

Webster University
Syllabus

Family Counseling

SOCS 5290.01

Spring, 2004

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Webster University Session:

Spring, 2004: There will be **8 sessions**, beginning **January 15th** and ending **March 4th**. All classes will meet **Thursday evenings** from **5:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.**
(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 teacher and/or 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 perceive and respond to challenging classroom behaviors in a positive and constructive manner.
4. To be able to recognize, assess, and intervene with students and their families in need of specialized individual attention.
5. To demonstrate an awareness of community services that are available to individuals and families and ways to access these resources.
6. 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. Then, during the final class, the student will either give a brief oral presentation of one of 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 the 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 level and age level, 6) list of materials needed, 7) detail of activity and procedure, 8) reflection and/or processing questions/activities with students about what they learned (**Note:** this section is at the end of each lesson and 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 -(10 minutes)- of one of your lesson plans may be presented orally in the last class.

2. **Journal.** Keep a journal (1 entry per week 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). A written review of the case should be presented using the following format (or a similar one that includes the following):

1) introduction of the case and how you chose it, 2) describe the client's/family's presenting concerns, 3) summarize the client's family history (Include a genogram &/or structural family diagram.), 4) discuss in detail how a family theorist of your choice (e.g., Structural Family Therapy) 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 student will visit and interview one of the above and will give a written report that includes: 1) why you chose this agency or professional, 2) description of the office/agency, 3) target populations serviced, 4) problems encountered, 5) methods and services utilized, 6) eligibility criteria, 7) mission statement, 8) location, phone number, contact information, fees, etc., 9) and a reflection about what you thought of this professional/agency and how you would feel about using this as a referral for your students and their families as well as sharing this with other colleagues. **Note:** Be sure to include any additional information that would be helpful if giving this person/agency as a referral source.

- WEEK 3:**
Jan. 29th
- *Topic:** Minuchin Family Therapy--The Structural Approach
- *Read: Text: Ch. 5 & 6;**
Handout: Ch. 9 (Becvar & Becvar)
- WEEK 4:**
Feb. 5th
- *Topic:** Understanding the Challenges of Divorced and Remarriage
- *Speaker:**
- Bonnie Rudden - Counselor, Private Practice & School
- *Video:** "A Child's View of Grief."
- *Read: Text: Ch.s 7 & 8;**
- WEEK 5:**
Feb. 12th
- *Topic:** The Impact of Substance Abuse on Family Development
- *Speaker:**
- Rob Weiss - Director of Counseling - Maryville Univ.
- *Read: Text: Ch.s 9 & 10;**
- WEEK 6:**
Feb. 19th
- *Topic:** Gay and Lesbian Issues in Families and Schools
- *Speakers:**
- Tim Gore: Panel Moderator
PFLAG and GLSEN members
- *Read: Text: Ch.s 11 & 12;**
- WEEK 7:**
Feb 26th
- *Topic:** Understanding Students and Families With Special Needs
- *Speaker:**
- Peppy Howard-Willms: Director of Spec. Ed.
Edgewood Children's Home
- *Read: Handout: Ch. 15 (McKenry & Price)**
- WEEK 8:**
Mar. 4th
- *Oral Presentations and Wrap Up!**
- *Note:** All final papers and lessons handed in with self-addressed stamped envelop.