

ASSOCIATED CANADIAN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS OF TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY

Graduate Course Syllabus

Course NUMBER: MFT 552

Course Name: Theories of Marriage & Family Therapy

Semester and Year: Fall Semester 2022

Course Times: Tuesdays, 2:30 pm to 5:10 pm

Instructor: John W. Auxier, Ph.D. Clinical Fellow AAMFT, R-MFT, CAMFT

Contact Information: auxier@twu.ca

Office Hours: By appointment

Co-requisites or Pre-requisites: Theories of Personality

Semester Hours: 3 Credit Hours

Semester Dates: Sept 7 – Dec 6, 2022

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.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Articulate what it means to “think systemically” in individual, couple, and family therapy.
2. Compare and critique key concepts of influential family systems theories in the history of the field.
3. Analyze various MFT theories using a “common factors” approach underlying therapy effectiveness.
4. Apply MFT theory concepts to their own personal and family process to increase self-awareness and promote “person of the therapist” development.
5. Articulate a provisional personal systemic therapy approach integrating common factors and one or two major MFT theories.

6. Demonstrate a critical understanding of philosophical and theological concepts that build towards an integrated understanding of Christian faith and MFT professional practice.
7. Interpret case studies from an attachment and Emotionally Focused Family Therapy perspective.
8. Demonstrate mastery of APA style, professional writing, and essential research skills.

Required Texts and Materials

REQUIRED:

BOOKS

- Entwistle, David. (2021). *Integrative Approaches to Psychology & Christianity*. 4th edition. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- Furrow, J. L., Palmer, G., Johnson, S. M., Faller, G., & Palmer-Olsen, L. (2019). *Emotionally Focused Family Therapy*. NY: Routledge.
- Kerr, M. E. (2003). *One Family's Story: A Primer on Bowen Theory*. Washington, DC: Georgetown Center for the Study of Family.
- Satir, V., Banmen, J., Gerber, J., & Gomori, M. (1991/2006). *The Satir Model*. Palo Alto, CA: Science & Behavior Books.
- Yarhouse, M. A. & Sells, J. N. (2017). *Family Therapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal*. 2nd Ed. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press.

VIDEOS/MEDIA

- Redford, R. (Director). (1980). *Ordinary People* [Film]. Wildwood Productions.
Note: you will need this film to use throughout the course in case study assignments.
- Students will be assigned selected videos on Youtube or in Psychotherapy.net at TWU library.

ARTICLES on MOODLE

- Blow, A. J., & Sprenkle, D. H. (2001). Common factors across theories of marriage and family therapy: A modified Delphi study. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 27, 385-401.
- Miller, W. R. (2005). What is Human Nature? Reflections from Judeo-Christian Reflections. In W. R. Miller & H. D. Delaney (Eds.), *Judeo-Christian Perspectives on Psychology: Human Nature, Motivation, and Change* (11-29). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Stanton, M. & Welsh, R. (2012). Systemic Thinking in Couple and Family Psychology Research and Practice. *Couple and Family Psychology*, 1 (1), 14-30.
- Thoresen, C. E., Harris, A., & Oman, D. (2001). Spirituality, Religion, and Health: Evidence, Issues, and Concerns. In T. G. Plante & A. C. Sherman (Eds.), *Faith and Health: Psychological Perspectives* (15-52). NY: Guilford Press.
- Tisdell, E. J. (2003). Breaking the Silence: Defining Spirituality in a Culturally Relevant Educational Context. In E. J. Tisdell's *Exploring Spirituality and Culture in Adult and Higher Education* (25-44). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Course Activities/Requirements

1. *Ordinary People* Family Therapy Case Conceptualizations (x 3 @ 15 = 45%)

By class two view the film *Ordinary People* for an overview of this troubled family. After completing the assigned readings write a 6-7 page assessment and treatment plan for the family using the key concepts and techniques of the following theories:

- Bowen Family Systems
- The Satir Model
- Emotionally Focused Family Therapy

This paper should cite course readings and lectures in APA style, using only third person impersonal voice.

