Instructor: Dr. J. Robert Nations
Email: bnations@centenary-ws.org

Time and location:
Tuesdays-2:00p.m-4:30p.m., A105 Tribble Hall

Course Content
This is a professional counseling course that surveys the field of marriage, couple and family counseling. By completing this course, students should become knowledgeable about the history, theories, and practices of marriage, couple and family counseling (5d). Ethical, legal, and other professional issues related to marriage, couple and family counseling (e.g., identification and affiliation) will be covered, too (1.j).

Course Objectives

Knowledge
- Review the general principles of family living: how families operate as a social system, develop rules for living together, and deal with the ever-changing tasks that must be met by a family going through its life cycle (5.g).
- Increase students’ self-knowledge and awareness of their own families and how their family histories impact their ability to counsel.
- Trace significant historical developments in marriage, couple and family counseling/therapy and provide an overview of the evolving viewpoints, perspectives, values, intervention techniques, and goals of this approach to counseling/therapy.
- Present the basic ideas of the major theoretical orientations within marriage, couple and family counseling/therapy along with theories and models dealing with family resilience (5.d; 3.d).
- Help students learn the beginning practices and techniques of marriage, couple and family counseling/therapy.

Skills and Practices
- Trace significant historical developments in marriage, couple, and family therapy.
- Explain the function/dysfunction in their own family or origin, how this has affected their lives, and be able to recognize and discuss their own present modes of relating and communicating with others, including clients.
- List and discuss the major theoretical perspectives of marriage, couple and family therapy (5.d).
- Discuss the fundamental assumptions of systems theory and its application to marriage, couple and family therapy (5.e).
- Demonstrate the practice of marriage, couple and family therapy at a beginning level.
- Articulate what they bring to marriage, couple and family counseling situations and how this affects the therapeutic outcome.
- List and describe the professional, ethical standards of the ACA and the AAMFT as applied to the practice of working with couples and families (1.j).
Course Policies
There is no prerequisite for this course. Students will be expected to be on time and attend 90% of all classes as well as actively participate in the learning process.

Methods of Instruction:
The learning in this course will take place through reading of required texts, class discussions, team presentations, experiential exercises, examining one's own family of origin, viewing of videotapes/DVDs, case history analysis, and writing about the dynamics and treatment of a family from a case history perspective.

Required Reading

Schedule of Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 24</td>
<td>Introduction to course</td>
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<td>January 31</td>
<td>Individual and Family Life Cycles (3.a)</td>
<td>Gladding, Chap.1-2</td>
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<td>Couple &amp; Family Systems</td>
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<td>February 7</td>
<td>Discussion on <em>Little Miss Sunshine</em> (professor has a copy to lend)</td>
<td>healthy/dysfunctional families; McGoldrick, et al. introduction to genograms</td>
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<td>Assignment #1 due: &quot;Snapshots of your Family&quot; (10% of final grade)</td>
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<td>February 14</td>
<td>Rationale and History of Family Counseling</td>
<td>Gladding, Chapters 6, 8</td>
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<td>Couple and Marriage Enrichment and Therapy</td>
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<td>February 21</td>
<td>Psychoanalytical/Bowen Family Theories (5.d)</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
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<td>Discussion of genograms</td>
<td>McGoldrick, et al</td>
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<td>Assignment #2 due (15% of final grade)</td>
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<td>February 28</td>
<td>Process of Family Counseling</td>
<td>Gladding, Chap. 1-2</td>
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<td>Single Parent and Blended Families</td>
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<td>March 6</td>
<td><em>The Family Crucible</em></td>
<td>Napier/Whitaker</td>
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<td>Assignment #3 due (15% of final grade)</td>
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<td>March 13</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>March 20</td>
<td>Culturally Diverse Families (2.d)</td>
<td>Gladding, Chap. 3</td>
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<td>Addiction, Violence, Abuse, and Infidelity</td>
<td>Gladding, Chap. 16</td>
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<td>The Impact of Loss on Family Life</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussion of <em>Rachel Getting Married</em> (professor has a copy to lend)</td>
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March 27 Test 1 (Gladding, Chs 1-9, 16) (20% of grade)

April 3 Experiential Family Theories (5.d) (Team 1)
Behavioral Family Theories (Team 2)
(Start of assignment# 4) (20% of grade)

April 10 Structural Family Therapy (5.d) (Team 3)
Strategic/Systemic Family Theories (Team 4)

April 17 Solution-Focused Family Theory (5.d) (Team 5)
Narrative Family Theory (Team 6)
(End of Assignment #4) (20% of grade)

April 24 Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues (1.j)
Research and Assessment

May 1 Test 2 (Gladding, Chapters 10-15, 17) (20% of grade)

Basis of Evaluation
Assignment 1 10%
Assignment 2 15%
Assignment 3 15%
Assignment 4 20%
Test #1 20%
Test #2 20%

Grading scale:
93 - 100 ------ A
90 - 92 ------ A-
87 - 89 ------ B+
83 - 86 ------ B
80 - 82 ------ B-
77 - 79 ------ C+
73 - 76 ------ C
70 - 72 ------ C-
69 or less ------ F

Course Requirements

Assignment #1. Snapshots of your family-. Write three (3) 100 word or less "snapshots" of times in your family-of-origin or family-of-procreation. These times can be of mundane events, tragedies, or celebrations. They should describe as well as convey feeling. (See example at end of syllabus). Write a 500 word (2 pages) write up of what you learn from your snapshots, i.e., the way you functioned in relationship to one or more members of your family. Turn both the snapshots and reflections in on February 7th. (10% of final grade) Core: 2.a; 3.a.f; 5.e.

