



McMaster Divinity
College

MS 3XM3/6XM6 Marriage and Family Therapy

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Tuesdays 8:30 – 10:20 am, Winter 2017

1. Course Description

An introduction to current theories of marital and family therapy, along with appropriate intervention methods related to each theoretical orientation. The various therapeutic models are examined in terms of their theoretical tenets, views of family functioning and dysfunction, methods of assessment, therapeutic goals, treatment process & techniques, role of the counsellor/therapist and evaluation.

Specializations: Counselling and Spiritual Care (CS), and Pastoral Studies (PS).

Doctor of Practical Theology students who wish to apply for this course as an Advanced Elective for their degree program must consult with the Program Director of the DPT and the course instructor in order to develop an Advanced Elective approach to the course that fulfills the specific elements required by the DPT program. Once the elements of the Advanced Elective have been agreed upon by the student, the Program Director, and the instructor, a formal application can be made for an Advanced Elective in connection with this course. Once the application is accepted, DPT students can proceed with the course as part of their degree program.

2. Course Format

Class sessions will include didactic instruction, discussion, video presentations and case studies as appropriate. Reading material is assigned for all sessions. Students are expected to participate in discussions and to incorporate the class readings and lectures when discussing case studies.

3. Course Objectives

3.1. *Knowing*

- To understand systemic thinking as it applies to marital and family relations (CRPO Competencies 1.1; cf. AAMFT Competencies).
- To envision strategies for responding to the challenges of marital and family life (; cf. AAMFT Competencies).
- To be able to reflect on marital and family life using at least two different perspectives (; cf. AAMFT Competencies).

3.2. *Being*

- To reflect on one's own experience of marriage and family, how this influences the student, and how it may impact the counselling relationship (CRPO Competencies 1.4 & 4.3; cf. CASC competencies).

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3.3. **Doing**

- To be able to provide a relationship-centred approach to assessment and care that sensitively connects with people and engages them in the healing process (cf. CASC & AAMFT Competencies).
- To be able to facilitate hope by strengthening relational connections within marital and family systems (cf. CASC & AAMFT Competencies).
- To be able to support couples and families as they seek reconciliation, learn to resolve conflict, and experience forgiveness (cf. CASC & AAMFT Competencies).
- To know when and how to make a referral to a qualified counsellor or therapist (cf. CRPO, CASC & AAMFT Competencies).

4. **Course Texts:**

Unless otherwise noted, all required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3 : phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

4.1. **Required Texts**

Patterson, J., L. Williams, T. M. Edwards, L. Chamow, and C. Grauf-Grounds. *Essential Skills in Family Therapy: From the First Interview to Termination*, 2nd Edition. New York: Guilford, 2009. ISBN: 9781606233054

Yarhouse, M. A. & Sells, J. N. *Family Therapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2009. ISBN-13: 9780830828050

4.2. **Required Readings (articles)**

Bartle-Haring, Suzanne, and Arpita Lal. "Using Bowen Theory to Examine Progress in Couple Therapy." *The Family Journal*, 18 (2010), 106–115.

Buckley, Elizabeth and Philip Decter "From Isolation to Community: Collaborating with children and families in times of crisis." *The International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work* (2006) No. 2, 3–12. <http://www.dulwichcentre.com.au/from-isolation-to-community.pdf>

Chromy, Samantha. "A Solution-Based Approach to Couple Therapy." *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 6 (2007), 71–84.

Gangamma, Rashmi, Suzanne Bartle-Haring, and Tatiana Glebova. "A Study of Contextual Therapy Theory's Relational Ethics in Couples in Therapy." *Family Relations*, 61(2012), 825–835.

Gottman, John M., Janice Driver, and Amber Tabares. "Repair During Marital Conflict in Newlyweds: How Couples Move from Attack–Defend to Collaboration." *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, 26 (2015), 85–108.

Hargrave, Terry. "Families and Forgiveness: A Theoretical and Therapeutic Framework." *The Family Journal*, 2 (1994), 339–348.

