



COUN 6060

Introduction to Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling

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Please allow for up to 24 hours for response

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the discipline of systemic models of counseling. Students will be introduced to the systems or ecological models, their historical development, and the utilization of these models in developmental and therapeutic activities with families. To understand and practice family requires that you make an “epistemological” shift from individual to relational thinking. Therefore, the focus of this course will be on examining how we “construct reality” and think in ways that facilitate relational interventions with couples, families, and organizational systems.

While the most intense focus will be on the nuclear family, the systems model will be used to integrate information regarding the marital, sibling, and individual subsystems, as well as the family of origin and the family’s interface with other social systems. Similarly, an emphasis on the relational and systemic aspects of human life does not mean that marriage and family therapists ignore, or are uninformed about, mental disorders, modalities for treating these disorders, and the ability to recognize them.

Commitment to Diversity and Accommodations

The Counseling Program at ULM is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the curriculum and clinical experience. We invite diversity and foster a culture of inclusion that supports multiple dimensions of culture that includes race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, spirituality, nationality, regionality, disability, and beyond.

Within the Counseling Program, we attempt to foster and maintain a safe environment of respect and inclusion for faculty, staff, students, and members of the communities we serve. We educate our faculty and students to be social justice advocates for marginalized populations and direct our curriculum to reflect the diversity of our communities and elevate awareness.

The Counseling Program is committed to building and retaining a faculty, staff, and student body that reflects these cultural values and respects the dignity of all persons.

The Counseling Program is committed to making reasonable efforts to assist individuals with disabilities in their efforts to avail themselves of services and programs offered by ULM. To this end, ULM will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with documented qualifying disabilities. Students who have a disability and feel they need accommodations in the course must present a letter to the instructor from the Self-Development, Counseling, and Special Accommodations Center at ULM indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested accommodations. Students who need accommodations because of a known or suspected disability should contact the Director for Disabled Student Services at 318-342-5220 or [click here](#) for the Self-Development, Counseling, and Special Accommodations Center website. ULM's official accommodations guidelines and policies are found [here](#).

Special circumstances. Students who encounter any unforeseen circumstances during the semester that may affect their performance (e.g., physical, or mental illness, family emergency) must let their instructor know within seven (7) days so possible accommodations can be discussed or alternative arrangements made. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, so it is important to request them in a timely manner.

Instructional Methods

The primary methods of instruction for this course comes from an asynchronous format that utilizes weekly recorded lectures, and assigned readings. Students are required to engage in a discussion board through asynchronous or synchronous formats. Students create recorded video discussion posts individually or in groups, and if done individually will provide written feedback to others' posts. Synchronously, students can participate in a live discussion board, where they can interact with the professor and other students over Zoom.

This course utilizes a combination of PPT presentations, readings, experiential activities, case studies, videos, research papers, and class discussions. For this process to be successful, each student must participate fully by reading assigned materials, logging onto Canvas at least twice weekly, and participating in class exercises and discussions. The instructional philosophy for the current course and the primary textbook is based on a learning-centered, outcome-based approach, which is briefly summarized below:

Course Content, Objective, CACREP Standards, and KPI

Content Areas

This course is designed to enable students to:

- Place some overall content areas/goals here.
-

Objectives

Program Objective related to CACREP 5.F. MCFC

Students will demonstrate *content* knowledge related to the Marriage, Couple, Family Counseling concentration that will be measured at two points in time with a success rate of 70% or higher.

CACREP Standards

From the objectives above, students will learn the following CACREP standards and some will be evaluated for the KPI #1 for MCFC 5.F.

Standards MCFC 5.F.

aging and intergenerational influences and related family concerns	1.
principles and models of assessment and case conceptualization from a systems perspective	7.
techniques and interventions of marriage, couple, and family counseling	9.
conceptualizing and implementing treatment, planning, and intervention strategies in marriage, couple, and family counseling	11.
service delivery modalities and networks within the continuum of care, such as primary care, outpatient, partial treatment, inpatient, integrated behavioral healthcare, and aftercare	12.
strategies for interfacing with the legal system relevant to marriage, couple, and family counseling	13.

