

**Chaminade University of Honolulu**  
**PSY 757 Family Systems Approach to Counseling**  
**Instructor: Blendine Hawkins, Ph.D., LMFT**  
**Email: [blendine.hawkins@chaminade.edu](mailto:blendine.hawkins@chaminade.edu)**  
**Phone: 808-349-6649**

**Class Text**

Patterson, J. et al. (2009). *Essential skills in family therapy: From the first interview to termination*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). NY: The Guilford Press (ISBN: 978-1-60623-305-4)

*\*Students will also be responsible for additional assigned articles and chapters that will be available via reserved readings on blackboard.*

**Recommended Reference/Resource Readings**

Becvar, D., & Becvar, R. (1999). *Systems theory and family therapy: A primer*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc.

Luepnitz, D. A. (1988). *The family interpreted: Feminist theory in clinical practice*. Basic Books.

Napier, A. Y., & Whitaker, C. A. (2011). *The family crucible: One family's therapy, an experience that illuminates all our lives*. Harper Collins.

Watzlawick, P., Beavin, J., & Jackson, D. (1967). *Pragmatics of human communication: A study of interactional patterns, pathologies, and paradoxes*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

**Catalog Course Description**

A study of the family as a system of interactive elements with a focus on the therapeutic implications of treating patterns of behavior rather than personalities. Coursework combines readings, simulations, and videotaped role-plays to increase understanding of the complexities and intricacies of a family system. Students will examine basic differences between individual problems and family problems, individual maladaptive behaviors compared to family maladaptive behaviors, and individual consequences versus family consequences as these impact treatment design and interventions. *Prerequisite: PSY 756*

**Program Linking Statement**

This course develops and assesses the skills and competencies for the MSCP program marriage and family counseling emphasis student learning outcomes of knowledge and skills for the practice of marriage and family counseling. In addition, this course also addresses the MSCP core program student learning outcomes of 1) professional issues and ethics, 2) research and evaluation and 3) social and cultural foundations.

This course develops and assesses the skills and competencies for the MSCP program community counseling emphasis student learning outcomes of 1) knowledge and skills for the practice of community counseling and 2) contextual dimensions: community counseling. In addition, this course also addresses the MSCP core program student learning outcomes of 1) professional issues and ethics, 2) research and evaluation and 3) social and cultural foundations.

**Course Description**

This class will continue to develop systems knowledge in couple and family counseling consistent with its prerequisite, PSY 756. Each student should consider the texts used in PSY 756 as references for use in this class and the program. Where appropriate, audio-video recordings may accompany lecture/reading material depending on topic and availability. This class continues the study of the family as a system. This class will also endeavor to give the student opportunities to further learning of current theory, assessment and practice in couple and family therapy, as outlined in PSY 756.

***It is imperative that students keep all syllabi from all courses taken while in the MSCP program to facilitate the application process for licensing, certification, doctorate school application, etc.***

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Student will demonstrate an understanding of:

1. The differences between an individual orientation and a systems orientation to couple and family assessment and counseling.
2. The complexities and intricacies of a couple and family system.
3. The differences between individual problems and family problems, individual maladaptive behaviors compared to couple and family maladaptive behaviors, and individual consequences vs. couple and family consequences.
4. The effects of culture on couple and family relationships.
5. Methodological strategies and statistical analysis in the study of couple and family interactions.
6. The ethical issues relative to couple and family counseling.

### **Assessment**

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Class Attendance & Participation:                      | 10pts        |
| Personal Epistemology Paper:                           | 10pts        |
| In-class Discussion                                    | 10pts (2x5)  |
| Genogram & Reflection Paper:                           | 15pts        |
| Circular Process- Couple Case Conceptualization Paper: | 15pts        |
| Clinical Application Paper & Presentation:             | <u>40pts</u> |
| Total Points:  | 100pts       |

**Grading**      A = 90-100    B = 80-89    C = below 79 (requires retake)

### **Attendance**

If you miss more than one class, you will be given a “C” and you must retake the class. (Graduate programs policy). To earn full credit for each class attended you must be on-time, not leave early and be an active participant in the class activities.

