I. Course Description
CNEP 5322 Family Counseling Strategies This course focuses on the application of major theoretical models of family counseling. Emphasis is on related interventions and strategies that facilitate change in the counseling process, addressing addictions, violence, suicide and related problems confronting diverse family systems. Techniques are demonstrated from a systemic perspective.

This is a blended taught course. The class will meet face to face every Monday, for lecture and case studies. Wednesdays, the class will have assignments on Blackboard due by midnight. Blackboard content will include power point lectures, videos, assignments, and discussions.

II. Rationale
This course is essential for graduate students in counseling or related fields that work with couple and family systems. It is required for licensure in marriage and family therapy, certification in family therapy and in the marriage, couple, and family counseling program. Several CACREP required competencies are included within this course as well as state proficiencies.

III. Proficiencies for Counselors
A. School counselor (state adopted)
   1. Learner Centered Knowledge
   2. Learner Centered Communication
   3. Learner Centered Professional Development
B. Professional Counselor (academic areas required by Texas State Board of Examiners of Licensed Professional Counselors)
   1. Counseling theories/techniques
   2. Social, cultural, and family issues
   3. Ethics and professional issues
C. Marriage and family therapist (academic course areas required by Texas State Board of Examiners of Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists)
   1. Theoretical Foundations
   2. Assessment and treatment
   3. Human development

IV. ExCET Competencies
A. Competency 001 Human Development
B. Competency 002 Environmental Influences
C. Competency 003 Diversity
D. Competency 006 Responsive Services
E. Competency 009 Consultation and Collaboration with School Personnel
F. Competency 010 School-Home Relations
G. Competency 011 School Community Relationships
H. Competency 012 Ethical, Legal, and Professional Standards

V. Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes:

CACREP Standards met in this class

(CACREP Standard B-2) Demonstrate the ability to select models or techniques appropriate to couples’ or families’ presenting problems.

(CACREP Standard C-2) Recognize specific problems (e.g., addictive behaviors, domestic violence, suicide risk, immigration) and interventions that can enhance family functioning.

(CACREP Standard C-4) Understands professional issues relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling, including recognition, reimbursement, and right to practice.

(CACREP Standard D-3) Uses systems theories to implement treatment, planning, and intervention strategies.

(CACREP Standard D-4) Demonstrates the ability to use procedures for assessing and managing suicide risk.

(CACREP Standard H-1) Applies skills in interviewing, assessment, and case management for working with individuals, couples, and families from a system’s perspective.

Student Learning Outcomes for the Course

Students will:

Demonstrate the ability to select models or techniques appropriate to couples’ or families’ presenting problems. (ratings on demonstration rubric during class demonstrations throughout the semester)

Recognize specific problems (e.g., addictive behaviors, domestic violence, suicide risk, immigration) and interventions that can enhance family functioning. (ratings on case studies rubric and in class and online demonstrations when working with these cases and problems, final examination ratings).

Understand professional issues relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling, including recognition, reimbursement, and right to practice. (demonstrated through the final examination)

Use systems theories to implement treatment, planning, and intervention strategies. (ratings on in class counseling demonstration rubrics and completed treatment plans with
intervention strategies, and final examination).

Demonstrate the ability to use procedures for assessing and managing suicide risk. (case studies rubric, and in class demonstration)
Apply skills in interviewing, assessment, and case management for working with individuals, couples, and families from a system’s perspective. (ratings on counseling demonstrations in class and information on the treatment plans in class and on the final examination)

(Several rubrics used to assess student learning outcomes are attached to this syllabus)

VI. Course Topics
   Major topics considered are essential counseling strategies and current theoretical foundations of marriage, couple, and family counseling including key interventions related to theories, initial and post assessment issues, ethical practices, gender, class, and multicultural issues when working systemically with diverse couples and families.

VII. Instructional Methods and Activities
   A. Each student will demonstrate knowledge of the course learning objectives through reading, videos, presentations, electronic learning, lecture, cooperative learning, role play, case studies, and examinations.
   B. Students will learn therapeutic interventions of different approaches through reading, observation, interactive learning experiences, videos, demonstrations of family counseling strategies, electronic learning, and role play.
VIII. Evaluation and Grade Assignment

A. Methods of Assessing Final Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENTS</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field Observation (RP1).</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Context. (RP2)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Identity (RP3).</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role Plays</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Critique.</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>

A = 90-100
B = 80-89
C = 70-79
D = 60-69
F = 0-59

I. Instructions for Assignments

A. Reflection Papers. These papers are intended to serve two purposes—to organize your own learning and to provide a vehicle for sharing that learning with your group members. For full credit you will need to cite reference sources (other than the basic text).

i) Field Observation (RP1). Every couple or family relationship is unique in some ways but at the same time in other ways can be seen as representing societal patterns. Our classroom discussions of couple and family issues are more substantive when we can make use of examples from real life. Therefore, you are expected to conduct an observation of a couple or family. The people you observe may be in any setting: at the mall, a park or restaurant, a place of worship, or a family gathering. You should:

- choose your observational group.
- try to record a sample of interaction that shows members of this group interacting with each other and also with others who are not part of the core group. Because you will typically not have permission, you should rely on written
or dictated notes rather than attempting to audi-record or video-record your
couple or family.
- try to gather at least 30 minutes of observation.

In the first part of your paper, you should describe what you see and hear—the
gestures and the words—without trying to interpret the individuals’ intentions or
the meaning of the interaction. As an observational researcher, you will attempt
to approach your group from a not knowing position, suspending your
assumptions about how people should behave with each other or why they are
doing what they are doing. For example, you might say: The man put his hands on
the woman’s shoulders and turned her toward him. She let her shoulders to be
turned but kept her face turned away.

