

**Course Title:** Couples and Family Counseling

**Course Number:** PC6700A

**Section & Times:** Spring II: 3/5/09 to 4/25/09  
Onsite Weekends: 3/21/09 – 3/22/09  
4/18/09 – 4/19/09

**Instructor and Contact Information:**

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**Required Reading**

Patterson, J., Williams, L., Grauf-Grounds, C. and Chamow, L. (1998). Essential skills in family therapy. New York: The Guilford Press ISBN 1-57230-307-7

Articles assigned to read in class

**Final Date to Drop the Class:**

To receive a “W” grade a student must officially drop this class by the date listed below that corresponds to this course’s term and length (indicated by bold type). Students may not withdraw from this course after the date this date. If a student chooses to discontinue course work after the final drop date, the student may receive an “F” grade for the course.

Spring Session I (7.5 week courses): February 13, 2009

**Spring Session II (7.5 week courses): April 6, 2008**

Spring Full Term (15 week courses): March 18, 2008

**Course Description:**

This course provides a broad theoretical and practical foundation for counseling couples and families, with an emphasis on systemic perspectives of functioning, therapeutic intervention, and skill practice. Methods of the course include lecture, class discussion, class exploration, video viewing, and skill practice.

**Course Objectives:**

As a result of participating in this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following:

1. Ability to manage anxiety when working with couples and families.
2. Ability to form a therapeutic alliance with each couple and family member.
3. Ability to conduct an assessment that includes identifying potential issues of harm, substance abuse, biological factors, and a general psychosocial assessment.

4. Ability to develop a treatment focus that includes a problem list, historical information, diagnosis, treatment goals and interventions.
5. Ability to use basic counseling skills in working with couples and families that includes reflection, validation, and empathy implementing multiple clinical perspectives.
6. Ability to use appropriate intervention when working with children and adolescents.
7. Ability to depict themes, events and other relevant details on a family genogram and timeline.

### **Program Outcomes: Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology**

#### **Program Outcome One: Professional Practice**

##### **Competency 1: Assessment and Skills**

Formulate assessments of psychological functioning and apply therapeutic intervention strategies when working with individuals, couples, families, and groups, toward the development of optimal mental health.

##### **Competency 2: Theory**

Interpret and apply psychological and developmental theories to therapeutic intervention strategies.

##### **Competency 3: Writing**

Employ media and technology when presenting counseling information orally and in writing, so that the presentation is concise, organized, well supported, professional, and appropriate to the audience.

#### **Program Outcome Two: Research**

**Competency 1:** Analyze research, and translate research findings for improvement of counseling services using statistics and program evaluation methods.

#### **Program Outcome Three: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Professional Development**

**Competency 1:** Students will develop positive relationship skills that promote personal and professional development via effective communication, encouragement, empathy, respect for others, self-awareness, and other-awareness.

- a. Apply active listening communication skills in interpersonal scenarios to establish empathetic relationships.
- b. Analyze the importance of effective nonverbal communication skills in interpersonal relationships.
- c. Solicit and utilize feedback to build and maintain interpersonal relationships.

#### **Program Outcome Four: Ethics**

**Competency 1:** Using the American Counseling Association's Standards of Practice /or the

American Psychological Association's Ethical Code, as well as, and local state law as it applies to the behavior of mental health professionals, identify ethical dilemmas and apply ethical decision-making strategies while engaging in professional activities.

### **Program Outcome Five: Diversity**

#### **Competency 1: Multicultural Skills**

Provide assessment, counseling, and consultation services in work with clients by applying psychological and multicultural theories and research to diverse populations, and modifying interventions as needed to work effectively with diverse clients.

#### **Competency 2: Multicultural Awareness**

Examine personal values and biases, reflect on beliefs, and understand how they impact work with clients and interpersonal relationships with other students and faculty.

#### **Competency 3: Multicultural Knowledge**

Identify and assess the complexity and multidimensionality of cultural/diversity theories and issues in the field of counseling psychology while working with clients and interpersonal relationships with other students and faculty.

### **Methods of Instruction:**

This course will be delivered in a **blended format**, including in class lecture and discussion, video, role-plays, skill practice, and group process.

