



Chaminade University OF HONOLULU

HAWAII SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
AT CHAMINADE UNIVERSITY OF HONOLULU

Course Syllabus

[Chaminade University Honolulu](#)

3140 Wai'ale Avenue - Honolulu, HI 96816

[www.chaminade.edu](#)

Course Number: PP8950-02-7

Course Title: Special Topics: Family Systems Theory and Therapy

Department Name: Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology

College/School/Division Name: College of Education and Behavioral Sciences

Term: Spring 2026

Course Credits: 03

Class Meeting Days: Thursdays

Class Meeting Hours: 9:00am-12:00pm

Class Location: Kieffer Hall, rm 6

Instructor Name: Kathryn M. Chun, PhD

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Office Location: Behavioral Science Building, Rm 103

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00pm-4:00pm (other times by appointment)

University Course Catalog Description and Overview

The aim of this course is to provide students with an overview of the theory, research, and practice models for family therapy. The history of family therapy, theoretical underpinnings, and numerous family systems theories are taught and discussed. Students will engage in experiential exercises, including role plays to develop practical skills of family therapy techniques, and will discuss comparisons of styles. Cultural and diversity factors are emphasized in considering family systems theories and woven into the course material to prepare students for effectively practicing family therapy in the community. Critical thinking, integration of research and theory into practice, responsiveness to situational factors and interpersonal dynamics, and further development of strong writing skills about family systems are essential elements of this course.

Marianist Values

This class represents one component of your education at Chaminade University of Honolulu. An education in the Marianist Tradition is marked by five principles and you should take every opportunity possible to reflect upon the role of these characteristics in your education and development:

- Education for formation in faith
- Provide an integral, quality education
- Educate in family spirit
- Educate for service, justice and peace
- Educate for adaptation and change

Native Hawaiian Values

Education is an integral value in both Marianist and Native Hawaiian culture. Both recognize the transformative effect of a well-rounded, value-centered education on society, particularly in seeking justice for the marginalized, the forgotten, and the oppressed, always with an eye toward God (Ke Akua). This is reflected in the 'Ōlelo No'eau (Hawaiian proverbs) and Marianist core beliefs:

1. Educate for Formation in Faith (Mana) E ola au i ke akua ('Ōlelo No'eau 364) May I live by God

2. Provide an Integral, Quality Education (Na'auao) Lawe i ka ma'alea a kū'ono'ono ('Ōlelo No'eau 1957)
Acquire skill and make it deep
3. Educate in Family Spirit ('Ohana) 'Ike aku, 'ike mai, kōkua aku kōkua mai; pela iho la ka nohana 'ohana ('Ōlelo No'eau 1200) Recognize others, be recognized, help others, be helped; such is a family relationship
4. Educate for Service, Justice and Peace (Aloha) Ka lama kū o ka no'eau ('Ōlelo No'eau 1430) Education is the standing torch of wisdom
5. Educate for Adaptation and Change (Aina) 'A'ohe pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okahi ('Ōlelo No'eau 203)
All knowledge is not taught in the same school

Program Learning Outcomes: HSPP Aims and Competencies

The Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University of Honolulu's clinical psychology doctoral program's aim is to educate and train students employing a practitioner-scholar model so that they will be able to function effectively as clinical psychologists. To ensure that students are adequately prepared, the curriculum is designed to provide for the meaningful integration of psychological science, theory, and clinical practice. The clinical psychology program at the Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology is designed to emphasize the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential in the training of health service psychologists who are committed to the ethical provision of quality, evidence based services to diverse populations and who are able to apply multiple theoretical perspectives to clinical issues.

The Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University of Honolulu's clinical psychology doctoral program subscribes to the American Psychological Association (APA) Standards of Accreditation. As such, students are expected to establish an identity in and orientation to health service psychology by acquiring the necessary discipline-specific knowledge and profession-wide competencies. Upon completion of the PSYD degree in clinical psychology, students will be able to:

