PSY568 Introduction to Marriage and Family Therapy

Reformed Theological Seminary–Orlando  
Mondays, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., 3 credit hours  
Fall Semester, 2013  
Instructor: Scott Coupland, Ph.D.  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Telephone: (407) 366-9493, ext. 238  
Email: scoupland@rts.edu

PURPOSE
This course is designed to familiarize the student with a family systems framework and a broad range of established family systems models that have shaped the practice of couple and family therapy. Theory and technique will be reviewed to assist the development of process skills necessary for addressing the multiple dynamics associated with counseling couples and families. It will provide opportunities to increase the student’s personal and professional growth.

OBJECTIVES
As a result of the completion of this course, students will:
1. Develop a systemic perspective in understanding and assessing family dynamics.
2. Become familiar with basic concepts and techniques of established models of family therapy.
3. Demonstrate skills pertinent to family counseling.
4. Examine his/her family experience through genogram and paper sculpture construction and interpretation.
5. Feel more confident in his/her ability to identify family dynamics and effectively work with families.

LEARNING FORMAT
Lecture, small group interaction, case study reviews, genogram and paper sculpture construction, and reading.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/26</td>
<td>Genogram construction and interpretation</td>
<td>N., Ch. 4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>No class, Labor Day</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>Systems theory and concepts</td>
<td>N.*, Ch. 1-2; N., Ch. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/16</td>
<td>Systems theory and concepts</td>
<td>N.*, pp. 53-66; N., Ch. 2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/23</td>
<td>The family life cycle</td>
<td>N.*, pp. 66-71; N., Ch. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/30</td>
<td>Family therapy process and techniques</td>
<td>N.*, Ch. 3; N., Ch. 7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/7</td>
<td>No class, Fall break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Date       Topic                                      Reading
10/14      Bowen family system theory              N.*, Ch. 5; N., Ch. 9
10/21      Experiential family therapy            N.*, Ch. 8; N., Ch. 10
10/29      Structural family therapy              N.*, Ch. 7; N., Ch. 11
11/4       Strategic and Systemic therapies       N.*, Ch. 6; N., Ch. 12
11/11      Narrative & Solution-focused therapy   N.*, Ch. 11-13
11/18      DVD family therapy demonstration       N.*, Ch. 10; N., Ch. 13
11/25      Paper sculpture presentations          N.*, Ch. 14; N., Ch. 14
12/2       Paper sculpture presentations          N.*, Ch. 15

REQUIREMENTS
1. Finish all assigned reading.
2. Construction and presentation of your family genogram with interpretation.
   You will receive instructions in class on how to construct your family genogram. You will present your genogram and your interpretation of it in your process group.
   a. Construct a three-generation genogram of your family with Genopro software. (If you are or were married, do not include your present or former spouse’s family of origin.) This software is free but written for PC computers. It can be used on MAC computers if a wrapping software (e.g., Wineskin) is used. The Genopro software is also installed on the computers in the library. Use 3 or more “layers” to underscore different family patterns and issues. The first layer should be a general family tree with demographic information. The second layer should be the family tree with descriptive information for the most significant family members. The third layer should be the family tree with relationship descriptors. Additional layers can be added, if desired, to highlight particular family dynamics. The 3 or more layers will make the genogram clearer and help in the interpretative process.
   b. An interpretation of your family genogram. Use the interpretative format described in the text (available on reserve in the library) below to help you identify and highlight family patterns and issues in your genogram.
   c. Discuss how you have seen and/or hope to see these patterns changed/redeemed.
   d. Your genogram must be constructed using the proper symbols and structure.

This text is available on reserve in the library and may help you in the construction and interpretation of your genogram.

Due date: Students will take two weeks to present and process their genograms in their process group during the months of October-December. A copy of your genogram file (“your name.gno”) and a brief outline of your interpretation should be emailed to Dr. Coupland at scoupland@rts.edu by the date of your presentation.