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- Johnson, Susan M., and Valerie E. Whiffen. "Made to measure: adapting emotionally focused couple therapy to partners' attachment styles." *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 6(1999), 366–381.
- Knauth, Donna. "Family Secrets: An Illustrative Clinical Case Study Guided by Bowen Family Systems Theory." *Journal of Family Nursing*, 9 (2003), 331-344.
- MacKay, Linda. "Trauma and Bowen Family Systems Theory: Working with Adults Who were Abused as Children." *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*, 33 (2012), 232–241.
- Murphy, Lindsay S., Kelsey Lancy, and Katherine M. Hertlein. "Attending to Social Network Usage in Teen and Family Treatment: A Structural-Developmental Approach." *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, 24 (2013), 173–187.
- Stavrianopoulos, Katherine, George Faller, and James L. Furrow. "Emotionally Focused Family Therapy: Facilitating Change Within a Family System." *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 13 (2014), 25–43.
- Strand, Paul S., Robert G. Wahler, and Melissa Herring. "The impact of behavior-specific and behavior-nonspecific reinforcement on child compliance to mother directives." *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 39(2001), 1085–1097.
- Trepper, Terry S. "Solution-focused brief therapy with families." *Asia Pacific Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 3 (2012) 137–148.

5. **Course Instructor:**

Biography: Dr. Kelvin Mutter is an Associate Professor (part-time) at McMaster Divinity College, Dr. Mutter is a Registered Psychotherapist (CRPO); an OAMFT/AAMFT Clinical Fellow & Approved Supervisor; and, a Certified Pastoral Counsellor & Associate Teaching Supervisor (CASC/ACSS). Dr. Mutter's ministry and counselling experience includes both his current work as an individual, couple and family therapist as well as over twelve years in pastoral leadership. Dr. Mutter is married and has three adult children.

Availability: Dr. Mutter will be available for one-on-one consultation after class and during breaks on the days class is scheduled. Otherwise, students may contact him at mutterk@mcmaster.ca.

6. **Course Schedule:**

Week #	Date	Educational Foci / Assignments
1.	Jan 10, 2017	Orientation to Course The Family Therapy: A Paradigm Shift in Psychology
2.	Jan 17, 2017	The "Art" of Couple and Family Therapy Read: (all) Patterson et al. chs. 1 & 6
3.	Jan 24, 2017	Bowenian Therapy Read: (CS) MacKay "Trauma and Bowen Family Systems Theory..."; (PS) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 3 Due: Safe and Effective Use of Self (All)

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4.	Jan 31, 2017	Video: Legacy of Unresolved Grief and Loss (McGoldrick) Read: (CS) Bartle-Haring and Lal "Using Bowen Theory to Examine Progress in Couple Therapy"
5.	Feb 7, 2017	Structural Family Therapy Video: Read: (CS) Murphy "Attending to Social Network Usage in Teen and Family Treatment..."; (PS) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 5
6.	Feb 14, 2017	Contextual Therapy Read: (CS) Gangamma et al. "A Study of Contextual Therapy Theory's Relational Ethics in Couples in Therapy", Hargrave "Families and Forgiveness..."; (PS) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 7 Due: Review of <i>Essential Skills in Family Therapy</i> (MTS & MDiv)
7.	Feb 21, 2017	READING WEEK
8.	Feb 28, 2017	Behavioural Family Therapy Read: (CS) Strand et al. "The impact of behavior-specific and behavior-nonspecific reinforcement..."; (PS) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 10
9.	Mar 7, 2017	Behavioural Marital Therapy Read: (CS) Gottman et al. "Repair During Marital Conflict in Newlyweds..."; (PS) Yarhouse & Sells
10.	Mar 14, 2017	Solution-Focused Family Therapy Video: Read: (CS) Trepper "Solution-focused brief therapy with families."; (PS) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 9 Due: Literature Review Essay (MA/PhD)
11.	Mar 21, 2017	Solution-Focused / Solution Building Couples Therapy Video: From Divorce Talk To Solution Talk Read: (CS) Chromy, "A Solution-Based Approach to Couple Therapy"; (PS) Yarhouse & Sells
12.	Mar 28, 2017	Narrative Family Therapy Read: (CS) Buckley and Decter "From Isolation to Community..."; (PS) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 11 Due: Major research paper (MTS & MDiv)
13.	April 4, 2017	Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy Video: Read: (CS) Johnson and Whiffen "Made to measure..."; (PS) Yarhouse & Sells Due: Application Essay: Design a Support Group (MA/PhD)
14.	April 11, 2017	Emotionally Focused Family Therapy Read: (CS) Stavrianopoulos et al. "Emotionally Focused Family Therapy..."; (PS) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 8

