

Family Therapy--Theory and Practice Syllabus

PC 304

Fall, 2010

Elizabeth J. Walker

Schlegel Room 120

Wednesday 1:30-4:20p.m.

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Course Description

This course provides procedural, theoretical and theological foundations for the practice of family therapy. In this course, students will explore the nature and development of family therapy, its impact on understanding human motivation and relationship systems, and explore its application in clinical practice. This will include a focus on family organization, family subsystems, and transgenerational processes as these apply to assessment, case conceptualization, treatment and theological understandings of family therapy. Through exploring contemporary family therapy approaches, students will have the opportunity to experience a variety of intervention methods and begin the process of formulating a theologically and personally integrated model of family therapy.

Course Objectives

Students will:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the nature and development of family therapy theory.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose and limitation of psychotherapeutic theory as it applies to producing change in human systems.
3. Understand the interaction of class, race, gender, and cultural experience on theory development and intervention procedures.
4. Articulate a broad understanding of family assessment, including interview, genogram and formal tools of evaluation.
5. Discuss a cross-section of historical and contemporary methods of family therapy.
6. Demonstrate a beginning understanding of the basic processes of counseling from intake to termination of therapy.
7. Demonstrate a beginning ability to write and intake assessment and plan a course of treatment for a family.
8. Demonstrate the ability to use systemic categories to conceptualize family organization, family subsystems and transgenerational processes in a therapeutic context.
9. Demonstrate an understanding of narrative and brief Solution-focused therapy in class discussions and case demonstrations.
10. Articulate a statement of how faith, spirituality and theology can be integrated into a personal philosophy and clinical practice of family therapy, and describe/discuss your personal philosophy in at least one clinical case.

Th.M. and D.Min. Objectives

1. Th.M. and D.Min. students are expected to complete all of the above objectives at an advanced, rather than beginning level;
2. Th.M. and D.Min. students will demonstrate more complete behavioral scientific and theological analysis in their class assignments;
3. Th.M. and D.Min. students will demonstrate advanced levels of theological and pastoral reflection and relate this work to their current ministry location.

Course Method

The course methodology will include discussion, media resources, role play, and case study demonstration in a movement toward the integration of theory, theology, and clinical practice.

Course Requirements

- Complete required reading, participate in class discussions and presentations. (20%)
 - A. Purpose and objectives of assignment**
By completing this assignment, students will:
 1. Become oriented to the basic literature of family therapy.
 2. Demonstrate that they have completed assigned reading and have organized their thoughts about the reading into a coherent summary;
 3. Become competent in discussing basic theoretical and practical issues in the practice of family therapy.
 - B. Tasks**
Each week, students will complete required reading and participate in class discussion.
 - C. Evaluation**
Students will demonstrate completion of reading assignments by participating in class conversations. Students will document completion of reading assignments each week.
- Reflection Assignments. (20 % of grade)
 - A. Purpose and objectives for this assignment**
By completing this assignment, students will
 1. Engage in conscious, reflective thought with colleagues about spiritual, cultural, religious, and theological issues related to the reading assignment;
 2. Begin to develop personally and theologically integrated stands related to family therapy and clinical practice.
 3. Conceptualize theological reflections on clinical/theoretical material that demonstrates depth of thinking about these matters.
 - B. Tasks**
Each student will participate in a reflection group of 3-5 colleagues. This group will meet, discuss, and develop a paper describing a theological understanding of "family." What is family? Why? What are your

sources of authority for conceptualizing the family? How is family to be understood in the light of scripture, church history, and contemporary theology? What issues are at stake? How does a theological understanding intersect with contemporary American life? Be sure to include some consideration of the intersection of race, class, and cultural background as part of this discussion.

This paper must not exceed twelve double spaced pages and will be presented in class. (APA format).

Papers are due as scheduled.

Th.M. and D.Min. students are expected to focus primarily on critical analysis of theories and theological reflection about use of theories in the practice of ministry. Papers should relate to current ministry placements or should demonstrate an advanced level of integrating academic study of theology to clinical practice.

- Critical Book Review (20% of grade) Book review due October 20.
 - A. Purpose and objectives for this assignment**

By completing this assignment, students will

 1. Gain a firm beginning understanding of one model of family therapy and how it is applied clinically;
 2. Begin to think critically about family therapy theory.
 - B. Tasks** (Note additional Th.M. and D.Min. requirements below)

Step One: Select a book focused on either Narrative Therapy or Brief Solution-focused therapy that is not a required text.

Step Two: Write a critical review of the book (page length: No more than 7 double-spaced pages.)

Your critical review should include the following:

 1. A brief summary of the author's reason for writing the book (thesis)
 2. A depth description of the model of therapy the author is proposing. Please note that you should not try to rewrite the book in a class paper. Instead, distill the model in a form that *you* understand and in which *you* emphasize what is important and de-emphasize what is not.
 3. A critical assessment of the book and theory. Be sure to address what *you* consider the strengths and weaknesses of the theory and how the authors use it. Point out also where the authors themselves suggest that this theory or approach has limitations and strengths.
 4. The final section of your critical review should be a theological/spiritual analysis in the light of the theory.

