



## Syllabus

### CC 621 Marriage and Family Therapy Fall 2007

**Instructor:** Melanie Driedger ([driedgercandc@shaw.ca](mailto:driedgercandc@shaw.ca))

#### Modular Course Dates

Three weekends: Sept 28/29, Oct 26/27, Nov 30/Dec 1  
Friday 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.; Saturday 8:30 – 4:30

#### Course Description

An introduction to systems theory and its application to Christian marriage counselling. Attention will be given to assessment and intervention in marriages as well as key marriage issues such as intimacy, communication, conflict, acceptance, forgiveness, and commitment. Family therapy will be examined through developmental stages in addition to didactic study of four to six major systems theorists. Approximately half of the course is devoted to utilizing the theoretical material in the context of Christian counselling both at a pastoral and professional counselling level.

The course is comprised of lectures and group discussions/presentations that explore theory related to marriage and family therapy and skill segments that promote the application of this theory through interview practicing and experiential exercises. The course will be interactive, participative, and experiential in design and expectation. Subject matter will be explored in ways that draw upon a student's personal and ministry experiences of marriage, families, and relationships. Focus questions and suggestions for student reflection and preparation will be offered to engage students in critical thinking regarding course readings, class content, and skill activities.

#### Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student should be able to:

- Understand systems thinking and its application to various units of treatment, e.g. larger systems, families, couples, and individuals.
- Identify and assess a number of common marriage and family issues;
- Demonstrate awareness of several marriage and family therapy approaches;
- Assess preferred theories, techniques and goals from Biblical and therapeutic perspectives
- Identify areas of personal growth resulting from his/her interaction with the course material (Formational Component)
- Have an introductory knowledge of skill development for Christian marriage and family therapy (Ministry Practice)

- Understand key issues for demonstrating a godly presence and providing godly nurture through counselling.

## **Course Schedule**

### **September 28/29**

Introduction to Marriage and Family Therapy and Systemic Thinking  
 Family Assessment  
 Family Life Cycle  
 Family Stress Model  
 Ideas of Change  
 Skills – Engagement and Genogram

### **October 26/27**

Research on Marriage/Theological Reflection  
 Marital Assessment  
 Introduction to Common Marriage Problems/Interventions  
 Intimacy  
 Communication  
 Conflict  
 Acceptance and Forgiveness  
 Commitment  
 Skills – Identification of Reciprocal Patterns and Therapeutic Questions

### **November 30/December 1**

Bowen Family Systems Therapy  
 Strategic Family Therapy  
 Structural Family Therapy  
 Experiential Family Therapy  
 Psychoanalytic Family Therapy  
 Cognitive-Behavioural Family Therapy  
 Solution-Focused Therapy  
 Narrative Therapy  
 Integrative Models (Emotion-Focused Therapy)  
 Common Factors  
 Skills – Commendations and Termination

### **Required Texts**

Nichols, M. and R. Schwartz (2006). Essentials of Family Therapy. 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Worthington, E. (2005) Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling: A Guide to Brief Therapy. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press.

Reading Package (available from seminary bookstore)

## Course Requirements

### 1. Personal Family Case Study (35%) (10 pages plus genogram) (Due October 17)

Using the multicontextual framework (Carter and McGoldrick, 2004), draw a three generational genogram of your own family, beginning with your parents and siblings, then your grandparents on both sides, and then your present family (and children if applicable). Identify as many domains from the framework as you can for each individual in your genogram. Then include as many domains as you can for each immediate household. Be sure to note relationship and patterns.

Also note “earthquake events” in your family history (e.g., premature deaths, abuse, suicide, war, cancer, business collapse, immigration, etc.)

Include with the genograms, a 10-page reflection on your experience of assessing your own family. What stood out for you or caught your attention? What response did you have to it? Why was it meaningful to you? What difference will it make for your own spiritual formation, your marriage (or family), and your ministry?

### 2. Class presentation (15%) Due October 26/27

‘Choose’ one of the family therapy Models presented in Essentials of Family Therapy (as assigned in the first class September 28) and prepare a **20 minute presentation** on the model, including a **two-page handout** outlining salient aspects of the model. (Note – depending on class size, this may be a group project. Models will be ‘chosen’ so that all are included in the class presentations)

### 3. Therapy Interventions Paper (30%) (10 pages) Due November 30

Watch the movie “One True Thing” or “The Story of Us” and present 3 or 4 interventions for the family in the movie based on marriage/family theory. You may wish to focus on the marital or family system. Outline how you conceptualize the presenting problem and the factors you would consider in choosing the interventions, giving theoretical and theological support. Be sure to include family life cycle considerations, relational patterns, and spiritual perspectives.