1. Apply ethical and legal standards relevant to the practice of clinical psychology, including professional ethics that guide professional behavior.
2. Apply professional communication and interpersonal skills, to include the utilization of clear, informed, and well-integrated communication, as well as effective interpersonal skills across settings.
3. Apply professional values and attitudes across settings, including self-reflective practice and openness to supervision and feedback.
4. Apply awareness of individual and cultural diversity, including knowledge of theoretical models and diversity research that serve to guide the application of diversity competence.
5. Articulate and integrate the history and systems of psychology as well as the basic areas in scientific psychology, including affective, biological, cognitive, developmental, psychopharmacological, and sociocultural aspects of behavior.
6. Conduct science in psychology, applying psychometrics, statistical analyses, and quantitative and qualitative research methods.
7. Competently perform psychological assessments, including the ability to administer, interpret, integrate, and convey results of psychological tests.
8. Competently perform clinical interventions, including case formulation, theoretical conceptualization, developing and applying evidence-based treatment plans, and evaluating treatment effectiveness in work with clients.
9. Apply knowledge of consultation models and practices, including interprofessional and interdisciplinary skills in consultative services.
10. Articulate supervision models and practices, including areas of ethics and potential conflicts.
11. Apply the Marianist values, through acts of community service, justice, and peace.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate understanding of multiple family systems theories. (Competency 5)
2. Students will be able to critically review selected professional, theoretical, and research literature related to family systems therapy, and to examine their implications for practice. (Competency 6)

3. Students will demonstrate family systems therapy intervention techniques consistent with learned theories, including development of evidence-based treatment plans and assessing treatment effectiveness. (Competency 8)
4. Students will generate ethically-bound and diversity-informed family systems theoretical formulations. (Competency 1, 4)
5. Students will demonstrate effective communication and interpersonal skills, as well as self-reflective practice in applying learned family therapy techniques. (Competency 2, 3)

Required Learning Materials

Required Textbooks

Patterson, J., Williams, L., Edwards, T.M., Chamow, L., & Grauf-Grounds, C. (2018). *Essential skills in family therapy: From the first interview to termination* (3rd ed.). The Guilford Press.

Taibbi, R. (2022). *Doing family therapy: Craft and creativity in clinical practice* (4th ed.). The Guilford Press.

Required Readings

Green, R.-J. (2000). "Lesbians, gay men, and their parents": A critique of LaSala and the prevailing clinical "wisdom." *Family Process*, 39(2), 257-266. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2000.39208.x>

Imber-Black, E. (2019). Rituals in contemporary couple and family therapy. In B.H. Fiese, M. Celano, K. Deater-Deckard, E.N. Jouriles, & M.A. Whisman (Eds.), *APA handbook of contemporary family psychology: Family therapy and training*, Vol. 3 (pp. 239-253). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000101-015>

Klever, P. (2015). Multigenerational relationships and nuclear family functioning. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 43(4), 339-351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2015.1051898>

Lockhart, E.N.S. (2025). Balancing bytes and bonds: Case studies in systemic approaches to digital dynamics in diverse family systems. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*, 46, e1606. <https://doi.org/10.1002.anzf.1606>

Sluzki, C.E. (2004). House taken over by ghosts: Culture, migration, and the developmental cycle of a Moroccan family invaded by hallucinations. *Families, Systems, & Health*, 22(3), 321-337. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1091-7527.22.3.321>

Weber, T., McKeever, J.E., McDaniel, S.H. (1985). A beginner's guide to the problem-oriented first family interview. *Family Process*, 24(3), 357-364. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.1985.0037.x>

Course Requirements

Course Requirements in Relation to Credit Hours. This is a three-credit hour course requiring 135 clock hours of student engagement, per the official CUH Credit Hour Policy. Students enrolled in this doctoral-level course are anticipated to spend a minimum of 45 hours in class. The additional 90+ hours outside of classes are anticipated to equal 2-4 hours per week on course readings and class preparation, and 2-4 hours per week of work on future assignments (e.g., presentations, projects, papers, exams).

Attendance and Participation. Regular attendance and active participation in class discussions and role-plays are required. Therefore, students are expected to attend every class, arrive on time, complete all assigned readings, actively participate in class discussions, complete all in-class assignments, and behave appropriately and professionally at all times. Failure to meet these expectations will result in an individual meeting with the instructor and, if severe or chronic, will result in a meeting with the student's academic advisor for remediation. Late or absent students are responsible for missed material, and more than two absences may result in loss of credit for the course.

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with all assigned materials ahead of time and to come prepared to discuss and/or apply them in class. The readings listed for a particular class date are the readings that will be discussed on that date, so please read them ahead and come prepared to discuss them or do activities based on the readings.

Role-plays are an integral part of learning the techniques of family therapy. Therefore, active participation in all role plays and respectful engagement with classmates that assists in personal and peers' learning is expected.

Family Genogram & Reflections Paper: Create your own family genogram that includes at least three generations, with appropriate symbols, including emotional triangles, drawn out and submitted with your paper. Write a family systems-based paper (~3 pages, APA-style) that (1) offers your reflections on what you observe about your own family after creating the genogram and (2) describes patterns (i.e., psychological, medical, cultural, interpersonal dynamics) you observe in your own family. Submit the paper as a Google Doc shared with the instructor and the genogram as a scanned image embedded at the end of the paper.