Directions:

Assume that all the Jarretts (Beth, Calvin and their son Conrad) have come to you for family counselling. Beth and Calvin are separated, but not seeking divorce. Beth is reluctant to participate, but present.

Assessment: Be sure to include all major factors each theory includes, with definitions from the readings and lectures, in your assessment; state clearly and succinctly how this theory would conceptualize the family's problems (e.g. is it an issue of structure, roles, triangulation, attachment, unmet yearnings, etc.), both in each person and in the system as a whole.

Treatment: Given this assessment, articulate what needs to happen from the standpoint of the theory (goal of therapy), then prioritize what kind of process the theory would suggest you follow, and what kinds of interventions you would use to get their given the theory's assumptions.

Reflection: Conclude with an evaluation of how well you think this model fits the needs of these clients, what works, what doesn't, what pitfalls does the model have given the circumstances of these clients, what strengths does it offer to help them.

2. Person of the Therapist Theory Application Paper (25%)

Write a 12–15-page paper that applies two family systems theories to your own life story. One of these must be EFFT, the other will be any of the theories from the Yarhouse text. 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 or book chapters) 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. Personal Theory of Counselling Paper (25%)

Using course texts, lectures and other materials, students are expected to prepare a personal theory of counselling summary paper which outlines preferred theoretical perspectives and integrates them with a Christian worldview. The expected length of the integration paper is 12-15 pages. NOTE: See Appendix 2 (PAGE 10) for a detailed outline of this paper.

Of special focus in this paper will be writing professionally and clearly documenting basic concepts and definitions in your paper. For example, sections on epistemology, psychology and spirituality need formal definitions and explanations as to why these are important include in a philosophy of counselling.

It is strongly encouraged to use course readings as resources in helping to frame these positions, as well as other materials. Therefore, please familiarize yourself with the outline of this assignment in the Appendix *early in the course* so that you can relate course readings to these key topics and draft notes accordingly.

This should be a well-crafted APA style document, using third person voice, citations through-out, and reference page, which will form the basis for your ongoing development as a therapist in the 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.

4. Attendance/Participation (5%)

- Students are expected to have done all assigned reading and assignments before class to facilitate discussion. Students taking the course by live-stream will please *leave their camera on*.
- Recordings will not be made of this class, and students are expected to attend either face to face or virtually every week.
- Missed class without a medical excuse or permission of instructor = -2.5%

Course Evaluation

Assignment	Points	Due
Class Attendance & Participation	5	Missed class = -2.5
<i>Ordinary People</i> Case Conceptualizations:		
Bowen Family Systems	15	
Satir Model	15	
Emotion-Focused Therapy	15	
Life Story Application Paper	25	
Personal Theory of Counselling Paper	25	
Total	100	

Grading System

Grading Scale

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

(OR)

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	Superior	4.30
A	Excellent	4.00
A-	Very Good	3.70
B+	Proficient	3.30
B	Good	3.00
B-	Average	2.70
C+	Adequate	2.30
C	Acceptable	2.00
C-	Needs Work	1.70
F	Below Standard	0.00

