

<b>Course</b>	COUN 5540 Family Systems Theory
<b>Term</b>	Spring II, 2008; Monday 5:30 – 9:30 p.m.
<b>Instructor</b>	Name: Wayne C. Witcher, Ph.D Phone: 913-787-5249 (cell), 913-677-3553 (office)
<b>Catalog Description</b>	This course explores the contribution of general systems theory to the development of family therapy. The focus is on examining different theoretical perspectives. Students will expand their acquired theoretical foundation by exploring the influence of their family of origin and current family life.
<b>Course Level Outcome Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Provide a conceptual and comparative review of the major family theories.</li> <li>2) Describe the key theoretical concepts and principals in family systems theory and apply them to one's family of origin.</li> <li>3) Understand differences between healthy and troubled family systems.</li> <li>4) Provide a practical and personal experience of family assessment by gathering intergenerational data for a four-generation genogram.</li> <li>5) Illustrate how clinical issues are conceptualized from a family systems viewpoint.</li> <li>6) Review professional and contemporary literature which illustrate a family systems perspective.</li> <li>7) Address ethical issues which arise in a family systems modality.</li> </ol>
<b>Materials</b>	<p>Required Text: <u>Systems Theory and Family Therapy</u>, Becvar &amp; Becvar, 1999, University Press of America, paperback, ISBN 0761812954.</p> <p><u>Supplemental Readings</u>: Provided by instructor</p>
<b>Grading</b>	<p>A/A- Superior Graduate Work          B+/B/B- Satisfactory Graduate Work          C Work that is adequate as graduate level work          F Work that is unsatisfactory</p>
<b>Activities</b>	A variety of educational strategies will be used to accomplish the course outcomes. Each class session will consist of lecture segments interspersed with interactive discussion and small group exercises. There will also be complimentary learning activities, video/audio presentations, and case study analyses.

<p><b>Policy Statements: University Policies</b></p>	<p>University policies are provided in the current course catalog and course schedules. They are also available on the university website. This class is governed by the university's published policies. The following policies are of particular interest:</p> <p><b>Academic Honesty</b> The university is committed to high standards of academic honesty. Students will be held responsible for violations of these standards. Please refer to the university's academic honesty policies for a definition of academic dishonesty and potential disciplinary actions associated with it.</p> <p><b>Drops and Withdrawals</b> Please be aware that, should you choose to drop or withdraw from this course, the date on which you notify the university of your decision will determine the amount of tuition refund you receive. Please refer to the university policies on drops and withdrawals in the Graduate Studies Catalogue to find out what the deadlines are for dropping a course with a full refund and for withdrawing from a course with a partial refund.</p> <p><b>Special Services</b> If you have registered as a student with a documented disability and are entitled to classroom or testing accommodations, please inform the instructor at the beginning of the course of the accommodations you will require in this class so that these can be provided.</p> <p><b>Disturbances</b> Since every student is entitled to full participation in class without interruption, disruption of class by inconsiderate behavior is not acceptable. Students are expected to treat the instructor and other students with dignity and respect, especially in cases where a diversity of opinion arises. Students who engage in disruptive behavior are subject to disciplinary action, including removal from the course.</p>
<p><b>Course Policies</b></p>	<p>All reading assignments are to be completed prior to class meetings. Professional conduct and academic integrity is expected at all times. Webster University's attendance policy will be adhered to.</p>
<p><b>Weekly Schedule</b></p>	<p>WEEK 1. Introduction and review of syllabus and course assignments and expectations. Additional reading assignments will be presented. Review of expectations of participants. Family assessment/genograms discussed. Team project discussed. Orientation to family systems theory: history, assumptions, terminology. Read ch. 1-3 of text.</p>

	<p>WEEK 2. Key contributors to family systems theory. Bowen's family systems framework and theoretical concepts. Possible speaker and presentation of personal genogram. Team Meeting.</p> <p>WEEK 3. Healthy family systems: characteristics and communications. Dysfunctional families: types of families, interaction, communication, roles, toxic beliefs. Personal project outline due.</p> <p>WEEK 4. Movie and working of a genogram of the movie. Team meetings. Lecture.</p> <p>WEEK 5. Discussion Topics: Family Theories. Literary review due. Team project presentations.</p> <p>WEEK 6. Discussion Topics: Therapeutic applications of family systems theory. Basic goals, techniques, and growth-promoting interventions. Discussion of Ch. 4-6 in the text.</p> <p>WEEK 7. Discussion Topics: Ethical/confidentiality issues. Special families to work with. Personal project due.</p> <p>WEEK 8. Application of systems theory to family therapy. Case examples presented.</p> <p>WEEK 9. Final exam. Course wrap-up.</p>
<p><b>Additional Information</b></p>	<p><b>Course Requirements:</b></p> <p><b><u>Course Attendance:</u></b>  The University reserves the right to drop students who do not attend class the first two weeks of the term/semester. Students are expected to attend all class sessions of every course. In the case of unavoidable absence, the student must contact the instructor. The student is subject to appropriate academic penalty for incomplete or unacceptable makeup work, or for excessive or unexcused absences.</p> <p><b><u>Conduct:</u></b>  Students enrolling in a degree program at Webster University assume the obligation of conducting themselves in a manner compatible with the University's function as an education institution. Misconduct for which students are subject to discipline may be divided into the following categories:</p>

