

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

PC 3043 Theoretical Foundations of Family Therapy

Fall 2024

Tuesdays

10:00 a.m. - 12:50 p.m.

Schlegel 120

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Drop-in office hours: Mondays 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Nelson MFT Director's Office

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Welcome to Theoretical Foundations! This is a vital course in the foundation of your understanding as you begin the Marriage and Family Therapy program. This is a time for you to learn the theoretical frames that support all the work you will do as a family therapist. This semester we will be focusing on learning the basics about theories that will inform, guide, and challenge your thinking about family systems. We look forward to learning together as we progress through the semester. If you have asked questions about the course and we have attempted to answer but you remain unclear, please *let us know* and we will work to clarify by further explanation.

Seminary Resources for Instruction, Learning, and Technology

- To access the Library and its resources, visit: <https://lpts.edu/library/>
- To request a library laptop loan, contact the Online Help Desk – library@lpts.edu.
- For general help with campus network access, Outlook (email), contact support@lpts.edu.

- For help with Canvas credentials, contact Carolyn Cardwell at ccardwell@lpts.edu.
- For Academic Support for any of your studies, contact the ASC located on the first floor of Schlegel.
- For a summary of information related to accessing Outlook, Canvas, CAMS, and the Intranet, see: [Accessing LPTS Resources](#).

Course Description

This course provides theoretical and practical foundations for beginning practice of family therapy. Please note, if you are not a student in the Marriage and Family Therapy Program, you must have prior professor approval to take this course. In this course, students will:

1. Explore the nature and development of family therapy as a field of study and professional practice;
2. Develop competence in systemic thinking and analysis as it applies to family organization, family processes and therapeutic intervention with family systems;
3. Develop basic understanding of and competence in fundamental clinical logic and practices necessary for successful completion of Practicum 1
4. Acquire a basic understanding of therapist formation, basic clinical competencies, and how one becomes a MFT.

Required Texts

- 1. N&D (number indicates chapter) = Nichols, M. & Davis, S. (2016). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods (11th edition)*. Pearson.**
- 2. Y&S (number indicates chapter) = Yarhouse, M., & Sells, J. (2017). *Family therapies: A comprehensive Christian appraisal (2nd edition)*. IVP.**

Optional Texts

Becvar, D. S., Becvar, R. J., & Reif, L.V. (2023). *Systems theory and family therapy: A primer* (4th edition). Rowman & Littlefield.

Gehart, D. R. (2023). *Mastering competencies in family therapy: A practical approach to theory and clinical case documentation* (4th edition). Cengage.

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Petry, S. (2020). *Genograms: Assessment and treatment*. WW Norton & Company.

Additional Resources

Davis, S. D., & Hsieh, A. L. (2019). What does it mean to be a common factors informed family therapist? *Family process*, 58(3), 629-640.

https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/famp.12477?casa_token=wwQyGuElyMAAAAAA:GQNKOa6kUFTQiIDjBoY7FD_bZASxB954PDCEp7IedV8sEcQAx9LZpbpBbrsbUr3eTsS4XTbgcDGPVBM

Family Therapy Magazine Sept/Oct 2008 edition: Genogram of Family Therapy. pp. 13-22.

http://www.aamft.org/members/familytherapyresources/articles/08_FTM_05_12_21.pdf

Family Therapy Magazine Sept/Oct 2008 edition: Family Therapy Pioneers: A Directory. pp 23-60.

http://www.aamft.org/members/familytherapyresources/articles/08_FTM_05_23_60.pdf

Frederick, T. (2014). Spiritual transformation: Honoring spiritual traditions in psychotherapy. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 109-115.

Stone, D. J. & Chenfeng, J. L. (2019). *Finding your voice as a beginning marriage and family therapist*. Routledge.

Wiggins Frame, M. (2000). The spiritual genogram in family therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 26 (2), 211-216.