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7. Course Requirements:

Assignments	Percentage of grade		
	MTS/MDiv		MA/PhD
	CS	PS	
Participation	10	10	
Safe and Effective Use of Self	20	20	10
Book Review: Patterson et al.	30	30	
Major Research Paper	40	40	
Literature Review Essay			50
Application Essay			40

7.1. Participation (Knowing, Being, Doing).

Class sessions will include a mixture of lecture, discussion and case reflection. The participation grade will be assessed on the basis of the student’s engagement with class activities as well as the student’s ability to respect others in their interactions, to demonstrate familiarity with the readings and texts, and apply the course material in specific situations.

7.2. Safe and Effective Use of Self (Knowing, Being, Doing) (15%) Due: Jan 24, 2017

Safe and Effective Use of Self refers to a professional’s learned capacity to understand his or her own subjective context and patterns of interaction as they inform his or her participation in a ministry, counselling or therapeutic relationship. It also speaks to the professional’s self-reflective use of his or her personality, insights, perceptions, and judgments in order to optimize interactions with those to who they counsel or minister to. (Definition adapted from the CRPO website).

Pastoral Studies Specialization: Family Life Cycle Awareness

Goals: (1) For the student to become consciously aware of his/her own life experiences and how these have shaped his/her life. (2) For the student to reflect on how his/her own life experiences may affect the way s/he interacts with clients and client families.

Instructions:

- Identify a) the phase of the “individual life cycle” you are currently experiencing, b) the phase of the “marital/couple life cycle” you are currently experiencing, and, c) the phase of the “family life cycle” you are currently experiencing.
- Describe the most recent individual/couple/family life cycle transitions you have experienced and the effect this change has had on your life. How have these experiences shaped your life? Is there any aspect of this transition that may be unresolved?
- Describe any individual/couple/family life cycle transitions you dealing with at the present time. Is there anything that you are finding to be particularly challenging? How do you imagine these experiences might impact your work with couples or families who may be living with similar issues?

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Counselling & Spiritual Care Specialization: Genogram Assignment

Goals: (1) For the student to become consciously aware of his/her own life experiences and how these have shaped his/her life. (2) For the student to reflect on how his/her own life experiences may affect the way s/he interacts with clients and client families. (3) To practice using genograms as a means of obtaining information about a couple or family. (

Instructions:

Draw a draw a genogram of your family of origin (FOO). Include your spouse if you are married. Include your children if you have any. Obtain as much information about your family of origin as possible. (Consult class handout for guidelines re: format). After you have drawn your genogram, discuss, analyze and interpret it according to the following aspects: (60 % or 10 points for each of the 6 parts)

- Family Structure: State who constitutes the current family of which you are a part. Are deceased members still a part of the emotional system? What about pets?
- Life Cycle Fit: Look at ages at transition periods such as leaving home, marrying, having kids to see if they are normative or not for that period in time. Discuss the fit between spouses, i.e. if one is much older or younger, etc.
- Pattern Repetition Across Generations: Look at level of needs, repeated relationship patterns or other patterns that are repeated such as having an offender, mental illness, heart attacks, ministers, teachers, military personnel, emotional cut-offs, or small or large families in each generation.
- Life Events and Family Needs: Track critical events and toxic issues to see if there are anniversary reactions, similar timing (in areas such as sexual abuse), the impacts of ecological events on family needs, coincidences, etc.
- Relational Patterns and Triangles: Look at dyads, triangles among parents and child, among siblings, in multigenerational context, in affairs, in divorced and blended families, etc.
- Family Balance and Imbalance: identify any potential differences between family groupings with respect to size of family, occupation, finances and other resources, roles, functioning, etc.

