



MASTER OF SCIENCE in
MARRIAGE and FAMILY THERAPY
CHAMINADE UNIVERSITY of HONOLULU

School of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Masters of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy

MFT 760-90-3 Couples & Relationship Therapy

Online, Monday 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Credits: 3 Section: 01 Term: Spring 2026

Class Meeting Link: <https://chaminade.zoom.us/j/98854781638>

Class Meeting Dates:

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8	WEEK 9	WEEK 10
4/13 5:30 PM - 8:20 PM	No Class Meeting	4/27 5:30 PM - 8:20 PM	No Class Meeting	5/11 5:30 PM - 8:20 PM	No Class Meeting	5/25 5:30 PM - 8:20 PM	No Class Meeting	6/8 5:30 PM - 8:20 PM	No Class Meeting

Instructor Information



Instructor: Blendine Hawkins, Ph.D., LMFT

Phone: (808) 739-7495

Office Location: Behavioral Sciences, Rm 112

Email: blendine.hawkins@chaminade.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

Communication

Primary communication method is email and I will respond between 24 to 48 hours.

School & Department Information

School of Education and Behavioral Sciences

Office Location: Behavioral Sciences, Rm 112

Phone: (808) 739-4652

If you have questions regarding the MS-MFT program, reach out to your Instructor or the School of Education and Behavioral Sciences.

Course Description & Materials

Catalog Course Description

This course will cover theories and associated techniques for couples and marital therapy along with ethical and best practices for work within this modality. This course covers therapeutic approaches to resolving adult relationship problems, such as escalated conflict and communication issues, mistrust and infidelity, and sexual concerns among others, in addition to exploring new trends in relationship therapy. Students will learn how to approach common concerns or problems in couple relationships and the appropriate treatment strategies in relationship therapy.

Mission Statement for Masters of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy

The Chaminade MFT Masters program has been developed on a firm foundation in the Marianist Educational Values of a formation in faith; quality education; family spirit; service, justice and peace; and adaptation and change. Each of these five core values are incorporated throughout the program to help graduates develop as not only practitioners but also as whole individuals who are ready to serve families and communities. The aim of the program is to prepare practitioners who think systemically, promote cultural humility and socially just-informed practices and programs, practice evidence-informed couple and family therapy approaches and actively contribute to the ongoing development of the profession in Hawaii. Special attention is given in this program to the honoring of groups including Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, in addition to other diverse populations.

Time Allocation

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 a 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.

Masters students are expected to perform work of higher quality and quantity, however typically a minimum of forty-five hours of student engagement for each student credit hour is required, although instructors may require roughly a third more work than this minimum undergraduate credit hour requirement. Therefore, a 3-credit masters+ course would typically require engagement of approximately 135 hours for the average student for whom the course is designed. 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.

Number of hours per class activity:

Educational activity	Expected hours of Student Engagement:	Details (if any):
Course attendance/Lecture	15	Synchronous class meetings
Assigned readings	50	
Discussions	15	
Written assignments	10	

Preparing for Final Paper & Presentation	25	
Total	135	

Required Materials

Weeks, G. R., Fife, S. T., & Peterson, C. M. (Eds.). (2016). *Techniques for the couple therapist: Essential interventions from the experts*. Routledge.

Recommended Text

Russo, J. A., Coker, J. K., & King, J. H. (Eds.). (2023). *Clinical handbook of couple therapy*. Guilford Publications.

It is imperative that students keep all syllabi from all courses taken while in the MS-MFT program to facilitate the application process for licensing, certification, doctoral school application, etc.

Canvas (<https://chaminade.instructure.com>)

Canvas will be used as the primary learning management system for this course. The course content will be posted on Canvas, where students will be able to access the syllabus, any additional readings, assignments, quizzes, and announcements.

Hardware Requirements: Canvas is accessible from both PC and Mac computers with a reliable internet connection. You will also need to be able to access audio and video files.

Subsequently, you should have access to speakers or headphones that allow you to hear the audio.

Software Requirements: You will need to have some ability to listen to audio in an mp3 format, watch videos in mp4 format, stream online videos, and read .pdf files. There are a number of free software online that can be downloaded for free. If you need assistance with locating software please feel free to contact me or Chaminade Help Desk at helpdesk@chaminade.edu or (808) 735-4855.

Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Upon completion this MS-MFT, the student will be able to:

1. Students will develop a coherent personal theoretical framework founded in relational/systemic practice, theories, models and philosophy in MFT. (Addresses FCA 1 COAMFTE)
2. Students will apply systemic/relational theoretical and evidence-based approaches in assessment, diagnosis, case conceptualization, and intervention to meet the diverse needs of individuals, couples, and families. (Addresses FCA 2 & 7 COAMFTE)
3. Students will employ ethical, professional and legal guidelines consistent with the standards and identity of marriage and family therapy. (Addresses FCA 5 COAMFTE)
4. Students will utilize current trends and research methods in the field to conduct and critically evaluate research within the practice of marriage and family therapy. (Addresses FCA 4 COAMFTE)
5. Students will cultivate a socially just and culturally responsive therapeutic practice with a critical self awareness of intersections of identities within a developmental and family life cycle framework. (Addresses FCA 3 & 6 COAMFTE)

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

At the completion of this course, MSMFT students will be able to:

1. Identify and apply relational theories to couples and other diverse relational units (PLO1, PLO2)
2. Identify ethical and evidence-based best practices for the unique modality of relational unit work (PLO3)
3. Describe common concerns and problems in couple relationships and apply appropriate treatment strategies in the couple modality (PLO2, PLO4)
4. Apply knowledge of diversity, power, privilege, and oppression as these relate to relationship units, taking into account the broader local, regional, and global contexts (PLO5)

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:

1. Education for formation in faith.
2. Provide an integral, quality education.
3. Educate in family spirit.
4. Educate for service, justice and peace, and integrity of creation.
5. 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

Alignment of Course Learning Outcomes

	CLO 1	CLO 2	CLO 3	CLO 4
Marianist Vaues	2	3	5	4
PLOs	1, 2	3	2, 4	5
Native Hawaiian Values	2	3	5	4

Course Activities & Assessment of Learning

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)	Assessment & Description	Contribution (%) to Final Grade
Program Expectation	<p><i>Attendance & Participation</i> Attending class on time and staying for the entire length of class, engaging in class discussions, and participating in class activities. Attendance and participation in class are of primary importance both with regard to successful understanding of course material and to personal/professional development and growth. It is my hope that class time will be utilized by each of you in such a way that you will leave feeling enriched and excited about the material, discussions, and activities. Please come to class on-time and having completed the assigned readings prior to arrival. In the event of your absence please make every effort to contact the instructor prior to class time. Students may miss one class without penalization; however, it is your responsibility to determine what was missed during an absence or tardy. If you miss more than one class, you will be given a "C" and you must retake the class. (Graduate programs policy) In addition, instructors have the option to penalize for tardiness or leaving early.</p>	Required
CLO 1: Identify and apply relational theories to couples and other diverse relational units (PLO1, PLO2)	<p><i>Final Research Paper & Presentation (also meets CLO 2–5)</i> This assignment is an opportunity for you to explore a couple concern from both a theoretical lens and via extant literature. You will construct a client system with a unique presenting concern and relevant contextual information, and lay out how the course of therapy may look with this couple using your chosen theory AND the literature about the concern and context. You</p>	35%

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)	Assessment & Description	Contribution (%) to Final Grade
	<p>may choose up to two theories; however, one of the selected theories/models MUST be from the following list: Gottman's approach, Discernment Counseling, EFT/Attachment-based, CBCT, Imago, Narrative Therapy, Family Systems, Object Relations, Bowen, Structural Family Therapy, SFBT, Experiential Family Therapy (Satir/Whitaker), Contextual Family Therapy, Feminist Family Therapy, or Internal Family Systems.</p> <p>Please inform the instructor and get approval for your topic and plan for the project by Week 6.</p>	
	<p><i>Couple Survey</i> Students will research and locate a standardized survey instrument often used with couples. Students will post a copy of this survey along with information about the psychometric properties of the survey, the method of administration, the application with a couple system, any contraindications, and cultural considerations. First come, first claim. Students are not allowed to choose the same instrument as another student.</p>	<p>10%</p>
<p>CLO 2: Identify ethical and evidence-based best practices for the unique modality of relational unit work (PLO3)</p>	<p><i>Discussions</i> There will be a number of online discussions. Students must post their initial post on Thursday of each week that it is due and 2 responses to colleagues by Sunday. Discussions must be substantive and add important knowledge and information. Simplistic posts will not be given full points. The discussions will attend to important topics within couples work, such as clinical assessment, ethical concerns, etc.</p>	<p>10%</p>
<p>CLO 3: Describe common concerns and problems in couple relationships and apply appropriate treatment strategies in the couple modality (PLO2, PLO4)</p>	<p><i>In-Class Discussions of Readings</i> Students will need to complete the readings for each week and be ready to provide a reflection when class is scheduled.</p>	<p>10%</p>
<p>CLO 4: Apply knowledge of diversity, power, privilege, and oppression as these relate to relationship units, taking into</p>	<p><i>Couple Session Demonstration</i> Conversations in therapy with couples can be stunted, discouraging, or even escalated if you feel unable to manage them. This assignment will challenge you to use your accumulated skills</p>	<p>20%</p>

