

**PCf 3083  
Syllabus  
Theories of Change  
Fall 2021**

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**Course Description:**

This course explores the epistemological foundations for the practice of Marriage and Family Therapy, especially as this is integrated in a theological context. The course is a graduate seminar and heavily focused on reading and class discussion. Course content centers a deep understanding of how epistemological assumptions guide theory, models and practice, and critical evaluation of traditional and emerging models of family therapy. One primary goal is for students to develop skill in: (1) describing and discussing epistemological and theoretical foundations of primary models of family therapy and (2) describe and discuss a personal theory of change that guides model selection and therapeutic choices in the practice of MFT.

<b><u>Theories of Change: Course Outcomes</u></b>		
<b><u>By the end of the semester, students will:</u></b>	<b><u>Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) &amp; Developmental Competencies</u></b>	<b><u>Assessment Signature Assignments</u></b>
Develop a historically-informed understanding of family therapy through the lens of epistemology and theory.	SLO: 2 Dev. Comp. 1, 2, 5	Theory of Change paper
Demonstrate skill in critically discerning and discussing the epistemological foundations for principal therapeutic schools of thought in Family Systems Theory.	SLO: 2 Dev. Comp. 1, 5	Theory of Change paper
Demonstrate the ability to describe one's own theory of change to clients, colleagues, supervisors and potential employers.	SLO: 2 Dev. Comp. 1 LPTS Comp. A	Theory of Change paper
Discuss the dynamic interaction between theoretical foundations in family therapy and key theological understandings of existence, creation, and the human person in a moral and relational ecological context.	SLO: 5 Dev. Comp. 3 LPTS Comp. B	Theory of Change paper

Able to discuss theoretical models and the student's own theory of change in a framework that attends to non-Western, multicultural, intersectional, and structural analysis of theory and clinical practice.	SLO: 4 DC: 1, 3	Theory of Change paper
<p><b><u>Student Learning Outcomes Specifically Related to this Class</u></b></p> <p>SLO2 Graduating students will demonstrate a broad knowledge of systemic theory and MFT treatment models and flexibly apply these in evidence-based practice.</p> <p>SLO4 Graduating students will be able to use a multi-contextual and antiracist strategies in Marriage and Family Therapy that attend appropriately to religious, cultural, racial, economic, gender, sexual orientation, diversity in client, client-therapist, supervisory, and broader social systems.</p> <p>SLO5 Graduating students will be able to use a clinically appropriate theological/spiritual framework in the practice of Marriage and Family Therapy.</p>		
<p><b><u>COAMFTE Developmental Competencies Related to the Class</u></b></p> <p>Dev. Comp. 1: Knowledge  Dev. Comp. 2: Practice  Dev. Comp. 3: Diversity  Dev. Comp. 5: Research  LPTS Comp. A: Self of Therapist  LPTS Comp. B: Spiritual/theological integration</p>		

### **Method**

This class is a graduate seminar.

- Most work for this class will take place independently in the form of reading, watching video examples and lectures, and responding to questions related to weekly content. Class sessions are for discussion with colleagues and questions the professor and class may explore.
- Synchronous class session discussion sessions will be 1.0 hours long on assigned dates.

### **Assignments**

**Expected:** Complete required reading and watch required videos for each class.

**25% of Grade:** Respond to essay questions posed for each class period and submit these through Canvas before the corresponding synchronous class session. Responses to essay questions must not exceed 1 page. The point is to think about these issues and then present your ideas succinctly and clearly.

**25% of Grade:** Participate in discussing essay questions and other questions with classmates in the synchronous class period. Assessment: See Rubric.

**Note that essay questions and class discussion can form an effective platform for shaping your Theory of Change.**

**50% of Grade: Due Last Day of Finals, December 16 by 5:00 pm.**

Write an essay of no more than 15 double-spaced pages describing your own theory of change.