### 4. Reflective paper on skill learnings (20%) (6 pages) Due December 12

Write a reflective paper related to your learnings from your participation in the skills presented in the course. Describe and interpret “learning moments”, instances or activities that prompted you to think differently, or which will enhance your practice of pastoral care in the future. Reflection occurs when we think back on what has been done to account for the ways that we have come to understand and think differently. This entails a willingness to explore, to question, to be curious, and to notice change in our thinking and practice over time. Reflective thinking calls for an interpretation of surprising learnings and difficult dilemmas encountered.

In your paper, you should offer examples of particular instances of learning, describe and interpret differences in thinking and practice over the duration of the course, demonstrate complex levels of reflection, explore and question your own perspective and consider other possible perspectives, and explore possible consequences of these emerging understanding for your future practice of pastoral care.

## **5. Required Readings**

**Note: Readings will be discussed in class and students are expected to participate in reflective analysis of the readings.**

### **By September 28:**

In required text: Nichols, M. and R. Schwartz (2006). Essentials of Family Therapy. 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. (Chapters 1 – 4)

In reading package: Carter, B and M. McGoldrick.(1999) "Overview: The Expanded Family Life Cycle." Ed. B Carter and M. McGoldrick. Third ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

### **By Oct 26:**

Required text: Worthington, E. (2005) Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling: A Guide to Brief Therapy. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press.

### **By Nov 30**

In reading package: Miller, S., M. Hubble, and B. Duncan. (1995) "No more bells and whistles." Family Therapy Networker March/April: 53-63.

In required text: Nichols, M. and R. Schwartz (2006). Essentials of Family Therapy. 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. Chapters 5 – 15 as assigned in class September 28. You will be responsible for in-depth reading of ONE of these chapters.

### **Important Notes:**

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies of Ambrose Seminary as are stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar and Catalogue. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at [privacy@auc-nuc.ca](mailto:privacy@auc-nuc.ca)

### **Submission of Assignments**

Assignments may be submitted by email to : [driedgercandc@shaw.ca](mailto:driedgercandc@shaw.ca) Due to the nature of assignment # 1 (genogram), which may be hand-drawn, the paper may be submitted to the Receptionist on 6<sup>th</sup> floor. Assignments may also be submitted to the instructor in class.

### **Return of Assignments to Students**

Students who will be on-campus at the time that graded assignments are returned will have those assignments delivered in class or via the on-campus mail system, if these have student mailbox numbers on the assignment.

Once the semester has concluded, students who wish to receive their assignments/exams back must submit a self-addressed, stamped envelope (of sufficient size and postage) to the Receptionist.

Papers that are unclaimed and/or undeliverable will be held for one year from the due date, and then destroyed. Papers from courses taught by part-time, adjunct, or visiting professors will be held by the office of the Academic Dean. All other professors are responsible for holding the papers for one year.

### **Term Paper Format**

All papers should follow APA format, should be free of grammatical and spelling errors and should reflect Masters-level scholarship.

### **Add/Drop Policy**

September 14, is the last day to enter a course without permission and to withdraw from a course and receive tuition refund.

November 16 is the last day to withdraw from courses or change to audit without academic penalty.

Students wishing to add a course should refer to the current academic calendar for the last day to officially enter the class. Students intending to withdraw from a course must complete the relevant Registration Revision form. The dates by which students may voluntarily withdraw from a course without penalty are contained in the calendar of events in the academic calendar.

### **Requests for Course Extensions or Alternative Time for Examination**

Students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination unless they have received permission for a "Course Extension". Alternative times for final examinations cannot be scheduled without prior approval. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office two weeks prior to examination week (noted as the "Last Day for Alternative Exam or Course Extension Requests" on the academic calendar). Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the students control."

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty Policy**

the seminary is committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the seminary. Even unintentional plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs. Students are expected to be familiar with the policy statements in the current academic calendar and the student handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean.