Seton Hall University
Professional Psychology and Family Therapy
CPSY 6601-Couple and family dynamics: A systemic perspective
Spring 2017
(3 credits)

Instructor: Corinne C. Datchi, PhD, ABPP-CFP
Office: Jubilee 314
E-mail: corinne.datchi@shu.edu
Office hours: TBD, by appointment (e-mail the instructor)
Class day & time: Wednesdays, 5:00-7:10pm

Course Description
This course is designed to provide an overview of the history and theories of couple and family therapy (CFT). Students will learn about the systemic epistemology, foundational theories, and evidence-based models of CFT. Students will also gain a developmental and multicultural understanding of family interactions and transitions.

Course objectives
1. Students will be familiar with the core concepts of systems theory and understand how it applies to couple and family therapy.
2. Students will be able to identify the challenges and tasks associated with the developmental stages of the family life cycle.
3. Students will be able to understand couple and family dynamics in their ecological context and identify the multisystemic factors that influence individual behaviors.
4. Students will become familiar with the major theoretical approaches to couple and family therapy, including evidence-based intervention programs for specific behavior and relational problems.

These objectives are consistent with the core MFT competencies 1.1.1, 2.1.1, 2.2.3, 2.3.3. They also support student’s progress towards the objectives of the MFT program (see program outcome #1 and student outcomes #2 and 4).

Required Readings
All readings are located in the content folder of the course Blackboard. Two of the required readings are available as e-books on the SHU library website. One of the required readings is available on the APA website (follow the link).

1) History of couple and family therapy:
2) **Systems theory:**


3) **Family structural processes**


4) **Family transgenerational processes:**


5) **Strategic family therapy:**


6) **Family developmental processes & resilience:**


7) **Ecological systems theory:**


8) **Adult attachment and couple dynamics:**


9) **Couple relationships in middle and late adulthood:**


10) Adolescent:

11) Ethical issues:

12) Separation, divorce, and blended families:


13) Postmodern perspectives:


Student Performance Evaluation

1. Participation/attendance (20% of the final grade – 20 points): Students will complete all assigned readings prior to each course and reflect on these readings using the following prompts:

   (1) This week’s readings introduced me to a new concept/theory: ___________________ (provide a definition or the key principles of the theory). (.5pt)

   (2) One way I could use this new concept or theory to understand human behaviors and interactions in therapy is _____. (.5pt)

   (3) What was not clear about this week’s readings is ________. (.5pt)

Students will post their reflections on Blackboard by Monday 8pm, prior to each class meeting (e.g., Students submit their reflections on 01/16 for the 01/18 class). The instructor has created
an online journal for this purpose. Students are expected to write at least 5 sentences for each prompt. There will be 10 journal entries, each worth 1.5 points. Students will also contribute to class discussions by sharing their reactions to materials discussed in class. Class participation is worth 5 points.

2. Contemporary evidence-based family treatment models: What does the research say? (Student Class Presentation, 20% of the final grade--20 points): For this assignment, students will prepare a 20 to 30 minute oral presentation and a handout that they will distribute to their peers on the day of the presentation. The purpose of this exercise is to introduce the class to existing scientific knowledge about evidence-based family therapy models for specific clinical problems. The instructor will provide specific guidelines for completing this assignment together with a grading rubric (see the course Blackboard).

3. Mid-term exam (30% of the final grade—30 points): The mid-term exam will include multiple choice and short-answer questions that will require students to integrate knowledge gained from class discussions, lectures, and readings. The instructor will provide a list of terms referring to specific knowledge areas the students are expected to master.

4. Final exam (30% of the final grade—30 points): The final exam will consist of a vignette describing a family and short-answer questions asking students to conceptualize the client and the problem using their knowledge of the family life cycle, systems and ecological systems theory, and health-promoting couple dynamics.

5. Genogram (Extra credit – 5 points): Students will receive specific instructions on how to develop and interpret their family genogram.

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>73-75</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>84-86</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>76-78</td>
<td>C+</td>
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Students’ Responsibilities

Students are responsible for:

(1) Attending all classes (if unable to attend all classes for medical or other reasons, please email the instructor to discuss the situation prior to the scheduled absence. Students may not miss more than 2 classes. Students who miss more than 2 classes will only receive credit for class participation (5 points deducted from the final grade).

(2) Completing their reading logs by the scheduled date and time (late assignments will not receive credit – 1.5 points/week).

(3) Participating in class and group discussions

Because these behaviors constitute evidence of professionalism, they are a requirement for passing this course.
Important Notes

Students with Disabilities: Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Civil Rights Restoration Act, students at Seton Hall University who have a visual, hearing, physical, and/or learning disability, may be eligible for accommodation in this course. Should a student require such accommodations, he or she must contact the Office for Disability Support Services (DSS), Room 67, Duffy Hall, at 973-313-6003. The student will work with DSS to develop a plan for accommodations. For more information, visit http://www.shu.edu/offices/disability-support-services/getting-started.cfm

Academic Integrity & Dishonesty: According to the Graduate Bulletin, “all forms of dishonesty whether by act of omission, included, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and knowingly furnishing false information to the University are prohibited and may elicit University sanctions of suspension or expulsion.” I will contact students suspected of being academically dishonest and consult with the Program Director and Department Chair regarding further actions.

