

Webster University
Syllabus

Family Counseling

SOCS 5290.01

Fall I, 2002

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Webster University Session:

Fall, 2002: There will be **8 sessions**, beginning **August 19th** and ending **October 7th**. All classes will meet **Monday evenings** from **5:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.**. These classes will be held at **Webster**

Hall: Rm. 401

(Phone -Education Dept.: 968-7490)

Course Description:

This course will provide students with the opportunity to explore their assumptions about "the family" and how it develops in a social/cultural context. The course is designed to give students an opportunity to obtain a beginning understanding of selected theories and principles of family counseling and classroom dynamics. There will be a combination of theoretical and practical information with opportunities for students to gain insights using a variety of approaches. These will include "out-of-class experiences," video-presentations, guest speakers, didactic, and experiential activities.

Course Rationale:

We are all a representative of a family system. The family, as an institution, is the foundation of building a healthy society. More often, healthy families produce individuals who are more able to contribute to society. In this postmodern era, there are many challenges that influence the development of a family system. Gender role changes, new family constellations, poverty, class-ism, and abuse issues (e.g., physical, sexual, & substance abuse) are some

examples of the challenges many families encounter. This course is offered to help the student begin to think about methods of evaluating family functioning and how he or she could use this information as a professional helper.

Course Objectives:

1. To gain a beginning understanding of systems theory and family counseling principles.
2. To be able to demonstrate basic communication skills for working with students or clients and their families.
3. To be able to recognize, assess, and intervene with students and their families in need of specialized individual attention.
4. To demonstrate an awareness of community services that are available to individuals and families and ways to access these resources.
5. To become sensitized to issues in the changing family.

Course Requirements:

Textbook:

**Molnar, A. & Lindquist, B. (1989). Changing Problem Behavior in Schools. San Francisco: Wiley.
ISBN: 1-55542-134-2**

Handouts:

Becvar, R.J. & Becvar D.S. (2000). Family therapy: A systemic integration. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

McKenry, P. & Price, S. (Eds.). (1994). Families and change: Coping with stressful events. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

NOTE:

The student is required to complete activities 1 & 2. The student will also choose one additional assignment from activities 3-5. During the final class, the student will either give an oral

presentation of one of the their lesson plans (from activity #1), or the student's choice from activities 3-5.

1. **Curriculum Project.** The student will develop six lesson plans on a topic related to family counseling or family development that could be incorporated into your classroom. As you think about your role as an educator, what aspect of the family could you help your students to focus on that may improve their family functioning or general well-being? **Each plan should contain:** 1) title 2) rationale, 3) goals or outcomes, 4) reflect a specific area of the family and classroom subject area, 5) grade and age level, 6) materials needed, 7) activity and procedure, 8) reflection and/or processing with students about what they learned (**Note:** this section is very important, 9) any follow-up, extension activities, or evaluations, and 10) any references used or needed to develop/execute this plan. A sample of your lesson plans may be presented orally in the last class.

2. **Journal.** Keep a journal (**1 entry minimum, 2-3 entries per week preferred**). This is your opportunity to express your thoughts and feelings about any issue related to class activities, readings, assignments, life, etc.. It will be turned in twice, but not graded.

3. **Written Case Presentation.** The student will choose an individual or family client case that he or she has worked with or heard about (or use a published case or make up a client case.). The case should be presented using the following format (or a similar one that includes the following): 1) Introduction, 2) describe the presenting concerns, 3) summarize the client's family history, 4) discuss in detail how a family theorist of your choice might explain the case and what interventions they might suggest, and finally, 5) recap what you have learned from this experience.

4. **Interview a Family/Child Therapist or Family-Oriented Agency.** The purpose of this interview is to identify types of 1) target populations, 2) problems encountered, 3) methods and services utilized, 4) eligibility criteria, 5) mission statement, location, fees, etc.. **Note:** Be sure to include any information that would be helpful if giving this person/agency as a referral source.

5. **Current Issues Paper.** Write a 5-6 page paper (not counting references) on a particular topic related to family counseling issues. The references for your paper should come from professional journals, books, current news articles, "expert" interviews, etc.. The paper should center around information that would benefit you in your understanding of the issue and in working with persons/families you may be teaching or counseling. **Note: Your paper should be in APA style (see Webster University APA style sheet).**

6. **Class Participation.** Participate in as many ways as you can. Your efforts in full participation and attendance will be part of your grade. This is an environment which will allow us to take risks, to try new things, to learn from each other, to see things in different ways, and to confront ourselves in a non-threatening community.

Final Projects:

These oral presentations will be given during the final class and will last approximately 10 minutes each. Students should be prepared with any handouts, visual aids, props, or materials to enhance the learning experience of their presentation.

Final projects/papers will be returned to students in the following manner:

Students should provide a self-addressed envelope (appropriate size and full postage) to the instructor so project/paper(s) can be returned. **Please note:** Papers will not be available for pick up from the School of Education Office.

Class Schedule:

WEEK 1: ***Topic:** Warm-up exercises; "Getting to know you"
Aug. 19th exercises, discussion of syllabus, and course requirements. Video: "Going Home, A Family Systems View of Change."
***Class discussion.**

***Read: Text: Ch. 1 & 2;**
Handout: Ch.s 1 & 3 (Becvar & Becvar)

WEEK 2: ***Topic:** Systems, Family Life Cycle Development and
Aug. 26th Genograms.
***Read: Text: Ch.s 3 & 4;**
Handout: Ch. 6 (Becvar & Becvar)

WEEK 3: ***Topic:** Minuchin Family Therapy--The Structural
Fri., Approach.
Sept. 6th ***Read: Text: Ch. 5 & 6;**
Handout: Ch. 9 (Becvar & Becvar)

WEEK 4: ***Topic:** Understanding the Challenges of Divorced
and
Sept. 9th Remarriage. Video: "A Child's View of Grief."
***Speakers:**
- **Bonnie Rudden - Counselor, Private
Practice & School**
***Read: Text: Ch.s 7 & 8;**
**Handout: Ch.s 10, 11, & 13 (McKenry &
Price)**

WEEK 5: ***Topic:** The Impact of Substance Abuse on Family
Sept. 16th Development
***Speakers:**
- **Rob Weiss - Director of Counseling -
Maryville Univ.**
- **Susan Wynne - Professor -Maryville/Webster
Counselor, Private Practice**
***Read: Text: Ch.s 9 & 10;**
Handout: Ch.s 12 (McKenry & Price)

WEEK 6: ***Topic:** Gay and Lesbian Issues in Families and
Sept. 23rd Schools.
***Speakers:**

