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## CO 670 Marriage and Family Therapy

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CO 670 Marriage and Family Therapy  
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**CO 670: Marriage and Family Therapy  
 Final Version August 29, 2006**

Family systems theory provides a course framework for exploring marital and familial issues. Special emphasis is given to the role of the counselor. Procedures and techniques for both preventative and remedial interventions are investigated.

This course will introduce the basic concepts in marriage and family therapy to you, and equip you with basic systemic counseling skills. We will give special emphasis to theological and biblical foundations for marriage and family processes. To quote Clark Pinnock: “Theologians and scientists both exegete God’s world, which we have been given to study and appreciate.” (Flame of Love, p. 65) The particular part of God’s world that we want to exegete is the world of family relationships. To that end, we will be focusing on the relational truths of Scripture and the relational reality of marriages and families. Family systems theory, or systemic thinking, will give us valuable tools for this “exegesis.”

**COURSE GOALS**

By the end of this course you will be able to....

1. . . . conceptualize theological and biblical foundations for marriage and family life.
2. . . . identify key family systems concepts.
3. . . . analyze marital and family dynamics.
4. . . . apply intervention strategies to dysfunctional relationships.
5. . . . evaluate the meaning of family systems concepts for your own setting.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Friedman, E. (1985). *Generation to Generation*. New York: Guildford Press.

Gottman, J. M. & Silver, N. (1999) *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Guerin, P.J., Jr., Forgarty, T. F., Fay, L.F., Kautto, J. G. (1996). *Working with Relationship Triangles*. New York: Guilford Press.

McGoldrick, M. & Gerson, R., & Shellenberger, S. (1999). *Genograms in Family Assessment* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: Norton.

Stanley, S., et al. (1998). *The Lasting Promise*. Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 0-7879-3983-8

## REQUIRED ARTICLES

### **For Nov. 15, 2006 (Affairs)**

Gordon, K. C., Baucom, D. H., & Snyder, D. K. (2005). Treating couples recovering from infidelity: An integrative approach. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 61*, 1393-1405. **See Academic Search Premier.**

Pittman, F. S., & Wagers, T. P. (2005). Teaching fidelity. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 61*, 1407-1419. **See Academic Search Premier.**

Snyder, D. K. & Doss, B. D. (2005). Treating infidelity: Clinical and ethical directions. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 61*, 1453-1465. **See Academic Search Premier.**

### **For Nov. 29 (Divorce)**

Westberg, H., Nelson, T. S., & Piercy, K. W. (2002). Disclosure of divorce plans to children: What the children have to say. *Contemporary Family Therapy, 24*(4), 525-542. **See Academic Search Premier.**

Baum, N. (2004). On helping divorced men to mourn their losses. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 58*(2), 174-185. **See Academic Search Premier.**

### **For Dec. 6 (Stepfamilies)**

Adler-Baeder, F. & Higginbotham, B. (2004). Implications for remarriage and stepfamily formation for marriage education. *Family Relations, 53*, 448-458. **See PsychINFO**

Pasley, I., Dollahite, D. C., & Ihinger-Tallman, M. (1993). Bridging the gap: Clinical implications of research findings on the spouse and stepparent roles in remarriage. *Family Relations, 42*, 315-322. **See PsychINFO**

Visher, J. (1994). Stepfamilies: A work in progress. *The American Journal of Family Therapy, 22*(4), 337-344. **See Academic Search Premier**

### **Recommended Reading**

Instone-Brewer, D. (2002). *Divorce and remarriage in the Bible: The social and literary context*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans

Pinnock, C. (1996). *Flame of love*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Schnarch, D. (1997). *Passionate marriage*. New York: Norton.

Thompson, D. T. (1996). Women, men, slaves, and the Bible: Hermeneutical inquiries. *Christian Scholars Review, 25*(3), 326-349.

### **Use of Course Icon on Your Desktop**

You will need your Asbury Seminary First Class Client e-mail account for this course. If you do not have an account, please open one through the Information Commons in the BL Fisher Library.

Open your First Class Client account at the **beginning of the semester**. On your Desktop you will locate the icon labeled **CO670A (F 06)**. **Open this folder**. Double click on the icon labeled “**Course Center**”.

All handouts and powerpoint presentations will be uploaded week by week to the course center. Print out the materials that you find here prior to class each week.

## Course Requirements

### 1. Individual Genogram Analysis. [25%] Due Nov. 1

#### Goals: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

The Individual Genogram Analysis provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to analyze a three-generational family along several dimensions significant to family life. See the Genogram Grading Rubric in the Rubric Folder in the Discussion Center for details about this assignment.

- a. **Construct your family's basic three-generation genogram.** [Ex. M, G, & S, pg. 23-26, 192]. If married or engaged, you do not need to do your partner's genogram. However, if you have children, you should expand your genogram to four generations (your children, you, your parents, your grandparents).
- b. **Create your family's pattern of functioning.** You may want to photo copy the basic genogram and then add the symbols [Ex. M, G, & S, pg. 26-32, 192]
- c. **Written analysis:**

Your written analysis should address the following areas:

- Differentiation of self: Thoroughly define the concept of "differentiation of self." Discuss differentiation of self in relationship to one member of your family.
- Triangles: Select a triangle in your family. Choose **one** of the laws of triangles that Friedman discusses (p. 36-39). Thoroughly define the law in your own words and clearly describe how your family triangle exemplifies this law. **Then** clearly analyze this triangle in terms of structure, movement, process and function (Guerin, et al.). You must clearly label the description that deals with each of these four variables.
- Select **one** law of family life (Friedman, Chapter 2). Identify and describe the application of these two laws in your family. Be sure you not only name the law but also summarize what it means in a sentence or two. Then provide an adequate narration of how your family exemplifies this law.
- Insights: What new insights about yourself and your family have emerged as you worked on this assignment?