### **Academic Honesty**

Violations of academic honesty principles are extremely serious and won’t be tolerated. Examples of dishonesty are records theft, cheating on examinations, altering grades, and plagiarism. Specific instances of dishonesty are investigated first by the instructor, then the program director. The penalty for dishonesty can range from an “F” grade to expulsion from the University.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Chaminade will provide assistance for any student with documented disabilities. Any student who believes he/she may need accommodations in this class must contact **Dr. June Yasuhara, 735-4845**, at the Counseling Center (office next to Security) in order to determine if the student meets the requirements for documented disability in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is important to contact them as soon as possible so that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

### **Scientific Method Definitions**

The **METHODS OF SCIENCE** are only tools, tools that we use to obtain knowledge about phenomena.

The **SCIENTIFIC METHOD** is a set of assumptions and rules about collecting and evaluating data. The explicitly stated assumptions and rules enable a standard, systematic method of investigation that is designed to reduce bias as much as possible. Central to the scientific method is the collection of data, which allows investigators to put their ideas to an empirical test, outside of or apart from their personal biases. In essence, stripped of all its glamour, scientific inquiry is nothing more **THAN A WAY OF LIMITING FALSE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT NATURAL EVENTS.**

Knowledge of which the credibility of a profession is based must be objective and verifiable (testable) rather than subjective and untestable.

**SCIENCE** is a mode of controlled inquiry to develop an objective, effective, and credible way of knowing.

The assumptions one makes regarding the basic qualities of human nature (that is, cognitive, affective, behavioral, and physiological processes) affect how one conceptualizes human behavior.

The two basic functions of scientific approach are 1) advance knowledge, to make discoveries, and to learn facts in order to improve some aspect of the world, and 2) to establish relations among events, develop theories, and this helps professionals to make predictions of future events.

### **Research Design and Counseling** Heppner, Kivlighan, and Wampold

A **THEORY** is a large body of interconnected propositions about how some portion of the world operates; a **HYPOTHESIS** is a smaller body of propositions. **HYPOTHESES** are smaller versions of theories. Some are derived or born from theories. Others begin as researchers' hunches and develop into theories.

The **PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE** decrees we can only falsify, not verify (prove), theories because we can never be sure that any given theory provides the best explanation for a set of observations.

### **Research Method In Social Relations** Kidder

**THEORIES** are not themselves directly proved or disproved by research. Even **HYPOTHESES** cannot be proved or disproved directly. Rather, research may either support or fail to support a particular hypothesis derived from a theory.

Scientific research has four general goals: (1) to describe behavior, (2) to predict behavior, (3) to determine the causes of behavior, and (4) to understand or explain behavior.

Methods In Behavioral Research; Cozby

In order to verify the reliability and validity of scientific research it is important to replicate the results. It is the preponderance of evidence that establishes/supports the theory.

<http://allpsych.com/researchmethods/replication.html>

### **Marianist Educational Values**

Chaminade University is a Catholic, Marianist University. The five characteristics of a Marianist education are:

#### **1. Educate for Formation in Faith**

Catholic Universities affirm an intricate relationship between reason and faith. As important as discursive and logical formulations and critical thinking are, they are not able to capture all that can be and ought to be learned. Intellectual rigor coupled with respectful humility provide a more profound preparation for both career and life. Intellectual rigor characterizes the pursuit of all that can be learned. Respectful humility reminds people of faith that they need to learn from those who are of other faiths and cultures, as well as from those who may have no religious faith at all.

