

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**Counseling and Development**

EDCD 658.001 – Couples and Family Counseling  
3 Credits, Fall 2017  
Thursdays, 4:30 – 7:10 PM Thompson Hall Room 1018

**Faculty**

Name: Mark R. Ginsberg, Ph.D.  
Office Hours: By Appointment  
Office Location:  
Office Phone:  
Email Address:

**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

Admission to Counseling and Development program; EDCE 609 (may be taken concurrently)

**University Catalog Course Description**

Introduces major approaches to counseling couples and families. Uses case studies and simulations to facilitate transition from theory to practice.

**Course Overview**

This course provides a broad overview of principles, theories and methods of family counseling/therapy. The focus of the course will be on developing an understanding of family functioning and processes across the life-cycle and models for intervention with families. The course will be both didactic and experiential consisting of lectures, consideration of case studies, viewing of video segments and experiential activities.

**Course Delivery Method**

This course will be delivered using a lecture, case study and clinical practice format.

**Learner Outcomes or Objectives**

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

- Gain an understanding of family structures, process and functioning across the life cycle,
- Gain an understanding of functional and dysfunctional family challenges, processes and behaviors,
- Become familiar with the historical legacy and rich history of the field of couple and family counseling/therapy, and
- Become familiar with the concepts, theories and methods reflective of the major systemically-linked approaches for intervention with couples and families.

**Professional Standards (CACREP)**

Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards:

1. Virginia Department of Education requirement for school counseling licensure that candidates understand the knowledge, skills and processes of individual and family counseling.

2. Virginia Department of Health Professions requirement that Licensed Professional Counselor candidates complete graduate study in theories and techniques of counseling and psychotherapy.
3. Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) core requirement described in Section II.K.e: Helping relationships: An understanding of counseling and consultation processes.
4. American Counseling Association Code of Ethics requirement that counselors establish counselor education and training programs that integrate academic study and supervised practice.

### **Required Texts**

- Nichols, M.P. (with Sean D. Davis), (2017). *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods (11<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Boston: Pearson.
- Napier, A.Y and Whitaker, C.A. (1978). *The Family Crucible*. New York: Harper and Row.

### **Encouraged Supplemental Readings/Resources (Required Readings are on Blackboard Site):**

Bray, J.H and Stanton, M. (2013). *Handbook of Family Psychology*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). *Handbook of Family Therapy*. New York: Routledge.

Diverse Families (March/April 2014), Special Issue of the *Journal of Family Therapy*. Washington, DC: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

McGoldrick, N., Gerson, R. and Petry, S.S. (2008). *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention*. New York: Norton. (On Reserve at the Fenwick Library)

McGoldrick, M. (2011). *The Genogram Journey*. New York: Norton. (On Reserve at the Fenwick Library)

### **Streaming Video Resources (Many are on the Blackboard Site):**

Available through George Mason University's Fenwick Library  
Alexander Street Press  
Psychology/Counseling Series

A large collection of video may be streamed to your computer – search the Fenwick Library collection of videos by searching on “family therapy.” During the semester, specific videos may be assigned for viewing while others may be recommended.

## Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy).

- **Assignments and/or Examinations**

### NOTE THAT LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

- **Class Participation (20% of Course Grade)**
  - As this course is BOTH didactic AND experiential, it is essential and required that students attend AND participate actively in each class session – if you will need to miss a class session, please notify the instructor via email in advance of the class session
  - Students are obligated, as part of the class participation requirement, to post AT LEAST ONE comment per week and participate actively in the class On-Line Dialog that will be hosted as part of the Blackboard Site for this course,
- **Readings**
  - There are two (2) required textbooks for this course – it is expected that students will read BOTH of these books as well as other assigned supplemental readings – class presentations and discussions will be supplemental to the assigned readings. In addition, other readings and video resources also will be available as supplemental resources for the course.
- **Personal Genogram (of your own family of origin) -- DUE on October 19 (15% of Course Grade)**
  - You are to complete a personal genogram of your own family of origin of at least three (3) generations. Include in your genogram pertinent data such as sex, age, ethnicity, place of birth and significant life-cycle events. In addition to the graphic depiction of your family of origin genogram, you also are to prepare a narrative of NO MORE THAN 5 PAGES that describes your family including: family roles, structures and processes (rules). In addition, provide an overview of how you (as a family counselor/therapist) would view the significant issues and challenges your family of origin faces together with a glimpse of your initial goals, objectives and intervention plan for working with your family.
- **Group Project – (15% of Final Grade)**
  - Students will be divided into small groups of (approximately) 4. Each group will be assigned a perspective, theory or model in the field of couple and family therapy. The group is asked to prepare a class presentation of approximately 20 minutes. The class presentation should include a comprehensive review of the theory/model and research that has been undertaken to assess its efficacy. The presentation also must include a case study of the application of the model with a couple or family and (if feasible) a brief clinical demonstration. Each member of the group should equally participate in the preparation of the presentation.
- **Paper -- DUE ON NOVEMBER 16 (30% of Course Grade)**
  - Prepare a paper of NO MORE THAN 10 PAGES (12 FONT) IN LENGTH that provides a review of a central issue, theory or method in the family

