

ASSOCIATED CANADIAN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS OF TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY

Graduate Course Syllabus-Online version

MFT 552: Theories of Marriage & Family Therapy, Fall 2020

Course Dates: September 10 - December 3

Required Virtual Class Time: Thursdays, 8:30 am to 10:30 am

(Zoom invitation will be sent to the email address provided)

Instructor: John Auxier, Ph.D.

Contact Information: auxier@twu.ca

Office Hours: Due to Covid restrictions, no office hours. Please use the above email to contact me for online appointments.

Co-requisites or Pre-requisites: Undergraduate course on theories of personality.

Semester Hours: 3 semester hours

Technology Requirements for virtual class on Zoom: Quiet space at home, stable internet connection, computer and dedicated headset (microphone and earphones) to reduce background noise and distractions.

Communication

The course will rely on your familiarity with the Moodle course site, where you will drop all assignments when due. Assignments are due by midnight the day before class discussion of them. Please use your .Mytwu email in communication as this is what the Moodle default is.

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.

Membership in the Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS)

In order to facilitate the learning of integration issues that are facing Christian family therapists today, students are required to join the Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS). CAPS provides students access to various resources in the area of integration and students can join their student membership online at www.caps.net at a nominal fee.

Course Learning Outcomes/Objectives

As a result of this course, in the following 4 outcome areas, students will be able to:

1. Knowledge and its Application

- Use systemic information to formulate comprehensive clinical assessments
- Differentiate between individual-oriented and family systems theory models as they apply to family structure and process.

2. Cognitive Complexity

- Delineate the key concepts of classic and post-modern family systems theories.
- Articulate how “the person of the therapist” connects with chosen theoretical models.

3. Inter-and intra-personal Wellness

- Apply family systems concepts to their own personal and family process.

4. Spiritual Formation

- Articulate a preliminary personal integrated therapy approach that is theologically sound and informed by a clear faith perspective.

Required Texts and Materials

Theoretical and Integrative Foundations

1. Entwistle, David N. 2015. *Integrative Approaches to Psychology & Christianity: An introduction to worldview issues, philosophical foundations and models of integration*. (3rd ed.). Wipf & Stock.
2. Yarhouse, M.A. & Sells, J.N. (2017). *Family Therapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal*. (2nd ed.). Downers Grove: IVP.

Exploring Specific Theories

3. Greenberg, Leslie S. 2016. *Emotion-Focused Therapy*. (Revised ed.) New York: APA.
4. Kerr, Michael E. 2003. *One Family's Story: A Primer on Bowen Theory*. Washington, DC: Bowen Center for the Study of the Family.
5. Satir, V., Banmen, J., Gerber, J., & Gomori, M. 1991/2006. *The Satir Model: Family Therapy and Beyond*. (1st ed.) Science & Behavior Books.

Selected Videos

Required Videos from online featuring various theories in action will be viewed between classes. Information on streaming access to be provided.

Film

6. *Ordinary People*, 1980. Director: Robert Redford. Paramount Pictures. Available on iTunes or public library. Used to explore different theory conceptualizations family distress in this and other MFT classes. You will have to watch this several times for the case study assignments.

Course Activities/Requirements

This is a “flipped classroom” course, and we will use most of weekly 2 hour Zoom sessions for instructor led discussion of assignments. You will be expected to do substantial work outside of class, including readings, viewing selected videos, researching/writing papers and participating in an online Forum.

1. *Ordinary People* MFT Theory Case Studies (x 3 @ 10 pts). 30 points

Due: Sept. 24; Oct. 15; Nov. 5

Using assigned readings, video examples, lectures and class discussion, write a 3-5 page case conceptualization, assessment and treatment plan of the family in the film *Ordinary People*. Pay attention to how key assumptions of the theory influence the clinical assessment of this case, how comprehensive the assessment is, and its strengths & weaknesses.

2. Person of the Therapist MFT Theory Application. 25 points Due: 26 November

Write a 12-15 page paper that applies two counselling theories to your own life story. The paper should include at least 5 reference entries that include quality articles or chapters from journals and books, and you are expected to read 50-100 additional pages from authoritative sources (e.g. journal articles) in order to have a more in depth understanding of the theory you are applying.

The paper will be organized with the following subheadings:

1. My Life Story: A thumbnail sketch of your life story. Include date of birth, a brief description of family of origin, significant life events, losses, crises, significant others, stress factors. 1-2 pages.
2. Significant Life Issue: An in-depth description of one selected issue that has significantly impacted you. 1-2 pages.
3. Theory 1 Perspectives: A thorough interpretation of the selected issue from a chosen family systems perspective. 3-4 pages
4. Theory 2 Perspectives: A thorough interpretation of the selected issue from a chosen family systems perspective. 3-4 pages.
5. Personal Reflections: A comparative evaluation of the helpfulness and limitations of each theory to your life issue, from a personal and spiritual perspective. Not less than three pages.