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE			
Class	Readings/media	Topics	Assignments Due
1 Sept. 13	Entwhistle intro, 1 Yarhouse & Sells 1	Christianity & Psychology Christian Understanding of MFT History of Family Systems & Psych	
2 Sept. 20	Entwhistle 2 Miller (2005) article Yarhouse & Sells 3, 13 Kerr booklet Watch Ordinary People	Faith & Science Bowen Family Systems	
3 Sept. 27	Entwhistle 3 Blow (2001) article Stanton, (2012) article Yarhouse & Sells 5, 14 Watch Minuchin video online https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DXghgwr_DI	The Soul of Psychology Minuchin's Structural Therapy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJ5H-ZWix2M	Bowen Case Conceptualization
4 Oct. 4	Entwhistle 4 Yarhouse & Sells 8,16 Satir 1-5 Psychotherapy.net video "Blended Family w/a Troubled Boy"	Worldviews Experiential Theories MFT Satir Model I Satir DVD: Use of Self in Therapy	Satir family map-(ungraded) (p. 369-372)
5 Oct. 11	Entwhistle 5; Satir 6-10 Watch Satir video online https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZTgp4WzvzI Thoresen (2001) Tisdell (2003)	Epistemology Satir Model II	Satir Case Conceptualization
6 Oct. 18	Entwhistle 6 Furrow et al. Intro, 1-3 Yarhouse & Sells, 18 Psychotherapy.net video "Emotionally Focused Therapy" w/ Sue Johnson	Metaphysical issues Emotion-Focused Therapy I Psychotherapy.net video "EFT in Action w/ Sue Johnson" 1	
Oct. 25	READING BREAK		
7 Nov. 1	Entwhistle 7 Furrow et al. 4-6 Psychotherapy.net videos "EFT Step by Step Stage I-2"	What is a human being? Emotion-Focused Therapy II "EFT in Action with Sue Johnson" 2	
8 Nov. 8	Entwhistle 8 Furrow et al. 7-8, 12 Psychotherapy.net video "EFT Step by Step Stage 3"	Understanding models Emotion-Focused Therapy III Paper discussion	EFT Case Conceptualization
9 Nov. 15	Yarhouse & Sells 9-10 Psychotherapy.net video "I'd Hear Laughter" w/ Insoo Berg	Cognitive Behavioral Therapies Solution Focused Model Psychotherapy.net video "Irreconcilable Differences"	
10 Nov. 22	Entwhistle 9-10 Yarhouse & Sells 11, 20	Antagonistic/Intermediate Models Post-modern Family Therapies Gottman's 10 Principles	
11 Nov. 29	Entwhistle 11 Yarhouse & Sells 12	Integrative Models Motivational Interviewing Discuss papers	Person of the Therapist Application Paper
12 Dec. 6	Entwhistle 12-13 Yarhouse & Sells 21	Integration in Research and Practice Integration focus	
Dec. 13	Personal Theory of Counselling Paper Due		

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 [University Homepage > Academics > Academic Calendar](#) (p. 47).

<https://prezi.com/od62fxnkbnmxh/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 centered 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.

CAMPUS CLOSURE AND CLASS CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event of extreme weather conditions or other emergency situations go to the <https://www.twu.ca/campus-notification>.

FINAL EXAMINATIONS

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."

PLEASE NOTE

The MCS-MFT is a program gearing students for Professional Life. Therefore, students are expected to budget their time and anticipate due dates for assignments. Extenuating circumstances will/do happen. Please learn time management skills, create margins in your life, and plan for them. In addition, late assignments create a backlog that effects the timely return of other student papers

- a) All work is due before class on the day it is due.
- b) Late assignments will be deducted 2% per day. Assignments received after a week after exams (12:00 p.m.) will receive an F.
- c) Only medical emergency or other extreme circumstances will be acceptable excuses for late assignments. Those who have extenuating circumstances delaying their work are required

to fill out the necessary paperwork and pay the required fee at the registrar. An incomplete (INC) will be entered on your transcript until all work is completed (15 weeks maximum).

I will do my best to budget my time and return your assignments within 2 weeks of the due date. There are sometimes when I am on other traveling assignments and your papers may take longer to be returned. Well written papers require much less time to grade so please do your part in handing in well written papers.

For philosophical, ethical, and professional reasons, only hand in your best work. Students at a Graduate level are expected to:

- a) Carefully **proofread** all written assignments and to turn in papers free of spelling and grammatical errors.
- b) **Edit** your papers several times so that your thoughts are logical and well organized.
- c) Understand and utilize APA style for all submitted work
- d) Submit papers electronically to Moodle with your name and assignment clearly indicated in the file name (e.g. JHaleyProfIssues). Students should use the “.doc” file extension when submitting papers so that you have no trouble receiving the written feedback in your paper.
- e) All assignments are to be dropped into Moodle. If technology is a challenge, please find someone to help you out: e.g., reduce file size.