Family Conceptualization Project:

Part I: Family Systems Intake Session: Conduct an intake interview (30 minutes) with a "family" made up of class group members with the basic therapeutic techniques that you would utilize in a family therapy session. Gather information about presenting concerns and history of the concerns, including the psychological histories of each family member, their cultural background, and their therapy goals. Transcribe and provide notations for key points to address in following sessions on the transcription. Submit the assignment as a Google Doc shared with the instructor.

Part II: Family Systems Therapy Session: Conduct a family therapy session with the same family as in Part I, exploring major themes that arose in the intake interview.

Part III: Family System Case Conceptualization Paper: Through a clearly identified family systems theoretical lens, write a 6-8-page paper (using APA style, well-written and organized, with references) that explores the communication styles, relationship dynamics, and cultural influences of the family members, and how the family system is influenced by these elements. Submit the assignment as a Google Doc shared with the instructor.

Part IV: Family System Group Case Presentation: Present your group's family therapy case to the class from a clinical perspective, using the findings of each group member, include terminology from a family systems theory, and incorporate a culturally-informed perspective, concluding the presentation by soliciting questions from the class. Presentations will be approximately 30 minutes each.

Specialty Topic in Family Therapy Treatment Plan

Students will write a brief vignette of a family facing a particular concern affecting their dynamics and will apply a family systems theoretical approach to creating a well-developed treatment plan. Submit the assignment as a Google Doc shared with the instructor.

Grading

Project/Assignment	Point Value
Attendance and Participation	10
Family Genogram & Reflections Paper	20
Specialty Topic in Family Therapy Treatment Plan	15
Family Conceptualization Project: Family System Intake Session Transcript	20
Family Conceptualization Project: Family System Case Conceptualization Paper	25
Family Conceptualization Project: Family System Group Case Presentation	10
Total	100

Grading Scale

Grade point equivalents (and grading scale values) are presented below. Final scores > .5 will be rounded up.

A = 4.00 (93-100) A- = 3.67 (90-92)

B+ = 3.33 (88-89) B = 3.00 (83-87)

C = 2.00 (70-79); Failed - No credit given

B- = 2.67 (80-82)

F = 0.00 (< 69); Failed - No credit given

Instructional Contact and Credit Hours

The unit of semester credit is defined as university-level credit that is awarded for the completion of coursework. One credit hour reflects the amount of work represented in the intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement for those learning outcomes. Each credit hour earned at Chaminade University should result in a minimum of 45 hours of engagement, regardless of varying credits, duration, modality, or degree level. This equates to one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester. Terms that have alternative lengths, such as 10-week terms, should have an equivalent amount of faculty instruction and out-of-class student work to meet each credit hour. Direct instructor engagement and out-of-class work result in total student engagement time of 45 hours for one credit. The number of engagement hours may be higher, as needed to meet specific learning outcomes. The minimum 45 hours of engagement per credit hour can be satisfied in fully online, internship, or other specialized courses through several means, including (a) regular online instruction or interaction with the faculty member and fellow students and (b) academic engagement through extensive reading, research, online discussion, online quizzes or exams; instruction, collaborative group work, internships, laboratory work, practica, studio work, and preparation of papers, presentations, or other forms of assessment. This policy is in accordance with federal regulations and regional accrediting agencies.

Course Policies

Instructor and Student Communication: Questions for this course can be emailed to the instructor. Online, in-person, and phone conferences can be arranged. Response time is up to 2 days.

Cell phones, tablets, and laptops: Out of consideration for your classmates, please set your cell phone to silent mode during class. Students are encouraged to bring laptops or tablets to class as the instructor will assign online activities and readings that will require the use of a laptop or tablet. Laptops and tablets should not be misused, such as checking distracting websites. Use your best judgment and respect your classmates and instructor.

Student with Disabilities Statement:

Chaminade University of Honolulu offers accommodations for all actively enrolled students with disabilities in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act (2008). Students are responsible for contacting Kōkua 'Ike Center for Student Learning to schedule an appointment. Verification of their disability will be requested through appropriate documentation and once received it will take up to approximately 2–3 weeks to review them. Appropriate paperwork will be completed by the student before notification will be sent out to their instructors.

Accommodation paperwork will not be automatically sent out to instructors each semester, as the student is responsible to notify Kōkua 'Ike via email at ada@chaminade.edu each semester if changes or notifications are needed.