Evaluation and Grade Assignment

Final grades will be based on points earned, according to the following matrix showing maximum points that can be earned:

Family of Origin Paper.....	35 points
Theory Comparison Paper.....	25 points
Discussion Boards.....	10 points
Midterm.....	30 points

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

Student Performance Evaluation: Criteria and Procedures

A. Participation

Active participation in all class sessions is required and expected. Readings must be completed as assigned.

Assignments must be submitted at the time they are due. No assignments or exam will be accepted late. A grade of zero will be assigned if any assignment or exam is turned in late.

B. Family of Origin Paper (35 points)

Due: 12/6, 11:59pmCT

We are all products of our families. To learn how to work with individuals and their families it is useful to examine the family you know best: your own family of origin, whether adopted or biological. A good place to start this investigative process is to complete a three-generation genogram. Following that, you will do a complete case study on your family as if you were a counselor conducting an initial assessment. The final section will involve those interventions that would be most useful in working with the family that you describe. If this assignment poses a special problem for you and you wish to use a substitute family, please see me ASAP. Be sure to use language consistent with what you have learned this semester throughout the paper to describe your family.

This Paper will include the following:

- 1) A genogram of your family of origin.

- 2) A case study: this will include an overview of your family life cycle, ethnic influences, celebrations and rituals, rules, values, stories, and philosophy of life (details below).
- 3) An intervention section: as a family therapist, what interventions would you recommend to treat or strengthen your family-of-origin?

Each of the above sections should appear as different headers in your paper, using appropriate sub-headers as needed (APA style). Be sure to include an introduction and conclusion. The final product should be between 10-15 pages (body of paper), typed, doubled-spaced. At least 5 references are required.

Part 1

- In the first part of your paper, you will complete and analyze a three-generation genogram beginning with you and your siblings as the first generation. Part 1) will have two parts: the actual genogram itself (with all the accompanying information) and the discussion (where you will analyze the patterns found in the genogram).
- Include immediate and extended family members on your genogram. This will include your parents, siblings (and their partners if applicable), nieces/nephews, aunt/uncles, cousins (1st cousins only), and grandparents. If you are married/life-partnered, include your partner but *not* his/her family of origin. If you have children, include them below you.
- You should include important identifying information for each individual on the genogram (i.e., written/printed next to each individual). This information will include his/her name, age, relation to you (e.g., mother, grandfather, etc.), and relationship status (e.g., married, divorced, single, separated, etc.).
- Off to the side of each individual's name, include his/her (a) primary occupation and (b) the presence of any known psychological and/or physical distress (addictions, mental illnesses, etc.). These may be hand-written.
- Discussion/exploration of the genogram – Explore and discuss the significance of the “Five Clues” that can be determined through your genogram:
 - 1) Significant dates – identify all important dates (e.g., historical, familial, and relationship dates), discuss what information exists about these events, and what this information adds to your understanding of the patterns in your genogram.
 - 2) Gender beliefs and values – discuss how these beliefs/values have thread through your genogram (or not) and what impact this may have had on your development.
 - 3) Secrets – identify where secrets exist in the make-up of the genogram. If there are no clear secrets, identify where (if anywhere) unknown or unspoken facets of people's lives exist. Discuss what impact these secrets (or lack thereof) have had on the boundaries and communication patterns in your genogram.
 - 4) Losses – discuss how the experience(s) of loss (remember how broad that term can be) has impacted the relationship patterns in your genogram. Explore how these events may have been perceived differently by different individuals.
 - 5) Themes – identify the themes that run through your genogram that answer the questions “Who are we?” and “How do we behave?” What do these themes reveal about your family's belief structure and how have they guided the family in making decisions about their current and future behaviors?

- **Free software** is available from <http://www.smartdraw.com/specials/ecomap.htm> or <http://www.genopro.com/genogram/> that you can use to create and print your genogram. Be aware that these are time-limited downloads (i.e., you should create your genogram soon after downloading and not wait until a month has passed to begin your work).

