

Bethel Seminary San Diego
MF565 Dynamics of Family Process
COURSE SYLLABUS
Spring 2008

Class Meetings: **April 2 – 30, 2008**
 Wednesdays, 7:15pm – 10:00pm

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Catalogue Course Description

The dynamic processes of family and couple relationships such as socialization, communication, shame, power, stress, and coping will be examined. Special attention will be given to spirituality and how families transition through divorce, remarriage, and grief. Students will be given opportunities to explore these dynamics in their own families of origin. Prerequisite: MF504. *Two hours* (Bethel Seminary 2007-2008 Catalogue p.126).

Course Themes

A combination of theory and *praxis* that elicits cognitive, affective and relational responses provides the richest environment for adult learners.

“Truth” and “reality” are essentially synonymous. God is the author of all truth and reality. The truth and reality of experience, theory and perception from sources other than biblical sources is ultimately evaluated in terms of its consistency with the Bible.

Identifying and understanding family process are necessary skills for conducting effective family therapy.

Both assessment and therapeutic treatment of the family must be approached from the same theoretical orientation in order to attain maximum effectiveness as professional marriage and family therapists.

Successful encountering of the processes of one’s own family of origin facilitates the therapist’s efficacious clinical intervention with client families.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

Understand normal family process across cultures, across generations and across family structures.

Articulate family process within the language of and through the lens of the student’s preferred systems theory.

Identify normal family process through family life cycle changes, major transitions and crises.

Identify normal family process as it occurs in families with different structures.

Explore their family of origin processes with the concomitant increase in understanding and acceptance of their “self of the therapist.”

More fully understand how spiritual dynamics play such important formative and functional roles in family process.

Course Design and Assignments

There will be **five class sessions**, each session 2 ¾ hours long. The course is designed around the extreme importance of prompt attendance and active participation during each class session. This means that assigned readings must be completed, reflected upon and largely understood prior to their respective class sessions.

Lecture and discussion will be the primary teaching methods during this course. Students are required to come prepared with questions, integrative thinking, and life applications of the material that will be discussed.

A **research paper** on your family of origin will be due on **Friday, 05/09/08 by 5:00pm**. In order to be in on time a hard copy of the paper must be brought to the professor’s office or placed in his mail box by the above indicated time. The paper is to be turned in using APA style, spelling and grammar that is expected of graduate students, and consisting of 5 to 7 pages of text excluding the title page and reference list. All in-text parenthetical citations must include page numbers. Include a minimum of seven scholarly sources, with at least three peer reviewed MFT-related journal articles. Late papers will be charged 2% per day with weekends counting as one day. Though your paper must relate to your family of origin, there are a variety of approaches from which you can select to fulfill the requirements of this assignment. Select only one bullet and write from the perspective of your selected systems theory.

- Describe your FOO process through the various lenses of normalcy.
- Describe your FOO using the concept of resilience.
- Evaluate your FOO in terms of various markers of success and failure.
- Describe your FOO’s patterns and effectiveness of communication, decision-making and conflict-resolution skills.
- Discuss your FOO in terms of structure, being sure to make special note of the benefits and deficits of its specific structure.
- Assess the spirituality of your FOO, especially in regard to its resilience.
- Discuss how your FOO has managed crises or a specific crisis.
- Other topics regarding your FOO may be selected. However, these must be approved by the professor.

One **exam** will be taken during the last part of the last class session on **4/30/2008**. It will include both multiple choice and essay response formats and will take approximately 1 ½ hours to complete. If this exam cannot be taken on the assigned day, the student must request at least one week prior to the date of the exam, arrangements to take the exam on an earlier day. An exam taken after the assigned date will be subject to a loss of 10% per day, with weekends counting one day..

Up to 30 points of **extra credit** are possible. Up to 10 points each for a maximum of three opportunities are possible, attending a MFT related event like professional seminars, workshops, CAPS meetings, MFT integration events, BSSD student senate events, BSSD sponsored lecture series, etc. For each event attended, write a one to two page paper including

- Title and description of event.
- Your critical analysis of the event.
- How you benefited from the event.

Assigned Reading

Walsh, F. (2003). *Normal family processes*. (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford.
(chapters 1-9, 13, 15-22)

Recommended Readings

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

American Psychological Association. (2005). *Concise rules of APA style*. Washington, DC: Author.

Bader E., & Pearson, P. (1988). *In quest of the mythical mate*. New York: Brunner/Mazel, Inc.

Dattilio, F.M. (1998). *Case studies in couple and family therapy*. New York: Guilford Press.

Broderick., C. B. (1993). *Understanding family process: Basics of family systems theory*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Galvin, K. M., Bylund, C.L., & Brommel, B. J. (2004). *Family communication: Cohesion and change*. (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Gottman, J. M. (1999). *The marriage clinic*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co.

Napier, A. Y. (1980). *The family crucible*. New York: Bantam Books.

Walsh, F. (1998). *Strengthening family resilience*. New York: Guilford Press.