3. Entwistle Integrative Forum on Moodle (10@2 points each = 20) 20 points

On a weekly basis read the assigned chapters in Entwistle and A. submit a 250-300 word reaction with your observations, favorite quotes and questions. B. Interact with at least one other post on the forum.

4. Emerging Personal Theory of Counselling Paper 25 points Due: 10 December

Using course texts, lectures and other materials students are expected to prepare a personal theory of counselling paper which will theoretical perspectives into a comprehensive model for human flourishing. Topics will include epistemology, human nature, human flourishing, family systems, spirituality and specific theories informing your counselling approach. (See Appendix I for a detailed outline of this paper). 12-15 pages.

Note: This should be a well-crafted APA style document, which will form the basis for your ongoing development as a therapist in the MCS-MFT program. As you take more advanced classes in both MFT and theological disciplines and enter into supervised practice, it will be revised and expanded, building towards your final graduating essay.

5. Online Attendance and Participation (Missed online classes/low participation = -2.5 points)

Students will be expected to mute their audio when not speaking, but not their video during Zoom sessions to demonstrate presence/engagement in class.

Course Evaluation

Assignment	Points
<i>Ordinary People</i> Case Conceptualizations:	
Bowen Family Systems	10
Satir Model	10
Emotion-Focused Therapy	10
Person of the Therapist MFT Theory Application	25
Entwistle Integrative Forum	20
Emerging Personal Theory of Counselling paper	25
Zoom Attend/Participation -2.5 per/missed class	
Total	100

Grading System

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

Tentative Course Outline

Class	Readings/media	Topics	Assignments in for discussion
1 Sept. 10	Entwistle intro Yarhouse & Sells 1	Christianity & Psychology Christian Understanding of MFT	
2 Sept. 17	Entwistle 1-2 Yarhouse & Sells 3 Kerr booklet Watch Ordinary People	Faith & Science Bowen Family Systems	Bowen Video Forum 1
3 Sept. 24	Entwistle 3 Yarhouse & Sells 5 Watch Minuchin video online	The Soul of Psychology Minuchin's Structural Therapy	Forum 2 Bowen Case Conceptualization
4 Oct. 1	Entwistle 4 Yarhouse & Sells 8 Satir 1-5 Satir Video online	Worldviews Experiential Theories MFT Satir Model I	Forum 3
5 Oct. 8	Entwistle 5 Satir 6-10 Satir video online	Epistemology Satir Model II Satir DVD Person of Therapist	Satir family map- (ungraded) Forum 4
6 Oct. 15	Entwistle 6 Yarhouse & Sells 9-10	Metaphysical issues Cognitive Behavioral Therapies Solution-Focused DVD Gottman Model	Forum 5 Satir Case Conceptualization
7 Oct. 22	Entwistle 7 Greenberg 1-3	What is a human being? Emotion-Focused Therapy I Guest Lecture EFFT	Forum 6
Oct. 29	READING BREAK		
8 Nov. 5	Entwistle 8 Greenberg 4-6	Understanding models Emotion-Focused Therapy II EFT videos from online	Forum 7 EFT Case Conceptualization
9 Nov. 12	Entwistle 9 Yarhouse & Sells 11	Antagonistic Models Post-modern Family Therapies: Narrative Family Therapy	Forum 8
10 Nov. 19	Entwistle 10-11 Yarhouse & Sells 12	Intermediate/Integrative Models/Motiv. Interviewing	Forum 9
Nov. 26	Person of the Therapist MFT Theory Application	Student Presentations	Life App. Paper
12 Dec. 3	Entwistle 12-13 Yarhouse & Sells 21	Integration focus Last class	Forum 10
Dec. 10	Emerging Personal Theory of Counselling Paper Due		

APPENDIX I

Personal Theory of Counselling Paper Format

Adapted from section 4.3 MA-MFT Student Handbook.

I. INTRODUCTION (4-6 pages)

1. **Parameters of paper**
2. **Define following terms *in context* of your discussion:**
 - a. Psychology & family systems theory
 - b. Theology, religion, spirituality
 - i. E.g., Define “spirituality” as used in psychology and make a brief evidenced based argument for including it as an important dimension of human experience in therapy.
3. **Epistemology – How do we know?**
 - a. Define epistemology, modernism and post modernism.
 - b. Briefly explain how epistemology relates to a. counselling and b. Christian faith.
 - c. Give your answer to two questions about epistemology:
 - i. Is there and objective reality?
 - ii. To what degree can we accurately connect with it?
4. **Description of selected family therapy theory**
 - a. Name(s) of leading figures associated with theory
 - b. Historical context & key elements
 - c. Reasons for your choice
5. **Particular theological assumptions and key beliefs**
 - a. What is your faith tradition, and what are key Biblical themes or doctrines that inform your counseling approach?