Assignment #2. Draw a three generational genogram of your family based on what you have learned from the McGoldrick, eta!. text on genograms. Write a 1000 to 1500 word (4-6 typed pages) paper discussing patterns you have discovered in your family and insights you have gained
from this assignment. Be prepared to share your findings with at least one classmate in class on **February 21**. Paper should include at least the Genograms: Assessment and Intervention (3rd ed) reference and must be in APA style. Questions you should ask and answer in this assignment are at the end of this syllabus. (15% of final grade)

**Core: 2.a; 3.a.f; 4.d; 5.e.**

**Assignment #3.** An in-class discussion on *The Family Crucible* will take place on **March 6**. The topic: "Whitaker and Napier in *The Family Crucible* were exemplary in treating the Brice Family. Their strategies and actions should be followed whenever possible in working with families." In preparation for the discussion write a 1000 word paper with your arguments for and against the exemplary nature of Whitaker and Napier in the treatment of the Brice Family, i.e., your paper should cover both sides of the argument. You may write your paper in a bullet format instead of a narrative. (15% of final grade)

**Core: 1.a.d.j; 3.a.d.e.f.h; 5.a.b.c.d.e.**

**Assignment #4.** Team Presentation on a Family Counseling Approach. In the group in which you are assigned, prepare a presentation on a family counseling approach that you are assigned. The presentation should last 35 to 40 minutes and should include a handout. Techniques used in the approach should be presented on video or should be enacted using a script in class. The presentation should explain the context in which the family counseling approach was developed, its founder(s), the theory behind it, techniques, research supporting it, and its uniqueness. (20% of final grade). Begins April 3rd with Team #1 and ends April 17th with Team #6.

**Core: 1.a; 3.a.d.h; 5.a.b.c.d.e; 8.a.b.c.e.**

**Teams:**

#1 Tal Fish and Teresa Prevattte  
#2 Lindsay Berg, Paul Smith and Carroll Hightower  
#3 Caleb Pusey and Corrine Harris  
#4 Leigh Zick and Kavitha Dharmalingam  
#5 John Tener, Jane Gordon and Brittany Anderson  
#6 Nicole Moody and Daniel Hall

Exams will be given on March 27th (20% of grade) and May 1st (20% of grade). The exam will be multiple choice, fill in the blank, true/false, and short essay and cover all the chapters in the Gladding text plus outside readings.

**Core: 1.j; 2.d; 3.a.d.f; 4.d; 5.d.e.**

**Office Hours**  
Almost anytime (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) Monday through Friday (but since I am out of the office at times for various reasons, please make an appointment). Telephone: 397-1357 (office) or 399-8258 (cell). E-mail: bnations@centenary-ws.org. Office: 114 Tribble Hall.

**Example of a Family Snapshot: Family Identity**

Bob Nations

My wife and I were completing an application that involved questions about dependents. One question inquired about the number of biological children we have. I immediately responded with pride; “two girls!” My wife gently reminded me that my oldest daughter is my adopted daughter.

We enjoy that story because my family can kid me about not knowing the difference between biological and adopted children. (I really do know the difference). The real joy for me is that in that moment I knew the identity of my children. How they came to be my children didn’t matter. They are my children.
Questions to Use in a Genogram Interview


1. Can you tell me the names and ages of the family members for at least three generations on both sides of the family who are presently living?

2. When were these individuals born, married, separated, or divorced? Give specific dates including day and year, if possible.

3. Who passed away in the family? Of what? When were they born, married, separated, or divorced?

4. What jobs did family members hold?

5. What were the educational levels of family members?

6. What were the ethnic/cultural and religious backgrounds of family members? How have these traditions been passed on in the family?

7. Where did family members live? In what city and state? When and where did they move? For what reason?

8. How did people get along in the family? Who was close to whom? Did anyone not speak to another family member? What happened in these cases?

9. Which family members were very successful at what they did?

10. Which family members used alcohol or drugs, were arrested, had mental problems, committed suicide or had other serious problems?

II. What illnesses are found in the family? How did family members cope with them?

12. Can you tell me any special life events that happened-positive, neutral and negative?

13. Are there any stories which have been passed down through the generations in our family?

14. Are there any family themes which seem to repeat in our family?

15. As an elder of the family, is there any advice that you would give to me as a younger member of the family?
Questions to Answer in Writing an Analysis of a Genogram


I. How healthy were family members in your genogram? What were the most common health problems on each side of your family and in your family of origin? What did family members do to prevent or treat such problems?

2. What type(s) of family structure (i.e., single parent, nuclear, remarried) were repeated in the genogram?

3. What family themes have been carried down through the generations?

4. What occupations occur most frequently in your family?

5. What stages of the family life cycle have been easier for your family to cope with? Most difficult?

6. What life events have affected family functioning throughout the generations of your family?

7. Where are triangles present in your genogram? Where are relationships close, distant, conflicted, or fused? Where are there emotional cut-offs?

8. What patterns are repeated such as educational or work success, religious commitment, alcohol or drug use, or other behaviors?

9. How large were the families in your genogram? Do some families stand out as larger or smaller when looking at the genogram? What stresses might have occurred due to family size or family imbalance?

10. Since you are a dynamic active organism according to systems theory, what could you do to change any patterns that disturb you? What would you like to pass on to your children someday?