

**EDPS 6250: Family and Couples Counseling
Fall 2024**

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Course Times: Wednesdays, 4:35-7:05 PM MST
Course Location: SAEC 3155
 Office hours by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is designed as an introduction to the field of family and couples therapy. Students who successfully complete the course should be well versed in the basics of both the founding and contemporary theories of the discipline. Further, students will be exposed to several clinical vignettes and case scenarios that demonstrate the application of the theories in family and couples therapy modalities. Systems theory guides the majority of what will be presented in class. Through class readings, lectures, classroom discussion, and role plays, students will be able to make a more informed decision as to whether family therapy is a field that holds potential for them in their own professional pursuits. Additionally, students may derive some personal or family insights from the content of this class.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Knowledge. Students will:	
A.	Demonstrate an understanding of the various theories and models of couples and family counseling.
B.	Recognize distinct strategies and techniques used in couple and family therapy and counseling.
C.	Examine the appropriate methods of couple and family assessment.
E.	Compare and contrast family therapy and counseling strategies for working with diverse populations and ethnic groups.

Skills. Students will:	
A.	Demonstrate the fundamental components of the major models of couple and family therapy and counseling.
B.	Critically evaluate and demonstrate strategies and techniques used in couple and family therapy and counseling.
C.	Delineate how the strategies and techniques within the major models of couple and family therapy and counseling meet the needs of diverse populations.

Attitudes & Values. Students will:	
A.	Appreciate the value of incorporating couple and family therapy and counseling methods into therapeutic approach.
B.	Be receptive to diversity issues, as well as personal biases, when incorporating couple and family therapy and counseling into one's professional practice.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., Petry, S. (2008). *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention*. Third Edition. United Kingdom: WW Norton.

Gehart, D. R. (2015). *Theory and Treatment Planning in Family Therapy: A Competency-Based Approach*. United Kingdom: Cengage Learning.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association: The Official Guide to APA Style. (2019). United States: American Psychological Association.

RECOMMENDED READING

Perel, E. (2017). *The State of Affairs: Rethinking Infidelity*. Yellow Kite.

Gottman, J. (1999) *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. New York: Harmony Books.

Seigel, D. J. (2004) *Parenting from the Inside Out: How a Deeper Self-Understanding Can Help You Raise Children Who Thrive*. New York: Penguin Random House.

Nagoshi, E. (2015) *Come As You Are*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.

ASSIGNMENTS

Classes will be devoted to lecture, presentations, experiential intervention examples, and discussion of the reading material. **All assignments except for those completed in class will be submitted on Canvas before class (4:34 PM MDT) on the due date.**

- 1. Class Attendance and Participation (40 points; 3 points/class):** Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions and activities and to come prepared to address assigned readings. Students are expected to arrive on time and cell phones should be silenced and put away for class. Laptops are to be used in class for note taking only. Please see more on participation and attendance under the “class policies” section.
- 2. Article Discussion (20 points):** Students will choose an article from a peer-reviewed journal on any topic related to couples/family therapy (special populations/presenting issues, trauma, infidelity, etc.) and facilitate a class discussion. The dyad will select an article of their choice and submit it to the professor (in PDF form) by **August 28**. Students will submit a one page write up about the article prior to their presentation with the following information: at least three key insights, or “take-aways” from the article and at least three thought-provoking discussion questions. On the day of their presentation, the students presenting will provide a short summary to the class (who will have already read the article) and then facilitate a conversation using the discussion questions.
- 3. Student Formed Families (100 points):** Students will be placed into groups of “families” of three or four students for role-plays which will occur during class sessions. Each family will have established general characteristics and identified problems and students will act as clients in the

vignettes they create. Student “families” will act as family counseling teams for another family.

Vignette (20 points): Students will be placed into groups of “families” for role-plays which will occur during the in-person class sessions. Each family will have established general characteristics and identified problems and students will act as clients in the vignettes they create. Each group will submit a 500-word vignette on the family which should include information on family’s background, a short paragraph on each member, a paragraph on their presenting issue, and a few paragraphs on the interpersonal and systemic dynamics of the family. The submission should also include a genogram of the family. The structure and symbols in the genogram should mirror the description of the family, the relational dynamics, and the presenting issue. An examples of this vignette can be found on Canvas.

