the use of universal and culture-specific strategies and roles in the healing process, and balances the importance of individualism and collectivism in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of client and client systems." Multicultural competence as a therapist includes: (1) therapist awareness of personal assumptions, values and biases, (2) understanding the worldview of diverse clients, and (3) facility with appropriate strategies and interventions consistent with the life experiences and values of culturally different clients. (Sue & Sue 2008)		
Evidence-based Practice Definition: EBP is a "...practice-friendly approach to using research to enhance family therapy" (Gehard, 2010, 133). This approach looks to research to help clinicians make decisions in therapy about care for individual clients, couples and families. Evidence-based practice will (1) look to research for information about what treatments are most effective for specific problems, (2) critically examine that research for its validity and applicability to specific cases, and (3) evaluate how effective a selected method is for specific clients, couples and families (for example, using the ORS/SRS).		

Texts

Norcross, J. C., Beutler, L.E. & Levant, R. F. (Eds.) (2009). *Evidence-based practices in mental health: Debate and dialogue on the fundamental questions*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Patten, M. (2009). *Understanding research methods* 7th ed. Los Angeles: Pryczak Publishing.

Required Reading From (also on library reserve)

Koenig, R. (2005). *Faith and Mental Health: Resources for Healing*. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation

Sprenkle, D. (ed.). (2003). *Effectiveness research in marriage and family therapy*. Washington, D.C.: AAMFT.

Other Useful Texts

Girden, E. Evaluating Research Articles From Start to Finish. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996.

Locke, L. F., Silverman, S. J., & Spiruso, W. W. *Reading and Understanding Research (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sprenkle, D., Piercy, F. (Eds.). (2005). *Research methods in family therapy (2nd ed.)*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Pyrzczak, R. *Evaluating Research in Academic Journals: A Practical Guide to Realistic Education*. Los Angeles, CA: Pyrczak Publishing Co., 1999.

JMFT articles and other readings as assigned below are library reference or reserved at the circulation desk.

Patten, M. (2000). Proposing empirical research: A guide to fundamentals. Los Angeles: Pyrczak Publishing.

Galvan, J. L. (1999) Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences. Los Angeles, Pyrczak Publishing.

Class Requirements

- 1. Quiz –statistics and methodology (pre-test purposes only)**
- 2. Two Journal Article Critiques (15% each, total 30%)**

Critiques should be a substantial review of the assigned article and should demonstrate competent understanding of class content up to time when the critique is due. The purpose of the critique is to summarize the conclusions and critically evaluate the article for its quality of research and usefulness of the results and conclusions. In your critique you will need to describe how you think the results can be useful (or not) in your work with clients. Critiques must be written in APA style (6th Edition). For instructions about evaluating articles, see Pyrczak, *Evaluating research in academic journals*. **Maximum: 5 pages per critique.**

Articles to be reviewed:

Article 1, Due March 26. Quantitative Research Article.

Robbins, M. S., Mayorga, C. C., Mitrani, V. B., Szapocznik, J., Turner, C. W., &

Alexander, J. F. (2008). Adolescent and parent alliances with therapists using brief strategic family therapy with drug-abusing Hispanic adolescents. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, Vol 34(3), 316-328.

Article 2, Due April 30. Qualitative Research Article.

Henry, S. B., Smith, D. B., Archuleta, K. L., Sanders-Hahs, E., Nelson Goff, B. S., Reisbig, A.,...Scheer, T. (2011). Trauma and couples: Mechanisms in dyadic functioning. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, Vol 37(3), 319-332.
doi: 10.1111/j.1752-0606.2010.00203.x

3. Evidence-based practice classroom debate/presentation (20%)

4. Clinical Research Review (Due: Last day of class) (25 %)

Purpose: present the research on one programmatic empirically validated treatment.

You will present on the programmatic research of **one** of the following groups:

Couple Interventions:

- Andrew Christensen and colleagues in Integrative Behavioral Couples Therapy
- Sandra Stith and colleagues in treatment of intact couples with intimate partner violence (IPV)
- Sue Johnson and colleagues in Emotion Focused Therapy
- Howard Markman and Scott Stanley in PREP

Child/Family Interventions:

- Scott Henggeler and colleagues in Multisystemic Therapy (MST)
- Guerney and colleagues in Filial Therapy
- J. Alexander and colleagues in Functional Family Therapy (FFT)
- Lynn McDonald and colleagues in Families and Schools Together (FAST)

Links to PDFs on each program of research

Sue Johnson and EFT: <http://www.eft.ca>

Andrew Christensen and Integrative Behavioral Couples Therapy: www.psych.ucla.edu/faculty

Howard Markman, Scott Stanley and PREP: <http://www.prepInc.com>

Multisystemic Therapy (MST): <http://mstservices.com/>

Filial Therapy: <http://www.filialtherapy.co.uk/>

Functional Family Therapy (FFT): <http://www.fftinc.com/index.html>

Families and Schools Together (FAST): <http://www.familiesandschools.org/>

You will be expected to *become familiar with the treatment manual* for the model and *read all of the original research articles on the model*. You are also responsible for **tracking down any empirical research published on your approach**. Do web searches using PsychLit, Google Scholar and other sources.