Additional resources for reference are posted on Canvas. Students will also independently locate and review materials, which is part of being a scholar in the field of family systems.

Course Objectives and Expected Student Learning Outcomes

<i>By the end of the semester, students will:</i>	<i>Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) & Developmental Competency Components</i>	<i>Assessment Signature Assignments</i>
Demonstrate basic knowledge of a broad systemic perspective as it relates to human interaction in diverse family, romantic and professional relationships.	SLO: 2 Dev. Comp: 2	Response Papers; Final Exam
Be able to use systemic categories to conceptualize family organization, family subsystems, and transgenerational processes in a therapeutic context.	SLO: 2 Dev. Comp: 2	Response Papers; Map project; Participation and self-evaluation
Demonstrate understanding of interactions of class, race, gender, and cultural experience on theory development and intervention.	SLO: 1 & 4 Dev. Comp: 4	Response papers; Participation and self-evaluation; Final Exam
Be able to discuss the history of Marriage and Family Therapy, development of its methods and its professional requirements (licensing, etc.).	SLO: 2 Dev. Comp: 1	Response Papers; Participation and self-evaluation; Final Exam
Demonstrate basic knowledge of primary models of Family Therapy and how they are used to guide the clinical practice of Marriage and Family Therapy.	SLO: 1 & 2 Dev. Comp 2, 5	Response papers; Participation and self-evaluation; Final Exam
Demonstrate a beginning ability to relate theological/spiritual concepts, contexts and meanings to the theory and practice of marriage and family therapy.	SLO: 4 & 5 Dev. Comp: 3	Response Papers; Participation and self-evaluation; Final Exam
Demonstrate a beginning understand of self of the therapist and how personal experiences impact development of therapist identity and practice of therapy.	SLO: 3 Dev. Comp: 4	Response Papers; Participation and self-evaluation; Map Project

Important scheduling appears below as well as corresponding readings. These are subject to change at the professor's discretion. It is the responsibility of students to keep abreast of the course schedule as well as corresponding videos posted on Canvas. All due dates indicated are for submission on Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on the date listed. Submissions

completed within 24 hours of the due date will be within the grace period for late assignments. Assignments more than 24 hours late will be deducted 5 points for each day late up to zero credit. Emails for consideration regarding late assignments or absences must be sent to verena.schmidt@lpts.edu.

Course Requirements

All assignments must be completed on time for successful completion of this course. Late assignments will be docked points up to and including non-credit. Missing assignments or assignments not meeting the threshold for student learning outcomes are not acceptable for graduate level work and will result in not passing this course. Professional engagement of graduate work requires on time submissions and deep intellectual engagement of course materials in order to progress in the program. Please note assignment page guidelines below include the title page and reference page of the paper following the APA Manual. Please see your manual as well as OWL Purdue and the writing center (ASC) for help (see above).

Participation with Self-Evaluation (20%)

Each student is to participate in experiential learning activities and discussions. With group cooperation and participation, this course intends to provide a safe and confidential environment in which students may discuss their feelings, questions and beliefs as a personal and/or pastoral care issue. No part of this course may be recorded including audio and visual. Please respect the members of your class by not characterizing or disclosing the content of their comments outside of class. Should unprocessed experiences and feelings related to the course surface for you during this class, please talk to us so that we may help you process or discern an appropriate referral for you. This class, your professor, the teaching assistant, and fellow students are not a substitute for therapy. Please attend to your self-care and developing self-of-the-therapist through your faith community, external pastoral care, and your own therapy process.

Engagement in the course is a primary vehicle of learning. Students who anticipate issues during the semester such as personal or professional responsibilities need to plan ahead in order to keep on track with their studies.

Students will complete a Participation Self-Assessment by writing a reflection of 300-500 words on their contribution to the course specifically referencing the rubric below including assigning themselves a score (multiplied by two from the rubric).

