

“Reflective Professionals Building Learning Communities”

COURSE TITLE

COUN 420: Introduction to Family Counseling

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

name  
office  
phone number  
email

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course focuses on major theories and techniques of family counseling. Lectures, student research, and role playing are utilized as presentation forms.

PREREQUISITES

Graduate standing, COUN 401, COUN 403

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Napier, A.Y. & Whitaker, C. (1988). *The family crucible: The intensive experience of family therapy*. New York: Harper and Row.

Nichols, L., M.P., & Schwartz, R.C. (2000). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods* (5th Ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

INSTRUCTIONAL MODE

The course will include lectures, film and an experiential component. Videos will include:

Constructing a Multigenerational Genogram, Mininger Foundation  
James Framo, Family Issues, IAMFC  
Virginia Satir, Substance Abuse Consultation  
Triad, Carl Whitaker, Consultation  
Triad, Salvador Minuchin, IAMFT Masters Series  
Jay Haley, Heroin My Baby, Indep  
Michael White, IAMFC  
Insoo Kim Berg, IAMFC

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the course are to help students to

1. understand the history and development of family counseling and understand the structure and operations of professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentialing bodies pertaining to the practice of marital, couple and family counseling/therapy (e.g., the International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors);
2. understand the role of marital, couple and family counselors in a variety of settings in relation to other helping professionals;
3. understand family development in a multicultural society, including family of origin and intergenerational influences, cultural heritages, marital, couple and family cycle dynamics, healthy family functioning, family structures, socioeconomic status, and belief systems;
4. achieve a basic understanding of general systems theory; understand the key elements, concepts, and techniques associated with major theories of family counseling; identify the strengths and limitations of each of the major theories of family counseling; and apply each of the major theories to problem situations in a manner congruent with theoretical principles ;
5. be aware of ethical principles as they apply to family counseling, including reimbursement recognition and right to practice;
6. be aware of existing research on best practices and outcome studies in resolving family issues in research and technology applications in marital, couple and family therapy;
7. develop skills in basic interventions of family therapy based on the major theoretical positions;
8. identify countertransference issues, personal values, beliefs and behavioral patterns based on family of origin and current family roles;
9. implications of professional issues unique to marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy, including recognition, reimbursement, and right to practice; and
10. the role of racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage, nationality, socioeconomic status, family structure, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and spiritual beliefs, occupation, physical and mental status, and equity issues in marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy.

## COURSE CONTENT

All instructors will include but not be limited to consideration of the following topics:

- definition of family therapy
- history of family therapy movement
- professional organization, journals and credentialing of MFTs
- Systems Theory
- Family therapy models
  - Communications model (Jackson, Bateson, Weakland, Haley, Satir)
  - Structural model (Minuchin)
  - Strategic model (Haley, Palazzoli-Selvini)
  - Experiential model (Whitaker, Satir)
  - Behavioral model (Patterson)
  - Systems model (Bowen)
  - Object Relations model

comparative analysis of models  
ethical considerations  
multicultural issues  
family therapy research  
special topics

Key concepts to be included within each of these theories include the following:

Systems Theory

circular (vs. linear) causality  
identified patient  
interpersonal (vs. intrapsychic)  
principle of non-summativity  
homeostasis  
negative feedback  
positive feedback  
family rules  
triangle  
structure  
equifinality

Communication model

double bind  
content level of communication  
metacommunicative level of communication  
faulty/incongruent communication  
clear/congruent communication

Structural model

family structure  
subsystem/holon  
boundaries (rigid, diffuse, clear)  
enmeshed family  
disengaged family  
joining (tracking, nimesis)  
structural diagnosis (enactments, spontaneous sequences)  
restructuring (intensity, boundary making, unbalancing, reframing)  
mapping

Strategic model

repeating sequences of problem behavior  
straightforward directives  
paradoxical directives  
prescriptions

Experiential model  
growth  
awareness  
emotional experiencing  
existential encounter  
family sculpting  
family choreography  
role playing

### REQUIRED PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES

1. Students will keep a journal after each class, exploring personal reactions to class topics and identified family of origin or current family issues. Journals will be collected each week and graded for completion rather than content. Students need to turn in a total of 10 journals, approximately one per class. (10%)
2. Students will construct a genogram that includes their family of origin (this is the focus) and their current family (briefly). The genogram should be on regular size paper. Students will write a brief autobiographical paper to accompany the genogram, including sections on significant events within the family, role served in the family and explicit and implicit family rules. The paper should reflect your knowledge of the material explored in class and the application of those materials to the development of the paper. In addition, the paper should explain the effect on doing the assignment on the student. (did you do any research for it? Did you find out anything you did not know? Overall effect on you of the assignment). Paper should be 3-5 pages long. (20%)
3. Students will write and submit 10 assessment questionnaires. The questionnaires capture the theoretical model discussed in the previous week. Students are to submit a one page typed assessment questionnaire of family functioning based on the theoretical model. The assessment may take the form of scales, open ended questions, choice questions, etc. (30%). The assessment questionnaire must:
  - a. identify key constructs of the model
  - b. distinguish distressed families from those functioning well
  - c. identify areas of clinical intervention, if applicable
  - d. highlight areas of ethical concern, if applicable

The assessment questionnaire needs to have no less than 5 questions, no more than 10. Examples will be given in class.

