

**Texas A&M University – Central Texas
Department of Psychology and Counseling
COUN 5356 = Introduction to Family Counseling
Mondays, 6:00 – 8:45, Warrior Hall 312**

Instructor: Carolyn A. Greer, EdD, LPC-S

Office Hours: By appointment

Phone: 512/567-9051

Email: drcarolyngreer@gmail.com

Office Hours and Student-Instructor Interaction:

Email is my preferred way of communicating with students. It is the most efficient way to ask a question and will provide you with the speediest response. Students may also contact me by my cell phone (listed above), and particularly to notify me of when they will need to miss class or report an immediate issue preventing their attendance.

COURSE CONTENT:

This course was designed to meet the CACREP 2009 Standards for Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling. This course provides an introduction to general systems theory of family development and interactions as well as providing an overview of the history of family therapy. Students will be introduced to a variety of family systems theories (i.e. Communications Theory, Transgenerational Approaches, Symbolic-Experiential, Structural Theory, Strategic Family Therapy, Social Learning Theory, Postmodern & Constructivist Approaches), evidence-based interventions, and multicultural and ethical considerations for working with couples and families.

This course uses lecture, discussion, videotapes, role-play, assigned readings, examinations, case studies, research/reflection papers and experiential exercises to explore the marriage, family, and relationship counseling field. **Students are encouraged to reflect on their own family and relationship experiences as they may impact their training and practice as professional counselors.**

COURSE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL OUTCOMES (CACREP):

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Understand family strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations, including multicultural competencies (CACREP II.G.2.d).
2. Understand theories of family development and transitions across the life span (CACREP II.G.3.a).

3. Understand a systems perspective that provides an understanding of family and other systems theories and major models of family and related interventions (CACREP II.G.5.3).
4. Understand the use of research to inform evidence-based practice (CACREP II.G.8.e).
5. Recognize the importance of family, social networks, and community systems in the treatment of mental and emotional disorders (CACREP CMHC.C.8)
6. Know the history, philosophy, and trends in marriage, couple, and family counseling (CACREP MCFC.A.1).
7. Know the roles and functions of marriage, couple and family counselors in a variety of practice settings and in relation to other helping professionals (CACREP MCFC.A.3).
8. Know the professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling (CACREP MCFC.A.4).
9. Understand a variety of models and theories of marriage, couple, and family counseling (CACREP MCFC.A.5).
10. Understand family development and the life-cycle, sociology of the family, family phenomenology, contemporary families, family wellness, families and culture, aging and family issues, family violence, and related family concerns (CACREP MCFC.A.6).
11. Understand the impact of crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events on marriages, couples, and families (CACREP MCFC.A.7).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

All assignments need to be turned in on or before the due date. Due to the intensity and scope of this course, late assignments will not be accepted unless the student has consulted with Dr. Greer more than 24 hours before the assignment is due. (Students must request and be granted permission for an extension on the due date 24 hours before the assignment is due.)

REQUIRED TEXT:

American Psychological Association (2009), *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.)*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Gladding, S.T. (2015). *Family therapy: History, theory, and practice (6th ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

GRADING

Your grade will be determined on this basis:

1. Class and online discussion	20 points
2. Field Observation	10
3. Family Context or Behavior Analysis Paper	15
4. Family Myth or Spirituality Paper	15
5. Genogram	15
6. Family Analysis and Intervention Paper	15
7. Final Examination	<u>10</u>
TOTAL	100 Points

Thus, averaging the above:

A 90 & up, B 80-89, C 70 - 79

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ASSIGNMENT DETAILS:

A. Field Observation

Every couple or family relationship is unique in some ways and in other ways can be seen as representing societal patterns. Our classroom discussions of couple and family issues are more substantive when we can make use of examples from real life. Therefore, you are expected to conduct an observation of a couple or family. The people you observe may be in any setting: at the mall, in a part, in a place of worship, or at a family gathering. You should:

- Choose your “observational group”
- Try to “record” a sample of interaction that shows members of this group interacting with each other and also with others who are not part of the core group. Because you will typically not have permission, you should rely on written or dictated notes rather than attempting to audi-record or video-record our couple or family.
- Try to gather at least 30 minutes of observation

In the first part of your paper, you should describe what you see and hear---the gestures and the words---without interpreting the individuals’ intentions or the meaning of the interaction. As an *observational researcher*, you will attempt to approach your group from a “not knowing” position, suspending your assumptions about how people should behave with each other or why they are doing what they are doing. For example, you might say, “The man put his hands on the woman’s shoulders and turned her toward him. She let her shoulders to be turned but kept her face turned away.”

Following the description, in the second part of the paper you are encouraged to explore the meanings you applied to what you saw. In the above example, you might say, “The man seemed to be trying to get eye contact, apparently because the woman seemed to be upset with him” The goal in this part of the exercise is to discover your own “programs” that you apply when making sense of relationships. The two part of the assignment should be approximately five (5) pages of text in addition to an APA style cover sheet

and reference page. No abstract is needed. Your submitted paper will be available to your group members for discussion.

B. Family Context

(option, choose this or the Behavior paper) Over time, couple and family relationships are affected by their political, economic and social---as well as geographical---environments.

Describe one relationship you know well, identifying at least one significant transition in which that relationship responded to conditions around it. If possible, provide online or print media references to document environmental influences. The assignment should be approximately five (5) pages of text in addition to an APA style cover sheet and reference page. No abstract is needed. Your submitted paper will be available to your group members for discussion.

C. Behavior Analysis

(option, choose this or the Context paper) Behaviorists have show that otherwise confusing behavior of an individual can often be explained by an analysis of the cues that elicit the behavior and/or the reinforcements that follow the behavior. Family counselors look for these cues and reinforcements in relationships.

Use this idea to examine a positive or negative behavior pattern in one relationship you know well, utilizing behavioral language. The assignment should be approximately five (5) pages of text in addition to an APA style cover sheet and reference page. No abstract is needed. Your submitted paper will be available to your group members for discussion.

D. Family Myth

(option, choose this or the Spirituality paper) Couples and families often transmit essential meanings and values through teaching stories---narratives that make a point, often a point that would be very upsetting if it were communicated directly. For example, my ancestors recited the story of a small incident which when told at the right time, would communicate the family tradition “nice people don’t ask for what they want.”

Use this idea to reflect on family stories, particularly ones you have heard many times, and describe one---along with the message you think may be hidden in the story. Your submitted paper will be available to your group members fro discussion.

E. Spirituality

(option, choose this or the Myth paper) Humans are spiritual creatures, and couple and family relationships involve a spiritual dimension, whether or not it is ever discussed or acknowledged.

Use this idea to examine spirituality in a relationship you know well. The assignment should be approximately five (5) pages of text in addition to an APA style cover sheet

and reference page. No abstract is needed. Your submitted paper will be available to your group members for discussion.

F. Genogram

Your own family will serve as a key learning tool in this course. You should plan to collect and present information on four (4) generations in your family (if you have children and grandchildren, you might have more generations because you should present at least two (2) generations before your own). Most students find that it is necessary to confer with others to fill in missing data, resolve discrepancies, etc. and **you should start this data collection immediately since the semester is not very long.**

Using a Genogram, you are to present your genogram to the class as a case study to illustrate a clinically relevant aspect of relationship structure or process (this does not have to be a “problem” in your family). Each presentation will be **strictly limited to 15 minutes, including questions** and will use the genogram as a visual aid.

G. Family Analysis and Intervention Paper

The purpose of this exercise is to practice the application of theories with a real family--your own. In assigned readings and lectures, you will be exposed, in a general way, to a number of theoretical orientations. This paper will require more in-depth use of selected theories.