Participation Rubric

9-10 points - Student comes to sessions prepared to engage with a positive orientation toward the learning milieu, having completed the readings and readily volunteers. Student is attentive, respectful to others, and willingly offers constructive and relevant comments and questions. Student listens courteously to others without interruption and supports collaborative discourse. Student offers any disagreements by making “I” statements and being kind, criticizing intellectual arguments not persons. All questions or comments are pertinent, sincere, and considerate reflecting scholarly concern. Use of technology is limited to educational purposes and does not distract from the learning milieu.

7-8 points - Student is usually prepared and generally positive. Student is always attentive, participates in all activities, and volunteers from time to time. Student listens to others, allows peers to participate, and is respectful of others. Student asks pertinent questions and regularly offers constructive comments. Use of technology is limited to educational purposes and does not distract from the learning milieu.

5-6 points- Student shows evidence of being unprepared on occasion. Student may arrive late or leave early in some instances. Student volunteers infrequently and/or makes unrelated or unhelpful comments. Student asks distracting questions that would not be necessary had the student prepared for class more thoroughly. Use of technology is usually limited to educational purposes and occasionally distracts from the learning milieu.

3-4 points - Student is unprepared and/or inattentive. Student rarely volunteers and demonstrates lack of involvement in class activities. Student may not be attentive or engages in additional activities. Use of technology is beyond educational purposes and distracts from the learning milieu.

0-2 points - Student exhibits lack of concern for the class. Student is minimally present or disruptive to the learning of others. Student is disrespectful to the learning milieu. Student comments include inflammatory or hate speech, which is counter to the ethos of an open learning milieu. Student attitude, behavior, or comments may have a negative influence on the class. Use of technology is disruptive to the learning milieu.

Total Grading Value for Participation with Self-Evaluation: 20 points

Family Map/Genogram with Process Reflection (15%)

Your family map or genogram is a graphic representation of your family of origin and, if applicable, procreation. You will create your own map of three generations including your own, going up the genogram and back into your family of origin. You and any siblings are the first generation. Your parents and their siblings are the second generation. Your grandparents are the third generation. Please also include your own children and grandchildren (going down the map) if applicable. When you are working up the map, you do not need to include multiple off branches of procreation. In other words, while you include their siblings you do not need to create additional mapping for their partners and children. For your own generation, do include these partners and children. As you work down the generational map, include relationships and children (for example, you will include your nieces and nephews). For important relationships, use connection lines for discord, closeness, cut off, fusion, and abuse as needed. Provide a detailed key using standard symbols with explanation such as shading the lower half of the person's shape for significant substance abuse. Include important features such as occupation, education, denomination, location, health issues, ethnicity and other noteworthy points. Circle households and note support systems of importance. You may use software to create your map. Alternatively, you may hand create a very neat map using careful lines and legible handwriting.

Computer generated maps may be used to neatly add by hand additional information. Interview family members in order to include any information currently unknown to you. Do *not* omit information unless you are unable, after a careful exploration, to discern what you need to know to properly map your family. If you have missing information, complete what you do know and note unknown information with a question mark. Use your accompanying narrative (5-6 APA pages) to explain your process of creating your family map as well as points of interest, confusion, or discovered patterns. You do not need to rehash the content of your map in your narrative. Rather, explain your process as well as new insights you have about your family system. You may also include in your narrative information that applies to your whole family and does not need to be mapped individually such as a universally shared ethnicity, denomination, or location.

Map Rubric

A: The family map is an exemplary construct of a family of origin (and procreation, if applicable) genogram carefully following the guidance provided and using sound judgment for individual differences. All familial generations are richly mapped and detailed with extensive additional information as researched and clearly presented

including relational lines, households, support systems, and individual points. The map is easily interpreted using standard symbols, an indexed reference key, and clear mapping patterns created via software or very neat handcrafting. The accompanying narrative provides rich familial context for the map, an explanation of the author's emotional process and new familial information/patterns learned, as well as important pieces of interest.