Role Plays: In the second half of each class session, groups will have an opportunity to role play the family therapy theory from the day’s curriculum. Students will rotate as counselors and observers in the family counseling role-plays. Under supervision, the counseling teams will plan, implement, and assess the family counseling process. Role play family counseling sessions may be audio recorded for review. Student “families” will also act as family counseling teams for another family.

The purpose of the role play is primarily for the students to experience and conceptualize working with a family client, not necessarily for the students to experience being clients. However, it may be helpful for the student-clients to share their experience of being a client with the therapists. These role plays will be observed by the professor and from time to time, the professor will pause the role play to offer feedback and supervision to the therapists. When playing the family, students are advised to be intentional about how they play the character and not reveal information through their character that is overly personal to them. The set-up is as follows:

- Students will be paired into two groups of three or four. Each group will play both their family client **as well as** the therapists (groups will alternate) in each class.
- When playing therapists, there will be one lead therapist and one co-therapist, and the remaining group member will observe/take notes.
- After the round, the groups will switch and the group that played the family will then play the therapists.
- Students will rotate throughout the semester such that each student has a chance to be lead therapist at least once.
- Before starting, families will take a few minutes to discuss the content they will present in session. The role plays will be approximately 30 minutes long with 10 minutes of post-session feedback which will include all members of both the family and the treatment team reflecting on the content and process of the role play together.
- Each student will be responsible for their own case conceptualization submission from the point of view of the therapist which may include reflections generated from the feedback sessions as well as their independent observations and insights from the experience.

Case Conceptualizations (80 points; 10 points each): Each student will submit a reflection (from the perspective of the clinician) for each role-play experience. This reflection should be substantive and at least 500 words in APA 7th writing style, but the narrative may be written in bullet point form. These bullets should be discrete ideas with elaborations of at least 3-5

complete sentences for each bullet. Please refer to the sample documents on Canvas as an example of what is expected in order to receive full points on this assignment.

Each entry will have two parts consisting of:

- An analysis/conceptualization in which the student demonstrates proficiency with the theory in question. This should include observations, technical applications of the theory, and an analysis of the case material using the basic components of the theory. These conceptualizations will be based on the readings and lectures from independent learning and from class. Students should highlight at least three theory-based insights.
- A reflection on the student's experience of the role-play. Students will develop insights on the process dimension of the session. This may cover elements such as the joining process from both the therapists' and clients' experience, what it felt like to be in the session, what felt safe or unsafe, what things felt "off-limits," things that opened or closed the conversation, people who participated and how that impacted the dynamic, where their POTT themes came up, etc.

Students are advised to take notes during or immediately after each role plays and feedback sessions for the case conceptualizations that are to be written afterward. Students are also encouraged to collaborate with their family to identify and discuss the themes that came up in the role play. There may be some time to work on this in class, but if so desired students may coordinate amongst themselves outside of class to collaborate on the conceptualizations.

Collaboration and consistent reflections across all group members are not required—it may simply be helpful to co-conceptualize what has transpired in each different role play experience. Voluntary sharing of student's reflections in class is permitted but is not obligated.

4. **Film Analysis (60 points):** This paper involves students watching a film and writing a case conceptualization from the perspective of the family therapist. Students can choose one of two movies:

- *Crazy Rich Asians (2018)*
- *Mrs. Doubtfire (1993)*

This should be a thoughtful, rich, and technical conceptualization in which students demonstrate their understanding of family dynamics in general and of family systems theory. Students will select one of the theories studied in class and conceptualize the family through the lens of their preferred theory. This paper should follow a traditional case conceptualization format:

- Background information and genogram attached as an appendix.
- Presenting Issues
- Conceptualization of family dynamics using chosen theory
- Treatment Plan (long term goals [list three], short term objectives [2 per long term goal], and interventions [2 per short term objective])
- Intersections with POTT

The paper should be written in APA 7th using at least three citations and should be between 6-8 pages. Submissions longer than 8 pages will not be graded. Examples of excellent submissions can be found on Canvas.

