



McMaster Divinity
College

MS 3XM3 Marriage and Family Therapy
In-Person/Livestream (Synchronous)

Kelvin F. Mutter, DTh
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Tuesdays, Winter 2024
9:00 am – 10:50 am

1. Course Description

Although this course is primarily about Marriage and Family Therapy, the themes, and concepts it explores are relevant for anyone who works with families (e.g., youth workers, pastors, etc.). This course will introduce students to selected theories of marital and family therapy and key intervention methods related to each theoretical orientation. These 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), Pastoral Studies (PS).

2. Course Format

This course will be delivered using both in-person and via livestream. Reading material is assigned for all sessions. Students are expected to participate in class 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.
- To envision strategies for responding to the challenges of marital and family life.
- To be able to reflect on marital and family life using at least two different perspectives.

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.

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.
- To be able to facilitate hope by strengthening relational connections within marital and family systems.
- To be able to support couples and families as they seek reconciliation, learn to resolve conflict, and experience forgiveness.

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- To know when and how to make a referral to a qualified counsellor or therapist.

Professional Competencies

This course is intended to support the development of the following competencies.

- Integrate a theory of human psychological functioning.
- Work within a framework based upon established theories of marital and family therapy.
- Integrate knowledge of comparative theories of marital and family therapy relevant to practice.
- Integrate awareness of self in relation to the student’s future role as a counsellor, spiritual care provider, or pastor.
- To ensure the student’s safe and effective use of self in the therapeutic role as a counsellor, spiritual care provider, or pastor.
- Conduct an appropriate risk assessment.
- Create and maintain effective therapeutic relationships in the learner’s role as a counsellor, spiritual care provider, or pastor.
- Establish and maintain core conditions for therapy, spiritual care provider, or pastor care.
- Structure and facilitate the therapeutic process.
- Refer clients, spiritual care recipients, and congregants to qualified professionals.

4. Course Texts:

All required textbooks for this class are available from the *Hurlburt Family Bookstore* located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at books@readon.ca. The *Hurlburt Family Bookstore* also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

4.1. Required Text

Yarhouse, M. A. & Sells, J. N. *Family Therapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal*, 2nd Edition. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2017.

4.2. Required Reading (journal articles)

Unless otherwise indicated, the following required readings may be found on the “Scholars Portal Journals” database available through the Mills Library.

| Article: Author(s) and Title | Spec |
|---|---------|
| Bartle-Haring, Suzanne, and Arpita Lal. “Using Bowen Theory to Examine Progress in Couple Therapy.” <i>The Family Journal</i> , 18 (2010), 106–15. | CS |
| Bond, Caroline, et al. “Practitioner Review: The Effectiveness of Solution Focused Brief Therapy with Children and Families: A Systematic and Critical Evaluation of the Literature from 1990–2010.” <i>Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry</i> , 54 (2013), 707–23. | CS & PS |
| Brendel, Kristen Esposito, and Brandy R. Maynard. “Child–Parent Interventions for Childhood Anxiety Disorders: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.” <i>Research on Social Work Practice</i> , 24(2014), 287–95. | CS |
| Gangamma, Rashmi, et al. “A Study of Contextual Therapy Theory's Relational Ethics in Couples | CS |