Grading Criteria and Expectations for Clinical Review:

Create a Handout and Presentation (PPT) addressing ALL of the following issues:

Looking at the program of research on the model as a whole:

1. What are the major theoretical tenets of the treatment model? To what extent is the theoretical rationale for many of the interventions grounded in basic (nonintervention) social science research linking family dynamics and problematic behavior? (e.g., the link between poor parent-adolescent relationships and teenage drug abuse). **The assumption here it is that a couple/family intervention program is likely to be more effective if it has a strong empirically based theoretical rationale in literatures related to child development and family studies.**
2. Describe the history of the research on this approach including **key studies**, events, **turning points**, lessons learned, and so forth. Describe the extent to which there has been a systematic accretive research program on the model with one study building on another. In sum, you will be doing a critical history of the program of research on this model.
3. Describe the extent to which the methods have been replicated by independent investigators not directly linked to the founder(s) of the model. (i.e., Are there studies on EFT by people other than Sue Johnson and those who work with ICEFT?)
4. To what extent has attention been paid to the issue of the transportability of the research model to actual (typical real-life) practice settings? To what extent is there evidence that the model works in real life practice settings?
5. To what extent have there been efforts to identify the mechanisms of change (why and how the intervention seems to work) through process research? (It is one thing to know that an intervention works; it is another thing to know how it works).
6. To what extent has the model addressed issues of economic evaluation (cost effectiveness/cost benefit analysis)?

7. For each *individual study*, rate the study on the following dimensions and then figure out an interesting way to present a summary of this data for all of the studies. A graph or chart is typically called for. IF you are working as a group, be sure that you work together on this summary and that the work does not appear to be a patchwork of independent efforts. Strive for continuity.

Was (or were) there (this list is a check list of what constitutes a strong study within the quantitative experimental paradigm):

- (a) Controlled assignment of treatment conditions through randomized clinical trials? (If not, was there matching or some quasi-experimental design?--these are compromises but certainly better than no control over assignment to treatment conditions).
- (b) Manualized treatments?
- (c) No contamination of major independent variables so that there are biases in favor of the preferred treatment model or against competing models: (this includes therapists' experience level, number of therapists per treatment condition, treatment length across treatments, and relevant therapeutic competence (e.g. a graduate student advocate of solution focused therapy doing behavior marital therapy for the first time offers a poor test for the power of the behavioral method). Overall, did the treatments seem to be equally valued?
- (d) Close supervision and training of the therapists?
- (e) Evidence offered for adherence to treatment protocols, and treatment fidelity was linked to outcome?
- (f) Multiple outcome measures?
- (g) Appropriate statistical analysis?
- (h) Non-reactive dependent variables like incarceration, hospitalization, etc?
- (i) A diverse sample?
- (j) Special efforts made to recruit/retain subjects and particularly difficult subjects?
- (k) Attention to comorbidity and multiple problem subjects and families?
- (l) Long term follow up of one year or more? Specify how long.
- (m) Therapist-investigator non-equivalence. (The therapist and the investigator are not the same person).

8. (IMPORTANT). Overall, give **your assessment of the strengths and weaknesses** of the research program and indicate what you think is the most important research that needs to be done in the future and why.
9. Describe how conclusions can be useful (or not) in your work with the clients.
10. Your handout must include an individual description of all of the individual research studies and (as noted above) some kind of summary of their methodological strengths and weaknesses.

You will have up to two hours (or in some cases more) for this presentation.

5. Final Examination (25%)

The final examination is cumulative, computerized and will be available in the library the week of finals.

Appendix

Critical Class Policies

SEMINARY POLICIES – See Student Handbook for policies on use of inclusive language, academic honesty, citation, attendance, and special accommodations. (NOTE FOR COAMFTE: These policies are normally inserted but removed due to space limitations for the self-study.)