### **Content Areas:**

Content includes stages of therapist development, the initial interview, and guidelines for conducting assessment, developing a treatment focus, basic treatment skills, working with families and children, as well as couples of various ethnic cultures.

### **Course Assignments:**

1) **Reading text** according to the following schedule:

|        |                                  |
|--------|----------------------------------|
| Week 1 | Chapters 1,2, and 3              |
| Week 2 | Chapters 4 and 5                 |
| Week 3 | Chapters 6 and 7                 |
| Week 4 | Chapters 8, 9, and 10            |
| Week 5 | Chapters 11 and 12               |
| Week 6 | Articles and handouts from class |

2) Complete **Genogram** assignment to be turned in on the second weekend (2/21/09). This assignment is to be done without the use of a computer- use pen or pencil.

Part 1 – construct a three generation genogram on yourself – four generations if you include your children. Feel free to include family members as you define as family. Use

zig-zag line to show conflict, a dotted line to show distance, and a triple line to show closeness. See figure 5.1 on page 7 for an example.

Part 2 - On a separate sheet, respond to the historical perspective questions presented in class.

Part 3 - Create a time-line as instructed in class.

Part 4 – identify one habitual role that derives from your interactions with your mother, father, and/or primary caregiver as instructed in class.

### 3) *Family Self-Study Paper*

The purpose of this assignment are 1) to understand the factors that make each family unique through the study of your own family of origin, and 2) to gain insight into your own personal experience, feelings, thoughts, and attitudes which will influence you as a clinician.

Paper are to be typed, succinctly written, double spaced, conform to APA 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, and roughly 7 to 9 pages (please no longer than 9 pages).

Include the following:

a) Discuss your family of origin's background, structure, and functioning. This may include issues related to culture, ethnicity, religion, occupations, economic status, academia, group affiliations, transactions between family members (past and present), discipline, family routines and rituals, family values, rules, challenges and methods for handling/solving problems. \*Select issues most relevant to your family of origin.

b) Choose two of the following areas and discuss how they play out in your family. Include specific examples to illustrate your point.

- Displays of emotions
- Use of power
- Display of affection
- Display of rule creation and implementation
- Display of conflict

c) Highlight two issues, 1 positive and 1 challenging, arising from your family of origin which may impact your work as a therapist. For a positive example, how do you see yourself utilizing this strength in you practice? How so you see this strength benefiting your clients? For a challenging example, how do you see yourself adjusting or accommodating for this difficulty so it will not interfere with your ability to establish a rapport with your client/patient? What to you need to learn, do, or change to remove or diminish this particular challenge?

d) Provide as overall evaluation of your family, apply course material from the text book and lectures. How would you assess your family in terms of progress through developmental stages, differentiation, communication, individual functioning, boundaries, triangulation, feelings of satisfaction in family roles, self-esteem, problem-solving, joy, intimacy, and respect.

e) Apply a therapeutic modality to your clinical case and describe how you would implement this intervention to treat your family.

- **Due 4/24/09, e-mail to the professor**

4) The Final Exam (multiple choice) will be based exclusively on the reading required for class, as well as a Case Study Vignette . Final will be given in class on Sunday 4/19/09.

5) Class role-plays. Class will be divided up into groups, each group will have a designated therapist and a family. Role-plays will be used to explore a particular theory, practice therapeutic techniques, and are to be presented in class.

**Grading Criteria:**

Class attendance is a must. Grades are determined by:

- Genogram Assignment: 20%
- Family Assignment: 30%
- Class Participation: 20%
- Final Exam (40 questions) 30%

The Final Exam (multiple choice) will be based exclusively on the reading required for class, as well as a Case Study Vignette . Final will be given in class on Sunday 2/22/09.

- As you read the text, complete the Reading Review (attached at the end of the syllabus) that corresponds with the reading. Then you will be ready to post online assignments onto the discussion board. Also, the completion of the Reading Review can be used as a study guide for the Reading Final Examination.

Class role-plays. Class will be divided up into groups, each group will have a designated therapist and a family. Role-plays will be used to explore a particular theory, practice therapeutic techniques, and are to be presented in class.

