

Associated Canadian Theological Schools

CLG 552: Theories of Family Therapy

Vange Willms Thiessen, MA, DMIN, RMFT
AAMFT Approved Supervisor
Fall - 2009
3 credit hours

vanget@twu.ca
604.513.2044 x3137
September 14 – December 07, 2009
Mondays, 11:20am – 2:00pm

I. Course Description

This course introduces the classic and post-modern family systems concepts and theories. Multiple models of family systems therapy will be presented to provide a framework for conceptual integration and application to clinical practice. Throughout the course students will be encouraged to assess and integrate family therapy theories with a Christian worldview. This course also provides opportunities for professional development through personal reflection and the construction of an integrated therapeutic perspective on the process of change and care within family therapy.

II. Goals

1. To introduce classic and postmodern family systems concepts and theories.
2. To apply theory-based assessment and interventions to individual and relational therapeutic situations.
3. To introduce students to a basic framework for the integration of clinical theory and practice with a Christian theological perspective.

III. Objectives

By the end of this course, each student should:

1. Differentiate between individual-oriented and family systems theory models as they apply to family structure and process.
2. Delineate the key concepts of classic and post-modern family systems theories.
3. Use systemic information to formulate comprehensive and objective clinical assessments.
4. Integrate their theoretical and assessment data into an informed selection of appropriate clinical interventions
5. Articulate a personal integrated therapy approach that is theologically sound and informed by a clear faith perspective.

IV. Course Textbooks

Gehart, Diane. (2010). *Mastering Competencies in Family Therapy*. Belmont: Brooks/Cole.

Gehart, Diane R. & Tuttle, Amy R. (2003). *Theory-Based Treatment Planning for Marriage and Family Therapists*. Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole.

Olthuis, J.H. (2001). *The Beautiful Risk*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Yarhouse, Mark A. (2008). *Family Therapies; A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic.

V. Course Assignments

1. Participation – 10%: Students are expected to attend all classes, to arrive on time, and participate fully during class. Readings are to be completed prior to class to facilitate meaningful discussion.

2. Family Theory Assignment – 30%; DUE – As per schedule.

a. Family theory paper – 20%

In pairs, students will research and discuss **ONE** of the MFT theories included in this course. Together they will write an 8-10 page, double-spaced paper presenting an overview of the following: i) leading theorists, ii) key theoretical concepts, iii) assumptions regarding the process of change, iv) goals of therapy, v) interventions specific to the theory chosen, vi) theological parallels and integration. Prepare a 2-3 page, single-spaced summary handout for class participants. A detailed format for this assignment will be discussed during the first class.

b. Family theory presentation – 10%

Students will present/demonstrate, in a dynamic and creative way, the research paper for the family theory assignment. Each pair will have 60 minutes for their presentation, with each individual having equal opportunity to participate. Guidelines for this assignment will be discussed during the first class and students will choose their working partners and theory of preference for presentation.

3. Personal Integration Paper – 30%; DUE - December 14, 2009

Students are expected to prepare an integration paper which outlines preferred theoretical perspectives and integrates them with a Christian worldview. The expected length of the integration paper is 15-18 pages. Guidelines for the working paper and the final version will be distributed during the third class. Students will complete a working paper by **November 16th** which will be returned with comments by the instructor on **November 30th**. The final version will be submitted during exam week, December 14.

4. Response Paper – 10%; DUE – October 19, 2009

Students will write a review and response to *The Beautiful Risk*. The response paper will be between 4-5 pages in length and is due prior to reading break. The format for response papers will be discussed in the first class.

5. Theory Application Paper – 20%; DUE – November 30, 2009

Write a 10-12 page paper that applies concepts of **at least two** Family Therapy theories to your own life story. The paper should include at least 10 references that support your application of specific theoretical aspects to your life situation. Your bibliography should include entries from quality MFT journals and books in order to present an in-depth understanding of the concepts that you are applying to your story. The paper will be organized with the following subheadings:

- a. My Life Story (5%): A thumbnail sketch of your life story. Include date of birth, a brief description of family-of-origin members, significant others, memorable life events, losses, crises, interpersonal stressors, etc. Not to exceed 2-3 pages.
- b. Significant Life Issues (10%): Select **2 interpersonal, family-related issues/dynamics** that have significantly impacted your development. Analyze/conceptualize these issues/dynamics according to MFT systems theories. No more than 4-6 pages.
- c. Personal Reflections (5%): Include a comparative evaluation of the inadequacy and limitations of each theory to your life issues, from a personal and spiritual/faith-based perspective. Not less than 2 pages.

VI. Evaluation

1. Participation – 10%
2. Theory Assignment – 30%
3. Personal Integration Paper – 30%
4. Olthuis Response Papers – 10%
5. Theory Application Paper – 20%

Grading Scale

1. Students are expected to budget their time and anticipate due dates for assignments. Only medical emergency or other extreme circumstances will be acceptable excuses for late assignments.

2. Those students who have extenuating circumstances delaying their work are required to fill out the necessary paperwork and talk to the registrar. An incomplete mark (INC) will be entered on the student transcript until all work is completed (15 week maximum).
3. It is the student's responsibility to get the assignment to the instructor.
4. Students are expected to edit all written assignments to check for spelling grammatical errors and coherence. All assignments must be typed and APA format is required. These factors will be incorporated into the grade.
5. **Please put your box number on all assignments.**

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	97-100	4.30
A	93-96	4.00
A-	90-92	3.70
B+	87-89	3.30
B	83-86	3.00
B-	80-82	2.70
C+	77-79	2.30
C	73-76	2.00
C-	70-72	1.70
F	Below 70	0.00

VII.Course Outline

September 14: Course introduction; Foundations and evolution of family therapy

September 21: Postmodernism and family therapy developments

September 28: Developing an integrative framework; Domains of integration

October 05: Psychoanalytic/Object Relations family therapy

October 12: THANKSGIVING - NO Class

October 19: Intergenerational/Bowen family therapy.