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| Article: Author(s) and Title | Spec |
|---|---------|
| in Therapy." <i>Family Relations</i> , 61(2012), 825–35. | |
| Gottman, John M., et al. "Repair During Marital Conflict in Newlyweds: How Couples Move from Attack–Defend to Collaboration." <i>Journal of Family Psychotherapy</i> , 26 (2015), 85–108. | CS & PS |
| Johnson, Susan M., and Valerie E. Whiffen. "Made to Measure: Adapting Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy to Partners' Attachment Styles." <i>Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice</i> , 6(1999), 366–81. | CS & PS |
| MacKay, Linda. "Trauma and Bowen Family Systems Theory: Working with Adults Who were Abused as Children." <i>Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy</i> , 33 (2012), 232–41. | CS |
| Murphy, Lindsay S., et al. "Attending to Social Network Usage in Teen and Family Treatment: A Structural-Developmental Approach." <i>Journal of Family Psychotherapy</i> , 24 (2013), 173–87. | CS |
| Mutter, Kelvin F. "Pastoral and Christian Marital Therapies: Complementary and Divergent Traditions." <i>Christian Psychology</i> , 7(2013), 51–74. http://christianpsych.org/wp_scp/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/Christian-Psychology-7.2-2013-The-Agency-of-Christ.pdf | CS & PS |
| Pilkington, Sasha McAllum. "Deconstructing Denial: Stories of Narrative Therapy with People Who are Dying and Their Families." <i>Journal of Narrative Family Therapy</i> , (2017), Release 1, 54–75. http://www.journalnft.com/uploads/9/4/4/5/94454805/jnft_2017_release_1_sasha_mc_allum_pilkington.pdf | CS & PS |
| Sibley, D. Scott, et al. "Generating New Stories of Commitment in Couple Relationships by Utilizing the Sliding Versus Deciding Framework." <i>Journal of Family Psychotherapy</i> , 26 (2015), 68–73. | CS |
| Stavrianopoulos, Katherine, et al. "Emotionally Focused Family Therapy: Facilitating Change within a Family System." <i>Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy</i> , 13 (2014), 25–43. | CS & PS |
| Trepper, Terry S. "Solution-Focused Brief Therapy with Families." <i>Asia Pacific Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy</i> , 3 (2012) 137–48. | CS |

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 AAMFT Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor; a Certified Psychospiritual Therapist Educator (CASC/ACSS); and, a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist (CAMFT). 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.

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6. Course Schedule:

| Date | Location | Educational Foci / Assignments |
|--|----------|---|
| Jan 9, 2024 (9:00–10:50 am) | | Orientation to Course Movements in Caring for and Counselling Couples and Families Read: (All) Mutter “Pastoral and Christian Marital Therapies” |
| First Generation Theories: Focusing on Structure, Function, Communication, and Interactions. | | |
| Preparation for next Class: Reading: (All) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 3; (CS) Bartle-Haring and Lal “Using Bowen Theory to Examine Progress in Couple Therapy”; MacKay “Trauma and Bowen Family Systems Theory...” | | |
| Jan 16, 2024 (9:00–10:50 am) | | Bowen Family Systems Therapy |
| Preparation for next Class: Reading: (All) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 5; (CS) Murphy “Attending to Social Network Usage in Teen and Family Treatment...” | | |
| Jan 23, 2024 (9:00–10:50 am) | | Structural Family Therapy |
| Preparation for next Class: Reading: (All) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 10; (CS) Brendel and Maynard. “Child–Parent Interventions for Childhood Anxiety Disorders...” | | |
| Jan 30, 2024 (9:00–10:50 am) | | Behavioural Family Therapy |
| Preparation for next Class: Reading: (All) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 7; (CS) Gangamma et al. “A Study of Contextual Therapy Theory's Relational Ethics in Couples in Therapy” | | |
| Feb 6, 2024 (9:00–10:50 am) | | Contextual Therapy Due: Annotated Bibliography (MTS & MDiv Students) |
| Second Generation Theories: Extension, Diversification and Integration | | |
| Preparation for next Class: Reading: (All) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 9; (CS) Trepper “Solution-focused brief therapy with families.” | | |
| Feb 13, 2024 (9:00–10:50 am) | | Solution-Focused Family Therapy |
| Feb 20, 2024 | | READING WEEK |
| Preparation for next Class: Reading: (All) Bond, et al. “Practitioner Review...” | | |
| Feb 27, 2024 (9:00–10:50 am) | | Solution Building Couples Therapy |
| Preparation for next Class: Reading: (All) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 11, Pilkington “Deconstructing Denial”; (CS) Sibley et al. “Generating New Stories of Commitment ...” | | |
| Mar 5, 2024 | | Narrative Family Therapy |

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| Date | Location | Educational Foci / Assignments |
|---|---|--|
| (9:00–10:50 am) | | |
| Third Generation Theories: Refinement and Empirical Verification | | |
| Preparation for next Class: Reading: (All) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 10, Gottman et al. "Repair During Marital Conflict in Newlyweds..." | | |
| Mar 12, 2024 (9:00–10:50 am) | Behavioural Marital Therapy | Due: Integration Essay (all students) |
| Preparation for next Class: Reading: (All) Yarhouse & Sells ch. 8, Johnson and Whiffen "Made to measure..." | | |
| Mar 19, 2024 (9:00–10:50 am) | Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy | |
| Preparation for next Class: Reading: (All) Stavrianopoulos et al. "Emotionally Focused Family Therapy..." | | |
| Mar 26, 2024 (9:00–10:50 am) | Emotionally Focused Family Therapy | Due: Safe and Effective Use of Self (All) |
| Integration: The Whole is Greater than the Sum of Its Parts | | |
| Preparation for next Class: Reading: (all) Yarhouse & Sells, chs. 1 & 12 | | |
| April 2, 2024 (9:00–10:50 am) | Integrative Models for Marriage and Family Counselling / Therapy | |

