

# **WURZWEILER SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

## **YESHIVA UNIVERSITY**

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

**SWK 6141**  
**Family Systems**  
**Fall 2020**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces the student to a beginning conceptual framework of a systems approach to social work practice with families. It provides an overview of family life taking into consideration the developmental life cycle of families. It also highlights the profound impact that societal and cultural influences have on a family's identity, structure, communication patterns and style of functioning. The course explores how common issues such as mental and physical illness, alcoholism and domestic violence may impact family life. The course provides an overview of assessment and interventions with families from a systems perspective.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the course, the students will be able to demonstrate:

1. Their understanding of the conceptual framework for social work practice with families from a systems perspective
2. Their competence in articulating the impact of psychosocial developmental tasks of the family life cycle
3. Their competence in articulating key concepts of different family systems frameworks
4. Their understanding and sensitivity to the profound influence that culture, ethnicity, race and class have on family functioning
5. Their understanding of issues such as mental/physical illness, alcoholism and domestic violence from a family systems perspective.
6. Their skill base for assessment and interventions with families from a systems perspective

These objectives are assessed in written papers, role-plays and classroom participation.

CSWE competency (engagement/assessment/treatment planning and interventions)

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

There will be two assignments for this course, a mid-term presentation accompanied by a paper and a final term paper due at the end of the semester. The specific requirements of each written assignment can be found at the end of the outline.

Late papers will result in lower grades.

### **PLAGIARISM:**

Students should remember that the School will not condone plagiarism in any form and will sanction acts of plagiarism. A student who presents someone else's work as his or her own work is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking and writing. Plagiarism occurs when a student directly copies another's work without citation; when a student paraphrases major aspects of another's work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also plagiarism to use the ideas and/or work of another student and present them as your own. It is not plagiarism to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept as a reaction to someone else's work; however, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. Any student who can be shown to have plagiarized any part of any assignment in this course will automatically **FAIL** the course and will be referred to the Associate Dean for disciplinary action, which may include expulsion.

### **HIPAA ALERT:**

In line with the new HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your work will need to be de-identified. What this means is that any information that would allow another to identify the person needs to be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious things like names and birth dates but may also contain other information that is so unique to the person that it will allow for identification, including diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity, gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations are asked to make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, Rochelle Kohn, Beren Campus, 917-326-4828, [rkohn1@yu.edu](mailto:rkohn1@yu.edu), Abby Kelsen, Wilf Campus, 646-685-0118, [akelsen@yu.edu](mailto:akelsen@yu.edu), during the first week of class. After approval for accommodations is granted, please submit your accommodations letter to Disability Services Office immediately.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Goldenberg, H., & Goldenberg, I. (2013). *Family Therapy: An Overview*, 8th Edition, Brooks Cole, Ca.

## **SESSION OUTLINE**

### **LEARNING THEME I: Introduction to Systems language and concepts**

(Sessions 1-3) Classroom Focus: Introduction to the basic concepts of systems approach, family structures, developmental life stages of the family, ethical dimensions of family work.

### **READINGS**

Cox, M.J., Paley, B. (2003). Understanding Families as Systems. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12(5), 193-196.

Goldenberg, I. and Goldenberg, H. (2013). *Family Therapy: An Overview*. California: Brooks/Cole Pub. (8th edition),

**Ch. 1. Adopting a Family Relationship Framework.**

**Ch. 2. Family Development: Continuity and Change.**

**Ch. 6. Professional Issues and Ethical Practices**

Hertlein, K. M. (2010). Therapeutic Dilemmas in Treating Internet Infidelity. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 39, 2, 162-178.

Knoble, NB; Linville, D. (2012). Outness and relationship satisfaction in same gender couples. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 38, 2, 330-9.

Kuo, FC. (2009). Secrets or No Secrets: Confidentiality in Couple Therapy. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 37, 5 351.

Lavadera, A., Lubrano; L., Togliatti, F., (2011). Assessing Family Coordination in Divorced Families. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 39, 4, 277-291.

McSchmidt, J.D. (2009), Stepfamily Relationships: Development, Dynamics, & Interventions. *College Studies in Social Work*, 79. 1, 73-7.

Nichols, M., & Schwartz, R. (2008). *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods*. MA: Allyn & Bacon. (8<sup>th</sup> Edition). Chapter 1 (pgs.11-45), Chap. 2 (pgs. 49-62) & Chap. 4 (pgs.97-122).