1. All forms of dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University.
2. Obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary procedures, or other University activities or of other authorized activities on University premises.
3. Classroom disruption. Behavior occurring within the academic arena, including but not limited to classroom disruption or obstruction of teaching, is within the jurisdiction of Academic Affairs. In case of alleged campus and/or classroom disruption or obstruction, a faculty member and/or administrator may take immediate action to restore order and/or to prevent further disruption (e.g. removal of student[s] from class or other setting). Faculty members have original jurisdiction to address the immediacy of a situation, as they deem appropriate. When necessary and appropriate, Public Safety and/or the local [or military] police may be contacted to assist with restoring peace and order. Faculty response is forwarded to the academic dean (or his or her designee) for review and, if necessary, further action. Further action might include permanent removal from the course. Repeated offenses could lead to removal from the program and/or the University.
4. Theft of or damage to property of the University. Students who cheat or plagiarize may receive a failing grade for the course in which the cheating or plagiarism took place.

Students who engage in any of the above misconducts may be subject to dismissal from the University on careful consideration by the executive vice president of the University or his designee. To the extent that penalties for any of these misconducts (e.g. theft or destruction of property) are prescribed by law, the University will consider appropriate action under such laws.

Students are subject to the Student Code of Conduct and Judicial Procedure described in the Online Student Handbook.

**Course Contact Hours:**

Unless a course has enrolled fewer than four students, faculty have a contractual obligation to meet the full complement of contact/meeting hours (32 for undergraduate courses; 36 for graduate courses). Not to meet this full complement of hours may be construed as a breach of contract and may also endanger Webster University's accreditation by The Higher Learning Commission, a commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and its licensure by the State of Florida. Finally, course meetings which are missed for any reason must be

made up.

**DETERMINATION OF GRADES IS BASED THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:**

Minimum Requirements:

Products (papers, case studies, projects) must be on time, in the correct format, corrected for spelling and grammar, appropriate materials included and referenced to-the-point and on topic and conclusions must be supported.

Examinations must be complete, accurate, neat, evidence clear thought, and exhibit concise and to-the-point responses.

Behavior in class discussions and group activities should be responsible, should exhibit open communication, be constructive, and helpful.

Mastery Level (Grade of "B"): Professional Achievement

Products must meet the requirements stated above for minimum requirements and additionally meet professional criteria. For example, documentation should be included to support research papers, the APA format should be used consistently throughout the paper, and substantially more than the minimum number of references should be included. Presentations should be logical, organized, and comprehensive.

Examinations should be organized, in depth, comprehensive, logical and complete, and evidence thorough understanding of the subject /topic through application of principles.

Classroom behavior should exhibit very focused activity and thought on the subject at hand, be motivated, and assist in discovery of new insights and relationships concerning the subject/topic of discussion.

Mastery Level Plus (Grade of "A"): Creative Achievement

Products must meet all requirements stated above and additionally meet creative criteria. These criteria include unique topic or subject selection, synthesis of ideas, evaluation of subject matter and positions found in the literature, be creative in approach, establish new relationships with ideas and provide new insights.

Examination responses indicate insightfulness of understanding, a synthesis of information and unique ideas, and rationale for application of principles following careful analysis.

Classroom behavior should exhibit very focused activity and thought on the subject at hand, be motivated, and assist in discovery of new insights and relationships concerning the subject/topic of discussion.

The grade of "A" represents the best work of students, accomplished in a unique and professional manner.

**Note:**

To achieve the objectives of this course, this syllabus may be revised at the discretion of the instructor without prior notification or consent of the student.

For Webster University policies and procedures, please refer to the Catalog and Student Handbook. If you have a documented disability as described in Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), you can contact our Academic Resource Center (ARC) at [www.webster.edu/acadaffairs/asp/arc.htm](http://www.webster.edu/acadaffairs/asp/arc.htm), or call 800-981-9801, ext. 7620 to make arrangements for services. Also, please notify your site administrator if you are attending an extended campus.

Reviewed by: Gene Chavez

Job Title: Faculty Coordinator

Date: 02/28/08