counseling/therapy field. You should review the relevant historical literature and recent research, provide a thorough discussion of the selected issue and suggest directions for future study and/or research. In addition, as part of your paper, describe a fictional “case study” of how the chosen model is applied within the context of a family-focused intervention.

- **Final Examination -- DISTRIBUTED ON NOVEMBER 30 AND DUE ON DECEMBER 7 (20% of Course Grade)**

There will be a take-home final examination for the course, which will be due NO LATER than the final class session on December 7.

- **Other Requirements**

### **COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

**APA Format:** Students in Counseling & Development courses are expected to use APA style (6th ed.) for written papers.

#### **Electronic Devices**

**Turn off and put away all electronic communication devices during class.** Cell phones, pagers, and other communicative devices are not allowed in this class, unless specific class activities include internet-based activities. Please keep them stowed away and out of sight. Engaging in activities not related to the course (e.g. gaming, email, chat, text, etc.) is prohibited and will result in a significant deduction in your participation grade. **Notify the instructor prior to class if you have an emergency situation that requires accommodation.**

#### **Attendance**

In accordance with the policies of the Counseling and Development Program, on-time attendance at every class meeting is expected. Late arrival to class will be considered an absence. Attendance is required for all classes. Excused absences are permitted for illness, religious holidays, or emergency situations only; documentation is required for the absence to be considered excused. Work-related absences are not considered excused.

#### **Course Requirements**

Each student is expected to: (1) attend each class, (2) complete all reading assignments before class, (3) arrive on time and stay for the entire class period, (4) participate in discussions and in-class work groups, (5) regularly check GMU email, and (6) submit or access documents via Blackboard, Taskstream or TK20 as assigned.

#### **Assignments**

Unless otherwise noted, the assignments for the course are to be **submitted in class on the due date.** Late assignments will not be accepted. Additional assignments and/or assessments may be added at the instructor’s discretion.

#### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a violation of both the George Mason University code of honor and the expected professional dispositions of the Counseling & Development Program. The GMU English Department has developed the following statement regarding plagiarism: “Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinion, or factual information from another person without giving that

person credit. Writers give credit through the use of accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or end notes; a simple listing of books and articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting. Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions to this include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writer's own insights or findings from their own field research, and what has been termed common knowledge. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious, and what is common knowledge for one audience may be so for another. In such situations, it is helpful to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being reader friendly. In other words, writers provide a citation for any piece of information that they think their readers might want to investigate further. Not only is this attitude considerate of readers and establishes credibility, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will never be guilty of plagiarism.”

### **TK20 REQUIREMENTS**

Every student registered for any Counseling and Development course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, to TaskStream or TK20 (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in TaskStream or TK20. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream or TK20 will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream or TK20 submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

The performance-based assessment for this course is the PAPER that is due on November 16.

- **Grading**

#### **Final Grade Matrix:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>
Class Participation	25
Personal Family of Origin Genogram	10
Paper	40
Final Exam	25
<b>TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **Grading Scale**

A = 97-100; A- = 96-94; B+ = 93-91; B = 90-87; B- = 86-84; C = 83-80; F = below 79.

All CEHD undergraduate and graduate students are held to the university grading policies as described in the Academic Policies section of the current catalog, which can be accessed at <http://catalog.gmu.edu>. Those students enrolled in a CEHD Licensure Graduate Certificate

program, however, must earn a B- or better in all licensure coursework. A degree-seeking graduate student will be dismissed after accumulating grades of F in two courses or 9 credits of unsatisfactory grades (C or F) in graduate courses. A 3.0 grade point average is required for completion of the graduate degree.

### Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>

### Class Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	READING & ASSIGNMENT(S) DUE
August 31	<p>Course Introduction</p> <p>Course Expectations</p> <p>Family Development Across the Life Cycle</p> <p>Family Structures and Processes</p>	Acquire Textbooks and Begin Reading
Sept 7	<p>Historical Roots and Legacy of Family Counseling/Therapy</p> <p>Systems Theories and Concepts</p> <p>Development and Use of the Genogram</p>	<p>Nichols Chapter 1, 3 &amp; 14</p> <p>Milhausen, R &amp; Neustifter, R. Diversity in Today's Families, (March/April 2014), <u>Diverse Families</u>. Special Issue of the Journal of Family Therapy. Washington, DC: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. (on Bb site)</p> <p>Falicov, C.J. Multiculturalism and Diversity of Families. In Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). <u>Handbook of Family Therapy</u>. New York: Routledge. (On Reserve in the Gateway Library in the Johnson Center)</p>
Sept 14	<p>Family of Origin</p> <p>Family Assessment</p> <p>Beginning Phase of Family Intervention &amp; Treatment</p> <p>Genograms and Their Role in Family Counseling/Therapy</p>	<p>Nichols Chapters 2</p> <p>Review Dyadic Adjustment Scale Resources (on Bb Site)</p> <p>Bray, J. H. Couple and Family Assessment. In Bray, H. &amp; Santon, M. Handbook of Family Psychology. (2013) Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. (Fenwick Library E-Reserves on Bb Site)</p> <p>Walsh, F. A Family Developmental Framework: Challenges and Resilience Across the Life Cycle. In Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). <u>Handbook of Family Therapy</u>. New York: Routledge. (Fenwick Library E-Reserves on Bb Site)</p>

Sept 21	NO CLASS –Rosh Hashanah Holiday  Work on Genogram Project, Participate in On-Line Dialog & Other Assignments	Genogram Web Site as a Resource -- <a href="http://genograms.org/">http://genograms.org/</a>
Sept 28	Structural Models of Family Counseling/Therapy	Nichols Chapter 6  Calapinto, J. Structural Family Therapy. In Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). <u>Handbook of Family Therapy</u> . New York: Routledge. (On Reserve in the Gateway Library in the Johnson Center)  Watch Salvador Minuchin Video (on Bb Site)  A Terrific Additional Video, in which Dr Minuchin engages in an interview about his theory and life, can be found in the Alexander Street Collection in the Fenwick Library and at the following link:  <a href="http://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/2542823">http://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/2542823</a>
October 5	Strategic Models of Family Counseling/Therapy  Genogram Project Due	Nichols Chapter 5  Watch Maurizio Andolfi Video (on Bb Site)
October 12	Experiential Models of Family Counseling/Therapy  Clinical Practice In-Class Laboratory  Genogram Project DUE	Nichols Chapter 7  Napier and Whitaker, <i>The Family Crucible</i>  Watch Carl Whitaker Video (on Bb Site)
October 19	Bowenian and Psychodynamic Models of Family Counseling/Therapy	Nichols Chapters 4 & 8  Magnavita, J.J. Psychodynamic Family Psychotherapy: Toward Unified Relational Systematics. Pages 240-257. In Bray, H. & Santon, M. <i>Handbook of Family Psychology</i> . (2013). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. (Fenwick Library E-Reserves on Bb Site)  Wanlass, J & Scharf, D.E. Psychodynamic Approaches to Couple and Family Therapy. In Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). <u>Handbook of Family Therapy</u> . New York: Routledge. (On Reserve in the Gateway Library in the Johnson Center)  Watch Scharf Video (on Bb Site)

October 26	NO CLASS – Virtual Assignment TBA	
November 2	Solution Focused and Brief Therapy Models of Family Counseling/Therapy	Nichols Chapter 11  Cheung, S: Solution-Focused Brief Therapy. In Bray, H. & Santon, M. Handbook of Family Psychology. (2013). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. (Fenwick Library E-Reserves on Bb Site)  Watch Insoo Berg and Steve DeShazer Video (on Bb Site)  Group Projects – Groups 1 & 2
November 9	Behavioral and Educational Models of Family Counseling/Therapy	Nichols Chapter 9  Epstein, N.B., Dattilo, F.M. & Baucom, D.H. Cognitive Behavioral Couple Therapy. In Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). <u>Handbook of Family Therapy</u> . New York: Routledge. (On Reserve in the Gateway Library in the Johnson Center)  Group Projects – Groups 3 & 4
November 16	Clinical Practice In-Class Laboratory Session  PAPER DUE	
November 23	Thanksgiving – NO CLASS	
November 30	Contemporary and Emerging Models of Family Counseling/Therapy  TAKE HOME FINAL DISTRIBUTED	Nichols Chapters 12 & 13  Ruddy, N. and McDaniel, S. Medical Family Therapy. In Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). <u>Handbook of Family Therapy</u> . New York: Routledge. (On Reserve in the Gateway Library in the Johnson Center)  Group Projects – Groups 5 & 6
December 7	Integrative Models of Family Counseling/Therapy  Convergence of the Field  Course Conclusion/Finale  TAKE HOME FINAL DUE	Nichols Chapters 10 & 13  Lebow, J. Integrative Approaches to Couple and Family Therapy. In Sexton, T.L. and Lebow, J. (2016). <u>Handbook of Family Therapy</u> . New York: Routledge. (Fenwick Library E-Reserves on Bb Site)

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.



## Group Project Topical Assignments

Group 1 - Strategic

Group 2 – Structural and Experiential

Group 3 – Bowenian and Psychodynamic

Group 4 – Behavioral and Educational

Group 5 – Brief and Solution Focused

Group 6 – Narrative

## Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

## GMU Policies and Resources for Students

### *Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

### *Campus Resources*

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/> .

**ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR THE PAPER (Due on November 17 and to be Uploaded to Taskstream):**

Criteria					TOTAL POINTS
<b>Review of Literature &amp; Research</b>	Poor Review of the Research Literature – Incomplete and Not Current.  2 Points	Marginal Review of the Research Literature – Provides a Review that is missing important elements and/or is not fully current.  5 Points	Good Review of the Research Literature – Provides a Review that is Comprehensive and Complete, yet is missing one or more key and critical elements and perspectives.  8 Points	Excellent and Comprehensive Review of the Research Literature that is both comprehensive and current.  10 Points	<b>10 Points Maximum</b>
<b>Discussion of Topic</b>	Discussion is superficial and without depth. It is not linked sufficiently to the research literature or provides useful, relevant applied examples.  0 Points	Discussion is of interest and reasonable depth yet lacks either sufficient connection to the research literature or relevant applied examples.  2 Points	Discussion is of sufficient depth, is linked to the research literature and cites applied examples – at least 1 key element is missing from the discussion.  4 Points	Discussion is an excellent synopsis of the issue with links to the research literature and uses multiple applied examples.  5 Points	<b>5 Points Maximum</b>
<b>Identification of Directions for Future Study</b>	Paper lacks discussion of directions for future study.  0 Points	Paper Includes limited discussion of directions for future study that are NOT consistent with the research literature and/or not highly relevant.  2 Points	Paper includes a good discussion of directions for future study that are linked sufficiently to the research literature yet lacks clarity and is incomplete or does not use sufficient logic.  4 Points	Paper includes an excellent and comprehensive discussion of directions for future study that are linked fully to the research literature and are clear and complete in its logic.  5 points	<b>5 Points Maximum</b>

<b>Fictional Case Study</b>	<p>Poorly conceived case Study.</p> <p>(If Case Study is Not Included in the Paper, 0 Points for this Section)</p> <p>2 Points</p>	<p>Acceptable, yet marginal, case study with some limited applied samples of the application of Couples and Family Counseling theories and methods. Case study is not fully relevant to the topic AND not sufficiently comprehensive to be fully applicable, illustrative or relevant to Couple and Family Counseling topic and method.</p> <p>5 Points</p>	<p>Good case study with modest applied examples of the application of Couples and Family Counseling theories and methods. Case study is relevant to the topic yet not sufficiently comprehensive to be fully applicable, illustrative or relevant to Couple and Family Counseling topic and method.</p> <p>8 Points</p>	<p>Excellent case study with clear and well-formulated applied examples of the application of relevant Couples and Family Counseling theories and methods.</p> <p>10Points</p>	<b>10 Points Maximum</b>