

Western Seminary—Portland

Family Systems Therapy Syllabus—Fall 2010

CNS 503 Family Systems Therapy, 2 Credits

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Course Description & Learning Goals: Family Systems Therapy focuses on

- Understanding how families function as systems, including “normal” family function, the family under stress, managing anxiety & conflict within the family, developmental transitions and multicultural perspectives
- Developing and using genograms to analyze family systems
- Understanding the student’s own family as a system
- Learning about the history, key theories and theorists associated with family systems therapy
- Beginning to understand and use basic interventions in family therapy from multiple theory perspectives

Textbooks:

The Essentials of Family Therapy, (5th Edition), Michael P. Nichols, Prentice Hall; 5th edition (January 21, 2010)

Genograms: Assessment and Intervention (Third Edition), Randy Gerson, Monica McGoldrick, Sueli Petry, W. W. Norton & Company; 3rd edition (February 17, 2008)

Optional: *Genopro* genogram software available for download online at www.genopro.com. *Genopro* sells for \$49 for a single-user license. If you plan to use genograms with your clients, it is handy to have on your computer to use in session.

Class Expectations:

- Complete all assigned reading by the date specified
- Participate in classroom activities and discussion
- Attend class—grade reduction results if missing more than two class sessions or a pattern of leaving class early or arriving late
- Complete assignments by due dates—late papers receive grade reductions

Class Notes & Papers

I would like to make this class as paperless as possible. I will not be duplicating notes after the first week, however I will be posting notes on SkyDrive each week. You will receive an e-mail with a link to the notes by the Sunday before each Tuesday class. You will be able to download the notes to your computer or print them out before class if you choose to do so.

All **papers** should be submitted digitally in an e-mail attachment or uploaded to SkyDrive with a link sent to me by e-mail (if you have a Hotmail account). The only **exception** is your genogram if you have done it by hand on sheets of paper rather than in digital form. Papers should be submitted in Microsoft Word or in a PDF. If you want to have my comments, please send it in Word. (You can do this on SkyDrive if you don’t have Word on your computer.)

Assignments:

1. Paper Due _____

Your own family genogram depicting at least three generations. If you are married or engaged, include both partners' families. If you are single, include friends network. A five page paper must be submitted with the genogram addressing the following:

- a. Family themes, function and roles
- b. Key events
- c. Triangles including at least three involving yourself
- d. Revelations from interviews
- e. How this activity affected your perception of your family & family members

2. Presentation Due _____

Participate in a group project covering one model of family systems therapy (strategic, structural, communication, psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, experiential, solution-focused, narrative). Each person in the group will be responsible for a part of the presentation.

Each model presentation will include these features:

- a) History of the model
- b) Key features
- c) Key theorists including contributions & publications
- d) Strengths and weaknesses
- e) A two-page summary (one page on both sides) to distribute to classmates

3. Paper Due _____

Three-page reflection paper summarizing your experience in your class "family". How did your arranged family compare to your own family of origin? (See In-Class Activity below.)

In-Class Activity

During this semester you will be assigned to a "family" made up of yourself and other class members. You will be given specific instructions concerning your part in the family dynamic. It is essential that you perform your role as consistently and as faithfully as possible. Please consider this activity to be as important as your papers and your presentation.

Final Exam

The final exam will cover material from the entire course including models & associated theorists, basic genogram information, vocabulary and general systems theory. Questions will be distilled from in-class lectures, classmate presentations and assigned reading.

Grading

<u>Paper/Activity</u>	<u>Percentage of Grade</u>
Genogram Assignment	25%
Presentation	20%
Reflection Paper	15%
In-Class Participation	15%
Final Exam	25%

Grading, continued

<u>Total Points</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
94 – 100	A
90 – 93	A-
87 – 89	B+
84 – 86	B
80 – 83	B-
77 – 79	C+
76 – Below	Repeat the class

Family Systems Therapy, Fall 2010 Class Schedule

Date	Subjects Covered	Assignments Due	Reading Due
August 31 st	Introduction to Family Systems Presentation Groups		
September 7 th	Genograms McGoldrick DVD		Genograms Ch. 1-4
September 14 th	Triangles McGoldrick DVD		Genograms Ch. 5-8
September 21 st	Fundamentals Family Groups		Nichols Ch. 1-4
September 28 th	Bowen		Nichols Ch. 5
October 5 th	Strategic FS & Religion	Group Presentation	Nichols Ch. 6
October 12 th	Structural FS & Addiction	Group Presentation	Nichols Ch. 7
October 19 th	Experiential FS & Ethics	Group Presentation	Nichols Ch. 8
October 26 th	Psychodynamic Family Secrets DVD	Group Presentation	Nichols Ch. 9
November 9 th	Cognitive-Behavioral Record Keeping	Group Presentation Genogram & Paper	Nichols Ch. 10-11
November 16 th	Solution-Focused & Narrative Children & FS Therapy	Group Presentations	Nichols Ch. 12-13

November 23 rd	Integration What Works?	Group Presentation	Nichols Ch. 14-15
December 7 th	Review	Reflection Paper	
December 14 th		Final Exam	