- Pelton, S. Hertlein, K. (2011). A Proposed Life Cycle for Voluntary Childfree Couples. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, 23, 1, 39-53.
- Ramisch, J.L., & Franklin, D. (2008). The Primary Triangle and Variation in Nuclear Family Functioning. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 36 (4), 312-322.
- Scher, S; Kozlowska, K (2012). Thinking, Doing, and the Ethics of Family Therapy *The American Journal of Family Therapy* , 40, 2 97-112.
- Sukut, M.E., & Trathen, D.W. (2002). Ethical decision-making in marriage and family therapy. *Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy*, 5(2), 179-190.

## **LEARNING THEME II:      Theoretical Foundations of Systems Approaches**

(Sessions 4-10)

Classroom Focus: The conceptual framework of key Systems approaches, e.g.; Psychodynamic, Transgenerational, Structural, Strategic,

& Narrative therapies

### **READINGS**

- Dattillio, F.M., & Epstein, N. (2013). The role of cognitive behavioral interventions in marital and family therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 31, 1, 7-14.
- Goldenberg, I. and Goldenberg, H. (2013). *Family Therapy: An Overview*. California: Brooks/Cole Pub.
- Ch.7 Psychodynamic Models.**
- Ch.8 Transgenerational Models.**
- Ch.10 The Structural Model.**
- Ch.11 Strategic Models.**
- Ch.17 Comparative View of Family Theories and Therapies.**

Klever, P (2009). Family Functioning and Self-Differentiation: A Cross-Cultural Examination, *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*, 31 (2), 140-159.

Lebow, J. (2016). Editorial: Narrative and Poststructural Perspectives in Couple and Family Therapy, *Family Process*, 55, 2, 191–194.

Reiter, M. D. (2017). Ten Things I Learned From Dr. Salvador Minuchin *Journal of Systemic Therapies; New York*, 36, 4, 46-56.

Lindblad-Goldberg, M.; Northey, W. (2013). Ecosystemic Structural Family Therapy: Theoretical and Clinical Foundations. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*, 35, 1, 47-160.

McCammon, JL; Marlowe, S.L., Anderson, D.P., Hodgson, R.J. (2012). Medical Family Therapy in Cancer Care: Patient and Family Experiences. *The American Journal of Family Therapy* , 40. 3, 258-273.

Sheinberg, M. True, F. (2008). Treating Family Relational Trauma: A Recursive Process Using a Decision Dialogue. *Family Process*, 47 (2), 173-195.

Trepper, T., Dolan, Y., McCollum, E., & Nelson, T. (2006). Steve DeShazer and the future of Solution-Focused therapy, *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 32(2), 133-139.

### **LEARNING THEME III:     Therapeutic Techniques**

(Sessions 11-12)                      Classroom Focus: The skill base of family systems; family genograms and ecograms, sculpting, choreography

### **READINGS**

Chung, H, & Gale, J. (2009). Marriage and Family Therapy with Low-Income Clients: Professional, Ethical, and Clinical Issues. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*, 31(1), 19-33.

George, S. (2013). Couples therapy for domestic violence: Finding safe solutions. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 39, 1, 128-129.

Grimes, M.E., McElwain, A.D. (2008). Genograms: Use in Therapy with Asian Families with Diverse Cultural Heritages *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*, 30 (4), 220-232.

Hartman, A. (1995). Diagrammatic assessment of family relationships. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Society*, 76(1), 111-122.

Holman VK; Larson, TB, Jackson, J (2010). .The Relationship between Coming to Terms with Family-of-Origin Difficulties and Adult Relationship Satisfaction Martinson. *The American Journal of Family Therapy* , 38, 3 , 207-221.

Mamalakis, P. (2013). Spiritual resources in family therapy. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 39, 2, 269-269.

McCullough-Chavis, A., & Waites, C. (2004). Genograms with African-American families: Considering cultural context. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 8(2), 1-19.

Pacquin, G. (1991). Family Treatment Assessment for Novices. *Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 72(6), 79-91.

Rappleyea, DL. Harris, SM.; White, M; Simon, K (2009). Termination: Legal and Ethical Considerations for Marriage and Family Therapists. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 37 (1), 12-27.

#### **LEARNING THEME IV: Special Dimensions as they Impact Family Life**

(Sessions 13-14) Classroom Focus: The psychosocial impact of race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation & gender on family functioning. The psychosocial impact of mental illness, physical illness, substance abuse/alcoholism, domestic violence, child abuse, terrorism and trauma on family life.