Following the description, in the second part of the paper you are encouraged to
explore the meanings you applied to what you saw. In the above example, you
might say: The man seemed to be trying to get eye contact, apparently because
the woman seemed to be upset with him.

The goal in this part of the exercise is to discover your own assumptions that you
apply when making sense of relationships. The two parts of the assignment
should be approximately 3 pages of text in addition to an APA style cover sheet
and reference page. No abstract is needed.

Upload the paper into Blackboard discussion. Your submitted paper will be
available to your group members for discussion. You will have opportunities
online to talk about your couple or family and explore others’ ways of interpreting
what you observed.

ii) Family Context. (RP2) Over time, couple and family relationships are affected by
their political, economic, and social—as well as geographical—environments.

Describe one relationship you know well, identifying at least one significant
transition in which that relationship responded to conditions around it. If possible,
provide online or print media references to document the environmental influence.
The assignment should be approximately 3 pages of text in addition to an APA
style cover sheet and reference page. No abstract is needed. Upload the paper into
the Blackboard discussion. Your submitted paper will be available to your group
members for discussion.

iii) Professional Identity (RP3). There are many ways that professionals can choose to
work with people and their problems. Some students in this will find themselves
drawn to make couple and family counseling a specialty; others will conclude that
their interest in families is less intense, or that they were mistaken in believing that
they wanted to focus on relationships.

Reflect on how the learning experiences in this course have shaped your view of
working with couple and/or family issues. Upload the paper into Blackboard
discussion. Your APA style submitted paper will be available to your group
members for discussion.
B. **Role Plays.** The essential understanding of couple and family counselors is that people’s behavior is not independent and therefore we must learn to understand. Case Presentation and Role-play exercises: Students will be assigned to an experiential group and will collectively create a couple or family to use in role-play exercises. Each group will be responsible for role-playing their couple or family for the benefit of the class once during the semester. Members of the group will conceptualize their case study using one of the theories discussed in class: Bowenian, Experiential, Strategic, Structural, Gottman Method, Cognitive-Behavioral, or Social Constructionist.

**rubric:**
- Role-play as counselor: 4 points
- Role-play as couple or family member: 4 points
- Intervention: 4 points
- Class handout: 4 points
- Responsibility and Cooperation: 4 points

C. **Film Critique.** Commercially released films are a convenient resource for an online or hybrid class, as it is possible for individuals to separately view the same material and come together for discussion afterwards. And many commercial films feature couple and family stories of love and lust, conflict, empathy, etc. A list of films will be made available but you are encouraged to be creative. Your group is expected to agree on a film, watch it, and discuss the relational issues you find in the film on Blackboard discussion.

**rubric:**
- Identify the issue: 2 points
- Identify possible ethical concerns: 2 points
- Intervention used: 5 points
- Professional response to 3 of your classmates: 6 points
IX. Course Schedule and Policies

**Course Description:** Students will receive an introduction to the theories and techniques of couples and family counseling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class One:</th>
<th>First Class: Course Overview, Review of Syllabus, Assignment to Experiential Groups, Introduction to Couple &amp; Family Dynamics; Gladding 1, History of Family Therapy; Gladding 2, 3 Class to agree on Film title for discussion on class four.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Two:</td>
<td>Couples &amp; Family Counseling Processes; Gladding 4 &amp; 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION BOARD:</td>
<td>DUE: Field Observation (Reflection Paper 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Three:</td>
<td>Psychodynamic and Bowenian Family Therapy; Gladding 6 Ethical and Legal Issues; Gladding 15, 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Four:</td>
<td>Experiential Models; Gladding 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION BOARD:</td>
<td>DUE: Cinematic Case Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Five:</td>
<td>Cognitive-Behavioral Models; Gladding 8 Research and Assessment; Gladding 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Six:</td>
<td>The Structural Method of Couples &amp; Family Counseling; Gladding 9 Strategic Family Therapy; Gladding 10 DUE: Family Context. (Reflection Paper 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION BOARD:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Seven:</td>
<td>Social Constructionist Models; Gladding 11 Case Study Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Eight:</td>
<td>Single-Parent and Remarried Families; Gladding 12, 13 DUE: Professional Identity (Reflection Paper 3).</td>
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<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION BOARD:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Nine:</td>
<td>Socio-cultural diversity and Family Counseling; Gladding 14; Case Study Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Ten:</td>
<td>Final Exam online (Black board)</td>
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</table>
X. Class Policies:

Reading assignments, class attendance, and participation are considered mandatory. Many learning objectives will be met during class time and your active participation will enhance the learning experience for yourself and others. Incomplete grades will not be given after the university deadline for dropping a course except in the case of medical emergencies.

XI. Required Text(s):


*Available on-line from [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)*

APA 6th Edition

Recommended Texts:


*(Due to the lack of recent texts in this area, 2012-2014 professional articles and thought papers are discussed and made available in this class)*

XII. Grade Appeals

As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student
Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamu.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

XIII. Disabilities Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Professionalism and Diversity: Acting within the bounds of professionalism and the student code of conduct is required. Encountering new ideas, new ways of knowing, and interacting with people different from us are pillars of the college and professional training experience. Intimidating (e.g., Racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, homophobic, etc.,) language will be challenged in this classroom. I encourage and expect to be mindful of this and other diversity related issues.

Electronic devices: Ringing and beeping devices are expected to be set on vibrate or non-audio during class time in order to reduce disruption.

Course changes: I reserve the right to modify assignment structure, re-arrange topic discussion, and to make as needed changes to the course. Students will always be notified in advance of said changes. Students will be asked to contribute feedback and input to changes instituted by the instructor.