Kōkua 'Ike: Tutoring & Learning Services

Chaminade is proud to offer free, one-on-one tutoring and writing assistance to all students. Tutoring and writing help is available on campus at Kōkua 'Ike: Center for Student Learning in a variety of subjects (including, but are not limited to biology, chemistry, math, nursing, English, etc.) from trained Peer and Professional Tutors. Please check Kōkua 'Ike's website for the latest times, list of drop-in hours, and information on scheduling an appointment. Free online tutoring is also available via TutorMe. Tutor Me can be accessed 24/7 from your Canvas account. Simply click on Account > TutorMe. For more information, please contact Kōkua 'Ike at tutoring@chaminade.edu or 808-739-8305.

Title IX and Nondiscrimination Statement:

Chaminade University of Honolulu is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment that promotes the dignity of all people, inclusivity and mutual respect and is free of all forms of sex discrimination and gender-based violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic

violence, dating violence, and stalking. As a member of the University faculty, I am required to immediately report any incident of sex discrimination or gender-based violence to the campus Title IX Coordinator.

Nondiscrimination Policy & Notice of Nondiscrimination:

Chaminade University of Honolulu does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including in admission and employment. Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the University's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both and contact information may be found at the Chaminade University Title IX Office Contact Information and Confidential Resources website. On-campus Confidential Resources may also be found here at CAMPUS CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES. The University's Nondiscrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures can be located on the University webpage at:

<https://chaminade.edu/compliance/title-ix-nondiscrimination-policies-procedures/>. To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to the Campus Incident Report form. Chaminade University of Honolulu prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. The NOTICE of NONDISCRIMINATION can be found here: Notice of Nondiscrimination.

CUH Alert Emergency Notification:

To get the latest emergency communication from Chaminade University, students' cell numbers will be connected to Chaminade's emergency notification text system. When you log in to the Chaminade portal, you will be asked to provide some emergency contact information. If you provide a cellphone number, you will receive a text from our emergency notification system asking you to confirm your number. You must respond to that message to complete your registration and get emergency notifications on your phone.

Assessment for Student Work:

With the goal of continuing to improve the quality of educational services offered to students, Chaminade University conducts assessments of student achievement of course, program, and institutional learning outcomes. Student work is used anonymously as the basis of these assessments, and the work you do in this course may be used in these assessment efforts.

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend regularly all courses for which they are registered. Student should notify their instructors when illness or other extenuating circumstances prevent them from attending class, and they should arrange to obtain missed information and complete missed assignments. Notification may be done by emailing the instructor's Chaminade email address, calling the instructor's campus extension, or by leaving a message with the instructor's division office. It is the instructor's prerogative to modify deadlines of course requirements accordingly. Any student who stops attending a course without officially withdrawing may receive a failing grade.

Students may be automatically withdrawn from the class or receive a failing grade if there are three or more absences in a 16-week term or two absences in a row in a 16-week term. With the condensed nature of the 8-week terms, missing class one day (e.g., 6-hours of class) would be equivalent to two absences in a 16-week term.

Students with disabilities who have obtained accommodations from the Chaminade University of Honolulu ADA Coordinator may be considered for an exception when the accommodation does not materially alter the attainment of the learning outcomes. Federal regulations require continued attendance for continuing payment of financial aid. When illness or personal reasons necessitate continued absence, the student should communicate first with the instructor to review options. Anyone who stops attending a course without an official withdrawal may receive a failing grade or be withdrawn by the instructor at the instructor's discretion.

Professionalism with Class Topics and Discussions:

It is anticipated that in the course of students' graduate education in clinical psychology, they will have emotional reactions to class topics and discussions. Recognizing, understanding, and managing one's internal

states is an integral part of one's professional responsibility. In the event that affective reactions become overwhelming, students are expected to manage their reactivity as they would as a practicing professional, subsequently discussing it with professors/supervisors and seeking informal and/or formal support. Similarly, it is the student's responsibility to notify the professor of potential issues, so they can address them (e.g., using the correct pronouns, pronouncing names/words correctly, awareness of triggering content). Self-disclosure is considered voluntary and at the discretion of the student. Additionally, it is expected that peers be mindful and respectful of disclosures of others, keeping shared information confidential.

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty is an essential aspect of all learning, scholarship, and research. It is one of the values regarded most highly by academic communities throughout the world. Violations of the principle of academic honesty are extremely serious and will not be tolerated. Students are responsible for promoting academic honesty at Chaminade by not participating in any act of dishonesty and by reporting any incidence of academic dishonesty to an instructor or to a University official. Academic dishonesty may include theft of records or examinations, alteration of grades, and plagiarism, in addition to more obvious dishonesty. Questions of academic dishonesty in a particular class are first reviewed by the instructor, who must make a report with recommendations to the Dean of the Academic Division. Punishment for academic dishonesty will be determined by the instructor and the Dean of Academic Division and may include an "F" grade for the work in question, an "F" grade for the course, suspension, or dismissal from the University. For the most up to date information, please refer to the Academic Honesty Policy on the Chaminade University Catalog website.