Cell Phone/Pager Policy: When class begins, please turn your cell phone and/or pager to the off or mute position. Loud beeps, sounds, songs, and rings from these devices are disruptive. However, I understand that emergencies can occur, so if you are expecting to be contacted during our class time, please advise me of this before class, turn your volume to ‘low’ or vibrate, and seat yourself near the exit of the room, so you can be excused without disturbing the class.

Attendance: Regular attendance is expected. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to contact me or another student to obtain materials missed.
## Tentative Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td>• Introduction &amp; orientation to the course</td>
<td>Walsh (2012, Chap 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 11</td>
<td>• What is a family?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td>• Marriage and Family Therapy: Brief history of the field</td>
<td>Goldenberg &amp; Goldenberg (2009)</td>
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<td>Jan. 18</td>
<td>• The systemic epistemology of couple and family therapy: Core concepts</td>
<td>Stanton (2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td>• Systemic epistemology: Core concepts (cont’d)</td>
<td>Stanton (2009)</td>
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<td>Jan. 25</td>
<td>• Family Resilience</td>
<td>Minuchin (1974, Chap. 3)</td>
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<td>• Structural &amp; Communication processes in family systems</td>
<td>Reading Log #2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
<td>• Structural &amp; Communication processes in family systems (Cont’d)</td>
<td>Haley (1987, Chap. 3 &amp; 4)</td>
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<td>Feb. 1</td>
<td>• Mapping family structure and transactional patterns</td>
<td>Madanes (1981, Chap. 2)</td>
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<td>• Overview of structural and strategic family theories</td>
<td>Minuchin (1974, Chap. 5)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
<td>• Ecological systems theory</td>
<td>Bronfenbrenner (1977)</td>
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<td>Feb. 8</td>
<td>• Overview of family theories that focus on contexts (Transgenerational family theory)</td>
<td>Hargrove (2009)</td>
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<td>Reading Log #4</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
<td>• Overview of family theories that focus on contexts (Cont’d)</td>
<td>McGoldrick, Gerson, Petry (2008)</td>
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<td>Feb. 15</td>
<td>• Family genograms</td>
<td>Reading Log #5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 7</strong></td>
<td>• Discuss midterm questions</td>
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<td>Feb. 22</td>
<td>• Family Life Cycle: Developmental processes-Becoming a couple</td>
<td>Walsh (2012, Chap. 3)</td>
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<td>Reading Log #6</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Family Genogram DUE (extra credit/optional)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 8</strong></td>
<td><strong>Midterm Examination (in classroom)</strong></td>
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<td>Mar. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>Readings &amp; Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 9</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mar. 8</td>
<td>Spring Break – No class</td>
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| **Week 10**<br>Mar. 15 | Healthy v. unhealthy couple functioning:  
  • Theory of adult attachment in couple relationships  
  • Gottman’s research  
  • Evidence-based couple therapy models | Schachner et al. (2003)  
  Johnsen (2008)  
  Driver et al. (2012)  
  Reading Log #7  
  Student presentations (adult substance misuse-Leslie & Raisa) |
| **Week 11**<br>Mar. 22 | Family Life Cycle (Cont’d)-- Becoming parents  
  • Evidence-based parent training programs | Walsh (2012, Chap. 3)  
  Student presentations (Taryn & Doug) |
| **Week 12**<br>Mar. 29 | Family Life Cycle (Cont’d) -- Adolescence  
  • Evidence-based family therapy for adolescent-focused problems | Walsh (2012, Chap. 3)  
  APA (2002)  
  Student presentations (juvenile delinquency-Brian & John) |
| **Week 13**<br>Apr. 5 | Family Life Cycle (Cont’d) -- Couple relationships in the middle and later years  
  • Prepare for final exam | Mitchell (2016)  
  Smith & Baron (2016)  
  Lodge & Umberson (2016)  
  Reading Log #8 |
| **Week 14**<br>Apr. 12 | Family Life Cycle (Cont’d) -- Separation, divorce, stepfamilies  
  *(Course meets online using Blackboard)* | Lebow (2008)  
  Papernow (1993) |
| **Week 15**<br>Apr. 19 | Post-modern perspectives: Narrative and solution-focused approaches to family functioning | Brown & Augusta-Scott (Intro, 2007)  
  O’Connell (Chap. 2 & 3, 2012)  
  Reading Log #9 |
| **Week 16**<br>Apr. 26 | Ethical issues in CFT: Overview  
  • Prepare for final exam | Gottlieb et al. (2008)  
  Reading Log #10 |
| **Week 17**<br>     | Final Examination (Online) DUE by May 3                                |                         |