

This syllabus is a representative sample for this course. Specific information such as texts, assignments, and schedule may vary by semester.

Florida Atlantic University  
College of Education  
Department of Counselor Education  
**Family Counseling**  
**MHS 6430**

**Course Description**

Course will introduce students to a family systems perspective in regards to client issues brought to the counseling setting. Students will be introduced to the family development framework and common family issues across the family life cycle. The course will also include an introduction to theories of family therapy along with counseling strategies and techniques as well as research in family counseling and family functioning.

**Required Text:**

Carter, B & McGoldrick, M., (Eds.). (1999). The Expanded Life Cycle: Individual Family and Social Perspectives. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Dinkmeyer, D. & McKay, G.D. (1997). The Parent's Handbook: Systematic Training for Effective Parenting. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Services.

**Required Readings:** (On Reserve in ED461, Boca)

Amatae, E.S. & Sherrard, P.A. (1997). When students cannot and will not change their behavior: Using brief strategic interventions in the school. In W.M. & G.R. Williams (Eds.) Schools and Family Therapy: Using Systems Theory and Family Therapy in the resolution of School Problems. (Pp. 55-67). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Nicoll, W.G. (1997). A family counseling and consultation model for school counselors. In W.M. Walsh & G.R. Williams (Eds.) School and Family Therapy in the resolution of School Problems. (55-67). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Nicoll, W.G. (2000) Working with families: A rationale for school counseling programs. In L. Miller, (Eds.) Practical approach for School Counselors: Integrating Family Counseling into School Settings. Arlington, VA: American Counseling Assoc. publications.

Thomas, C.R. & Marchant, W.C. (1993). Basic Principles of Adlerian Family Counseling. In O.C. Christensen (Ed.) Adlerian Family Counseling (Rev. Ed.) Minneapolis, MN: Educational Media Corp.

**Course Objectives:**

At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Identify the basic concepts, assumptions, perspectives and research regarding family systems theory.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of family development and transitions across life span to identify normative issues expressed by families as they progress through the family life cycle.
3. Develop basic interviewing, assessment, and counseling skills for client's presenting issues from a family systems perspective.
4. Understand the structure, functions, roles and goals of families as influenced by culture, race, ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation.
5. Understand multi-cultural and pluralistic trends including characteristics and concerns of diverse groups as applicable to family counseling.
6. Identify family issues that effect the development of children adolescents and adults which may impede optimal social functioning and manifest in symptoms such as learning disabilities, intellectual disability, abuse or violence, substance abuse, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, etc.
7. Demonstrate skills in using developmental approaches to assist children, adolescents, parents and adults at points of educational and life transitions.
8. Demonstrate skills for consulting with parents, teachers, and agency personnel regarding, problems, affecting children and adolescents.
9. Identify preventive strategies for working with couples and families such as pre-marital counseling, parent education and relationship enhancement.
10. Apply ethical standards to family counseling situations.
11. Analyze their own family-of-origin system's structure & function and it's impact on individual member's behavioral patterns.

**CACREP:** General: J-1A, J-2A, J-2B, J-2C, J-2D, J-3A, J-3B,

School: C-2D, C-2E, C-3B,

Mental Health: A-1

**Florida DOE Subject Area Competencies:** 1.1, 1.3, 1.6, 1.7, 1.10, 2.7, 4.4, 4.5, and 5.2.

**Course Requirements:**

1. Participation: Active participation in class discussions and activities is important part of this course. Plan to attend all class sessions, complete assigned readings prior to class and participate in the class discussions and activities. Class material will largely cover material not presented in your readings.

2. Family Genogram Analysis: Each student will submit a mid-term paper in which he/she demonstrates an understanding of the family development framework and family structure and process by applying the concepts for class to an analysis of one's own family of origin. Papers will be typed, double-spaced and use APA style in referencing readings and lecture material. At least twelve concepts from the course lectures and readings should be explained and used in assessing your family system structure, function and dynamics.
3. Parenting Skills Training Programs: You will study the STEP Programs (for children & teens). It is necessary that you read the Dinkmeyer & McKay book by April 11<sup>th</sup> class.
4. Research Review Project: Working in teams, you will be expected to review the empirical research literature on as assigned topic related to a current issue in family counseling. Each student will be responsible for reviewing a different set of research articles and summarizing each article in as expanded annotated bibliography format. In addition, you will be expected to include a written (APA style) summary paper of no more than 4-6 pages which will focus on briefly summarizing the research findings and then delineating implications and recommendations for practitioners regarding assessment, treatment and/or prevention in family counseling. Finally, you will be expected to make a group presentation on your findings to the class. Grading will be based upon the thoroughness and quality of your research review and final recommendations/ implications paper and in-class presentation.

#### **Course Evaluation:**

Class Participation:	15 pts.
Family Analysis:	30 pts.
Parent Education Programs Review:	15 pts.
Research Review:	40 pts.

#### **Grading:**

A = 94-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69	F = <60
A- = 90-93	B = 84-86	C = 74-76	D = 64-66	
	B- = 80-83	C- = 70-73	D- = 60-63	

#### **Research Topics**

Family dynamics & chronic illness or disability

Family Violence: Identification, prevention and intervention

Brief Family Counseling: Process & Outcome research

Effectiveness of Parents involvement/ home-school programs

Families, children and community-organized activities: effects of sports & cultural activities

Characteristics of well-functioning families (two-parent, single-parent, blending, minority)