Th.M and D.Min. students are expected to collaborate with the professor concerning

additional reading and writing requirements. Students will write a paper and/or book review, topic to be selected in collaboration with the professor. The final paper must include substantial theological analysis and pastoral reflection.

- Clinical Case Study Using Narrative or Solution-Focused Therapy (30% of grade)
(A case will be provided by the professor)
 - A. Purpose and objectives for this assignment**
By completing this assignment, students will
 1. Gain a firm beginning understanding of one model of family therapy and how it is applied clinically;
 2. Gain the ability to articulate their critical thought processes about family therapy in written professional documents;
 3. Begin to apply family therapy theoretical concepts to clinical case contexts;
 4. Form a beginning ability to reason clinically about case material, informed by one theory;
 5. Gain experience organizing clinical reasoning from one theoretical foundation into basic clinical documents that demonstrate a recursive, inferential connection between theory, observation, assessment, treatment planning, clinical procedures, and evaluation.
 - B. Tasks**
 1. Identify the family to be assessed as assigned by the professor.
 2. Follow directions in “How to Write an Intake Assessment”
 3. Write a pastoral/theological evaluation of the case that demonstrates your reflective thinking about the client, the problem and the process of helping.

Th.M and D.Min. Expectations: Students will complete the study described above.

Th.M.andD.Min. students should pay particular attention to a thorough and well written clinical study which demonstrates maturity in clinical reasoning and treatment planning. In the final section, Th.M. and D.Min. students must provide advanced levels of theological and pastoral reflection and relate this to their current ministry placement.

- Final examination (30% of grade)
 - A. Purpose and objectives for this assignment**
By preparing for the final examination and taking the final examination, students will
 1. Demonstrate their mastery of the primary body of knowledge presented during the semester and how this knowledge applies to clinical contexts;
 2. To gain experience preparing for professional body of knowledge and competency evaluations.
 - B. Tasks**
 1. Students will prepare for a computerized final examination by using the practice CD distributed during class and other materials necessary to prepare for a comprehensive final examination.

2. Students will take the final examination during the week of finals on computer in the library computer lab. This is a closed book final.

Texts

Required: (on library reserve)

Journal of Marital and Family Therapy (selected articles: Library)

Boyd-Franklin, N. *Reaching Out in Family Therapy: Home-based, School, and Community Interventions*.

Nichols, M. and R. Schwartz, eds. *Family Therapy: Concept and Method*, 6th. Ed.

Payne, Martin. *Narrative Therapy: An Introduction for Counselors*

Stone, H. *Strategies for Brief Pastoral Counseling*

Walsh, F., ed. *Spiritual Resources in Family Therapy*

Recommended and references:

Olsen, D. *Integrative Family Therapy*.

McGoldrick, M. and Gerson, R. *Genograms in Family Assessment*.**Consult in Library

Graham, L. *Care of Persons, Care of Worlds*.

L'Abate, L. *Family Assessment: A Psychological Approach*.

Carter, E. and M. McGoldrick, eds. *The Changing Family Life Cycle*, 2nd ed.

Gurman, A. and D. Kniskern. *Handbook of Family Therapy*, Vol. 1 and 2.

Aponte, H. *Bread and Spirit: Therapy with the New Poor*.

Sprenkle, D. and C. Bailey, eds. *Family Therapy Effectiveness*.

Walters, M., Carter, B., Papp, P., & Silverstein, O. *The Invisible Web*.

Neuger, C. *Counseling Women: A Narrative Approach*

White D. & D. Epston. *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends*

Wimberly, Edward P., *Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Values*

_____ *Reaching Out in Family Counseling*

Boyd-Franklin, Nancy, *Black Families in Therapy* . . .

Important Policies

Grading: Grade Scale and Philosophy

A	93-100	20
A-	90-92	16
B+	87-89	14
B	83-86	12
C	80-82	10
C+	77-79	8
C	73-76	6
C-	70-72	4
D	60-69	2
F	Below 60	0

Individuals admitted to graduate study are expected to perform consistently and well in academic work. This is translated into grades in the following way:

1. Basic mastery of the body of knowledge at a level expected in graduate study will earn scores in the B to B+ range.
2. Grades of A- are granted for work which demonstrates
 - basic mastery of the body of knowledge, and
 - independent thought about the subject matter.
3. Grades of A are granted for work which demonstrates
 - mastery of the required body of knowledge,
 - independent thought about the subject matter, and
 - creative/integrative use of the material, exceptional writing which integrates the material into a student's own system of thought, and/or exceptionally well done or articulate research.

Inclusive Language:

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. See for further assistance, http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

Academic Honesty:

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

Special Accommodations:

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Citation Policy:

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Attendance Policy:

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.