Part 2

- In this section, you will complete a case study where you explore some of this course's main concepts as they apply to your family of origin. For instance:
- Family life cycle: Compare and contrast your current life cycle stage with how your parents (or grandparents) experienced it. What issues are pertinent to you that were/were not pertinent to your parents? How do you account for these differences?
- Ethnic influences: What is your ethnic identity? What is the nature of your current family relationships, habits, attitudes, values, and life style that are a reflection of your ethnic background? How are these the same or different than when you were growing up in your family of origin? How did your family of origin interact with other ethnic/racial groups? How does this differ in your current family situation? How do you account for the changes?
- Rules & values: What were some of the common rules found in your family? Which of these rules have you incorporated into your current family situation? Which rules have you discarded? What overt and covert values were played out within your family system? Which of these values have you incorporated/discarded?
- Stories: What are some of your family's stories that are told? What are the underlying messages? What influence do these stories have?

At least 3 concepts should be explored.

Part 3

- In this last section, you will explore those interventions that would be most useful in working with a family like the one you've described. These interventions can be directed at treating any issues noted and/or strengthening positive attributes. Be sure to answer such things as:
 - What are some of the needs of this family?
 - What are the strengths of this family?
 - Which theory or blend of theories would be most beneficial to this family (and why)?
 - What goals would you set if you were to work with this family?
 - What would success "look like" if the goals are reached?

C. Theory Comparison Paper (25 points) KPI

Due: 11/8/23, 11:59pmCT

Choose three systems theories covered in class and compare and contrast them. You are to discuss how these theories are similar and different based on the following: (a) the role of the counselor of each theory, (b) the overall goals, techniques, mechanism for change, and the counseling process for each theory, and (c) the strengths and limitations for each theory. In addition, you will use of your three theories to conceptualize a family case given in Canvas. You will complete each of the following after reading the vignette: (a) Describe an advanced model of assessment you would use to better understand the family, (b) conceptualize the family using the tenets of your chosen family theory, (c) create a treatment plan based on the families' given issues and the tenets of the family, (d) propose what techniques you would implement in session and why they would contribute to meeting your goals, and (e) compare how one ethical standard from ACA and AAMFT might conflict with each other when working with this family.

This paper should be up to eight pages (body of paper) and double-spaced using APA format. Please note that the abstract, cover page and reference page are not included in the page requirement; include at least six references). Do not go over page limit and do not plagiarize. This exam will serve as the Key Performance Indicator #1 for the CACREP Standards 5.F. MCFC. KPI evaluations are submitted and stored in Tevera, a sample of the rubric in Tevera is provided at the end of the syllabus.

D. Midterm (30 points)

There will be a midterm open-book exam, comprehensive in nature, given mid-semester. It will consist of 30 multiple-choice and true/false questions that are worth one point each. Responses must be your own. The exam is not a group project. You will be given 30 minutes to take the exam and you will have two attempts.

E. Video Discussion Boards (10 points; 5 points each)

Students will complete two video discussion boards during the semester based upon two provided topics below. Students will record these discussions using Zoom and can do them in the form of a monologue (4-5 minutes) or dialogue (2-3 students; 6-7 minutes). Students will record their Zoom discussions and upload them to the weekly module they are due.

1. Discussion Topic: Due 9/19, 1159pmCT

Identify at least three codes from the ACA Code of Ethics that specifically deal with working with families and cite at least three codes from AAMFT that specifically deal with working with families and note any differences you found between the ACA codes and the AAMFT codes. Discuss how these codes might come into conflict if one were licensed as a LPC and LMFT.

2. Discussion Topic: Due 11/21, 1159pmCT

Conduct research on current assessment tools that can be utilized in marriage, couple, and family counseling and cite two examples. Please include the publisher's contact information and any other pertinent information useful to obtain this assessment tool.

You cannot cite an assessment that has already been cited by a classmate. If you are doing a video monologue, you only have to describe one tool. If you are doing a dialogue, each student must describe a tool.