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)	Assessment & Description	Contribution (%) to Final Grade
account broader local, regional, and global contexts (PLO5)	<p>and theoretical grounding to respond to a couple issue in the moment. This session will involve one of the following content areas: sexual difficulties between the couple, past trauma experienced by one or both partners, high conflict and distress between partners, infidelity, and other loaded issues.</p> <p>Since this course is fully online, to best simulate a real session, you and a 'co-therapist' will not be provided any information about the couple prior to the session. Your classmates playing the role of the couple will receive the vignette the week of the role-play. You will schedule a virtual meeting and record the entire meeting (session and debrief after). You will then post your recording on the Canvas course site. You and your colleagues will then engage in helpful reflections on the strengths you demonstrated and any recommendations that might be helpful for your growth.</p> <p>You will receive full points for: 1) engaging in the session as the therapist, 2) using a couple theory/strategy, 3) managing to keep the session going and joining with the couple. Your effectiveness in managing the difficult content will not affect the grade for this assignment.</p>	
CLO 5: Articulate skills used and rationales for interventions related to couples' treatment informed by extant literature and evidence-based models (PLO1, PLO2)	<p><i>Reflections of Couple Session Demonstration (Online Discussions)</i></p> <p>Each of you will provide written feedback, comments, or questions to your colleagues about their demonstrations; feedback is meant to be both strength-based and constructive.</p>	10%

Course Policies

Attendance

Since this is a graduate course requiring students to engage fully, it is important to attend every class. You are responsible to inform the instructor prior to the start of class should an emergency prevent you from attending. Please note that regardless of reason, more than one (1) missed class will result in a failing grade. If you miss more than one class, you will be given a "C" and you must retake the class. (Graduate programs policy) In addition, instructors have the option to penalize for tardiness or leaving early.

Late Work

Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Late assignments will be penalized 10% of the grade earned per day late. Unexcused absences on exam days and in-class assignments cannot be made up and will result in a score of zero (0) for the exam or assignment. Students must provide documented evidence of an approved excused absence.

Changes to the Syllabus

While the provisions of this syllabus are as accurate and complete as possible, your instructor reserves the right to change any provision herein at any time. Every effort will be made to keep you advised of such changes, and information about such changes will be available from your instructor.

Grades of Incomplete

Incomplete grades are not automatically issued without prior correspondence with the instructor. An Incomplete grade may be provided to a student when most of the course requirements have been completed and the remaining assignments was not able to be submitted due to extenuating circumstances. With early correspondence, a valid reason, and submitted documentation, the instructor may grant an incomplete.

Final Grades

Final grades are submitted to [Self-Service](#):

A = 90% and above

B = 80-89%

C = Fail and will need to retake the course

MS-MFT Program Information

MS-MFT Student Disposition Expectations

As a therapist in training, you are constantly being evaluated for your fitness for this profession in every class. This evaluation is subjective and based on your class participation, evaluation of other assignments, interpersonal interactions with other students and clients, if appropriate, etc. Students who do not meet the following criteria may have their grade reduced in the course, be administratively dropped or “red flagged” for a discussion by the faculty as a whole. The following criteria are used in this evaluation: 1) being empathic; 2) being genuine; 3) being accepting; 4) being open minded and non-dogmatic; 5) being self-reflective and having an internal locus of control; 6) being mentally healthy; 7) being capable of building alliances; 8) being competent in knowledge and skills (Neukrug, 1999).