B: The family map is thoroughly completed using the guidance provided. Each of the three required generations and all additional pieces are included and mapped such as individuals' information, relational lines, and households. The map is software created or neatly hand created. The key is included, clear, and a helpful reference. The accompanying narrative provides familial context for the map and includes important points.

C: The family map is completed following the guidance provided. Each of the three required generations are present and appropriately mapped including individuals' information, relational lines, and households. The map is software created or legibly hand created. The key is included and clear. The accompanying narrative is helpful and includes many important points of the family system.

D: The family map is completed including most of the information for the required generations. Some information or points of interest are provided including some relational lines. The map is software created or drawn. The key includes some reference to the map. The accompanying narrative provides some help reading the map and considers some points of the family system.

F: The family map has some members included with information such as a key or points of interest. The map is software created but unclear or drawn without clear lines. The accompanying narrative is missing, does not provide familial information or is not clearly related to the reading of the map. The map is late in accordance with the submission policy in the course syllabus.

Total Grading Value for Family Map with Narrative: 15 points

Response Papers (40%)

Your response papers are an academic reflection of your reading materials and additional student sourced articles regarding four of the assigned theories for the course: Bowen, Structural, Experiential, and Narrative. Following your **title page**, begin by **briefly summarizing** the given theory. In order to do this, you will need an introductory topic sentence followed by a body in which you concisely state the main

points of the theoretical orientation. In the next section, identify major **strengths** of the theory. Do not simply give your opinion. Support the strengths using logical arguments. For your third section, reflect succinctly on how this theory may **apply** to your own life course, family of origin, family of procreation, or systems you have encountered in your own life (such as the school system, congregational systems, legal systems, etc.). In other words, connect the theory to your own prior knowledge. Next, include a concise **theological reflection** referencing the lecture and discussion material as well as relevant readings. Remember to include a **conclusion** to your response paper followed by your **references**. Response papers are to be 5-6 APA pages (including the title and references).

In sum, the paper will include the following sections:

- I. APA Title Page
- II. Summary
- III. Strengths
- IV. Application
- V. Theological Reflection
- VI. Conclusion
- VII. VII. References

Response Rubric

A: The response provides a scholarly and concise summary of the theory demonstrating deep understanding. Strengths are creative, well explained, and show critical thinking skills. The paper is in deft conversation with theoretical, theological, and clinical arguments in accordance with the assignment description. Reflections pertaining to the student's own life are exemplary matches to the theory and its underpinnings. The APA style is correctly followed with appropriate organization including a title page, introduction, body with headings, conclusion, and reference page that includes five or more substantial student sourced articles in addition to required readings.

B: The response provides a good and concise summary of the theory demonstrating understanding. Clear strengths are delineated. Support for arguments is couched in theoretical, theological, or clinical terms with clear reference to the assignment description. Reflections pertaining to the student's own life course are relevant and demonstrate concepts from the theory using logical connections. A title page, introduction, body, conclusion, and reference page are well organized in the paper.

C: The response provides an adequate summary with some theoretical understanding. Strengths are included with some reference to theory, theology, or clinical presentations. Reflections pertaining to the student's own life course have a logical relevance or connection. A title page, introduction, body, conclusion, and reference page are meaningfully included.

D: The response attempts to summarize the theory. Strengths are included pertaining to the theory. Reflections on the student's own life course are presented. Parts of the paper are present (title page, introduction, body, conclusion, and reference page).

F: The response omits a meaningful summary, critique, or personal connection to the student's life course. Important parts of the paper are missing. The paper includes language that communicates disregard for the learning process, disrespect for others, or hate speech. The paper is late in accordance with the submission policy in the course syllabus.