Reflect on the information you have gathered. Are there any issues that remain unresolved? How have these experiences shaped your life? Is there anything that you find to be particularly challenging? How do you imagine these experiences might impact on your approach to working with couples or families who may be living with similar issues?

Written Format: Submit a one-page 3-4 generation genogram and a brief reflection on the above questions/topics. Highlight the salient features and insights derived by yourself. Be sure to identify intergenerational influences.

Grading: Papers will be graded on the basis of (a) the student's ability to identify patterns of relationship within their family of origin, (b) the student's ability to identify and discuss the effect of key events (familial, societal, etc.) on the life of their family, and (c) the student's reflection on the potential value and/or possible shortcomings of using this tool in their work.

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7.3.MTS/MDiv Programs

7.3.1. Review of *Essential Skills in Family Therapy* (30% of grade) (Due Feb 14, 2017)

Goal: To orient students to the process of counselling couples and families from first contact to completion (Knowing, Doing).

Instructions: Read and reflect on Patterson et al. *Essential Skills in Family Therapy: From the First Interview to Termination*. What are the central questions that this book is addressing? How does this book contribute to your understanding of marriage and family therapy? What theoretical perspective do the authors work from? What are their assumptions concerning the process of couple and family therapy or counselling? How does this shape or affect their discussion? Did you find the book to be helpful? Why or why not?

Written form: Submit a written critique of the text (2000 words or 8 pages double-spaced) that highlights the perceived strengths or short-comings of this book. Conclude with a brief statement describing how do you envision this text shaping your understanding of a) family, b) marriage, and/or b) marriage/family counselling?

Grading: Papers will be graded on the basis of (a) the student's ability to identify and interact with the text, (b) the student's ability to reflect on this text from a counselling perspective, and (c) the student's ability to reflect with insight as to whether this text may be of practical value in his/her ministry.

7.3.2. Major Research Paper: (40%) Due: March 28, 2017

Pastoral Studies Specialization:

- Research the academic and counselling literature (e.g., academic journals, counselling texts) relating to one of the following topics relevant to the practice of marriage and family counselling in a congregational context:
 - Counselling couples/families affected by grief and loss, **or**
 - Counselling families affected by separation, divorce, and remarriage, **or**
 - Counselling families affected by domestic violence, **or**
 - Counselling couples/families affected by addiction or mental illness (focus on one issue or diagnosis), **or**
 - Another topic approved by the professor.
- **Write an integrative essay** (4000 words or 16 pp double-spaced) that focuses on how you might counsel a family who lives with one of these realities. Each essay needs to contain the following elements: a clearly worded introduction that identifies the focus and the intent of the paper; a section that reviews the academic literature relating to this topic, summarizing the key concerns and responses identified within the literature (30-40% of paper); a section that reflects on the topic through the lens of pastoral practice and outlines a possible pastoral counselling response (40-50% of paper); a clearly worded conclusion; and a bibliography.
- **Grading:** Papers will be graded on the basis of (a) the student's ability to identify and interact with core theme(s) relevant to the issue under discussion, (b) the student's ability to reflect on this issue using both secular sources and pastoral sources, and (c) the student's ability to construct a pastoral understanding for responding to this concern within the context of his/her

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ministry.

Counselling & Spiritual Care Specialization: Genogram Assignment (15%) (Due Oct. 19, 2010)

- Research the academic and counselling literature (e.g., academic journals, counselling texts) relating to one of the following topics relevant to the practice of marriage and family counselling within a spiritual care setting or a counselling practice:
 - Counselling individuals/families affected by domestic violence, **or**
 - Counselling couples/families affected by addiction or mental illness (focus on one issue or diagnosis), **or**
 - Counselling couples/families where one person lives with a developmental limitation: e.g., autism, Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome (focus on one diagnosis), **or**
 - Counselling couples/families affected by crisis, trauma, cultural transition, poverty (focus on one concern), **or**
 - Another topic approved by the professor.
- **Write an integrative essay** (4000 words or 16 pp double-spaced) that focuses on how you might counsel a family who lives with one of these realities. Each essay needs to contain the following elements: a clearly worded introduction that identifies the focus and the intent of the paper; a section that reviews the literature relating to this topic, summarizing the key concerns and responses identified within the literature (30-40% of paper); a section that reflects on the topic through the lens of clinical or spiritual care practice and outlines a possible counselling response (40-50% of paper); a clearly worded conclusion; and a bibliography.
- **Grading:** Papers will be graded on the basis of (a) the student's ability to identify and interact with core theme(s) relevant to the issue under discussion, (b) the student's ability to reflect on this issue using secular sources as well as material drawn from the spiritual care and Christian counselling literature, and (c) the student's ability to construct a clinical understanding for responding to this concern.