II. INTEGRATION DOMAIN (4-6 pages)

1. **What is the relationship between Faith and Science?**
 - a. Explain the concepts of General and Special Revelation and how this informs your understanding of the relationship between Christianity and Psychology
2. **What is your Model of Relating Christianity and Psychology?**
 - a. Using *Entwhistle* as a guide, select one model of integration and explain the key features, how it relates to your above theological assumptions, and beliefs about the relationship between science and faith, and what its strength and weaknesses are. (Note: For the final version of this project you will use Eric Johnson’s *Christianity and Psychology: five views*).
3. **Anthropology – Who are we?**
 - a. Who are human beings? What determines human character and actions? What is the role of environment vs. learning? What is the relationship between affect, cognition and behavior?
 - i. Christian worldview perspective
 - ii. Chosen theoretical model perspective
 - iii. Similarities
 - iv. Differences/limitations (and what will you do with that?)

- 4. Health and Well-being – What is wholeness in theological and therapeutic terms?**
 - a. What does a well functioning person look like? What general goals do you have for clients given your view of human nature and wholeness?
 - i. Christian worldview perspective
 - ii. Chosen theoretical model perspective
 - iii. Similarities
 - iv. Differences/limitations (and what will you do with that?)
- 5. Pathology/Sin – What goes wrong?**
 - a. What are the processes and pitfalls that work against human wholeness?
 - i. Christian worldview perspective
 - ii. Chosen theoretical model perspective
 - iii. Similarities
 - iv. Differences/limitations (and what will you do with that?)
- 6. Change Process/Redemption – How does it work?**
 - a. Given the above assumptions about human beings, how does change occur? What is the interplay between affect, behavior and cognition in effecting change? What techniques or methods will you use? Will you focus on the past, present or future with clients?
 - i. Christian worldview perspective
 - ii. Chosen theoretical model perspective
 - iii. Similarities
 - iv. Differences/limitations (and what will you do with that?)
- 7. Therapeutic Response – What does it look like?**
 - a. What is your role? Who are your clients? To what degree will you work with individuals vs. families?
 - i. Christian worldview perspective
 - ii. Chosen theoretical model perspective
 - iii. Similarities
 - iv. Differences/limitations (and what will you do with that?)

III. CONCLUSION (3 pages)

- 1. Summarize your integrated approach**
- 2. Strengths & weaknesses?**
 - a. Flaws of its focus?
 - b. Why it works & how it doesn't
- 3. Questions remaining?**
- 4. Personal Conclusions**
 - a. How do the strengths outweigh the weaknesses?

Course Policies

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM AT TWU

One of the core values of Trinity Western University is the integration of academic excellence with high standards of personal, moral, and spiritual integrity. The University considers it a serious offence when an individual attempts to gain unearned academic credit. It is the student's responsibility to be informed about what constitutes academic misconduct. For details on this, and on identifying and avoiding plagiarism go to the <https://www.twu.ca/academics/academic-calendar> (p. 47).

<https://prezi.com/od62fxnkbmxh/plagiarism-how-to-get-it-out-of-your-life/> (Prezi presentation)

<http://bit.ly/1p00KX3> (Google Slide presentation offering more comprehensive information)

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY

Students with a disability who need assistance are encouraged to contact the Equity of Access Office upon admission to TWU to discuss their specific needs. All disabilities must be recently documented by an appropriately certified professional and include the educational impact of the disability along with recommended accommodations. Within the first two weeks of the semester, students must meet with their professors to agree on accommodations appropriate to each class. Students should follow the steps detailed by the Equity of Access Office on their website at:

<http://www.twu.ca/student-life/student-success/disabilities-and-equity-access>

HOSPITALITY IN THE CLASSROOM

TWU is committed to an ethic of inclusion centred on the principles of Christian hospitality, reciprocity and reconciliation. We seek to cultivate generous learning spaces that are based on respect for differences and are open to diverse views, opinions, and identities that are thoughtfully expressed in a collegial manner. We welcome and value all voices, including those from under-represented groups or those who have been marginalized.

The following policies are optional but recommended, to allow you to efficiently respond to student challenges to the syllabus. *Click on these fields and press delete if you do not wish to use them:*

CAMPUS CLOSURE AND CLASS CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event of extreme weather conditions or other emergency situations.

<https://www.twu.ca/campus>

FINAL EXAMINATION

“A student who is absent from a final examination without an acceptable excuse will be assigned a zero for that examination. Absence due to illness must be supported by a medical certificate indicating the nature of the illness. If an examination is missed for any reason, including illness, the student must notify the faculty member prior to the examination and the Office of the Registrar within 48 hours of the missed examination, giving written documentation explaining the absence.”

2020-2021 Academic Calendar: <https://www.twu.ca/academics/academic-calendar>