Total Grading Value for Response Papers: 40 points

Final Examination (25%)

Students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning over the course of the semester on a multiple-choice examination of 55 questions covering the content of the course including readings, lectures, discussion, and videos posted on Canvas. Students are strongly encouraged to take notes and mark their texts throughout their engagement with course materials to assist in their successful completion of the final examination and these may be referenced during the examination. A link to the examination will be provided on Canvas to be activated at the start time assigned by the registrar. The access code will be written on the classroom board and is not to be shared. Time limit for the test is three hours from beginning and will be proctored in the room assigned by the registrar.

Total Grading Value for Final Examination: 25 points

Point Calculations

Participation with Self-Assessment	20 pts
Genogram/Map with Narrative	15 pts
Response Papers	40 pts
Final Examination	25 pts
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Points Possible	100 pts

Course Schedule (subject to change at professor's discretion; come to class having read the assigned reading listed in that week)

Topic	Date of Class	Come to class having read
Welcome to Theoretical Foundations	9/10	Syllabus, N&D 1, Y&S 1
Introduction to Systemic Therapy, Theory & Thinking	9/17	N&D 3, Y&S 2
Bowen*	9/24	N&D 4, Y&S 3
Conceptualizing the Family	10/01	
Structural*	10/08	N&D 6, Y&S 5
Research & Study Week	10/15 No class	
Experiential*	10/22	N&D 7, Y&S 8
New Developments, Power & Solution Focused	10/29	N&D 10&11
Mapping	11/05	Bring Draft of Map & Reflection
Narrative*	11/12	N&D 12, Y&S 11
Integrative Therapy	11/19	Y&S 12
Integrative Therapy	11/26	
Looking Ahead	12/03	Y&S 21
Final Examination	TBA	

*Theories with Response Papers

Due Dates

Bowen Response Paper	10/04
Structural Response Paper	10/18
Experiential Response Paper	11/01
Map and Reflection	11/08
Narrative Response Paper	11/22
Participation Self-Evaluation	12/04

Course Policies

Student responsibility- Class attendance is expected. Read the assigned material prior to each class session and come to class prepared to participate in the discussions. You are responsible for all assignments, material presented in class, videos, and assigned texts. Lectures may supplement, highlight, or bring something entirely different from what is included in the text. This class is intended to provide a safe space for students to disclose pertinent information to contribute to the discussion which may be of a personal nature. Student disclosures are expected to be treated as confidential by other students and neither repeated nor characterized outside of class. No part of this class may be recorded.

Classroom Behavior - Tardiness and early departures are distracting and not appreciated by me as the instructor, nor your fellow classmates. Please avoid these behaviors unless absolutely necessary. Kindly note and follow participation guidelines.

Inclusive/Expansive Language – The practice of using inclusive language is encouraged of all LPTS staff, students, and faculty. In classroom discussions and writing assignments it is important to avoid divisive terms that reinforce stereotypes or are pejorative. Please access the following web page for resources to assist in using non-biased language: <http://www.lpts.edu/academics/academic-resources/guides-policies-and-handbooks/inclusive-and-expansive-language>

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. Please note, absence from a three hour class is equivalent to two absences from a one-and-one-half-hour-class. Students missing more than two three hour classes may not pass.

Late work – Due dates for every assignment are provided above. There are no make-ups for in-class activities or the final exam. If you experience extenuating circumstances (e.g., you are hospitalized) that prohibit you from submitting your assignments on time, please let inform in writing at verena.schmidt@lpts.edu. These instances will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Writing guidelines - All assignments should be submitted typed in 12-point font using Times New Roman one-inch margins, and double-spaced.

Homework assignments assume a certain level of writing skills, and points will be deducted if your writing assignments are difficult to read due to poor writing. If you need assistance with your writing, please visit the LPTS online writing lab, <http://>

lpts.libguides.com/OWL, or schedule an appointment with the academic support center (ASC).

All assignments should be completed using APA format 7th edition.