Weeks, G. & Treat, S. (2001). *Couples in treatment*. Philadelphia, PA: Brunner- Routledge.

Grading

Student final grades will be weighted according to the following schedule:

Exam	250 points
Research paper	225 points
Reading account	<u>25 points</u>
	500 points
Extra credit possible	30 points

The final letter grade will be decided according to the following percentage ranges:

93 - 100%	A	73 - 76.99%	C
90 - 92.99%	A-	70 - 72.99%	C-
87 - 89.99%	B+	67 - 69.99%	D+
83 - 86.99%	B	63 - 66.99%	D
80 - 82.99%	B-	60 - 62.99%	D-
77 - 79.99%	C+	- 59.99%	F

Bethel Seminary students are expected to demonstrate graduate-level writing skills, including correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation, in all course work, and to fulfill course requirements as listed in the course syllabus. Grades will be assigned using the full range of letter grades (A-F), representing the following levels of performance:

- A Excellent work submitted; evidence of outstanding ability to synthesize and use course knowledge; consistent evidence of creativity and originality; insightful contributions in class; consistent demonstration of integrative and critical thinking skills; regular class attendance; and respectful interaction.
- B Good work submitted; evidence of substantial ability to analyze and use course knowledge; evidence of creativity and originality; thoughtful contributions in class; demonstration of integrative and critical thinking skills; regular class attendance; and respectful interaction.
- C Acceptable work submitted; evidence of adequate ability to analyze and use course knowledge; appropriate contributions in class; attempts at integration and critique; regular class attendance; and respectful interaction.
- D Poor work submitted; little evidence of ability to analyze and use course knowledge; inconsistent evidence of mastery of course content; few contributions in class; no attempts at integration and critique; inconsistent class attendance; and respectful interaction.

- F Inadequate work submitted; insufficient evidence of ability to analyze and use course knowledge; inappropriate and/or disrespectful contributions in class, poor class attendance; or failure to complete course requirements.

Please note that a grade of “C” represents satisfactory performance, and that students are required to hold a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher (C average) to graduate with a degree from Bethel. (2007/2008 Catalogue pg. 91)

After the last day of the course (**4-30-08**), there will be no extensions for work in this class except for extenuating circumstances, family emergencies, or medical reasons. An Incomplete Contract Form must be filled out, approved by the professor and returned to the Associate Registrar’s Office prior to the last day of the class. This means that a **pile-up of workload will not constitute a valid reason for Incomplete.**

Attendance Policy: “Students are expected to attend classes regularly. Those who find themselves unable to do so should drop the course completely. Unexcused absences, not to exceed the number of course hours a week [3], are allowed without penalty” (2007/2008 Catalogue, p. 90). This is based on a full four credit course. Since this is a 2 credit course, the allowed hours of absence without penalty is 1 ½ hours. Because of the extreme importance of engaged attendance, any hours of unexcused absence above the 1 ½ hours without penalty will be assessed a 10 point per hour loss. Time missed will be rounded off to the nearest ½ hour.

Academic Integrity

All written material submitted must be the original work of the student. Academic dishonesty constitutes a serious violation of scholarship standards at Bethel and can result in denial of credit and possible dismissal from the school. Any act that involves misrepresentation regarding the student’s academic work is forbidden. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on assignments or exams, plagiarism, fabrication of research, multiple submissions of work in different courses, misrepresentation of academic records, the facilitation of academic dishonesty, and depriving others of necessary academic resources. Students charged with academic dishonesty have the right to appeal any disciplinary action. Contact the Associate Dean for details on the appeal process. Please read the Student Handbook 2007-2008, p. 23 and the 2007/2008 Catalogue pp. 88-89.

Disabilities

Any student, who because of a disability may require some special arrangements to meet course requirements, will contact the professor or the Access Coordinator for the Bethel Office of Disability Services by the end of week 2 to discuss reasonable accommodations. Please read the Student Handbook 2007-2008, pp. 20-21.

A Final Comment

Any course which requires us to examine our previous experience and understandings of family life (our own or that of families in general) has the potential to be unsettling or anxiety producing. Our ability to learn in a course like this depends on several important issues: our ability to tolerate ambiguity; our willingness to dialogue honestly and respectfully with others; 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 our presently held beliefs. **If you do find that you are having personal difficulty or disruption as a result of this course, please feel free to talk with me about your reaction. I will do all that I can to be of help and support.**

Course Schedule:

Class#	Date	Content	Readings are to be completed by the date assigned.
1	4/2	Course introduction Views of family normality Spirituality in family life Walsh chapters 1, 2 & 13	
2	4/9	Two-parent families, divorce, single parenting, remarriage and stepparenting Walsh chapters 3-6	
3	4/16	Lesbian and gay families, adoptive families, and family resilience Walsh chapters 7, 8, 15 & 17	
4	4/23	Models of family success and competence - Part I Walsh chapters 18-20	
5	4/30	Models of family success and competence - Part II Nature, nurture and family life Walsh chapters 21 & 22 Exam	
	5/9	Research paper due 5:00pm	

Revised date: 03/10/08