

Syllabus

MF920 Marriage & Family Therapy: Contemporary Issues
Course Number. MF 920
July 14 to 18, 2008.
Bethel Seminary - St. Paul, Minn.

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Course Description: The course will explore the nature of marriage and family therapy, and contemporary issues that the Christian counselor is likely to encounter. The course will investigate the basics of family and marriage structure, and look at ways of working successfully with these relationships. Included will be issues of current relevance that confront the pastor/counselor: sexuality, pornography, etc.

Course Objectives: After completing this course the student should be able to:

- Understand the nature of marital and family relationships.
- Understand the nature of change in these relationships..
- Employ techniques of pacing and reframing to assist people in moving forward.

Topical Outline: The syllabus should include a list of the topics to be discussed in the one week long course. Amplifying comments are only necessary if the topic is not self-explanatory. This section may be combined with the classroom schedule as described next.

- Who am I. Effective change agents are able to first understand and manage their personal lives. I must be able to manage myself in order to be able to manage other relationships successfully.
- Family Dynamics: Families are living systems that shape the behavior of each member. Understanding how these systems are structured and how they unfold over time is critical to the change process.
- Marriage Dynamics: Marriage is the foundation of society. Marriages have an annoying habit of developing many dysfunctions that this course will hopefully explain.
- Pacing. In order to lead a person/group successfully, the leader must be able to give people the sense that the leader has entered their reality and understands their position.
- Reframing. Problems presented are rarely problems that can be solved. To be successful in problem solution, the leader must be able to frame problems in a way that allows the community to move forward.

Classroom Schedule: The daily schedule will be 8:30-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:15 p.m. on each of the five days with 2 15-minute breaks. Monday through Thursday evenings should be kept free for additional group experiences or individual working assignments. Since course time is so limited, attendance at all sessions is expected.

Required Textbooks:

- John M. Gottman *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert*
- James Osterhaus, *Questions of a Marriage*. (provided electronically)
- Friedman, E.H. *Generation to generation*. (New York: Guilford, 1985).
- Susan Howatch. *Glittering Images*.
- Michael Kerr & Murray Bowen. *Family Evaluation*.
- Peter Scazzero. *Emotionally Healthy Church*.
- Curran, D. (1983), *Traits of a Healthy Family: Fifteen Traits Commonly Found in Healthy Families by Those Who Work With Them*, Winston Press

Pre-Course Assignments:

- Read all required texts.
- Write a short paper (5-10 pages double-spaced) on what constitutes a healthy family.

General Course Expectations

- Written materials for this course should represent the student's own work, conform to principles of academic integrity, reflect graduate-level thinking and writing skills, and be in accordance with the program's guidelines for style and form issues.
- Our ability to learn in doctoral courses depends on several things: our ability to tolerate ambiguity; our willingness to dialogue honestly and respectfully with our fellow students; our willingness to consider alternative interpretations; our acceptance of truth, no matter where it is found; our comfort with political incorrectness; and our ongoing struggle to integrate new information with present beliefs. If you find that you are having personal difficulty in this course, please feel free to talk with the instructor, program coordinator, or director.

Supplemental Bibliography:

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