#### **READINGS**

Ahrons, C.R. (2007). Hill, A. (2006). Play therapy with sexually abused children: Including Family ties after divorce: Long term implications for children. *Family Process*, 46(1), 53-70.

Ardihi, J.A. (2005). Families and incarceration: An ecological approach, *Families in Society*, 86(2), 251-277.

Ariel, J., & McPherson, D.W.(2000) Therapy with lesbian and gay parents and their children. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 26 (4) 421-432.

Bell, H. (2003). Strengths and secondary trauma in family violence work. *Social Work*, 48 (4), 513-522.

Bernstein, A.C. (2000). Straight therapists working with lesbians and gays in family therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 26(4), 443-454.

Bland, R. (1998). Understanding grief and guilt as common themes in family response to mental illness: Implications for social work practice. *Australian Social Work*, 51,4,

27-34.

- Blasko, K.A., Winek, J.L., & Bieschke, K. (2007). Therapists' prototypical assessment of domestic violence situations. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 33, 2, 258-269.
- Boss, P., Bealieu, L., Weiling, E., Turner, W., LaCruz, S. (2003). Healing, loss, ambiguity and trauma: A community based intervention with families of union workers missing after the 911 attack in NYC. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 29,4,, 455-459.
- Brown, M., Banford, A., Mansfield, T., Smith, D., Whiting, J. (2012). Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms and Perceived Relationship Safety as Predictors of Dyadic Adjustment: A Test of Mediation and Moderation. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 40, 4, 349-361.
- Chan, J.G. (2003). An examination for family-involved approaches to alcohol treatment. *Family Journal of Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 11 (2), 129-133.
- Coolhart, D; Baker, A; Farmer, S; Malaney, M; Shipman, D. (2013). Therapy with Transsexual Youth and Their Families: A Clinical Tool for Assessing Youth's Readiness for Gender Transition. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 39, 2, 223-243.
- Corcoran, J., & Dattalio, P. (2006). Parent involvement in treatment for ADHD: A meta-analysis of the published studies. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 16 (6), 561-570.
- DeChillo, N. (1993). Collaboration between social workers and families of patients with mental illness. *Families in Society*, 44(2), 104-115.
- Dudley, J.R., (2007). Helping non-residential fathers: The case for teen and adult unmarried fathers. *Families in Society*, 88 (2), 171-181.
- Ettner, R., Monstrey, S., Coleman, E. (2016). Principles of Transgender Medicine and Surgery, Ch. 8 *Developmental Stages of Transgender Coming Out Process*, New York; Routledge.
- Falicov, C.J. (2007). Working with transnational immigrants: Expanding meanings of family, community and culture. *Family Process*, 46(2), 157-171.
- Feeney, J.A., Passmore, N.L., & Peterson, C.C. (2007). Adoption, attachment and relationship concerns: A study of adult adoptees. *Personal Relationships*, 14(1), 129-147.

Ford, J Durtschi, JA; Franklin, DL. (2012). Structural Therapy with a Couple Battling Pornography Addiction. *The American Journal of Family Therapy* 40. 4 336-348.

Freeman, E.M., Couchonnal, G. (2006). Narrative and culturally based approaches in practice with families. *Families in Society*, 87 (2), 198-208.

Gushwa, M., & Chance, T. (2008). Ethical Dilemmas for Mental Health Practitioners: Navigating Mandated Child Maltreatment Reporting Decisions. *Families in Society*, 89, (1), 78-83.

Green R. J. (2000). Introduction to special section: lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues in family therapy. *Journal of Marital Family Therapy*, 26(4) 407-408.

**Goldenberg, I., & Goldenberg, H. (2013) Ch. 3 Gender, Culture, and Ethnicity in Family functioning,**

Imber-Black, E. (2008). Incarceration and Family Relationships: A Call for Systemic Responses. *Family Process*, 47(3), 277-279.

Kissane, D. W. (2016). The challenge of family-centered care in palliative medicine, *Annals of Palliative Medicine*, 5, 4, 319-321

McCann, D. (2001). Lesbians, gay men, their families and counseling: Implications for training and practice. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 18 (1) 78-88.

McDowell, T; Melendez-Rhodes, T; Althusius, E; Hergic, S; Sleeman, G; My Ton, N.K; Zimpfer-Bak, A.J.(2013). Exploring Social Class: Voices of Inter-Class Couples. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 39, 1,59-71.