Be sure, at a minimum, to discuss:

- Your guiding epistemology;
- How a theory, theories or therapeutic models have influenced your personal theory of change;
- How your theory, as described, impacts the decisions you make in clinical practice;
- How your spiritual or religious commitments or consciousness intersect with how you define and facilitate change as a therapist;
- How your theory of change embodies anti-racist and diversity/advocacy commitments in your clinical practice.

### **Texts**

Becvar, D.S. and Becvar, R.J. (2014). *Family therapy: A systemic integration, 8<sup>th</sup> ed.* Boston: Pearson.

### **Supplemental Texts**

Browning, D.S. (1987). *Religion and the modern psychologies.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Duncan, B. L., S. D. Miller, B. E. Wampold, and M. A. Hubble (2009). *The heart and soul of change.* 2 ed. (2009). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Keeney, B. (2002). *Aesthetics of change, revised ed.* New York: Guilford Press

Luepnitz, D. (1988). *The family interpreted.* New York: Basic Books.

### **Policies**

#### **Use of 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 more information, see:

<http://www.lpts.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-support-center/online-writing-lab/avoiding-gender-bias>

## **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. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

## **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](mailto:kmapes@lpts.edu)) during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) 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 MFT Program papers should follow the American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Copies of the manual 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. This includes synchronous Zoom meetings. Multiple class absences and arriving late for class may result in lower grade or failing the class.

**Email Policy:** Emails will be responded to as quickly as possible. However, emails sent on the weekend may not be responded to until Monday. It is highly recommended that you provide sufficient time before an assignment is due for receiving a response to an email asking a question.

## **Grading: 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 consistently and well in academic work. This is translated into grades in the following way:

- Basic mastery of the body of knowledge at a level expected in graduate study will earn scores in the B to B+ range.
- Grades of A- are granted for work which demonstrates basic mastery of the body of knowledge, and independent thought about the subject matter.
- Grades of A are granted for work which demonstrates mastery of the required body of knowledge, independent thought about the subject matter, 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.

## Schedule 2021

Access highlighted videos at psychotherapy.net through LPTS website. Choose Library at the top of the home page and "Research Databases". Scroll down to Psychotherapy.net. Click on this database, enter your library identification number and password 4207. Once you are in the library look for the highlighted title from the 50 available videos.

Date	Classroom	Assigned reading and videos. Some are links to websites, some are psychotherapy.net, and some are lectures.
9/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Be prepared to discuss the reading assignment for today.</b></li> </ul>	Becvar & Becvar Chs 1, <b>Video Lecture: Theories of Change Actual 1</b> (Townsend)  Psychotherapy.net video: Family Systems Therapy, Kenneth Hardy
No Essay for this class session.		
9/20	<b>Systemic epistemology: Concepts and Therapeutic Implications for Change</b>  Vocabulary 1-Cybernetics: 2-System Wholeness & Ecology 3-Circular causation 4-Feedback/Homeostasis 5-Recursion & levels 6-Autopoeisis 7-Closed/open systems/entropy 8-First/second order change 9-Equifinality/Equipotentiality 10-Isomorphism:	Becvar & Becvar Chs 2, 3, 15  Video: Patron Saint--Bateson:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nW3ovmBjQ9I">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nW3ovmBjQ9I</a>  <a href="https://www.facebook.com/MFTExam/videos/in-this-video-find-out-why-cybernetics-hierarchical-structure-incongruous-hierar/299921394658674/">https://www.facebook.com/MFTExam/videos/in-this-video-find-out-why-cybernetics-hierarchical-structure-incongruous-hierar/299921394658674/</a>
Essay (sort of): In no more than 15 words each, define the 10 vocabulary concepts above.		
9/27	<b>Epistemology &amp; Change Communication Approaches</b>	Becvar & Becvar Ch. 10  Video: Paul Watzlawick <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7etsh4HwG78">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7etsh4HwG78</a>  psychotherapy.net: <b>Virginia Satir Therapy by Jean McClendon</b>
Essay (be sure to use examples from your clinical work). Think about: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How would you describe this theory's epistemology?</li> <li>2. What about this theory attracts you and/or puts you off from using it in clinical practice? Why?</li> <li>3. What problems do you see with this theory as it applies to your own practice? Why?</li> <li>4. If we are concerned about anti-racist practice, what elements of this theory's epistemology and form of practice might (a) support that commitment? Why? (b) Might undercut that commitment? Why?</li> </ol>		
10/4	<b>Epistemology &amp; Change Strategic &amp; Milan</b>	Becvar & Becvar Ch. 11  <b>Video Lecture MRI and Communication Theory</b> (Townsend)