### 2. Midterm (Oct. 18) & Final Exam (Dec. 13) [combined 40%] Course goals: 1, 2, 3, 4

### 3. Best Practices Paper [35%]

#### Course goals: 2, 3, 4

"Best Practices Paper" is a collection of books, articles, or resources that represents a smorgasbord of ways to work with a particular issue. Topics: Affairs; Divorce; Stepfamily; Pre-marital counseling/Marriage enrichment; Parenting.

#### Due dates for papers & in-class presentation:

Nov. 15 --- affairs & premarital counseling/marital enrichment

Nov. 29 --- divorce & parenting

Dec. 6 --- stepfamilies

**Sections of your paper include:****Treatment Overview:**

Develop a five page summary of the salient treatment issues that are associated with your topic. This is similar to your classic research paper.

**Book Reviews:**

1 Secular: You will present a summary of the treatment protocol from 1 secular book that deals with your topic. This summary should be an outline of “how” to treat the problem. This may not be a photocopy from the book.

1 Christian: You will present a summary of treatment protocol from 1 book written from a Christian perspective. This summary should include a discussion of the Christian issues present in this problem and also include an outline of “how” to treat the problem. This may not be a photocopy from the book.

**Web Resources:**

What websites contribute to helping counselors deal with this problem area? You will describe the content of 4 websites that you have reviewed that will help counselors or clients learn more about this problem area.

**In-Class Presentation:**

On your due date, you will upload your Best Practices Paper to the Course Discussion Center. In addition, you will work collaboratively with the other students who researched the same topic as you studied to present to the class a 30-minute section that gives the “highlights of the best” from your collective work. As the groups will be comprised of 6-7 students, it is not necessary for everyone to have a speaking part during the presentation.

**Grading Practices & Policies**

I will adhere to the grading criteria on page 29 of the 2004-2006 catalog. Asbury Seminary defines grades using the following criteria:

A= Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives

B= Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives

C= Acceptable work: essential achievement of course objectives

D= Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives

F= Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

A plus (+) or minus (-) indicates positions between categories (for example, B+ = very good; C- = slightly below acceptable, etc.).

When all is said and done and all the grades are averaged together, here is the final scale of measurement:

100-96 = A  
95-91 = A-

90-87 = B+  
86-84 = B

80-77 = C+  
76-74 = C

70-67 = D+  
66-64 = D

83-81 = B-

73-71 = C-

63-61 = D-  
60 and below =  
F

## Grading Process

The Asbury Seminary School of Theology faculty has adopted the following standards for faculty grading of papers:

- ◆ Timely feedback: For assessment of student work during the course of the academic term, the expectation of “timely” feedback is met when students have their work marked, graded, and returned within one week of its submission for classes of 35 or less...Moreover, when assignment “B” builds on assignment “A,” assignment “A” should be returned before assignment “B” falls due. Longer assignments are often due at the end of the term, and are not subject to this definition.
- ◆ Substantive feedback: For assessments of student work during the course of the academic term, the expectation of “substantive” feedback is met when students receive responses that alert them to what they have done well and how they might improve their performance in subsequent work.

## Grading Rubrics

If you review the rubric carefully before you begin your assignment then you will know the standards that I am setting to evaluate your work. Rubrics will be uploaded into the Course Center.

## Late Assignments and Papers

A paper or assignment that is late *without prior permission from the instructor* receives a grade but no written comments. Late papers automatically receive a 1/3 grade reduction.

## Incomplete Policy

A grade of "I" denotes course work has not been completed due to an **unavoidable emergency**, which does **not** include failure to turn in course work or attending to church work or other employment. A request for an incomplete requires not only my approval, but also the approval of the Dean of the School of Theology. See the current Asbury Seminary Catalog.

## Gender Inclusive Language

Gender inclusive language is required for all papers when referring to humanity (i.e, humanity sinned, not just man; Jesus died for humankind, not just mankind.). Refer to the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the APA Publication Manual for guidance on gender inclusive language for humanity. **Papers that fail to use gender-inclusive language will incur an automatic 1/3 grade reduction.**

## Bibliography

- Brown, J. H. & Brown, C. S. (2001). *Marital therapy: Concepts and skills for effective practice*. Pacific Coast, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Dinkmeyer, D., McKay, G., & McKay, J. *New beginnings: Skills for single parents and stepfamily Parents*. Champaign, IL: Research Press. ISBN: 0-87822-286-3
- Gottman, J. (1994). *Why marriages succeed or fail*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Hargrave, T. D. (2000). *The essential humility of marriage*. Phoenix, AZ: Zeig, Tucker, & Theisen, Inc. ISBN: 1-891944-36-3
- Jacobson, N. & Gottman, J. (1998). *When men batter women: New Insights into ending abusive relationships*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Kroeger, C. C., & Beck, J. R. (1996). *Women, abuse, and the Bible: How scripture can be used to hurt or heal*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Papernow, P. L. (1993). *Becoming a stepfamily: Patterns of development in remarried families*. Jossey Bass.
- Stanley, S. (1998). *The heart of commitment*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Visher, E.B. & Visher, J. S. (1996). *Therapy with stepfamilies*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Weeks, G. R., & Odell, M. (2005). *If only I had known: Avoiding common mistakes in couples therapy*. New York: Norton.
- Worthington, E. L. (1989). Marriage Counseling. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.