3. Family sculpture and presentation.
   The goal of the paper sculpture is to create a figurative picture that encapsulates the relational dynamics of your family at a certain time frame of your life. This sculpture allows you to reflect on your family system’s characteristics and may give you a different
perspective on your family as a group and your role in the family. There is no right or wrong way to do a family sculpture. Use your imagination.

a. Decide what family you want to sculpt. You may sculpt your family of origin, or, if you are married and have children, your family of procreation.

b. Pick a time period on which to focus (e.g., my preteen years; my junior year in high school; when my children where four and six years old, etc.)

c. Create shapes and/or select objects or pictures for all persons/things you wish to include. Shapes/objects/pictures should be made for all persons and things who or which had/have a significant effect on the family. Think in terms of size, color, texture, etc.

d. Arrange the shapes/objects/pictures so that they express the family relationships as you see them. Consider the meaning of the proximity of the shapes/objects/pictures to one another. When you are satisfied with the arrangement, secure them in place. (Note: a piece of paper with a few magazine clips attached to it does not meet the level of creativity expected for this project.)

e. This sculpture will not be turned in, but will be presented to the class on November 25th or December 2nd. You will have 20 minutes for your presentation.

f. Address the following in your presentation:
   i. Identify the time period in your life that is represented by your sculpture.
   ii. Identify who or what the shapes/objects/pictures are (age, sex, relationship to you, why included), why you arranged them as you did, the meaning of any connecting or boundary lines, and any special uses of size, shape, color, texture, proximity.
   iii. Describe the family dynamics depicted in your paper sculpture.
   iv. What were the roles of the family members?
   v. How did you respond to these dynamics at the time of the scene?
   vi. How has your response to these dynamics changed since then (if applicable), and/or how would like to see it changed?
   vii. How have you sought to “honor your father and mother,” and love the other family members depicted in your paper sculpture.

Due date: November 25th or December 2nd in class.

4. Case study review and questions.
In the third hour of the classes held from September 23rd to November 11th case studies will be provided with questions associated with them. In groups of three, you will discuss and type out your responses to the questions and email them to Dr. Coupland’s email address at scoupland@rts.edu by the end of class. The intent is to apply your conceptualization and technique skills as related to the topic discussed in class that day. Each assignment is worth 10 points. Each group member will receive the same grade.

5. Weekly quizzes.
There will be a weekly quiz given the last 10 minutes of each class beginning on August 26 and ending November 11. The quizzes will be based on the required reading for the lecture topic being covered in class that day, and the material covered in the class that day. The quizzes will consist of 5 multiple choice questions, and each quiz is worth 10 points. If you are not satisfied with your quiz grade, you may retake the same quiz during the 10 minute period prior to the next class. There is no makeup permitted for missed quizzes.
GRADING
Family genogram and interpretation: 50 points
Paper sculpture and interpretative presentation: 50 points
Case studies and questions: 70 points
Weekly quizzes: 100 points
Required reading: 30 points
Total possible points: 300 points
Course grades will be determined by adding points from the family genogram with interpretative presentation, the paper sculpture and presentation, the in-class technique demonstrations, the take home examination, and the required reading. Grades will be based on the following scale:

A = 291-300 points  C+ = 249-257 points  D- = 210-215 points
A- = 282-290 points  C = 240-248 points   F = 209 points and below
B+ = 273-281 points  C- = 234-239 points
B = 264-272 points  D+ = 225-233 points
B- = 258-263 points  D = 216-224 points

ACADEMIC STANDARDS
If you should miss a class, you are expected to contact another student regarding the information covered.

All assignments will be due on the date specified in the syllabus. Late genograms or paper sculptures will not be accepted.
## Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

**Course:** PSY568 Introduction to Marriage and Family Therapy  
**Professor:** Scott Coupland, PhD  
**Campus:** Orlando  
**Date:** Fall semester, 2013

### MAC Student Learning Outcomes

*In order to measure the success of the MAC curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MAC outcomes.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</th>
<th>Minimal</th>
<th>Students articulate their knowledge of biblical and theological concepts applied in a counseling context.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scripture</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Students learn to apply Scriptural concepts (e.g., forgiveness, reconciliation) to struggling families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformed Theology</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Students learn to evaluate family therapy approaches with a reformed theology framework.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanctification</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Students reflect on their family of origin experience by constructing a genogram and family sculpture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desire for Worldview</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Students learn to help people build strong family relationships that are consistent with God’s Word.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winsomely Reformed</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Students learn a counseling framework that is applicable in a broadly Christian and secular contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preach</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherd</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Students learn and practice skills that enable them counsel families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church/World</td>
<td>None</td>
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within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.