

CO6000 Issues in Counseling: Contemporary Issues in Couple and Family Counseling Two weekend modular course 8/30-31 10/11-12 Room Number: TBD	Dr. Luis San Roman Lgsanroman@tiu.edu Cell: (847) 917-9974 Office: (847) 317-8054 <b>Office Hours:</b> By Appointment Only
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## CO 6000: Issues in Counseling: Contemporary Issues in Family and Couple Counseling

Section 01

### COURSE SYLLABUS

Last updated: 07/05/2024

#### **Course Description:**

This course examines contemporary issues in couples and family counseling within a Christian context. Students will explore major intervention strategies, ethical considerations, current research, and evidence-based practices. The course emphasizes the integration of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic level, and multicultural perspectives.

#### **Course Learning Objectives (CLOs):** After the course, the student will...

1. An Understanding Family Systems Theory
2. Review the family life cycle, including stages such as becoming a couple, becoming parents, and transformations during adolescence.
3. Students will learn to utilize a systems approach to conceptualize couples and families.
4. Explore current literature and research to develop an in-depth understanding of timely family and marital counseling topics.
5. Become familiar with evidence-based interventions in family therapy and specific models.
6. Incorporate gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic level, and multiculturalism into the above objectives.
7. Understand family dynamics, including one's own family of origin.

#### **Course Guidelines and Understanding**

- 1) All written work must be submitted in APA format (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) and Word format and is double-spaced unless otherwise stipulated. Well-structured, clearly articulated, graduate-level academic work is the expectation for all written assignments.
- 2) As per the catalog, all assignments handed in after the deadline announced are considered late and will receive a 1.5-point reduction for each day or fraction thereof that they are late.
- 3) Electronic transmission of written work is acceptable only via the Canvas course page. Do not e-mail assignments directly to the instructor.
- 4) No assignments will be accepted after the last day of the Quad.
- 5) A lecture/discussion format is used. As such, attendance and participation in classroom discussions and activities enhance the learning experience and are expected. Participation can be defined as the leading, originating, informing, and challenging contributions that reflect in-depth study, thought, and analysis of the topic under consideration, as well as a demonstrated ability to listen to and build upon the ideas of others. The student comes to class prepared for the discussion and initiates the discussion. The student demonstrates sensitivity to diversity.
- 6) Assigned readings are to be completed **before** class meetings. Readings are selected to stimulate

mutual exchange.

- 7) Announcements regarding assignments, deadlines, or assigned reading may be made in class or via the course's Canvas page notification system. Students are responsible for updates communicated in either format.

## Teaching Methods

The genogram is designed to help the students gain practice in using a genogram and understand how to assess family dynamics and patterns. Lecture, discussion, Socratic dialogue, and practical application through demonstration are the principal modes this course will be taught. Case discussions may also be utilized. Videos, movies, podcasts, role-plays, guest lecturers, and small group discussions may highlight specific course content and theoretical approaches.

## Required Reading:

Yarhouse, M.A. & Sells, J.N. (2017). *Family therapies; a comprehensive Christian appraisal*. Intervarsity Press.

Taibbi, R. (2022). *Doing Family Therapy: Craft and Creativity in Clinical Practice* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Guilford

Taibbi, R. (2017). *Doing Couple Therapy: Craft and Creativity in Work with Intimate Partners*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Guilford

## Recommended:

McGoldrick, M. & Gearson, R. (2008). *Genograms: Assessment and intervention* (3rd ed.). W. W. Norton & Company.

Lebow, L. J. & Snyder, K. D. (2022). *Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Guilford Press.

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Author.

## Course Assignments and Evaluation Procedures

### Readings and Class Participation

**100 Points**

Students are expected to complete all required reading before their class due dates, and class participation is expected.

Rubric	Unacceptable 0-25	Satisfactory 26-80	Excellent 81-100
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<b>Class attendance and participation</b>	Passive participation: present, awake, alert, attentive, but not actively involved. Rarely volunteers in class discussions or activities. Student rarely shares personal reflections. Has not demonstrated the ability or interest in leading or collaborating with peers. Is present only part of the class or missed two or more classes. Have excessive late arrivals or classes been left early.  (0-25 points)	Reactive participation: supportive, follow-up contributions that are relevant and of value but rely on the leadership and study of others, or reflect opinion rather than study, thought, and contemplation. Missed 1 class or has a couple of late arrivals or classes were left early.  (26-80 points)	Proactive participation: leading, originating, informing, and challenging contributions that reflect in-depth study, thought, and analysis of the topic under consideration, as well as a demonstrated ability to listen to and build upon the ideas of others. The student comes to class prepared for the discussion and initiates the discussion. The student demonstrates sensitivity to diversity. The student missed 0 classes.  (81-100 pts)
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### **Theological Reflection & Praxis (Couples) Paper**

This paper is meant to be both a critical examination of your beliefs and the intersection of these beliefs with your praxis (counseling context). As such, you will be provided a vignette of a couple or family. You will explore themes in Scripture and engage in theological reflection. The paper should include not only your understanding of carefully selected passages throughout the Bible but also include your own reaction to these passages as you apply them to potential counseling scenarios. It is also important to conceptualize how treatment may occur from a systems perspective, but more specifically, understand how dynamics in a dyadic relationship impact your interventions and goals. Choose a specific theory (e.g., Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) and integrate peer-reviewed and scholarly sources. 10-12 pages total (does not include the title page and references).

- Case Conceptualization, Assessment, Treatment Plan, and Praxis Section (70 points)  
Provide a rationale for intervening based on your theological reflection. Clarify a specific dynamic related to your chosen issue(s). The literature should address spiritual dynamics and/or the church population. Include your own visceral responses in moving towards praxis and treatment. Talk explicitly about how biases may inform your praxis. Utilize empirical research here to engage in this process and write this section. Include two goals for counseling and interventions based on the literature. 6-8 pages.
- Theological Reflection Section (30 points)  
Provide a rationale and a framework for understanding this issue(s) utilizing at least three Scriptures/passages. Refer to the Yarhouse & Sells text as an example of how a Biblical framework informs theory. Integrate theological works here. 4-5 pages.

### **Family Systems Analysis Paper**

This assignment aims to conduct a concise yet comprehensive analysis of your family of origin (FOO) through the lens of family systems theory. This exercise will help you demonstrate your understanding and application of family systems concepts by examining three generations of your family.

Create a detailed genogram of your family, spanning at least three generations. Include all family members, noting their ages, marital statuses, and significant life events. Identify and discuss 5-9 predominant themes or issues within your family, such as career choices, personality traits, academic history, cultural influences, or health concerns. Highlight strength-based themes like education, professional achievements, talents, and religious faith.

Develop a list of at least 12 questions you might ask family members to construct a genogram in therapy. These questions should elicit information about family structure, relationships, significant life events, and interaction patterns. Use assigned readings, supplemental materials, and online resources to ensure your questions are effective. Cite any resources used.

Apply family systems theory to analyze the themes and patterns identified in your family. Discuss concepts such as differentiation of self, triangulation, family roles, and the multigenerational transmission process, providing specific examples from your family. Summarize your findings and reflect on what you have learned about your family and yourself through this assignment.

**Format:** APA format, including title page, in-text citations, and reference page.

**Length:** 4-5 pages, excluding the title and reference pages.

**Genogram:** Hand-drawn or created using software, with a detailed key or legend.

### **Book Review and Reflection**

For this assignment, you will read either "The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work" by John Gottman and Nan Silver or "Created for Connection" by Sue Johnson. Write a comprehensive 4–5-page paper that includes a summary of the main arguments, principles, and techniques presented in the book. Discuss the theoretical framework and research basis supporting the authors' approaches and highlight key takeaways and practical insights relevant to couples or family therapy. Reflect on how these concepts resonate with your personal and professional experiences and how they can be applied in your future practice. Additionally, analyze how the book's principles align with or differ from family systems theory and critically analyze its strengths and limitations, considering its cultural relevance and applicability to diverse populations.

**The final grade will be based on the following criteria:**

Assignment	Points
Theological Reflection Paper	100
Family Analysis Paper	100
Book Review and Reflection	100
Readings, Attendance, and Class Participation	100
Total =	400 points

### **Grading Structure**

**Grading Scale:** Grades are calculated on an 8-point system:

- A (96-100)
- A- (93-95)

- B+ (91-92)
- B (88-90)
- B- (85-87)
- C+ (83-84)
- C (80-82)
- C- (77-79)
- D (70-76).

### **Confidentiality**

We will occasionally deal with very personal and sensitive matters. It is imperative that any personal information revealed during class time is kept confidential among classmates and not exposed outside of class. That said, instructors are not bound to the confidentiality of the student but will take measures to preserve the privacy and dignity of each student. When a discourse requires intervention, the instructor reserves both the right and the responsibility to respond as appropriate to assist, support, and/or provide resources.

Self-reflective learning is supported, but individual concerns will not be the focus of the class. Please use judgment and address supervision or personal issues with a trusted personal advisor, therapist, or instructor after class. Overall, this course and the program aim primarily for education and training to become an effective people helper.

### **Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism**

The community at Trinity International University promotes a commitment to integrity in all areas of life. In the case of breaches of academic honesty, such as plagiarism or cheating on examinations, the matter will be reported to the Dean/Associate Dean of Students. Students should be advised that normally, in academic dishonesty or plagiarism cases, the penalty shall be a "0" for the assignment and an "F" for the course. For the full policy, please see the *TEDS/TGS Student Guide*.

### **Computer Use Statement**

Students may use computers in class because they will use the computer only for purposes related to the course that day. All programs such as internet use, solitaire and other games, email, and any others not related to the course should not be open during class time. Such programs cause unnecessary distraction for you and those sitting around you in the class.

### **Generative AI Policy**

As the development of writing and critical thinking skills is an essential objective of this course, it is mandatory that all assignments be completed solely by the individual student. The use of generative AI tools, including but not limited to ChatGPT, DALL-E, Bard, or Copilot, is strictly prohibited in this class. This encompasses any work written, developed, created, or inspired by an AI program. The use of such tools will be deemed a violation of academic integrity. Plagiarism and AI detection programs may check any submitted academic work for academic dishonesty.

### **Course Extensions**

Course extensions may not be granted by the professor past the final day of exam week and are granted only for exceptional reasons. Requests for course extensions must be made to the Dean of Students office. Grades of "incomplete" are not granted at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

## Students with Disabilities

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School to provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations, or academic adjustments, and services to students with a documented disability to help ensure an equal educational opportunity. Students seeking these services should contact Mary Guthrie, Associate Dean of Students, with supporting documentation as soon as possible. If you believe you might have a disability that negatively impacts your educational performance but have never been diagnosed, you are encouraged to meet with Mary Guthrie to discuss your needs. You can contact her at [mcguthrie@tiu.edu](mailto:mcguthrie@tiu.edu) or 847-317-7114.

Note on Academic Accommodations. This course's reading and writing assignments are available before its starting date. This will allow for advanced preparation for those needing additional time for exposure to this material. Preparation in advance of the course is the optimum way to overcome learning challenges, as it permits full participation with the cohort and immediate use of in-class support.

## Schedule:

### Contemporary Issues in Couples and Family Counseling

Date	Topics	Reading	Assignments
Day 1: Friday 8/30	Review Syllabus Introduction to Class Systems, Theory and Systemic Thinking, Origins and Growth of Couples and Family Therapy	Yarhouse Part 1	
Day 2: Saturday 8/31 Jan. 24 <sup>th</sup>	Bowen Family Therapy *Genogram Presentation Emotionally Focused Couple/Family Therapy Gottman Method Therapy Cognitive Behavioral Couple/Family Therapy	Yarhouse Chapters 3 and 10.	Book Review and Reflection Due 8/31/24  Family Analysis Paper Due 9/20/2024
Day 3: Friday 10/11	Gender Dynamics Parenting Styles Mental Health Intimacy Issues	Please have both books by Tabbi Read  Yarhouse Chapter 16	
Day 4: Saturday 10/12	Counseling Infidelity, Divorce, Remarriage, and Blended Families Counseling Partner Violence Counseling Substance Abuse Counseling Cultural Differences	Yarhouse Chapters 15, 17 & 18	Theological Reflection Paper Due 10/12/2024