Unless expressed in writing via a university accommodation, all course information, content, and materials in any medium (including but not limited to notes, slides, recordings, electronic files, and verbal discussions and presentations) are prohibited from being intentionally or unintentionally shared (or allowed to be accessed), distributed, published, uploaded, or reproduced in any form, as they are reserved for the private use by the student registered for the course. Any audio and/or visual recordings (including pictures) are prohibited unless prior written permission from the instructor is granted, and permission is limited to individual and temporary use (i.e., recordings are not to be shared/reproduced, recordings must be deleted at the end of the term).

Unless otherwise instructed, all course submissions should follow the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th Edition format. The faculty at the Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University of Honolulu is dedicated to providing a learning environment that supports scholarly and ethical writing, free from academic dishonesty and plagiarism. This includes the proper and appropriate referencing of all sources. Your course assignments may be submitted to an online authenticity resource (e.g., Turnitin), which helps students and instructors detect potential cases of academic dishonesty.

Similarly, the program needs to evaluate a student's *competency* in all academic and practice areas (including writing skills and critical thinking). Therefore, using artificial intelligence (AI) and automated writing tools is *not permitted* for program submissions and will be considered academic dishonesty.

Technology: A laptop with the following technology may be required in order to complete courses in the Clinical Psychology program: at least Windows 10 (for PCs), at least Mac OS X 10.5.8 (for Macs); a current antivirus program; the current Microsoft Office (PowerPoint and Word) and Adobe Acrobat; a standard web browser; and an internet or broadband connection with speed and connectivity to support internet searches and video conferencing. Most courses are paperless, but a printer/scanner may also be required.

Schedule

Week	Date	Topics	Readings Due (to be completed before attending class)	Assignments Due
1	01/15	-Introduction to Family Systems Theories -Family Therapy Context & Classic Schools -Cultural Competency -Cybernetics -Ethics		
2	01/22	-Bowen Family Systems Therapy -Video: Bowenian Family Therapy & Analysis Exercise -Genograms	Taibbi Ch. 1 & 2 Patterson et al. Ch. 1 & 2 Weber (1985) article	
3	01/29	-Bowen Family Systems Therapy -Small group examination of Bowen's 1970 Videotape Lecture Series Notes -Technique Application Practice	Taibbi Ch. 3 Patterson et al. Ch. 3 & 4 Sluzki (2004) article	
4	02/05	- Strategic Family Therapy -Technique Application Practice	Taibbi Ch. 4 Patterson et al. Ch. 5	Family Genogram and Reflections Paper Due
5	02/12	-Structural Family Therapy -Technique Application Practice	Taibbi Ch. 5 Patterson et al. Ch. 6 Klever (2015) article	
6	02/19	-Multigenerational transmission of strengths and trauma -Diverse family compositions -Technique Application Practice	Patterson et al. Ch. 7 Green (2000) article	
7	02/26	-Psychoanalytic Family Therapy -Technique Application Practice	Taibbi Ch. 6 Patterson et al. Ch. 8	
8	03/05	-Cognitive-Behavioral Family Therapy -Technique Application Practice	Taibbi Ch. 7	
9	03/12	-Experiential Family Therapy -Gender Roles and Identity in Families and Intersectionality -Internal Family Systems Therapy	Taibbi Ch. 13 Patterson et al. Ch. 9 Lockhart (2025) article	Specialty Topic in Family Therapy Treatment Plan Due
10	03/19	-Social Constructivism -Solution-Focused Therapy -Narrative Therapy -Conduct Part I Family Systems Intake Interviews	Imber-Black (2019) article Taibbi Ch. 8 & 9 Patterson et al. Ch. 10	
11	03/26	-Conduct Part I Family Systems Intake Interviews	Taibbi Ch. 10 & 11	
12	04/02	-Conduct Part II Family Therapy Sessions	Amorin-Woods et al. (2020) article Patterson et al. Ch. 11	Family System Intake Interview Transcript Due
13	04/09	-Conduct Part II Family Therapy Sessions	Taibbi Ch. 12 & 14 Patterson et al. Ch. 12	
14	04/16	-Family Crises: Violence, Substance Use, Infidelity, Illness/Chronic Conditions	Patterson et al. Ch. 13	

		-Comparative Analysis Exercise -Role Plays		
15	04/23	-Play in Family Therapy		Family System Case Conceptualization Paper Due
16	04/30	-Family System Group Case Presentations		Course/Instructor Evaluations