7.4. MA/PhD Programs

7.4.1. Literature Review Essay (50% of grade)

(Due: March 14, 2017)

- The student will research the counselling literature (pastoral, Christian, and secular) related to one of the following topics relevant to the practice of marriage and family therapy:
 - Couple formation and marriage preparation programs
 - Marriage and family enrichment programs
 - Addiction and the family
 - Other topic as agreed upon by the professor
- The student will write and submit a pre-publication draft of what may become a publishable paper that summarizes the "state of the field" with respect to the topic under consideration. This essay is to be 8000 to 10,000 words (33 to 40 pp, double-spaced). These essays are to focus on the historical and current practices of pastoral and Christian counsellors, and secular

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counsellors relevant to the identified topic. The essay needs to consider the topic against the backdrop of historical and current secular counselling practices and the research literature.

- Papers will be graded on the basis of (a) the student's ability to identify and interact with core theme(s) relevant to the issue under discussion, (b) the student's ability to reflect on this issue from: historical and contemporary perspectives, secular and faith-based perspectives, and the research literature; and, (c) the student's ability to identify and evaluate the relevant strengths and shortcomings of the pastoral and Christian counselling literature on the topic.

7.4.2. Application Essay: Design a Support Group) (40% of grade) (Due: April 4, 2017)

- This essay builds on the student's research for the Literature Review Essay.
- The student will design a 6-session counsellor-led, clergy-led, or peer-support program for use within a faith-based context to help couples or families gain insight and appropriate life skills with respect to the student's research topic. Each session will include the following elements: session goals, a concise introductory essay (750-1000 words) about the topic for the session, an outline for the session that includes any relevant supporting narrative for each portion of the session, copies of any worksheets or handouts that may be used, and a select bibliography of key sources used in designing the session.
- Assignments will be graded on the basis of (a) the student's ability to identify relevant themes and content for this program, (b) the student's ability to create a curriculum that will appeal to a broad range of individuals; and, (c) the student's ability to structure a curriculum that will enhance a couple's or family's ability to function or relate to each other.

8. Course Administration:

College Style for Submission of Written Work: All written work—unless informed otherwise by the professor—is to be submitted in accordance with the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guide for Essays and Theses*, available on the McMaster Divinity College web-site <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>.

Statement On Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the McMaster University Academic Integrity Policy - <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>.

Gender Inclusive Language: McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

Submission of Written Work: All assignments are due on the day indicated (by email before 5 p.m. of the day due). ***Late submission of assignments will be deducted one grade point for every late day.*** With

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the exception of the **Online Discussion**, all written work is to be submitted by email in either MSWord format, "Rich Text Format" (i.e., *.rtf), or as an Open Office document. Graded papers will be returned to the student with comments in pdf format

Length: Students are expected to adhere to the word count. If a paper exceeds the word count, grace will be accorded for the first 10%. However, the grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade for each additional 10% a paper exceeds the stipulated word count.

Cell Phone/Computer Policy: Students are to refrain from texting or conducting cell phone conversations while class is in session. Should you need to maintain contact with family members and/or your church or ministry, please turn off the ringer so as to avoid disturbing others; upon receipt of an urgent call, you may discretely excuse yourself from the classroom. The same policy applies to all computer generated sound schemes, pagers, or other electronic annunciation systems.

9. Supplemental Bibliography:

Students will receive a supplemental bibliography of seminal works and other key resources in the first class.

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