#### **2. Provide an Excellent Education**

In the Marianist approach to education, “excellence” includes the whole person, not just the technician or rhetorician. Marianist universities educate whole persons, developing their physical, psychological, intellectual, moral, spiritual and social qualities. Faculty and students attend to fundamental moral attitudes, develop their personal talents and acquire skills that will help them learn all their lives. The Marianist approach to education links theory and practice, liberal and professional education. Our age has been deeply shaped by science and technology. Most recently, information and educational technologies have changed the way faculty and students research and teach. At Marianist Universities, two goals are pursued simultaneously: an appropriate use of information technology for learning, and the enhancement of interaction between students and teachers. As Catholic, Marianist Universities seek to embrace diverse peoples and understand diverse cultures, convinced that ultimately, when such people come together, one of the highest purposes of education is realized: a human community that respects every individual within it.

#### **3. Educate in Family Spirit**

Known for their strong sense of community, Marianists have traditionally spoken of this sense as “family spirit.” Marianist educational experience fosters the development of a community characterized by a sense of family spirit that accepts each person with loving respect, and draws everyone in the university into the challenge of community building. Family spirit also enables Marianist universities to challenge their students, faculty and

staff to excellence and maturity, because the acceptance and love of a community gives its members the courage to risk failure and the joy of sharing success.

**4. Educate for Service, Justice, and Peace**

The Marianist approach to higher education is deeply committed to the common good. The intellectual life itself is undertaken as a form of service in the interest of justice and peace, and the university curriculum is designed to connect the classroom with the wider world. In addition, Marianist universities extend a special concern for the poor and marginalized and promote the dignity, rights and responsibilities of all people.

**5. Educate for Adaptation to Change**

In the midst of rapid social and technological change, Marianist universities readily adapt and change their methods and structures so that the wisdom of their educational philosophy and spirituality may be transmitted even more fully. “New times call for new methods,” Father Chaminade often repeated. The Marianist university faces the future confidently, on the one hand knowing that it draws on a rich educational philosophy, and on the other fully aware for that philosophy to remain vibrant in changing times, adaptations need to be made.

Selected from *Characteristics of Marianist Universities: A Resource Paper*, Published in 1999 by Chaminade University of Honolulu, St. Mary’s University and University of Dayton

Each of these characteristics is integrated, to varying degrees, in this course.

### Course Schedule

| <b>Week/<br/>Date</b> | <b>Topic</b>   | <b>In-Class Activity</b>    | <b>Readings</b>                                  | <b>Assessments Due</b>                               |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Week 1<br>10/6        | Evolution of Family Therapy<br><br>General Systems Theory  |                             | ES Ch. 1   |  |
| Week 2<br>10/13       | Social Constructionism & Constructivism<br><br>Initial Interview   |                             | ES Ch. 2, 3<br><br>Additional readings on Canvas | Personal Epistemology Paper                          |
| Week 3<br>10/20       | Communication Theory; Axioms of Communication<br><br>First Order Cybernetics<br><br>Assessment in MFT                        |                             | ES Ch. 4<br><br>Additional readings on Canvas    |  |
| Week 4<br>10/27       | Communication Theory; Family Stability and Change<br><br>Second Order Cybernetics<br><br>Goal-Setting—Case Conceptualization | In-class Discussion 1       | ES Ch. 5<br><br>Additional readings on Canvas    |  |
| Week 5<br>11/3        | General Treatment Skills & Planning<br><br>Paradoxical Communication   | Treatment Planning practice | ES Ch. 6<br><br>Additional readings on Canvas    | Genogram & Reflection Paper                          |
| Week 6<br>11/10       | Family-Children Skills—Abuse Reporting   | In-class Discussion 2       | ES Ch. 7<br><br>Additional readings on Canvas    |  |
| Week 7<br>11/17       | The Change Process; Feminist Perspective<br><br>Couples Skills—Sexual Issues   | Role-play                   | ES Ch. 8<br><br>Additional readings on Canvas    | Circular Process-Couple Case Conceptualization Paper |
| Week 8<br>11/24       | Family Development through the Lifecycle   | Role-Play                   | Additional readings on Canvas                    |  |
| Week 9<br>12/1        | Theory Review  | Presentations               |  | Clinical Application Paper & Presentation            |
| Week 10<br>12/8       | Theory Review  | Presentations               |  | Clinical Application Paper & Presentation            |