Mui-Teng Quek, K., Eppler, C., & Morgan, M. (2016). Gender in family therapy education: reflections of cis-females, *Journal of Family Therapy*, 38,3, 443–462.

Morgan, T. B.; Crane, D. R.; Moore, A. M.; Eggett, D.L. (2013). The cost of treating substance use disorders: individual versus family therapy. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 35, 1,2-23.

Platter, A., Kelley, (2012). Effectiveness of an Educational and Support Program for Family Members of a Substance Abuser. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 40, 3, 208-220.

Powell, MD; Ladd, L D. (2010). Bullying: A Review of the Literature and Implications for Family Therapists. *The American Journal of Family Therapy* 38. 3 189-201.

Reilly, I. (2002). Trauma and family therapy: Reflections on September 11. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 21, 71-80.



Roberts, A. R. (2007). Domestic Violence Continuum, Forensic Assessment and Crisis Intervention. *Families in Society*, 88, (1), 42-54.

Roberts, McGill J. (1991). Sugar and spice, toads and mice: Gender issues in family: An overview. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 17(2), 111-119.

Sherman, M.D., Sautter, F., Jackson, M.H., Lyons, J.A., & Han, X. (2006). Domestic violence in veterans with PTSD who seek couples therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 32 (4), 479-495.

Wilkins, E.; Whiting, J.; Watson, M.; Russon, J.; Moncrief, A. (2013). Residual Effects of Slavery: What Clinicians Need to Know. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*, 35, 1, 14-28.

Yorgason, J. (2013). Changing aging, changing family therapy: Practicing with 21st century realities. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 39, 1, 130-131.

### **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

There will be two assignments for this course, a mid-term presentation accompanied by a brief paper and a final term paper due at the end of the semester. **Late papers will result in lower grades.**

#### **Assignment I Mid-Term**

**Due: Session 7**

##### **1. The written portion of mid-term assignment:**

Each student is to develop a discussion that defines and analyzes the following components of a family. The family can be drawn from their field work, literature or film.

A. Homeostasis, Hierarchy, Boundaries, Systems and subsystems and Coalitions/alliances

B. The impact of the developmental life cycle on the presenting problem(s)

C. The impact of race, ethnicity, class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, immigration or any other sociocultural factor on family's perspective of presenting problem.

**[This is to be a scholarly 6-8 page paper drawing from relevant literature and developing an analysis of key family systems concepts as they relate to a family system]**

## **2. The oral portion of mid-term assignment:**

Each student will be responsible for organizing and participating in a brief role-play (based on the family they have written about) that illustrates systemic assessment and intervention skills with this family system.

### **Assignment II- Final Term Paper**

**Due: Session 13**

Choose a family you have been working with (or from literature/film) and develop a discussion using a family systems approach to the following issues:

1. Briefly describe the structure of the family systems using systems concepts.
2. Describe the specific psychosocial tasks facing this family in respect to the developmental phase in their life cycle.
3. How has the family manifested both motivation for change and resistance to change?
4. Describe how a practitioner using a systems approach might perceive of the problem differently than the family might.
5. Of the theoretical approaches and interventions covered in the course,
  - a) which might be the most effective with this family (explain your rationale)
  - b) how would you employ this approach in assessment and intervention with this family?
6. Make sure to include any ethical dilemmas that may present themselves.

(CSWE competencies 2.1.10b, c; 2.1.6; 2.1.2; 2.1.7; 2.1.3)

### **Format for Written Assignments**

Papers are to draw on relevant literature covered in the course and should conform to APA academic style to include citations and bibliography. All authors and sources of ideas or fact, whether quoted directly or paraphrased in your own words, must be given due credit through the use of APA citations.

### **Other Recommended Family Systems Readings (Classic and Current)**

Ackerman, N. (1958). *The Psychodynamics of Family Life*. New York: Basic Books.

Anderson, C. (2003). *Normal Family Processes: Growing Diversity and Complexity*. New York: Guilford Press.