If you have questions, please see the following resources:

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Purdue Online Writing Lab: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html

Assignments that do not meet the writing guidelines will be returned for correction and will not be graded until corrected. Assignments will be reduced by five points for each day (excluding the grace day) after the assignment is late due to failure to adhere to the writing guidelines.

Drop/Withdrawal - If you decide to withdraw from this course, you must follow the Registrar's Office's specified procedures. A student can change course load during the first two weeks of regular semesters with no notation on their transcript. After the first two weeks, the student may withdraw and receive a WP or WF notation. Withdrawal from a course during the last four weeks of class will result in a failing grade; withdrawal for medical reasons may be an exception. Students seeking a withdraw-medical (WM) must file a formal written request with the Dean of the Seminary no later than 5 p.m. of the last day of classes of the term in which the course is taught. In the case of medical causes, a student who receives a withdraw-medical will be required to submit to the Dean of the Seminary certification from the treating physician or therapist of the student's ability to resume academic and professional work before being readmitted to classes in the following term or semester.

Academic Honesty - All work turned in to the instructor is expected to be the human 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 the 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, Student Handbook, p. 16.

Special Accommodations - Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Academic Support Center during the **first two weeks** of a semester. Anyone who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact us to arrange an appointment within the **first three class sessions**. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs and explore potential accommodations. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Grading Scale and Philosophy

A 94-100

A- 90-93

B+ 86-89

B 84-85

B- 80-83

C+ 76-79

C 74-75

C- 70-73

F Below 70

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

A Grade of A Represents

- (1) Superior understanding of course material and evidence of ability to analyze critically and synthesize creatively.
- (2) Sound techniques of scholarship in all projects.
- (3) Creativity, imagination, sound judgment, and intellectual curiosity in relating the course material to other areas of intellectual investigation.

A Grade of B Represents

(1) Understanding of course material; evidence of ability to produce viable generalizations and insightful implications. (2) Understanding of techniques of scholarship in all projects. (3) Sustained interest and the ability to communicate the ideas and concepts, which are part of the subject matter of the course.

A Grade of C Represents

(1) Understanding of course material demonstrated by few errors in fact and judgment when discussing the materials. (2) Competence in the techniques of scholarship. (3) Satisfaction of the minimum stated requirements for the course in preparation, outside reading, and class participation.

A Grade of D Represents

(1) A minimal understanding of the course material demonstrated by some errors in fact and judgment when discussing the material. (2) Very little competence in the techniques of scholarship. (3) Satisfaction of somewhat less than the minimum standard of requirements for the course in preparation, outside reading, and class participation. A grade of D will not be conferred as it is not sufficient for building competencies.

A Grade of F Represents

(1) A lack of understanding of the course material demonstrated by many errors in fact and judgment when discussing the material. (2) An inability to use sound techniques of scholarship. (3) Failure to meet the standard and fulfill the requirements of the course.

I - Incomplete W - Withdrawn

Appendix

MFT Student Learning Outcomes

SLO 1 Graduating students will be able to flexibly conduct evidence-based, systemic therapy with individuals, couples and families that meets entry-level professional standards in both face to face and telehealth contexts.

SLO2 Graduating students will demonstrate a broad knowledge of systemic theory and MFT treatment models and flexibly apply these in evidence-based practice in both face to face and telehealth contexts.

SLO3 Graduating students will be able to think ethically and make appropriate clinical ethical decisions.

SLO4 Graduating students will be able to use a multi-contextual, antiracist approach to Marriage and Family Therapy that attends to religious, cultural, racial, economic, gender, and sexual orientation diversity and intersectional contexts in client, client-therapist, supervisory, and broader social systems.

SLO5 Graduating students will be able to use a theologically informed and clinically appropriate framework to integrate religious and spiritual factors into the practice of Marriage and Family Therapy.

SLO6 Graduating students will be able to apply an ethical framework, including but not limited to the AAMFT Code of Ethics, to make appropriate decisions in therapy, advocacy, service and public participation.