**Student Performance Evaluation & Grading Criteria:**

Class attendance and participation is mandatory. PLEASE be on time. Grades are determined by:

- Genogram Assignment: 20%
- Family Assignment: 30%
- Class Participation: 30%
- Final Exam (40 questions) 20%

**Genogram Assignment Evaluation Criteria (20 points)**

| Criteria | Distinguished Category (A) | Commendable Category (B) | Average Category (C) | Failed Category (F) |
|----------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Genogram | 3 generations (not         | 3 generations;           | 3 generations;       | No genogram         |

|                                  |   |  |  |               |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|---------------|
| 10 points                        | including children); closeness/distance markings; hierarchy of each generation clearly demonstrated (contained in one horizontal area ); ages inside circles or squares | closeness/distance markings omitted or hierarchy of generations not clear      | closeness/distance markings omitted AND hierarchy of generations not clear |               |
| Historical Questions<br>5 points | Responses to historical questions placed in genogram  | Some missing responses   | Many missing responses   | No responses  |
| Time-line<br>5 points            | Horizontal timeline with chronologic events clearly marked  | Horizontal timeline with some chronologic events not clearly marked            | Horizontal timeline with most chronologic events not clearly marked        | No timeline   |
| Hypotheses<br>5 points           | One or more hypotheses that correlate past with present clearly presented   | Hypotheses that correlate past with present with some difficulty to understand | Hypotheses without correlation between past and present                    | No hypotheses |

**Family Self-Study Assignment (30 points)**

| <b>Criteria</b>  | <b>Distinguished Category (A)</b>                            | <b>Commendable Category (B)</b>                           | <b>Average Category (C)</b>                               | <b>Failed Category (F)</b>          |
|--|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| Family description.(1)<br>3 points                               | Rich, thorough and relevant description of family.           | Adequate description of family                            | Minimal description of family                             | No description of family            |
| Emotion , Power, Roles and Rules (2)<br>4 points                 | Fully examined in context of family with relevant examples.  | Sufficiently examined with examples given                 | Listed, but not examined, minimally descriptive examples. | Not examined, nor examples provided |
| Family Issues Impacting your work as a therapist (3)<br>7 points | Exceptionally insightful and remediation is fully addressed. | Moderately insightful and remediation is fully addressed. | Marginally insightful and remediation is fully addressed. | Not insightful, nor addressed.      |
| Family Assessment (4)  | Obviously and strongly supported by                          | Somewhat supported by                                     | Scarcely supported by                                     | Not supported by                    |

|                             |   |   |   |   |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 6 points                    | the facts presented and class material.   | the facts presented and class material.   | the facts presented and class material.   | the facts presented and class material.                     |
| Intervention(5)<br>5 points | Thoroughly addresses identified problems, clear rationale for use, accurate application of intervention . | Partially addresses identified problems, some rationale for use, accurate application of intervention . | Minimally addresses identified problems, unclear rationale or inaccurate application. | Does not address problems or apply intervention accurately. |

**Class Participation Evaluation Criteria (30 points)**

| <b>Criteria</b>                        | <b>Distinguished Category (A)</b>   | <b>Commendable Category (B)</b>  | <b>Average Category (C)</b>   | <b>Failed Category (F)</b>  |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| Personal goals                         | Pursues goals with high energy and assertion.   | Pursues goals actively and with some assertion.  | Pursues goals with low energy and mostly with prompting from others.  | Fails to set goals.   |
| Member goals                           | Works toward shared goals in a highly cooperative manner.   | Works toward shared goals in a cooperative manner; at times with compliance and defiance.      | Works toward shared goals mostly with compliance and defiance.  | Not cooperative in working toward shared goals  |
| Creating climate of trust and openness | Uses active listening and responding skills which are highly facilitative.                                | Uses active listening and responding skills which are facilitative.                            | Uses active listening and responding skills which are minimally facilitative.                                 | Uses active listening and responding skills which are destructively facilitative            |
| Displaying sensitivity                 | Displays consistent sensitivity to similarities and differences with individuals from varied backgrounds. | Displays sensitivity to similarities and differences with individuals from varied backgrounds. | Displays some degree of sensitivity to similarities and differences with individuals from varied backgrounds. | Lacks sensitivity to similarities and differences with individuals from varied backgrounds. |

Note: Member goals include timely submission of email assignments, and online posting.