	<p>Essay:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe “paradox” and make a case for why it is important in therapy.</li> <li>2. How does change take place according to strategic therapy?</li> </ol> <p>Extra credit: Give an example of Jesus using paradox and second order cybernetics.</p>	
10/11	<b>Epistemology &amp; Change: Structural Approach</b>	<p>Becvar &amp; Becvar Ch 9</p> <p>Video:  <a href="#">Psychotherapy.net, A House Divided: Structural Therapy with an African American Family</a></p>
	<p>Essay</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How would you describe this theory’s epistemology?</li> <li>2. What about this theory attracts you and/or puts you off from using it in clinical practice? Why?</li> <li>3. What problems do you see with this theory as it applies to your own practice? Why?</li> <li>4. If we are concerned about anti-racist practice, what elements of this theory’s epistemology and form of practice might (a) support that commitment? Why? (b) Might undercut that commitment? Why?</li> </ol>	
10/18	<b>Research and Reading</b>	
10/25	<b>Epistemology &amp; Change: Natural Systems (Bowen)</b>	<p>Becvar &amp; Becvar Ch 7</p> <p>Psychotherapy.net.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Bowenian Family Therapy with Phillip Guerin</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Harnessing the Power of the Genogram, Monica McGoldrick</a></li> </ol>
	<p>Essay How would you describe this theory’s epistemology?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What about this theory attracts you and/or puts you off from using it in clinical practice? Why?</li> <li>2. What problems do you see with this theory as it applies to your own practice? Why?</li> <li>3. If we are concerned about anti-racist practice, what elements of this theory’s epistemology and form of practice might (a) support that commitment? Why? (b) Might undercut that commitment? Why?</li> </ol>	
11/1	<b>Epistemology &amp; Change: Object Relations</b>	<p>Becvar &amp; Becvar Ch. 6</p> <p>Psychotherapy.net  <a href="#">Object Relations Family Therapy, with Sharff and Scharff</a></p>
	<p>Essay: How would you describe this theory’s epistemology?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What about this theory attracts you and/or puts you off from using it in clinical practice? Why?</li> <li>2. What problems do you see with this theory as it applies to your own practice? Why?</li> <li>3. If we are concerned about anti-racist practice, what elements of this theory’s epistemology and form of practice might (a) support that commitment? Why? (b) Might undercut that commitment? Why?</li> </ol>	
11/8	<b>Epistemology &amp; Change: Contextual Therapy</b>	<p>Becvar &amp; Becvar Ch. 6</p> <p>Video:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhfzKnZDQ6s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhfzKnZDQ6s</a></p>
	<p>Essay: How and why would you use Contextual Therapy in your practice? How might your choice be guided by issues of justice?</p>	
11/15	<b>Epistemology &amp; Change Experiential Approaches</b>	<p>Becvar &amp; Becvar Ch 8</p> <p>Psychotherapy.net, <a href="#">Experiential Family Therapy with Carl Whitaker</a></p>

