



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY
ALABAMA A & M UNIVERSITY

Course Number	COUN 625
Course Title	Family Counseling
Call Number/Section	
Class Times	
Class Location	
Textbook	Samuel T. Gladding (2019). <i>Family Therapy: History, Theory, & Practice</i> (7 th Ed).
Instructor	
Office and Office Hours	
E-mail address	
Telephone number	

Course Description

This course covers the basic principles, techniques, applications, uses, and contraindicators of the major family therapy systems models. Specifically, the intersystem interface among intrapsychic, interpersonal, and family systems dynamics is addressed. Assessment techniques and intervention rationales are covered along with the role of the therapist and the therapist as person. The concepts of family-of-origin, family functioning, structure, strength, and narratives will be studied through an experiential and didactic approach. Application of theory and research to practice is discussed.

Course Objectives

- a. Describe the history and the philosophical and etiological premises of the family and relational perspective in counseling
- b. Identify family and relationship characteristics that have been associated with family and individual well-being and resilience
- c. Utilize the concepts of family life cycle, intergenerational patterns, and diversities including race, class, gender, sexuality, and culture in understanding and working with clients' relationships

- d. Demonstrate a clinical understanding of problematic family and couple interaction using one or more commonly used family and relationship counseling approaches
- e. Describe and demonstrate basic family counseling techniques and case management strategies
- f. Recognize some ways in which his or her own family history will influence therapeutic effectiveness when working with families and relationships

CACREP (2016) Standards Covered in COUN 662

<u>Standard</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>
F.5. Counseling and the Helping Relationship	
5.a. theories and models of counseling	Family Analysis/Intervention Paper
5.b. a systems approach to conceptualizing clients	Genogram, Family Analysis/Intervention Paper, Family Narrative Interview
5.n. processes for aiding students in developing a personal model of counseling	Professional identity paper

Description of Course Assignments

Class Attendance/Participation

Please plan to attend all course meetings in their entirety and meaningfully engage in all course discussions and activities. Your attendance and degree of participation will be tracked by the instructor. This class is highly collaborative in nature, so failure to do so potentially impacts the learning of the whole group. Meaningful engagement means that your comments are additive to the discussion at hand, do not detract from the conversation, and are not focused solely on personal issues.

Genogram

Your own family will serve as a key learning tool in this course. You should plan to collect and present information on four generations in your family (if you have children and grandchildren, you might have more generations because you should present at least 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 so short.**

You are expected to organize your information using Genopro software. We will spend time in class learning how to use this tool; you are invited to bring any particularly challenging family configurations into class on a flash drive, we will use them for illustration.

You are expected 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.

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. I will be happy to help you with any additional references if you have not found enough information on a theory you would like to use.

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 (5th edition) 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

Family Narrative Interview

This is an opportunity to learn about families by interviewing one. **You will not be doing family therapy.** You will simply be assuming the role of an interested interviewer of a non-clinical family (i.e. family that is not in therapy) as you learn about the culture -- of a non-help-seeking family. Select a family that you are not personally connected to (e.g. choose a family that a friend or classmate knows, current neighbors or a family in your hometown you are not too familiar with). **You will be asked to Pair Up with someone else in class for this assignment.** You will turn in one paper for both (make sure this is an equitable process and endeavor). When writing your paper, please note contrasting perspectives/experiences between you and your partner as part of your report.

Selection of families may vary in terms of family forms and structures (i.e. two-parent, single-parent, teen parent, multigenerational homes, blended/remarried families, gay/lesbian/transgendered parents, adoptive or foster family, ethnically/racially diverse or mixed families, etc.) reflective of today's diversity and composition of families. You will gain more from this experience by having all immediate family members present (a minimum of 2 family members that you can speak with during your interview is expected).

After you interview the family you will write 4-5 page (double-spaced) paper that describes: (1) How you ended up selecting the family,
 (2) The composition of family you interviewed (keep identities confidential),
 (3) Some highlights of the interview,

(4) Sample questions you asked along with family's responses,
 (5) Based on the family's reminiscing and how they co-constructed their shared past through storytelling, describe this family's narrative or story (i.e. If you were to tell their story, what would that sound like?).
 (6) What this experience was like for you (ideas, thoughts, reactions, etc.), and (7) Anything else that was relevant (e.g. how this might contribute to your professional development, what this experience was like for the family, etc.).

Professional Identity Paper

There are many ways that professionals can choose to work with people and their problems. Some students in this will find themselves drawn to make couple and family counseling a specialty; others will conclude that their interest in families is less intense, or that they were mistaken in believing that they wanted to focus on relationships.

Reflect on how the learning experiences in this course have shaped your view of working with couple and/or family issues.

