COUN 511 Family Systems  
Spring 2014  
Boise State University  
Department of Counselor Education

Instructor: Bobbie Birdsall, PhD, NCC, LCPC, LMFT  
Course Time and Locations: Thursdays, 6-8:45 pm, Business Bldg. 222  
Office: E611  
Email: bbirdsa@boisestate.edu  
Office Hours: Mon 1:30-3:30 pm, Wed 1:30-3:30 pm, and by appointment

**Required Texts/Materials:**  

**Recommended reading:**  


**Additional Recommended Readings:**


Course Description:
Main theoretical and therapeutic approaches of contemporary family counseling with emphasis on critical research issues in educational and other counseling settings.

Course Goals & Objectives:
1. To understand the historical perspective and ethics of family counseling.
2. To understand basic characteristics of family counseling and systems theory.
3. To understand diverse family forms and various patterns of family interaction.
4. To understand the major theories and approaches to family therapy.
5. To understand techniques associated with family counseling approaches.
6. To explore self and family in an effort to develop an awareness of values and life experiences and gain an understanding of how these contribute to one’s clinical practice.
7. To improve observation skills via video and role play demonstrations.
8. To communicate in a professionally written form an understanding of the theoretical framework of family counseling and/or pertinent family therapy issue.
9. To understand family life cycle development perspective within the framework of diversity (including race, ethnicity, SES, religious affiliation, and sexual orientation.)

Course Requirements:

20 pts.  Attendance and participation
It is expected that students attend and be on time for the beginning of every class. In case of illness or family emergency, please contact the instructor in advance. Missing classes result in point reduction to final grade. Appropriate participation refers to the continuous acceptance and support of fellow students with a willingness to share your views in a timely and succinct manner that is sensitive to and respectful of the rights and feelings of others while providing evidence of familiarity with texts and handouts.

80 pts.  Theoretical Presentation and Role-Play
This is a multi-media presentation on a theoretical approach, individually or with a partner. You will present a theoretical approach to working with families to the class. Limit presentation to 40 minutes, including 10-15 minutes of a video clip demonstration. Include specific terminology, important dynamics and, if available, evidence of efficacy in presentation. Include a role-play with 3 – 5 participants as family members to demonstrate this theoretical approach. The role-play should last about 15 minutes. During your role-play, the instructor might gently interrupt to give suggestions, demonstrations, or ask questions. A brief hand-out should be given to all students.

100 pts.  Family of Origin Paper (FOO)
Students will prepare a family system analysis of your Family of Origin. This analysis will include a complete three-generation genogram, with your generation as the third generation. I will be looking for how, after reviewing your FOO, you can integrate how your family may have contributed to the foundation of your values, perceptions, attitudes, position, and cognitive map of the world. Choose a systems’ theory of your liking (or pieces of different theories) and analyze your family system. The FOO paper should be
between 7-10 pages (excluding genogram), double-spaced and typed. This paper will use the professional lexicon, which will demonstrate student’s understanding of the vocabulary as well as insight into family of origin. Intended to enhance the student’s introspection, knowledge and assessment of personal family dynamics. Although this paper will only be seen by yourself and the instructor, it will be up to you to determine your comfort level in self-disclosure. Suggested website: www.genopro.com.

100 pts. Current Issues Research Paper

This should be a review of an issue presently under debate or scrutiny in the MFT field and a clearly stated position on both sides of the issue. Examples include: family group-therapy, feminist family therapy, conjoint therapy with domestic violence couples, inclusion of children in therapy, etc. The first part of the paper should review the related literature on the subject, and provide supporting evidence for both sides (if appropriate) of the issue. A minimum of five current references from professional counseling/therapy journals for this part, or more depending on your topic (textbook does not count!) Part two should be your position in a clearly stated form, with your rationale for assuming the position. This is not just a research paper. Please read requirements carefully. The paper will not exceed 15 pages and must be completed in APA style and include, in addition to the review of the literature, potential application to the field in which the student will be working.

Note: All assignments should be typed according to guidelines provided in the APA Publication Manual. Points are deducted for late assignments; class absences are highly discouraged and will result in reduction of grade. All absences should be discussed with the instructor.

Evaluation Criteria:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theoretical Presentation &amp; Role Play</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family of Origin Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Issues Research Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
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Total 300 points

Grading System:

A = 90 – 100
B = 80-89
C = 70-79
D = 60-69
F = 59 and below

COURSE POLICIES:

Readings: In order to gain the maximum potential from the learning environment, your task is to complete the assigned reading in advance and come to class prepared to share your impressions and interpretations, to raise pertinent questions and issues, and to remain open to the ideas and reactions of the other class members. Instructional
approach will include lecture, group facilitation by instructor, peer feedback and discussion, exercises, and video presentations. Related articles may also be assigned.

Late assignments will result in a one-point per day reduction in the assignment grade. Incompletes are discouraged and must be requested in writing prior to the end of the course with appropriate reason for the request.

**Tentative Class Schedule**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Discussion Topic(s)</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| Jan. 30  | Overview of Class and requirements  
History of Family Therapy  
Healthy Family functioning | Ch. 1, 2             |
| Feb. 6   | Gender, Culture, and Ethnicity  
Family Life Cycle  
Lexicon and definitions | Ch. 3               |
| Feb. 13  | Interlocking Systems  
Origins & Growth of Family Therapy | Ch. 4 & 5           |
| Feb. 20  | Psychodynamic Models                    | Ch. 7               |
| Feb. 27  | No Class                             |                     |
| Mar. 6   | Transgenerational Models               | Ch. 8               |
| Mar. 13  | Experiential Models                    | Ch. 9               |
| Mar. 20  | The Structural Model                   | Ch. 10              |
| April 3  | Strategic Models                       | Ch. 11              |
| April 10 | Behavioral & Cognitive Behavioral Models       | Ch. 12              |
| April 17 | Solution-Focused Therapy               | Ch. 13              |
|          | **Family of Origin Paper Due**        |                     |
| April 24 | Narrative Therapy                      | Ch. 14              |
| May 1    | Psychoeducational Models               | Ch. 15              |
|          | **Presentations by students** (brief) |                     |
|          | **Current Issues Research Paper Due**  |                     |
| May 8    | Professional Issues and Ethical Practices | Ch. 6             |
|          | **Presentations by students** (brief) |                     |
CNPS 545: Family Counseling II
Terminology

Family
Family of origin
Family structure
Family strategies
Family assumptions
Dysfunction
Cybernetics: 1st order
2nd order
Identified patient
Family life cycle
Family process
Systems theory
Homeostasis
Open system
Closed system
Circular causality
Morphostasis
Morphogenesis
Subsystem
Boundary
Postmodern
Marital schism
Marital skew
Objects
Relational ethics
Legacy
Loyalty

Family sculpture
Family roles
Self differentiation
Fusion
Triangulation
Nuclear family emotional system
Family projection process
Emotional cut-off
Multigenerational transmission process
Sibling position
Societal regression
Generic rules
Idiosyncratic rules
Complementarity
Boundary permeability
Alignment
Coalition
Family mapping
Double bind
Metacommunication
Symmetrical escalation
Semantics
Syntax
Pragmatics
Genogram