

Systems Theory and Interventions 2015-2016

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Objectives

- Familiarize students with foundational concepts of systems theory
- Provide framework for normal family development
- Familiarize students with the theory and practice of various family therapy models, including structural, experiential, dynamic and others.
- Practice basic systems conceptualization with actual cases
- Examine the empirically findings regarding systems models and their purported concepts/change mechanism.

Methods

The course will include frontal, didactic lectures, class discussions of readings, observation of videotapes, student clinical presentations, a personal genogram and a student critical clinical research review.

Evaluation

Final grades will be computed as follows: 35% *informed* class participation, 35% case presentation, 15% genogram, and 15% critical clinical research review.

The **case presentation** will be of a case the student is seeing in their practicum site. It will involve conducting a systemic analysis of the structure, interactional patterns, and developmental stage of the family. More detailed instructions will be forthcoming. No longer than 6 pages, line spacing 1.5, font 11 or greater.

The **genogram** project is intended to illustrate the salience of intergenerational patterns in one's current life and experiential effect of revealing such patterns. Students will complete a comprehensive genogram of either their own family, a client's family or an acquaintances family.

The **critical clinical research review** is meant to be a concise, critical review of theory and research on a focused area of family therapy. Some examples of topics include:

- A comparison of behavioral and systemic intervention with alcoholics
- A review of the empirical research regarding the effectiveness/efficacy of systems based interventions for clients with medical disorders (i.e., diabetes, cancer, etc.).
- A review of the empirical research regarding parenting behaviors and/or child-parent relations and the development of anxiety disorders (or eating disorders, or substance abuse, etc.).
- A review of the theoretical and empirical literature on spousal violence

The review paper should be no longer than 6 pages (same parameters as above), excluding references, and should be prepared according to APA publication guidelines. Up to 2 students can collaborate on one project and both will receive the same grade. Papers are due by the last class of the year.

CLASS ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY

Fall Semester

Class 1 (October 26th): Introduction, Syllabus and Basic Concepts in Systems Theory

Class 2 (November 2nd): Couplehood

Scarf, M. (1987). *Intimate Partners: Patterns in Love and Marriage* (pp. 17-84)

Class 3 (November 9th): Love itself, emotional triangles

Scarf, M. (1987). *Intimate Partners: Patterns in Love and Marriage* (pp. 85-112; 155-184; 221-242; 373-388)

Class 4 (November 16th): The evolution of family therapy, basic techniques of family therapy and the fundamental concepts of family therapy

Nichols, M.P. (2014). *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods* (10th Edition) (pp. 1-73).

November 23rd – No class

Class 5 (November 30th): Introduction to structural family therapy

Nichols, M.P. (2014). *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods* (10th Edition) (pp. 133-153).

Minuchin, S. (1974). *Families and Family Therapy* (Chapter 1: Structural Family Therapy, pp. 1-15).

Class 6 (December 7th): Introduction to structural family therapy (cont'd)

Minuchin, S. (1974). *Families and Family Therapy* (Chapter 2: A Family in Formation: The Wagners and Salvador Minuchin, pp. 16 – 45; Chapter 3: A Family Model, pp. 46 – 66; Chapter 5; Therapeutic Implications, pp. 89-109).
Video: Family with a fire

Class 7 (December 14th): Introduction to structural family therapy (cont'd)

Minuchin, S. (1974). *Families and Family Therapy* (Chapter 6: The Family in Therapy, pp. 110-122; Chapter 7: Forming the Therapeutic System, pp. 123-137; Chapter 8: Restructuring the Family, pp. 138-157).

Class 8: (December 21st) Reframing, enactment and focus

Minuchin, S. & Fishman, H.C. (1981). *Family therapy techniques*.
Cambridge: Harvard University Press (Chapters 6, 7, & 8; pp. 73-115).

Class 9 (December 28th): Attachment based family therapy for depressed and suicidal adolescents

Diamond, G.S. (2005). Attachment-based family therapy for depressed and anxious adolescents. In J.L. Lebow (Ed), *Handbook of clinical family therapy* (pp. 17-41). Hoboken, NJ, US: John Wiley & Sons

Class 10 (January 4th): Attachment based family therapy (Video)

Class 11 (January 11th): Bowen family systems therapy and genograms

Nichols, M.P. (2014). *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods* (10th Edition)
(pp. 79-106).

Bowen, M. (1974). Toward the differentiation of self in one's family of origin.
In *Georgetown family symposium* (pp. 529-547).

Student presentations of genograms

Class 12 (January 18th): Genograms

Continuation of student presentations of genograms

Spring Semester

Class 13 (March 7th): Experiential family therapy

Nichols, M.P. (2014). *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods* (10th Edition)
(pp. 159-182).

Class 14 (March 14th): Experiential family therapy (cont'd)

Family sculpting

Class 15 (March 21st): Solution focused therapy

Nichols, M.P. (2014). *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods* (10th Edition)
(pp. 159-182).

Class 16 (March 28th): Narrative Therapy

Nichols, M.P. (2014). *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods* (10th Edition)
(pp. 239-265).

Class 17 (April 4th): Case presentations

Class 18 (April 11th): Case presentations

Class 19 (May 2nd): Case presentation

Class 20 (May 9th): Case presentations

Class 21 (May 16th): Case presentations

Class 22 (May 23rd): Case presentations

Class 23 (May 30th): Case presentations

Class 24 (June 6th): Research presentations

Class 25 (June 13th): Research presentations

Class 26 (June 20th): Research presentations and summary

Class 27 (June 27th): SPR