GRADING PROCEDURE

Participation and Attendance	20
Genogram	100
Family Analysis and Intervention Paper	200
Family Narrative Interview	100
Professional Identity Paper	50
Total	470
	A: 470-423
	B: 422-375
	C: 374-327
	D: 326-280
	F: 279-0

GUIDELINES

This syllabus represents a contract between the student and the instructor for this course. The syllabus delineates essential details about the course, course content, and performance. As the instructor, I reserve the right to modify assignment structure, re-arrange topic discussion, and to

make as needed changes to the course. Students will always be notified in advance of said changes in writing, via email and/or blackboard. Additionally, a student is officially enrolled in this course until the university procedure for withdrawal from the course has been executed. Some of the materials in this course are possibly copyrighted. They are intended for use only by students registered and enrolled in this course and only for instructional activities associated with and for the duration of the course. They may not be retained in another medium or disseminated further. They are provided in compliance with the provisions of the Teach Act.

LIBRARY SUPPORT

The Libraries at Alabama A&M provide access to materials and services that support the academic programs. The Alabama A&M University Library Website is <http://www.aamu.edu>. This site provides access to the resources to all campus libraries.

REMEDATION

Faculty in the College of Education expect all candidates to be proficient in the areas of spoken and written communication. Consequently, the course instructor reserves the right to recommend remediation for any candidate who oral and written communication skills are considered unsatisfactory. This remediation might include an objective diagnostic writing evaluation or additional course work, not for punitive measures, but to improve students' knowledge and comprehension in this course.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University provides environmental and programmatic access for persons with documented disabilities as defined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disability Act of 1990. Any student who desires information or assistance in arranging needed services for a disabling condition should contact the Director of Special Students Services, Student Center, Room 203, 256-372-4263.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The attendance policy complies with the Alabama A & M University guidelines. A graduate student is permitted **one** (1) unexcused absence for each credit hour generated by the class. Two absences will lower your grade by one grade; this holds true for subsequent absences. Students are expected to attend all classes. This instructor does not have to be contacted in the event of your absence, except in the event of extended absences. Students are allowed one unexcused absence. **Two absences = 1 letter grade lower; Three absences = failure of course.**

ETHICS STATEMENT

All acts of dishonesty in any work constitute academic misconduct that could result in a failing grade for the class or expulsion from the Program/University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication of information. Students who commit acts of academic dishonesty will be immediately referred to the Department's Academic Standards Committee for adjudication, which could result in expulsion from the Program and from the University. Resource: the AAMU, Office of Academic Affairs, Academic Policies and Procedures Manual, most recent revision.

CLASSROOM DECORUM

It is expected that students will take responsibility for their own education and will help to create an environment conducive to learning. Additionally, each classroom should be embraced as a professional experience. Cell phones will be turned off or placed on the silent mode during class. Disregarding this request will lower your grade by one letter grade. Appropriate attire is required.

Laptops may be used in class but are only to be utilized for class related activities (e.g., taking notes). If it becomes apparent you are using the computer for non-class activities (e.g., checking your email, playing games) then you may be asked to turn off your computer and refrain from bringing it into class in the future. Laptop use is restricted to the back or sides of the classroom so that other students are not distracted during lecture.

Students who violate the Student Code of Conduct will be referred to the Department's Academic Standards Committee. The Psychology & Counseling Master's Program adhere to the code of ethics that govern our profession: ACA, <http://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/ethics>; and the NCC, <http://www.nbcc.org/assets/ethics/nbcc-codeofethics.pdf>.

IRB COMPLIANCE

Should this course implement a research/evaluation project, no stage of the research project for this course is to begin prior to the student, course instructor, a student advisor receiving a stamped copy of the IRB Approval Form. Initiating any stage of research/evaluation prior to approval is a direct ethical and academic violation and will result in failing the course. Students may request additional information about IRB requirements from the Office of Research Grant and Support.

COURSE EVALUATION

Alabama A&M University is committed to professional growth and development for each faculty member as well as to enhance course development. To assist in this process, students are asking to complete an online faculty evaluation at the end of each academic course. Individual Responses are not shared with the faculty member, only a summative report of students' responses.

DISCRIMINATION/HARRASSMENT

Alabama A&M University is committed to providing a workplace and educational environment, programs, and activities free of discrimination and harassment. This policy does not allow curtailment or censorship of constitutionally protected expression. This procedure applies to present and former employees of the University, students, applicants for admission or employment, and participants in University programs or activities (includes customers for services, vendors, contractors, and volunteers). A complaint may be filed with the Office of Human Resources (HR) by any present or former employee of the University, student, applicant for admission or employment, or participant in a University program or activity, who believes (s)he has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this Policy. Any such complaint must be filed within 300 calendar days of the incident. The Complaint Form can be found at: <http://www.aamu.edu/administrativeoffices/hrservices/Documents/Complaint%20Form.pdf>

Schedule

Week/Date	Topic	Assignment	CACREP
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