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PM 704 Marriage and Family Counseling

Virginia Todd Holeman

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Course Handbook & Syllabus

PM 704: Marriage and Family Counseling
January 2000

Jan. 10, 11, 12 ~ 8:30-11:30 and 1-4; Jan. 13 ~ 8:30-11:30
Jan. 18, 19, 20 ~ 8:30-11:30 and 1-4; Jan. 21 ~ 8:30-11

Asbury Theological Seminary

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A Letter to YOU!

Greetings and Salutations!

Welcome to PM 704: Marriage and Family Counseling. Together we will explore some of the ins and outs of family life. Hopefully, you will have a better idea of what kinds of things make marriages and families work well and what kinds of things hinder healthy functioning by the end of the class.

This course may make you think (I apologize for that). You will not have to memorize lists of things. You will not have to take objective tests. You will need to analyze, synthesize, integrate, and apply what you are learning to yourself and to case material. You will be experimenting with several different techniques. You will choose what things you want to do – in some measure – to obtain the grade that suits your fancy.

I have structured this course in two major parts: theoretical and practical. The first half of the course is “theory.” Here you will meet such terms as triangles, non-anxious presence, the two-choice dilemma, and much more! Here we will wrestle with theological issues and we will let Scripture guide us as we interact with experience, tradition, and social science. In the second half of the course you will learn several marriage counseling techniques and you will practice them in class, and then with your volunteer “clients.”

Two words of caution! First, this is not an extended therapy session. While therapeutic things may happen, it is not my intent to restructure your entire personality – or even any part of it! Second, please do not try to fix your family. While you may be right on target about something, your extended family (or immediate family for that matter) may not be ready to change. Please be respectful of them. Trust me, you will have enough to do just dealing with yourself.

Well, still game?? Ok, here we go.
Purpose of the Course

From the catalog:
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.

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.

This course will introduce the basic concepts in marriage and family therapy to you, and equip you with basic systemic counseling skills [that's systemic not systematic]. 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.”

Required Texts


This is the foundation text for this course. You may find this challenging reading if family systems terms are new to you. Friedman's insights into the processes of family and church are worth the price of the book - especially chapters 8 & 9.

Guerin, et al. adds some meat and bones to many of Friedman's principles. I found this book very engaging, and very practical!

Dr. Stanley's work is based on his love of the LORD and his years as a researcher on marital commitment. This is intended for couples -- premarital and married. Research suggests that the most efficient way to prevent divorce is through sound, structured premarital counseling. The Christian PREP model equips couples with specific skills that, when practiced, will help couples fight for their marriage.

I think that you will find this text very helpful as you work with remarried families with children. Consider it a good guide for some pre-remarital counseling too!

Course Packet of Readings. You buy this from the bookstore and it contains selected required readings for this class.
Optional Text for “A” Grade Assignment

Feel free to view the movie to add to your understanding of the text, but don’t replace the text with the film. Also feel free to skim read any sections that are disturbing to you (there is one violent scene and some immorality). I am also happy to negotiate another text. Keep in mind that your story must cover three generations of one family.

Recommended Texts

Worthington has done Christian counseling a wonderful service when he wrote this text.

This new book has the latest research on domestic violence and is a “must read” for anyone who wants to work with couples and families. Domestic violence DOES happen in “good” Christian families.

Don’t let the reader-friendly nature lull you into thinking this is “light.” Collins has masterfully summarized key family studies research, adding his own unique take on the book’s contents. As other pastors have told me “this will preach.”

Gottman’s research on marriages has helped us fine tune what we do. He’ll bust some of your myths about what makes marriage work, and give you concrete tools for increasing the success of marriages with which you work.

Drawing on the best of the psychological studies related to forgiveness, McCullough, Sandage, and Worthington composed a useful book on the “how-tos” of forgiveness.

Definitely a book for the counselor rather than the client. If you intend to work with stepfamilies (and who won’t be) this book is for you!

This easy reading book focuses on how to build a stronger foundation of commitment within a marriage. Good for premarital or marriage counseling.

This edited volume explores the role of spirituality from many different perspectives – including the role of spirituality within poor families, and families of color. It is not written from a Christian perspective. It does reflect where the field of marriage and family therapy is as a whole, and, to quote an old commercial “we’ve come a long way baby!”
**Course Requirements**

This semester you can “contract” for your grade range. Your final grade will also depend on the quality of your work. I have assigned a certain number of “points” to each requirement.

**For a grade in the “C” range:**
1. Complete all required reading and additional reading to make a total of 1200 pages. REQUIRED READING DOES NOT ADD UP TO 1200 PAGES! Submit your reading log by Feb. 4, 2000.
2. Fully participate in class discussions and activities within each module.
3. Complete counseling practice & reflection papers by assigned due dates.

Points for C grade range: 500-470 = C+; 470-440 = C; 439-400 = C-

**For a grade in the “B” range:**
Complete all “C” requirements. In addition, complete Individual Genogram Analysis (item #4 below).

Points for B grades: 750-671 = B+; 670-586 = B; 585-500 = B-

**For a grade in the “A” range:**
Complete all “B” requirements. Plus analyze the Wingo family from the BOOK, THE PRINCE OF TIDES (item #5 below). Points for A grades: 1000-876 = A; 875-751 = A-

**Detail of Course Requirements**

1. **Reading Log.** Points 100  
   Course goals: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  
   Due Feb. 4, 1999 5:00 p.m.

I require a minimum of 1200 pages of reading for this course. Be sure to keep a log of your reading. Your log should include the title & author (books, journal articles) and total the number of pages you have read. Remember that the required reading does not add up to 1200 pages. Appropriate reading log material includes all required reading, anything from the “recommended reading list”. It does not include the story “Prince of Tides.”

2. **Course Participation Activities.** Points 250  
   Course goals: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  
   Because this is NOT an independent study, your daily participation in course discussion is vital to your learning and an integral part of how I designed the course. Some activities require preparation the evening before. Do your best to clear your schedule during these two weeks so that you can keep pace with the class and get sleep!

3. **Counseling Practice and Reflection Paper** 150 Points  
   Course goals: 4, 5

   **Practice.** Your practice will take two forms (1) trying the technique out in class and (2) working with a volunteer practice couple. Recruit a “couple” of friends to let you try your hand at counseling them. They are free to role play. You will practice the Speaker-Listener Technique, Problem Discussion Technique, and [Caring Days OR Couples Forgiveness Exercise].

   **Feedback.** The each person in your couple will complete a feedback form. Include a summary of your practice couple’s feedback in your reflection paper

   **Reflection Paper.** Your reflection paper includes your thoughts on your application of the technique on yourself and your use of it in a counseling session. You will audio-tape each session. Sessions will probably last only 20 minutes in
length. You will need to have your clients agree to let your audio-tape their session. After you are done, listen to your own work. Write a 2 page (double-space and typed) reflection paper based on your experience (both live and taped). Answer these questions:

a. What was it like to use this technique? [areas of comfort, discomfort, skill development]
b. What did I learn about myself as a counselor as I listened to the audio-tape? [things done well & areas of improvement].
c. Overall evaluation of self and session.

Your grade is based on the depth of your analysis not on your perfection of the skill. Surface level analysis will receive surface level grades.

4. Individual Genogram Analysis. Points 250
Postmarked by Jan. 18, 2000. Grades will be reduced by one letter grade for every day late.

Course goals: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
To earn points in the B range you will need to complete required activities #1, 2, 3, and 4.

You will analyze your own family according to the principles discussed in the deMaria, et al. text.

a. Construct your family's basic genogram.
b. Create your family map. You may want to photo copy the basic genogram and then add the symbols.
c. Construct your family time line.
d. Focused genogram. Follow the guidelines from ONE of chapters on special focus issues (Chapter 6-10) to create a focused genogram of your family. For example, you may analysis your family according to anger or emotions or culture, etc.
e. Written analysis:
Your written analysis will include the following in narrative form.

- Respond to appropriate questions on Level of family functioning (pg. 38).
- Respond to birth order questions (pg. 40).
- Respond to self-esteem question (pg. 42).
- Select a triangle in your family. Choose two of the laws of triangles that Friedman or Guerin discuss. Define each law in your own words and describe how your family triangle exemplifies each law. Then analyze this triangle in terms of structure, movement, process and function (Guerin, et al.).
- Select two laws of family life (Friedman). 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 these laws.
- Reflection. In one page or less evaluate what you have learned about yourself and your family that is new to you. OR in one 200-word paragraph discuss the impact of anxiety within YOU on YOUR relationships (see Guerin & Friedman).

5. Wingo Family Analysis 250 points
Postmarked by Feb. 4, 2000. Grades will be reduced by one letter grade for every day late.

Course goals: 4, 5
To earn points for a grade in the A range you will need to complete required activities #1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

This assignment is based on an analysis of the Wingo family as presented in the book, "Prince of Tides" (Pat Conroy). You may supplement your reading by watching the movie "Prince of Tides." There is one violent scene in the film and some questionable language. The therapist, Susan Lowenstein, acts unethically as sexual relationships with current clients (or their family members) are FORBIDDEN in all professional ethics codes.
Include the following components.

a. **Construct the Wingo Family Genogram** as you would view the family from the perspective of the last chapter. Include at least four generations. Be sure to indicate names, ages, occupations, health concerns, and any other outstanding information about persons in this family. Make the genogram as thorough as possible.

b. **Construct the Wingo family map** (de Maria, et al.)

c. **Construct the Wingo time line** (de Maria, et al.)

d. **Ten Laws of Family Life** (Friedman). Identify and describe the application of two laws of family life to the Wingo Family. Be sure that you not only name the law, but that you also say what this law means. Give one CLEAR example of the Wingo family enacting these laws.