In the genogram assignment many of you will have discovered patterns of interaction that don't fit with some of your long-held beliefs about your family (the family narrative/myth). Others will have noticed themes and patterns that you have observed before but have always found to be confusing and troubling. In either case in this paper you now have the opportunity to use theories about families to increase your understanding and plan a counseling approach that could lead to family improvements related to one of the patterns you have observed (of course, you will not try to do counseling with your own family--this is only an exercise)

- There is no minimum or maximum length for the paper.
- You don't have to discover a family secret; everyday issues are OK.
- APA style is expected, including references to support your theory and discussion.
- The paper must incorporate, in an identifiable way, five elements:
 1. raw data – descriptions, dates, places, events, etc.
 2. your restatement/summary of the theory or theories you are going to use
 3. your integration of the raw data using the theory.
 4. a theory-based intervention plan.
 5. an analysis of how your experience with this relationship pattern could have an impact on your counseling with other people's families.

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE/CALENDAR

Week	Topic to be discussed	Course Reading	Assignment due
Aug. 28	Introduction to course and class		
Sept. 4	Holiday	Gladding, Chapter 1	Online Discussion
Sept. 11	Characteristics; Family Systems Concepts of Families	Gladding, Chapters 1 & 2	
Sept. 18	Cont'd Characteristics	Gladding, Ch. 1 & 2	Online Discussion
Sept. 25	History & Process of Family Therapy	Gladding, Ch. 3 & 4	Field Observation, Due
Oct. 2	Bowen Family Therapy	Gladding, Ch. 9; use of genograms	Genogram
Oct. 9	Experiential Family Therapy (Satir Model)	Gladding, Ch. 10	Genogram Presentation
Oct. 16	Structural Family Therapy	Gladding, Ch. 12	
Oct. 23	Strategic Family Therapy	Gladding Ch. 13	Family Myth or Spirituality due
Oct. 30	Solution-Focused Family Therapy	Gladding Ch. 14	
Nov. 6	Cultural Diversity in Family Therapy	Gladding, Ch. 5	Online Discussion
Nov. 13	Behavioral and Cognitive-Behavioral Family Therapies	Gladding, Ch. 11	Family Context or Behavior Analysis due
Nov. 20	Thanksgiving Holiday		
Nov. 27	Special Issues	Gladding, Ch. 15	
Dec. 4	Special Populations; Ethics; Integration	Gladding, Ch. 4, 5, 6	Family Analysis and Intervention Paper due
Dec. 11	Final Examination		

***The professor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule as needed during the term. Any and all changes will be communicated as soon as possible to the students.**

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Drop Policy. If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must go to the Records Office and ask for the necessary paperwork. Professors **cannot** drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The record's office will provide a deadline for which the form must be returned, completed and signed. Once you return the signed form to the records office and wait 24 hours, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. Should you still be enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the records office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to

avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course.

Academic Integrity Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

Access & Inclusion

At Texas A&M University – Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to an education that is barrier-free. The Office of Access & Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability enjoy equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. Some aspects of this course or the way the course is taught may present barriers to learning due to a disability. If you feel this is the case, please contact Access & Inclusion at (254) 501-5831 in Warrior Hall, Ste. 212. For more information, please visit their website at <https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/disabilitysupport/index.php> Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Tutoring

Tutoring is available to all TAMUCT students, both on-campus and online. Subjects tutored include Accounting, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Room 111. If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, contact information, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Kim Wood at k.wood@tamuct.edu Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables TAMU-CT students to log-in and received FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Spanish, Calculus, and Statistics. To access Tutor.com, click on <https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/academicsupport/tutoring.php>

University Writing Center. The University Writing Center at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students. The

UWC is located in 416 Warrior Hall. Students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Students may also arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor. Tutorials can be arranged by visiting the UWC. Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. Sessions typically last between 20-30 minutes. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will help students develop more effective invention and revision strategies.

University Library. The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at TAMUCT are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders. Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments. Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the TAMUCT main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our homepage: <https://tamuct.libguides.com/>