### Criteria for Class Participation

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Grade       |   |
| A = 90+     | Student actively participated in discussions in <b>&gt;80%</b> of class sessions; <b>nearly all</b> comments were <b>thought provoking and incorporated material from the assigned readings</b> |
| B = 80 – 89 | Student actively participated in discussions in <b>&gt;80%</b> of class sessions; <b>most</b> of the comments were thought provoking and incorporated material from the assigned readings       |
| C = 70 – 79 | Student participated in discussions in <b>&gt;70%</b> of class sessions; comments/questions demonstrate a surface level understanding of course topics  |
| D = 60 – 69 | Student participated in <b>&lt;70%</b> of class sessions; comments/questions did not demonstrate an understanding of course topics  |
| F = <60     | Student did not participate in class discussions  |

### Grading scale:

|          |    |
|----------|----|
| 98-100   | A+ |
| 93-97    | A  |
| 90-92    | A- |
| 87-89    | B+ |
| 83-86    | B  |
| 80-82    | B- |
| 77-79    | C+ |
| 73-76    | C  |
| 70-72    | C- |
| 69 below | F  |

### Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism

In an effort to foster a spirit of honesty and integrity during the learning process, Argosy University requires that the submission of all course assignments represent the original work produced by that student. All sources must be documented through normal scholarly references/citations and all work must be submitted using the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (2001)*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association (APA) format. Please refer to Appendix A in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* for thesis and paper format. Students are encouraged to purchase this manual (required in some courses) and become familiar with its content as well as consult the Argosy University catalog for further information regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

Additionally, Argosy University considers resubmission of a work produced for one course in a subsequent course or the submission of work done partially or entirely by another to be academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsibility to seek clarification from the instructor regarding how much help may be received in completing an assignment, exam or project and what sources may be used.

Scholarly writing: The faculty at Argosy University 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. You are responsible for maintaining an electronic copy of any work submitted, because you may be asked to submit your course assignments through "Turnitin," ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)), an online resource established to help educators develop writing/research skills and detect potential cases of academic dishonesty. Turnitin compares submitted papers to billions of pages of content and provides a comparison report to your instructor. This comparison detects papers that share common information and duplicative language.

### **ADA Policy**

It is AU/San Francisco Bay Area Campus policy not to discriminate against qualified students with a documented disability in its educational programs, activities or services. If you have a disability-related need for accommodations in this class, contact the Campus Director of Student Services who serves as the Disability Services Coordinator.

Once the determination of reasonable accommodations has been made, an approved Letter of Accommodation is given to the student. The student is then responsible for presenting and discussing a copy of the Letter of Accommodation with faculty, when requesting needed services. Accommodations are effective once the instructor has received the approved Letter of Accommodation. Accommodations are not retroactive. Students should promptly notify the Disability Services Coordinator of any problems encountered in receiving the agreed-upon accommodations.

**Your instructor is responsible for delivering this curriculum in a format that will ensure the objectives are met and measured. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways depending upon the experience, orientation, technological acumen, emphasis and preferences of the instructor as well as the resources available. Any adjustment to the syllabus will be clearly delineated in the Outline and available for download prior to registration and on the first day of class.**

### **COUPLES AND FAMILY COUNSELING (PC 6700) READING REVIEW**

#### **Part 1: Questions 1 – 29**

**Type each response following each question.**

- 1) Name 3 stages of therapist development (Ch. 1).
- 2) What is the basic principle regarding *who* should come to therapy (Ch. 2)?
- 3) Summarize the process of *initial hypothesizing* (Ch. 2).
- 4) Summarize the process of *joining* (Ch. 3).
- 5) Name 3 steps in the event your credibility is questioned (Ch. 3).
- 6) Summarize the process of *building motivation* (Ch. 3).
- 7) State 3 benefits in having each member of family share their version of the problem (Ch.3).
- 8) State 3 benefits in exploring *attempted* solutions (Ch. 3).
- 9) List 10 potential *issues of harm* (Ch. 4).
- 10) List 5 themes in couples assessment (Ch. 4).
- 11) List 5 themes in family assessment (Ch. 4).
- 12) List 5 themes in assessing social systems outside the family (Ch. 4).
- 13) List 5 themes in assessing the larger social context (Ch. 4).
- 14) How does a *problem priority list* help (Ch. 5)?
- 15) List 4 *family therapy frameworks* and their corresponding interventions (Ch. 5).
- 16) What is a question that assists the client to specifically identify a *long-term* treatment goal (Ch. 5)?
- 17) What factors influence the selection of a *framework theory* used with a particular family (Ch. 5)?
- 18) List 5 factors that influence therapists in considering *medication consultation* (Ch. 5).