4. Students will write a case study on a family of their choice. Guidelines for the case assessment will be given in class (30%). The family assessment is for class assignment purposes only and is not intended to be an intervention with the family. Have the family members give written consent and mask their names and any other identifying information. In the beginning of the paper, instead of Reason for Referral, write about how you decided to interview this particular family.

GRADING POLICY

Reaction papers	10%
Genogram	20%
Assessments	30%
Case study	30%
Timeliness, attendance, participation attention to guidelines, etc.	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

Grading Scale:      100-90 = A    89-80 = B    79-70 = C    69-60 = D    Below 60 = F

INFORMED CONSENT

In compliance with the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics regarding counselor training, and because the Department of Counselor Education at Northeastern Illinois University is a clinical training program as well as a graduate degree program, admission to this department indicates that an admitted student agrees to self-disclosure of personal information in papers, journals, discussions and other assignments for the purposes of self-reflection and awareness and improvement of interpersonal skills.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. For more information, please see the University Catalogue.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

The following chart indicates the relationship of the learning/performance objectives of this course, the standards of the various professional organizations, and the means by which learning is assessed.

<b>COUN 420 Course Objectives</b>	<b>DCE Objectives</b>	<b>COE Objectives</b>	<b>CACREP Standards</b>	<b>Means of Assessment</b>
1. history and profession	1a. history, goals, ethical, legal standards	foundations	A1. history, philosophical and etiological premises of marital, couple, and family counseling A2. professional organizations, preparation standards, marital, couple, and family credentialing bodies A4. implications of professional issues	journal assessment questionnaires
2. role	1e. counselor client relationship, counseling strategies, representative counseling models	organizational culture	A5. role of marital, couple, and family counselors	journal assessment questionnaires, case study
3. development	1c. social and cultural change within a	diversity	A6. racial, ethnic, cultural heritage, socioeconomic status	journal assessment

<b>COUN 420 Course Objectives</b>	<b>DCE Objectives</b>	<b>COE Objectives</b>	<b>CACREP Standards</b>	<b>Means of Assessment</b>
	pluralistic society			questionnaires, case study
4. systems theory	1b. theories, concepts, and principles of normal and abnormal human development	foundations, content/introduction	C1. family systems theories and applications (legal, legislative, school, community) C2. interviewing, assessment and case management skills, systemic interventions	journal assessment questionnaires case study
5. ethics	1a. history, goals, ethical, legal standards		A3. ethical and legal considerations	journal
6. research, best practices	1j. understanding and conceptualization of scientific research within the counseling field	research	C5. research and technology applications B3. societal trends and treatment issues on family, couple functioning	journal case study
7. skills, assessments	2b. supervised laboratory practice, probing, verbal and nonverbal interaction, statements, summarization, self-disclosure	assessment	C2. interviewing, assessment, case management skills for working with individuals, couples, families, and other systems	journal genogram case study
8. countertransference	2a. didactic, self-assessment, group process activities	professional development	A6. racial, ethnic, cultural heritage, socioeconomic status C2. interviewing, assessment, case management skills for working with individuals, couples, families, and other systems	journal genogram

### STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Northeastern Illinois University does not discriminate against employees or students on the basis of disability. In addition, the university provides reasonable accommodations for both employees and students with disability. Students seeking reasonable accommodations in the classroom should contact the Accessibility Center/HELP, A-118 (phone 773/442-5495, 5496, or 5497; TDD 773/442-5499). The University Policy on Services for Students with Disabilities may be found at: <http://www.neiu.edu/%7EDeanSt/survival/disabilities.pdf>. Students should feel free to meet with the instructor, in confidence, at any time to discuss any reasonable accommodations or removal of barriers that may hinder full inclusion and participation in the course and their learning experience.

COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
Week 1	Introduction	
	Systems Theory	Ch. 1, 2, 4
Week 2	Normal Family Processes	
Week 3	Assessment	Ch. 3
	Interviewing, Initial Interviewing	
Week 4	Bowen	Ch. 5
Week 5	Experiential	Ch. 6
		Bowen Assessment Due
Week 6	Structural	Ch. 8
		Experiential Assessment Due
Week 7	Cognitive Behavioral	Ch. 9
		Structural Assessment Due
Week 8	Strategic and Systemic	Ch. 11
		Cognitive Behavioral Assessment Due
Week 9	Solution-Focused	Ch. 11
		Strategic/Systemic Assessment Due
Week 10	Narrative/Milan	Ch. 12
		Solution-Focused Assessment Due
		Genogram Due
Week 11	Feminist Theories	Ch. 13
		Narrative Assessment Due
Week 12	Integrative Theories	Ch. 13
Week 13	Ethical Issues	Ch. 13
	Professional Issues Unique to Marital, Couple, and Family Counseling	
Week 14	Cultural Issues	Ch. 13
	Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Heritage, Other Factors Related to Diversity	
Week 15	Final Projects	Family Case Study Due
	Wrap-Up	

## REFERENCES

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### **Child Abuse**

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### **Adoption And Infertility**

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### **Alcoholism**

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### **Divorce**

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### **Journals**

*American Journal of Family Therapy*

*Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*

*Family Process*

*Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*

*Journal of Family Psychology*

*Journal of Strategic and Systemic Therapies*

*Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*

*Journal of Psychotherapy and the Family*

*Voices*