DUE: Review and Response paper; Olthuis, *The Beautiful Risk*

October 26: READING WEEK – NO Class

November 02: Experiential/Satir family therapy.

November 09: Cognitive-Behavioral family therapy.

November 16: Solution-Focused therapy.

DUE: Personal Integration Paper-in-progress

November 23: Narrative ideas and practice.

November 30: Integrative models; Seminar discussion.

DUE: Theory Application Paper

December 07:

December 14: DUE: Final Personal Integration Paper

VIII. MC Program Graduate Essay

A. MC Program Integration Assignment

1. Objective: To prepare a personal perspective that articulates an integrated therapeutic approach with a Christian Worldview
2. Phase I: CLG 552 provides the opportunity to write the initial Integration Paper as a required assignment in this course.
3. Phase II: CLG 694 requires a final Integration Paper as the graduate essay necessary for completion of the MC program.

B. Assignment Expectations

1. **Introduction:** Describe the intent and parameters of this assignment.
2. **Define** the following terms/concepts in the context of your discussion.
 - a. Psychology and Family Systems Theory
 - b. Theology, Religion and Spirituality
 - c. Modernism and Postmodernism
3. **Present your argument** for integrating spirituality/religious worldview as an important dimension of human experience in the process of family therapy.
4. **Choose 2 or more Family Systems Theories** and briefly discuss:
 - a. Names of leading figures associated with the theory
 - b. Historical context of this theory.
 - c. Reasons for your choice.
5. **Integrate** your preferred Family Systems Theories with your Christian Worldview using the suggested **Integrative Framework** (McKinn & Campbell).
 - a. Highlight areas of compatibility between your chosen MFT theories and a Christian Worldview.
 - b. Briefly discuss limitations of the MFT theories and how they differ from a Christian Worldview
 - c. Your principles of integration should reflect thoughtful reflection about your assumptions and should be supported by citation.
6. **Articulate** how your faith perspective informs an ethic of care and counselling/therapy; a spirituality of care and compassion (Olthuis).

7. **Identify your particular Christian theological tradition** and any important assumptions you are bringing to the project.
8. **Evaluate** your integrative approach. What are its strengths and weaknesses?
9. **Summarize** your integrated, informed therapeutic approach.

C. Integrative Framework

Domain	Philosophical Terms	Expectations of Content and Process	Christian Worldview	MFT Theoretical Assumptions
What Exists?	Metaphysics	What is material and non-material?		
How We Know?	Epistemology	Describe the relationships between <i>general</i> and <i>special</i> revelation. How have modernism and postmodern influenced our way of knowing? Discuss your position on the possibilities and limitations of knowing and how it impacts this integration assignment.		
Who Are We?	Anthropology	What are your ideas about human nature? What determines human character and actions?		
What Goes Wrong?	Pathology/Sin	What are the processes and pitfalls that work against human wholeness? What is the role of environment and learning?		
What Is Wholeness?	Health and Well-being	What are your ideas about what a well functioning person looks like? What desires/goals do you have for clients?		
How It Works?	Change Process	How does change occur? What is the interplay between affect, cognition and behavior in effecting change? What methods and/or techniques are useful?		
What It Looks Like?	Therapeutic Response	What is the role of the therapist? How would you define the process of therapy? Identify key components of therapeutic practice, including context.		

Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS

Web Support – Student Portal <https://students.twu.ca>

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called “I forgot my password.” When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions overnight or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), MAX (850 AM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM) by 6:30 a.m., and an announcement will be placed on the University's switchboard as well as on the website <http://www.twu.ca/conditions/>. The first announcement regarding a closure will cover the period up to 1:00 p.m. only. If classes are to be cancelled beyond 1:00 p.m., this decision will be announced by the same means before 11:00 a.m. that day. Students and faculty should assume that all night classes will continue to operate. If the emergency continues into the evening, students and faculty may check for a closure notice on the University's switchboard and website after 3:00 p.m. that day.

Paper Formatting

Students need to adhere to Turabian format except in counselling courses, for which APA format is used.

Students are encouraged strongly to use RefWorks (available through the library home page www.twu.ca/library) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. They will need to be aware of the need to “clean up” most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples: <http://faculty.ucc.edu/egh-damerow/turabian.htm> or www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/. Note that in RefWorks the available formatting styles are those of Turabian (Notes), 6th edition, and APA – American Psychological Association, 5th edition.

Counselling students are expected to purchase the APA Publications Manual. More information found at the following website. <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>.

CANIL students can locate this on the CANIL intranet, under the “student” side. A hard copy is given to incoming students in the fall.

Please check with your professor to see which one he/she recommends you use!!

Research Ethics

Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) **MUST** be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Information and forms may be found at <http://www.twu.ca/academics/research/ethics/>. Those needing additional clarification may contact Dr. Bruce Guenther. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire TWU community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at TWU. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. TWU has a strict policy on plagiarism (see academic calendar 2008-09, pp. 37-38). Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage (www.acts.twu.ca) at the following link: www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html.

Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. An excellent resource describing plagiarism and how to avoid it has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or used as flash (self running) tutorials of varying lengths from:

<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/plagiarism.ppt>

<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism.swf> (14 minute flash tutorial)

http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism_Short.swf (8 minute flash tutorial)

Equity of Access

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the ACTS Director of Student Life of that fact **before the beginning of a course** so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the student's learning experience. We are unable to accommodate any student who informs the Director of Student Life of a disability after the beginning of class.