Neukrug, E. (1999). *The world of the counselor*. Pacific Grove, CA.: Brook/Cole.

Ethical Behavior of MS-MFT Students

Students will abide by the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Code of Ethics. It is your responsibility to be familiar with the guidelines. Ethical violations are serious and may lead to disciplinary action, which could lead to separation from the MS-MFT program.

Expectations for online classes

If any or all of your class meetings are held online, these are the expectations:

1. Please find a space to log in on your video conferencing enables device, that is quiet and private, preferably within a room with the door closed. Often classroom discussions involve private or confidential information such as when discussing examples of client cases or consulting on real clients, and thus the need for privacy.
2. While in class, you should have your video turned on and be muted to minimize background noise unless you are speaking, asking or answering questions. At different times during the class such as during discussions (before or after the lecture), role-plays, presentations, and when you are engaging with peers and the instructor, the instructor and your classmates should be able to see and hear you.

Writing Policy

All papers should be written in APA format unless stated otherwise. APA format includes 1-inch margins, double-spaced, 12-point serif font, in-text citations, and a reference page. Please refer to the syllabus for paper submissions, over Canvas or hard copy/printed in class.

Plagiarism

Any submitted assignments containing a portion of someone else's work i.e. full sentences, sections, or paragraphs that are copied verbatim AND is not cited and referenced correctly, is plagiarism. Students will automatically receive a grade of 0 for that assignment and possible department and college-level consequences.

Any assignment content composed by any resource other than you, regardless of whether that resource is human or digital, must be attributed to the source through proper citation.

Unattributed use of online learning support platforms and unauthorized sharing of instructional property are forms of scholastic dishonesty and will be treated as such.

Artificial intelligence (AI) language models, such as ChatGPT, and online assignment help tools, such as Chegg®, are examples of online learning support platforms: they can not be used for course assignments except as explicitly authorized by the instructor. The following actions are prohibited in this course:

- Incorporating any part of an AI generated response in an assignment or online discussion
- Using AI to brainstorm, formulate arguments, or template ideas for assignments
- Using AI to summarize or contextualize source materials
- Submitting your own work for this class to an online learning support platform for iteration or improvement
- Using AI programs to input quiz/exam questions to retrieve answers to be submitted
- If you are in doubt as to whether you are using an online learning support platform appropriately in this course, I encourage you to discuss your situation with me. You are prohibited from using generative AI to write any part of the Final Research Paper in this course. The consequences may be and are not limited to a zero grade for the Final paper, possible failing grade for the course, and notification to the program/university.

General expectations and requirements

Students are expected to:

1. Attend class consistently and punctually. If you know you are going to be absent, please inform the instructor at your earliest opportunity. You are responsible for obtaining all material when you miss a class. Missing class time will have a negative effect on your learning and likely your grade.

2. Complete assigned readings prior to the date of discussion in class and be prepared to participate respectfully in class discussions with questions and comments from the readings, the information presented in class, and your own ideas.
3. Complete assignments by the beginning of class on the date they are due. All assignments must follow the writing policy.
4. At the graduate level, learning is primarily student-generated and is supplemented by course instruction. Therefore, the responsibility rests upon the student to master the material.

Readings

The readings have been intentionally selected to contribute substantive material to the course. That is, the readings are not supplemental to the course, they are central. Therefore, prior to each class, significant preparation and reading is necessary. Please be able to access the readings when you are in class.

Citations and References

- Please cite a source every time you copy a phrase, quote, or paraphrase someone else's words. If you use someone's words verbatim, you will have to use quotation marks and in parenthesis note the author's last name, year of publication, and the page from which you took the quote.
- Example of how to cite a direct quote:
- Past research has indicated that "becoming parents heightens couples' awareness of their identity intersections and they turn towards mutually supporting each other" (Hawkins, 2016, p. 121).
- If you paraphrase or just report on what you've read of someone's publication, use the parentheses but omit the page number.
- Example of how to cite a direct quote:
- There is evidence that couples become more aware of their identity, such as race and religion after becoming parents (Hawkins, 2016).
- Always use the (Author, Year) format. Please refer to APA formatting requirements in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition.
- The Purdue website can also be helpful:
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- Your last page will be the Reference page, listing your full source/references.

Important Information

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.

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.

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 Kokua 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 Kokua 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.