	Essay: How would you describe this theory's epistemology? 1. What about this theory attracts you and/or puts you off from using it in clinical practice? Why? 2. What problems do you see with this theory as it applies to your own practice? Why? 3. If we are concerned about anti-racist practice, what elements of this theory's epistemology and form of practice might (a) support that commitment? Why? (b) Might undercut that commitment? Why?	
11/22	<b>Epistemology &amp; Change: Cognitive/Behavioral</b>	Becvar & Becvar Ch. 12  Diane Gehart: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RekSgH76w3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RekSgH76w3s</a>
	Essay: What misconceptions have you had about Cognitive-Behavioral Family Therapy and how might it fit in your Theory of Change?	
11/29	<b>Epistemology and Change: Postmodern Approaches</b>	Becvar & Becvar 13  Psychotherapy.net, 1. Narrative Therapy with Stephen Madigan 2. Solution-Focused Therapy with Insoo Kim Berg
	Essay: How would you describe this theory's epistemology? 3. What about this theory attracts you and/or puts you off from using it in clinical practice? Why? 4. What problems do you see with this theory as it applies to your own practice? Why? 5. If we are concerned about anti-racist practice, what elements of this theory's epistemology and form of practice might (a) support that commitment? Why? (b) Might undercut that commitment? Why?	
12/6	<b>Epistemology and Change: Thinking about Thinking</b>	Becvar and Becvar Ch 18
	No Essay	
12/16	<b>Theory of Change Paper Due Last Day of Finals, December 16 by 5:00 pm.</b>	

<b>Assignment: Essay Question Scoring</b>		
Demonstrates understanding of concepts and practices highlighted in reading and video.		
Demonstrates professionally useful understanding of how		



epistemology of a model being considered guides practice.		
Makes a connection between therapy model's epistemology and practice and broader concerns of social meaning, theology, etc.		
Discussion leadership--shows expert ability to engage the class in a focused, critical discussion of issues.		
		Letter Grade Score:

<b>Assignment: Class Participation</b>		
	Meets Expectations	Does not Meet Expectations
Offers statements, questions, and opinions related to class material		
Engages other students in a positive, collaborative manner		
Takes risks to engage in collaborative conversations		
Comments add depth and breadth to class discussion		
Vocalizes and tolerates difference of opinion and diverse visions of the class session material appropriate to the classroom setting and collaborative process		
		Letter Grade Score

**Rubric: Theory of Change Paper**

- Write a 15 page double spaced paper (APA 7) describing your personal theory of change and how this theory guides your work as a therapist. Your paper should include, but not limited to:
  - A general description of your theory and theology of change (that is, what do you believe about how and why clients change in therapy?).
  - Clarity about the epistemological assumptions and commitments that support your theory of change.
  - Description of how your preferred model of therapy connects with your epistemological assumptions and commitments. Does it account for biology, psychology, social/contextual factors, life of the spirit, etc.? How?
  - How do these commitments and beliefs translate into choice of therapy model and inform your in-session decisions of what to do with clients? Be specific.
  - Be sure to consider contextual issues, such as how systemic racism, diversities, and cultural factors influence your epistemological and theoretical thinking.
  - Address a beginning theological framework for your theory of change. For instance, what place does religion or spirituality play in your theory of change? How do your theological/religious beliefs influence what you expect and what you believe you know about therapy, clients, life, change, etc.

	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations	SLOs and Competencies
Theory of change is well grounded in a nuanced, critically analyzed use of MFT theory.			SLO: 1. Dev. Comp. 1
Epistemological assumptions and commitments framing the argument for the student's theory of change are identified and justified with insight and critical thought.			SLO: 1 Dev. Comp. 1
Student relates theory of change directly to preferred models of therapy in a nuanced, critically evaluated way. Shows clear evidence and examples that demonstrate how theory of change influences and directs therapeutic action.			SLO: 1, 2 Dev. Comp. 1,2
Demonstrates coherence between concepts, theory of change, practice.			SLO 1 Dev. Comp. 1, 2
Theory of change demonstrates clear attention to multicultural, multireligious, anti-racist and other contextual and diversity factors that frame and influence family therapy.			SLO: 4 Dev. Comp. 3
Paper attends directly to theological and spiritual factors related to theory of change. Good use of theological thought in addressing human change, appropriate use of personal faith tradition and understanding of religious diversity.			SLO: 5 Dev. Comp. 4 LPTS Comp. B
	Letter Grade Score:		