**COUPLES AND FAMILY COUNSELING (PC 6700)  
READING REVIEW**

**Part 1: Questions 1 – 29 (continued)**

- 19) Distinguish between 4 types of *questions* (Ch. 6).
- 20) Define *reframing* and give 4 examples of reframing (Ch. 6).
- 21) Define *confronting* (Ch. 6).
- 22) Distinguish between *pacing and leading* (Ch. 6).
- 23) List the four goals of *crisis intervention* (Ch. 6).
- 24) A basic principle is that the \_\_\_\_\_ guides the *content* and the \_\_\_\_\_ guides the *process* (Ch. 6).
- 25) Summarize 5 guidelines in determining level of *self-disclosure* (Ch. 6).
- 26) The therapist's role is to \_\_\_\_ clients, not to make decisions for them (Ch. 6).
- 27) List the seven steps of a family therapy *treatment plan* (Ch. 7).
- 28) List and define the 6 stages of the *family life cycle* (Ch. 7).
- 29) List one example per stage of *second-order changes* required in the family life cycle that is meaningful to you (Ch. 7).

**Part 2: Questions 30 – 41**

- 30) Summarize 1 section that is meaningful to you in Working with Families and Children from among the following (Ch. 7):
  - Common Childhood Disorders*
  - Young Children, Birth to 4 Years*
  - Children Ages 5-12 Years*
  - Adolescents*
  - Launching Children and Later Life*
  - Special Issues with Divorcing and Remarried Families*
  - Mediation & Child Custody/Special Issues w Single-Parent Poor Families*
- 31) Give an example of a statement with a couple from the *position of empathizing with an individual* (Ch. 8).

**COUPLES AND FAMILY COUNSELING (PC 6700)  
READING REVIEW**

**Part 2: Questions 30 – 41 (continued)**

- 32) Give an example of a statement with a couple from the *triadic position* of working with the couple as a unit (Ch. 8).
- 33) Give an example of a statement with a couple from the “*translator*” position (Ch. 8).
- 34) Give 3 examples where couple therapy may *not be the therapy of choice* (Ch. 8).
- 35) List 5 *common problems* and their definitions presented in couple therapy (Ch. 8).
- 36) Per *John Gottman*, list 4 qualities in conflict process that are especially *corrosive* (Ch. 8).
- 37) *Emotionally Focused Therapy* as opposed to cognitive-behavior focuses more directly on \_\_\_\_\_ and draws from \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ (Ch. 8).
- 38) Summarize 1 section that is meaningful to you in *Special Topics* from among the following (Ch. 8):  
*Dealing with Infidelity*  
*Violence*  
*Sexual Difficulties*  
*Same-Sex Couples*  
*Structured Separation*
- 39) Summarize 1 section that is meaningful to you from *When a Family member Has a Mental Illness* from among the following (Ch. 9):  
*Individual and Family Concepts*  
*Individual Diagnosis in a Family Context*  
*Depression*  
*Anxiety*  
*Alcoholism and Drug Abuse*
- 40) Summarize 1 section that is meaningful to you in *Getting Unstuck* from among the following (Ch. 10):  
*Understand Clients’ Ambivalence to Change/Therapist’s Reluctance to Intervene*  
*Therapist-Client Agenda and Timing Mismatch*  
*Therapist’s Lack of Theoretical Clarity/Supervision*  
*Dealing w Cancellations and No Shows/Difficulty Getting Members to Therapy*  
*Handling Secrets*  
*How Agencies Contribute to Being Stuck*  
*Countertransference*
- 41) Summarize 1 section that is meaningful to you from *Termination* from among the following (Ch. 11):  
*When to Terminate/Goals/Interventions*

*Special Issues/Therapist Terminations/Client Terminations*