e. **Triangles** (Friedman & Guerin). Identify one major triangle in the Wingo family. Identify two laws of triangles that describe this triangle. Remember to name the law, say what the law means, and give an example from the Wingo triangle. In addition, analyze this triangle in terms of its structure, movement, process, and function. (Guerin, et al.).

f. **Analyze the marriage of Lila and Henry Wingo** (Gottman). Analyze this marriage by using John Gottman's material. Provide supporting evidence from book, Prince of Tides.

g. **Counseling strategy.** You are the counselor. Tom and Sallie Wingo come to see you about 3 months after Tom's return home from New York. Draw upon your knowledge of marriages and identify two goals for your counseling. Then discuss one strategy or technique you could use for each goal and why you would choose that goal and that strategy.

h. Discuss one salient theological/biblical issue that needs to be addressed in this family? (one page)
## Fall 1999 Class Calendar – PM 704X

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Participation Activities (tentative)</th>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Due for this unit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module 1</td>
<td>Friedman Intro., Ch 1, 2; Guerin Ch 1, 2; Guerin 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13; Friedman Ch. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13; Friedman pg. 35-39</td>
<td>1. Send greeting &amp; reply 2. Team: Gilbert Grape Scavenger Hunt 3. Peer questioning</td>
<td>What's Eating Gilbert Grape</td>
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<td>Sept. 7-17</td>
<td>Basic Systemic Concepts</td>
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<td>Module 2</td>
<td>Guerin 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13; Friedman Ch. 8, 9; Stanley Ch. 1, 14; Friedman pg. 35-39</td>
<td>1. Team: Anatomy of Relationship Triangles 2. Only the Lonely “I spy”</td>
<td>Only the Lonely</td>
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<td>Sept. 20-Oct. 1</td>
<td>Becoming a Triangle Doctor</td>
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<td>Module 3</td>
<td>Pinnock (packet); Friedman Ch. 8, 9; Stanley Ch. 1, 14; Friedman pg. 35-39</td>
<td>1. Team: Theological comparative analysis 2. Discussion: two-choice dilemma</td>
<td>“Matt &amp; Tammy” intake video</td>
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<td>Oct. 4-15</td>
<td>Theology of Relationships; two-choice dilemma; self-differentiation</td>
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<td>Module 4</td>
<td>DeMarin Part I, II and ch. 11; Guerin 10; Friedman p. 31-34, 69-70 91-9, Ch 12</td>
<td>1. Team: Sharing about ourselves 2. Discussion: Using genograms in counseling</td>
<td>“Fred &amp; Stacey” genogram demo.</td>
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<td>Individual genogram analysis. Post marked by Nov. 15.</td>
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<td>Oct. 18-29</td>
<td>Family-of-Origin Influences</td>
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<td>Dr. Toddy Holeman, ATS, 204 N. Lexington Ave., Wilmore, KY 4039-0199</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module 5</td>
<td>Gottman; Guerin Ch. 1, 2; Stanley Ch. 2-5</td>
<td>1. Team: Comparing theorist role play 2. Discussion: Share counseling experiences</td>
<td>Demo. Video of speaker-listener &amp; problem discussion Speaker-Listener</td>
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<td>Post Speaker-Listener reflection paper by Monday Nov. 15</td>
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<td>Nov. 1-12</td>
<td>Communication, Conflict &amp; Coaching</td>
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<td>Module 6</td>
<td>Guerin Ch. 9; Stanley, Ch. 6-10; Holeman; McCullough</td>
<td>1. Discussion: ReBuilding commitment 2. Team: Cinderella</td>
<td>Demo video on caring days &amp; forgiveness exercise Problem-Discussion</td>
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<td>Post Problem Discussion reflection paper by Monday Nov. 29</td>
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<td>Nov. 15-26</td>
<td>Hidden Issues, Commitment, &amp; Forgiveness</td>
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<td>Nov. 29-Dec. 10</td>
<td>Divorce &amp; Stepfamilies</td>
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<td>Finals Week</td>
<td>Final Due Date</td>
<td>All reading logs should be posted by 5 pm, e.s.t.; Final projects for “A” grades postmarked by Dec. 15</td>
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<td>Dec 15</td>
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<td>Mail to: Dr. Toddy Holeman, ATS, 204 N. Lexington Ave., Wilmore, KY 40390-1199</td>
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Practice Counseling Guidelines

Following these helpful guidelines as you practice the new counseling techniques.

1. Let your practice couple know that you are practicing AND that they can stop participating at any time.
2. Keep your focus on learning a skill, NOT analyzing your friends. You will ask them for feedback on how they experienced the technique and your instructions.
3. Audio tape your practice sessions WITH YOUR PRACTICE COUPLE’S PERMISSION. As you listen to your own voice, you will learn much about yourself and your delivery of new skills.
4. Have fun.
5. Remind your "practice couple" to talk about safe things with you. You want to protect them (and you) from getting in over their heads. Also, ask them to stick with “realistic” topics for them. In other words, they shouldn't give you the HARDEST thing they can imagine.