Grade Scale and Philosophy

A	96.6-100
A-	93.6-96.5
B+	90.6-93.5
B	87.6-90.5
B-	85.6-87.5
C+	83.6-85.5
C	81.6-83.5
C-	79.6-81.5
D	70.6-79.5
F	Below 70.6

Individuals admitted to graduate study are expected to perform well consistently in academic work. This is translated into grades in the following way. Basic mastery of the body of knowledge required for a course at a level expected for graduate study results in scores in the B to B+ range. Grades of A- are granted for work which demonstrates: 1) basic mastery of the body of knowledge and 2) independent thought about the subject matter. Grades of A are granted for work which demonstrates: 1) mastery of the required body of knowledge, 2) independent thought about the subject matter, and 3) creative/integrative use of the material, exceptional writing and expression which integrates the material into a student's own system of thought, and/or exceptionally well done or articulated research.

Expectations for Class.

6. Assignments are due on the day they are assigned.
7. Given the intensive nature of this class, late assignments will be graded down one letter grade per day, beginning the day after the assignment is due.
8. Late assignments will not be accepted past two days overdue.
9. Reading and discussion are expected of all participants.
10. As per seminary policy, an incomplete will be granted only because of serious personal or family problems or a major illness. Procrastination and poor planning are not generally acceptable as illness. While these may be personal problems, they do not qualify as the kind of circumstantial disruption of life that will qualify for an incomplete.

Form for Writing Assignments

All papers submitted for grades must be written in APA approved style (6th edition) and be double-spaced.

- Major research papers, book reviews, etc. should include a cover sheet with the assignment title, your name, and the class for which you are writing.
- Weekly assignments should include at the top of the first page your ***name, title of the assignment, and the date the assignment is due.*** These papers are to be folded in half (vertically) with your name and mailbox number on the outside. This allows returning them to you through campus mail.
- All sources used in writing assignments must be cited appropriately and according to APA style. ***Failure to cite sources is plagiarism. You must give credit for quotes and ideas used in your writing. Papers submitted for grades that demonstrate plagiarism will receive a failing grade, and students will be subject to the seminary policy regarding plagiarism.***

MFT Research Comprehensive Rubric

Assessment Rubric: (Note to COAMFTE: Rubrics for assessing SLOs and Marriage and Family Therapy core competencies have been removed to meet self-study space limits. See SIE rubric which is used for all case studies in the MFT Program and see 1 sample comprehensive course rubric Bookmarks. All rubrics can be provided upon request.)

I. Assignment: Journal Article Critique 1 & 2
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Instructions: Critiques should be a substantial review of the assigned article and should demonstrate competent understanding of class content up to time when the critique is due. The purpose of the critique is to summarize the

conclusions and critically evaluate the article for its quality of research and usefulness of the results and conclusions. In your critique you will need to describe how you think the results can be useful (or not) in your work with clients. Critiques must be written in APA style (6th Edition). For instructions about evaluating articles, see Pyszczak, *Evaluating research in academic journals*. **Maximum: 5 pages per critique. See syllabus for assigned article.**

II. Assignment: Evidence-based classroom debate

Instructions: See syllabus and classroom instructions

III. Assignment: Clinical Research Review

Instructions: present the research on one of the following programmatic empirically validated treatment groups:

Couple Interventions:

- Andrew Christensen and colleagues in Integrative Behavioral Couples Therapy
- Sandra Stith and colleagues in treatment of intact couples with intimate partner violence (IPV)
- Sue Johnson and colleagues in Emotion Focused Therapy
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Child/Family Interventions:

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- Guerney and colleagues in Filial Therapy
- J. Alexander and colleagues in Functional Family Therapy (FFT)
- Lynn McDonald and colleagues in Families and Schools Together (FAST)

Grade: ____

Comments:

MFT Research: Aggregated Rubric Scores																		
	Sign Assignment*:	Article I. 1	I.2	I.3	I.4	I.5	Debate II.1	II.2	II.3	II.4	Res Rev III.1	III.2	III.3	III.4	III.5	III.6	III.7	III.8
Student																		
1																		
2																		
3																		
4																		
5																		
6																		
7																		
8																		
9																		
10																		
	Mean Score for SLOs & MFTCs:																	
	SLOs	1	1	1	1	1	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1, 2	1, 2
	MFTCs	6.33	6.33	6.33	2.1.7	6.3.2 6.3.3	6.1.1	6.3.2 3.1.1	4.1.2 6.3.2	4.1.2	6.1.2	6.1.1 6.1.2	2.1.7 6.1.1 6.1.2	3.1.1 4.1.2 6.3.2 6.3.3	3.1.1 4.1.2 6.3.3 6.3.2	3.1.1 4.1.2 6.3.3 6.3.2	6.3.3	3.1.1 4.1.2 6.1.2 6.3.3 6.3.2