These factors will be incorporated into the grade. Students with known writing challenges must make full use of the Writing Centre.

Lastly, what you need to know: *Everything you need to know for successful completion of your studies and Graduation is contained in the 2 student handbooks (**Program Guide and Practice Handbook** are available from MAMFT website): Please make sure you thoroughly read and absorb the information. “I didn’t know about that” will not be an acceptable excuse for not fulfilling requirements.*

APPENDIX I

Course Learning Outcomes

<u>TWU Graduate Student Learning Outcomes</u>	<u>Course Learning Outcomes</u>	<u>Assessment Strategies</u>
<p>Knowledge and its Application</p> <p>1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a particular field of study and/or profession.</p> <p>2. Demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and discipline specific methodology to solve unique problems.</p> <p>3. Demonstrate superior ability to identify and interpret new ideas and research in a specific discipline.</p> <p>4. Demonstrate superior skills in academic research, writing, and act as skilled practitioners to move beyond knowledge into practice.</p>	<p>1. Articulate what it means to “think systemically” in individual, couple, and family therapy.</p> <p>2. Compare and critique key concepts of influential family systems theories in the history of the field.</p> <p>3. Demonstrate mastery of APA style, professional writing, and essential research skills.</p>	<p>1. Students will include systemic reflection in 3 case study assignments.</p> <p>2. Students will include a section on “systemic thinking” in their Personal Theory final.</p> <p>Students will critique various theories w/in each case study.</p> <p>APA writing style will be evaluated rigorously in papers.</p>
<p>Cognitive Complexity</p> <p>5. Show ability to carry out discourse and research as an active member of the counselling and psychotherapy community</p> <p>6. Demonstrate the ability to “undertake inquiry and analysis, to solve problems with a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking and risk taking”.</p>	<p>4. Analyze various MFT theories using a “common factors” approach underlying therapy effectiveness.</p> <p>5. Interpret case studies from an attachment and Emotionally Focused Family Therapy perspective.</p>	<p>3. In the Personal Theory paper, students will provide evidence of common factors issues in presenting their chosen theoretical framework.</p> <p>4. Students will interpret a case study using EFFT principles and create a treatment plan.</p> <p>5. In the Person of the Therapist Life Application paper, students will use EFFT as one of the models to analyze their own family of origin dynamics.</p>
<p>Inter-and intra-personal Wellness.</p> <p>7. Demonstrate increased professional capacity and autonomy</p> <p>8. Demonstrate superior organizational and time management skills</p> <p>9. Demonstrate academic and personal integrity.</p>	<p>6. Apply MFT theory concepts to their own personal and family process to increase self-awareness and promote “person of the therapist” development.</p>	<p>5. In <i>The Person of the Therapist</i> assignment, students will explore a family crisis or turning point in their own life, using two different MFT models and evaluate their fit and utility.</p>
<p>Social Responsibility and Spiritual Formation</p> <p>10. Demonstrate the ability to analyze, appraise and evaluate their discipline in a social context.</p> <p>11. Develop the ability to become socially responsive agents with a commitment to understanding global issues</p> <p>12. Demonstrate greater understanding of and connection to God’s work in the world</p> <p>13. Utilize spiritual practices for self-reflection and the helping of others</p> <p>14. Exemplify a Christian ethic in pursuit of truth, reconciliation, compassion, and hope.</p>	<p>7. Articulate a provisional personal systemic therapy approach integrating common factors and one or two major MFT theories.</p> <p>8. Demonstrate a critical understanding of philosophical and theological concepts that build towards an integrated understanding of Christian faith and MFT professional practice.</p>	<p>6. The Personal Theory of Counselling paper will include a comprehensive explanation of their tentative theoretical perspective.</p> <p>7. The Personal Theory of Counselling paper will include sections dealing with philosophical, theological, and professional integration with MFT practice.</p> <p>8. <i>The Person of the Therapist</i> Life Application assignment includes significant self-reflection about their own family’s life experiences, hopes and challenges.</p>

APPENDIX 2

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?