- Asen E.; Scholz, M. (2013). Multi-Family Therapy: Concepts and Techniques. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 35, 1, 114-115.
- Beckerman, N.L. (2006). *Couples of Mixed HIV Status: Clinical Issues and Interventions*.
- Becvar, D.S. (2001). *In the Presence of Grief: Helping Family Members Resolve Death, Dying, and Bereavement Issues*. New York: Guilford.
- Bevilacqua, L.J., & Dattilio, F.M. (2001). *Brief Family Therapy Homework Planner*. NY: Wiley.
- Bowen, M. (1978). *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*. New York: Jason Aronson.
- Boyd-Franklin, N (2005). *Black Families in Therapy: Under the African-American experience*. NY: Guilford Press.
- Brock, G. & Barnard, C.P. (1992). *Procedures in Marriage and Family Therapy*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Colapinto, J. (2000). *Structural Family Therapy*. In A.M. Horne (Ed.). *Family Counseling and Therapy*. Itasca, IL: Peacock.
- Cravens, J.; Leckie, K.; Whiting, J. (2013). Facebook Infidelity: When Poking Becomes Problematic. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*,. 35,1, 74-90.
- Dattilio, F.M. & Padesky, C. (1990). *Cognitive Therapy with Couples*. Florida: Professional Resources Exchange.
- Feder. M., & Diamond, G. (2016). Parent-therapist alliance and parent attachment-promoting behaviour in attachment-based family therapy for suicidal and depressed adolescents, *Journal of Family Therapy*, 38, 1, 82–101
- Gambrel, L. E; Butler VI, J L.. (2013). Mixed Methods Research in Marriage and Family Therapy: A Content Analysis. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, Vol. 39, 2, p163-181
- Gurman, A.S., & Kniskern, D.P. (1991). *Handbook of Family Therapy (Vol. II)*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Hanna, S.M., & Brown, J.H. (1998). *The Practice of Family Therapy: Key Elements Across the Models*. Boston: Brooks Cole Pub.
- Hoffman, L. (2002). *An Intimate History of Family Therapy*. NY: Norton, W. W. & Co.

- Howe, R. (2013). Point of View, The Power of Forgiveness: Cutting the bonds of resentment. *Psychotherapy Networker*, 37,1, 5-17.
- Jewell,T.,Blessitt, E., Stewart,C.Simic, M. (2016). Family Therapy for Child and Adolescent Eating Disorders: A Critical Review, *Family Process*, 55, 3, 577–594.
- Kerr, M., & Bowen, M. (1988). *Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory*. NY: Norton, W.W. & Co.
- Lawson, M., & Prevatt, F. (1999) *Casebook in Family Therapy*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- McGoldrick, M., Giordano, J., & Pearce, J.K. (2005). *Ethnicity and the Family Life Cycle*. NY: Guilford Press.
- Mikesell, R., Lusterman, D. and McDaniel, S. (1995). *Integrating Family Therapy*. American Psychological Association: Washington, DC.
- Minuchin, S., & Fischman, C. (1998). *Family Therapy Techniques*. Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Napier, A., & Whittier, C. (1978). *The Family Crucible*. New York: Harper & Row. New York: Haworth Press.
- Nichols, W. C., Pace-Nichols, M.A., Becvar, D.S., Napier, A.Y. (2000). *Handbook of Family Development and Intervention*. New York: Wiley Press.
- Rambo, A.H.; Heath, A., & Chenail, R.J. (1993). *Practicing Therapy: Exercises for Growing Family Therapists*. New York: W.W. Norton
- Robbins,M., Alexander, J., Turner, C.,& Holliman, A. ( 2016). Evolution of Functional Family Therapy as an Evidence-Based Practice for Adolescents with Disruptive Behavior Problems, 55, 3, 543–557.
- Seshadri, Gita; Knudson-Martin, Carmen.(2013). How Couples Manage Interracial and Intercultural Differences: Implications for Clinical Practice. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, Vol. 39 Issue 1, p43-58.
- Sexton, T.L., Weeks, G.R., Robbins, M.S. (2003). *Handbook of Family Therapy: The Science and Practice of Working with Families and Couples*. NY: Brunner-Routledge.
- Taibbi, R. (2012) *The Art of the First Session: Getting it right from the start*.

*Psychotherapy Networker*, 36, 6.

Vennum, A.; Vennun, D. (2013) Expanding Our Reach: Marriage and Family Therapists in the Public School System. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*, 35,1, 41-58.

Walsh, F. (2003). *Normal Family Process: Growing Diversity and Complexity*. NY: Guilford Press.

White, M. (2000) *Reflections on Narrative Practice: Essays and Interviews*. Australia: Dulwich Centre Publications.

Zuccarini, D; Johnson, S. M.; Dalglish, T.L.; Makinen, J.A. (2013) Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Emotionally Focused Therapy for Couples: The Client Change Process and Therapist Interventions. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 39, 2, 148-162.