F. Synchronous Coffee Shop Discussion

I will host a synchronous Coffee Shop Discussion, see Canvas for details. During the Coffee Shop Discussion, we can discuss anything related to the class or the counseling profession in general. Participation in these Zoom meetings is voluntary.

IV. Textbook and Required Readings

Required:

- Gladding S. (2018). *Family Therapy: History, Theory, and Practice (7th ed.)*.

Recommended by optional:

- McGoldrick, M., & Gerson, R. (1985). *Genograms in family assessment*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- A Family Genogram Workbook: An Exciting Tool for Understanding Your Family and How it Works! 1st Edition by Israel Galindo, Elaine Boomer, Don Reagan.

Course Schedule

Dates	Topics	Readings	CACREP Standards
Week 1 8/26	History, Foundations, and Evolution of Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling Service Delivery Modalities and Networks within the Continuum of Care	Gladding 1	5.F.12
Week 2 9/2	Fundamental Concepts of Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling Theoretical Context of Family Therapy; Types and Functionality of Families	Gladding 2 & 3	
Week 3 9/9	Lifespan Development and Cultural Diversity within Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling Single-Parent Families and Blended Families	Gladding 4 & 5 “Finding a way forward together”	5.F.1
Week 4 9/16	Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling	Gladding 6 ACA Code of Ethics (2014) AAMFT Codes of Ethics	5.F.13
Week 5 9/23	The Process of Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling	Gladding 7	
Week 6 9/30	Couple and Marriage Counseling	Gladding 8	
Week 7 10/7	Midterm on Chapters 1- 8 (30 points) Open: 10/7 Close: 10/11, 11:59pmCT		

Week 8	Psychodynamic Approaches		
10/14	Bowen's Family Systems Theory	Gladding 9 & 10	5.F.9 5.F.11
Week 9	Experiential Family Therapy		
10/21	Structural Family Therapy Strategic Family Therapy	Gladding 12, 13, 14	5.F.9. 5.F.11
Week 10	Solution-Focused Family Therapy		
10/28	Narrative Family Therapy	Gladding 15 & 16	5.F.9. 5.F.11
Week 11	Theory Comparison Paper Due: 11/8/23, 11:59pmCT		
11/4			
Week 12	Substance-Related Disorders and the Family		
11/11	Domestic Violence and the Family Child Abuse and the Family	Gladding 18	
Week 13	Research and Assessment in Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling	Gladding 17	5.F.7
11/18			
Week 14	Thanksgiving Holiday		
11/25			
Week 15	Family of Origin Paper Due: 12/6, 11:59pmCT		
12/2			

*The instructor reserves the right to adjust the schedule as needed.
All times listed are in central time.*

**KPI Assessment COUN 6060 Grading Rubric
This will be assessed in your Tevera account**

Pass: as evidenced by receiving a performance level of a 3 on a 5-point scale on each requirement/standard assessed through the assignment.

5 = Advanced: Skills and understanding evident at an exceptional level

4 = Proficient: Strong level of mastery of skills and understanding

3 = Basic: Understanding of concepts/skills evident

2 = Developing: In process of developing understanding of concepts and skills; growth needed

1 = Deficient: Insufficient understanding of concepts and skills; significant remediation needed

NA: Not Applicable

Note: Ratings of 3 or above indicate performing well for student’s stage of development.

Assignment Specific Requirements and Professional Identity 2024 CACREP Standards

Assignment Specific	CACREP Standards Performance Level 1-5
	MCFC
<u>aging and intergenerational influences and related family concerns</u>	1.
<u>principles and models of assessment and case conceptualization from a systems perspective</u>	7.
<u>techniques and interventions of marriage, couple, and family counseling</u>	9.
<u>conceptualizing and implementing treatment, planning, and intervention strategies in marriage, couple, and family counseling</u>	11.
<u>service delivery modalities and networks within the continuum of care, such as primary care, outpatient, partial treatment, inpatient, integrated behavioral healthcare, and aftercare</u>	12.
<u>strategies for interfacing with the legal system relevant to marriage, couple, and family counseling</u>	13.

This data will be collected and stored in Tevera.