7. Course Requirements:

| Assignments | Due Date | MTS/MDiv Assignments CS |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| Participation | | 10 |
| Annotated Bibliography | Feb 6, 2024 | 35 |
| Integration Essay | Mar 12, 2024 | 35 |
| Safe and Effective Use of Self | Mar 26, 2024 | 20 |

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. Written Assignments

7.2.1. Annotated Bibliography Feb 6, 2024

This assignment is intended to meet two goals. First, this assignment is designed to orient the student to the literature on a specific topic of their interest. Second, it is expected that the student will focus on

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sources of sufficient quality that they are able to draw on the sources used in this assignment when they write the Application Essay. NOTE: students unfamiliar with how to write a Annotated Bibliography are advised to consult the document *A Guide To Writing Annotated Bibliographies* that is posted on Avenue to Learn.

Assignment Guidelines:

The expected length of this Annotated Bibliography is 3000 words (12 pages).

The student will research the pastoral and/or Christian counselling literature as well as the secular literature on one of the sub-topics identified within chapters 13 to 20 of the Yarhouse and Sells text.

Students will read 3–4 quality monographs (books) on the topic from the counselling literature, one of which should represent one of the counselling traditions described in the Yarhouse and Sells book; and, 8–10 recent academic journal articles from the counselling and/or spiritual care literature, at least two of which should reflect the use of one of the counselling traditions described in the first part of the Yarhouse and Sells text.

Grading:

- Knowledge & Interpretation (knowing / discernment) (50 %)
- Contextualization (knowing + doing) (35 %)
- Academic Style (15 %)

7.2.2. Integration Essay MTS & MDiv Specializations)

Due: Mar 12, 2024

The intent of this assignment is to provide the student an opportunity **to build on** the Annotated Bibliography assignment and the relevant chapter in Yarhouse and Sells. NOTE: Students are to demonstrate critical thinking and develop their own ideas rather than simply recapitulating Yarhouse and Sells' argument or methodology.

Assignment Guidelines:

The student will read the chapter(s) in the Yarhouse and Sells text that is (are) relevant to their paper, and review their notes from the Annotated Bibliography assignment.

Students will write a 4000 word (16 pages) "Integration Essay" (inclusive of Bibliography) in which they demonstrate how they will use the information and insights they learned in the Annotated Bibliography assignment within a counselling practice or chaplaincy (spiritual car) setting. Students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the topic as well as how they would employ one of the counselling models described in the text. Students are encouraged to demonstrate their skills in contextualizing and applying their knowledge through the use of a brief hypothetical case study, or developing guidelines for their 'professional' practice, etc.

Grading:

- Contextualization (knowing + doing) (40 %)
- Performance (doing; i.e., the interview) (45 %)
- Academic Style (15 %)

7.2.3. Safe and Effective Use of Self

Due: March 26, 2024

Safe and Effective Use of Self refers to a professional's learned capacity to understand his or her own

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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).

Assignment Guidelines:

Students will submit a 1500 word (4 to 5 pages) reflection paper in which the student reflects on how one key insight or lesson about "family" they have learned from this course is shaping their understanding of themselves and their perspective on working with others.

Grading:

- Knowledge & Interpretation (knowing / discernment) (20 %)
- Contextualization (knowing + doing) (20 %)
- Personal / Professional Formation (being) (50 %)
- Academic Style (10 %)

8. Course Administration:

AODA

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

NOTE: In this course we will be using a web-based service (turnitin.com) for plagiarism detection.

Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the **Disclaimer:** This syllabus is the property of the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as, for example, the following: NRSV (2021), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

Written Work:

- **Style Guide:** All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>.
- **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 3% or 1/3 of a letter grade for each additional 10% a paper exceeds the stipulated word count.
- **Late Penalties:** Assignments submitted after the beginning of class on the due date will be considered late. Late assignments will receive a deduction of 2% per day.
- **Mode of Submission:** Students are instructed to submit their assignments via Avenue to Learn.

9. Bibliography:

The following select bibliography focuses on important texts relevant to practitioners. Students researching a specific model of Marriage or Family Therapy are encouraged to expand their research beyond this bibliography and consult the reference lists at the end of the relevant chapter(s) in the course text and assigned articles, the holdings of McMaster University's Mills Library, as well as periodical databases such as Psycinfo and Scholars Portal Journals—both of which are available through the Mills Library.

Ariel, S. *Culturally Competent Family Therapy*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999.

Boszormenyi-Nagy, Ivan, and Barbara R. Krasner. *Between Give and Take: A Clinical Guide to Contextual Therapy*. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1986.

Boszormenyi-Nagy, Ivan, and Geraldine M. Spark. *Invisible Loyalties*. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1984.

Bowen, Murray. *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*. New York: Aronson, 1989.

Boyd-Franklin, N. *Black Families in Therapy: Understanding The African American Experience*, 2nd Edition. New York: Guilford, 2006.

Connie, Elliott. *Solution Building in Couples Therapy*. New York: Springer, 2012.

Donovan, J. M. *Short-Term Objects-Relations Couples Therapy: The Five-Step Model*. New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2003.

Gottman, John M. *The Marriage Clinic: A Scientifically Based Marital Therapy*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1999.

Greenberg, Leslie S., and Susan M. Johnson. *Emotionally Focused Therapy for Couples*. New York: Guilford, 1988.

Halford, W. Kim. *Brief Therapy for Couples*. New York: Guilford, 2001.

Hiebert, William J., et al.. *Dynamic Assessment in Couple Therapy*. New York: Lexington, 1993.

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- Hughes, Daniel A. *Attachment-Focused Family Therapy*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2007.
- Johnson, Susan M. *Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy with Trauma Survivors*. New York: Guilford, 2002.
- Johnson, Susan M. *The Practice of Emotionally Focused Marital Therapy: Creating Connection*. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1996.
- Johnson, Susan M., and Leslie S. Greenberg (eds.). *The Heart of the Matter: Perspectives on Emotion in Marital Therapy*. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1994.
- Johnson, Susan M., and Valeri E. Whiffen (eds.). *Attachment Processes in Couple and Family Therapy*. New York: Guilford, 2003.
- Kilpatrick, Allie C., and Thomas P. Holland. *Working with Families: An Integrative Model by Level of Need*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2006.
- Madanes, Chloe. *Strategic Family Therapy*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981.
- McGoldrick, Monica, and Randy Gerson. *Genograms in Family Assessment*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1985.
- McGoldrick, Monica, et al. (eds.). *Women in Families: A Framework for Family Therapy*. New York: Norton, 1989.
- McGoldrick, Monica. (ed.). *Re-visioning Family Therapy: Race, Culture, and Gender in Clinical Practice*. Guilford, 2002.
- Minuchin, Salvador. *Families and Family Therapy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1974.
- Napier, Augustus, and Carl Whitaker. *The Family Crucible: The Intense Experience of Family Therapy*. New York: Harper, 1978.
- Nichols, William C. *Marital Therapy: An Integrated Approach*. New York: Guilford, 1988.
- O'Hanlon Hudson, Patricia, and William Hudson O'Hanlon. *Rewriting Love Stories*. New York: Norton, 1991.
- Patterson, Gerald R. *Families: Applications of Social Learning to Family Life*. Champaign, IL: Research Press, 1971.
- Satir, V. *Conjoint Family Therapy*. Palo Alto: Science and Behavior Books, 1964.
- Scharff, D. E., and J. S. Scharff. *Object Relations Couple Therapy*. New York: Jason Aronson, 1991.
- Sherman, Robert, and Don Dinkmeyer. *Systems of Family Therapy: An Adlerian Integration*. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1987.
- Stuart, Richard B. *Helping Couples Change: A Social Learning Approach to Marital Therapy*. New York: Guilford, 1980.
- Walters, Marianne, et al. (eds.). *The Invisible Web: Gender Patterns in Family Relationships*. New York: Guilford, 1988.

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