5. **Family Genogram (80 points):** The final assignment for this class will be a personal genogram of their family of origin spanning at least four generations, (i.e., great grandparents of both mother and father). The genogram is comprised of three components: the genogram, the paper, and the presentation. Please see Blackboard for the specific requirements and grading scheme for the genogram and accompanying paper.

The Genogram (20 points): Students are to complete a written (by hand or computer) genogram depicting at least 4 generations of the student's family. Students may choose to use GenoPro, which is a free software program, to complete this assignment. Please make sure the GenoPro files of your genogram are uploaded into Canvas in PDF form. You may check out a university-owned laptop with the GenoPro software from the EDPS administrative assistant if you do not own a Windows computer. A first draft of this genogram is due on **October 23** (10 points). The instructor will meet individually with each student for 10 minutes to review a draft of the genogram.

The Genogram Paper (35 points): The genogram should be accompanied by a 1500-word (max 2000 words) analysis on the following:

- Description of the process of constructing the genogram and any insights gained about the nature of the student's family system (10 points)
- Major transgenerational themes (at least three). Use theory to identify and discuss these dynamics (significant enmeshments, cutoffs, triangulations, fusions, how trauma impacted development, levels of differentiation, etc.). (30 points)
- Ethnic/cultural, physical and mental health, socioeconomic, religious, historical, and educational factors that impacted family history and human development over the generations. (10 points)

The genogram paper accompanied by the final draft of the genogram are due on **December 4**.

The Genogram Presentation (15 points): Students will create a 10–12-minute presentation on their family genogram to highlight the most salient information from their experience. The slides should include an image of the genogram itself (so the student can walk the class through the map and explain the family system) and slides on some of the major themes that capture the family story. They may also share insight on what it was like to do the interviews (who was forthcoming, who wasn't, if any secrets were discovered, if any discomfort came up and how it was dealt with, if the relationship with the interviewee shifted because of the conversation, how their relationship to their family has shifted since, etc.) Students are advised to be selective about what they choose to share verbally. If any student feels uncomfortable, they are encouraged to discuss alternatives with the professor.

Genogram Assignment in summary:

Genogram draft (Oct 23):	10 points
Genogram (Dec 4):	20 points
Genogram Paper (Dec 4):	35 points
Genogram Presentation (Nov 20/Dec 4):	15 points

GRADING

The following assignments will comprise the student's grade for the course:

Attendance and Participation:	40 points
Article Discussion:	20 points
Role Plays:	100 points
Film Analysis:	60 points
Genogram:	80 points
Total:	300 points

Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent
A	94+	B-	80-83
A-	90-93	C+	77-79
B+	87-89	C	74-76
B	84-86	C-	70-73

All graduate students should be submitting A, B+ or B work. Students receiving a C or even a C+ should consult their professors immediately for feedback about making significant changes in their approach to their courses. Some graduate programs may consider a C degree as grounds for academic probation. Students receiving a D or below are not working at the graduate level and should consider whether their current life circumstances are conducive to successfully completing a graduate degree at this time.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic and Agenda	Assignment Due
August 21	Introductions Review syllabus Developing a Systems Perspective Student Formed Families	---
August 28	Core Concepts of Family Therapy Family Games Person of The Therapist Genograms	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gehart Ch. 1, 2, & 4 ○ McGoldrick Ch. 1 ○ Lutz & Irizarry, 2009 <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vignette ○ Discussion Article (PDF)
September 4	Article Discussion #1: Systemic Theories Intakes with Families and Couples Role Play #1	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gehart Ch. 5 ○ McGoldrick Ch. 2 <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Article Discussion #1
September 11	NO CLASS	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None
September 18	Article Discussion #2: Intergenerational Family Therapy Role Play #2	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gehart Ch. 10 ○ McGoldrick Ch. 3 <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Article Discussion #2 ○ Case Conceptualization #1
September 25	Article Discussion #3: Structural Family Therapy Role Play #3	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gehart Ch. 7 ○ McGoldrick Ch. 5 <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Article Discussion #3 ○ Case Conceptualization #2
October 2	Article Discussion #4: Strategic Family Therapy Role Play #4	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gehart Ch. 6 ○ McGoldrick Ch. 6 <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Article Discussion #4 ○ Case Conceptualization #3 ○ Film Analysis Paper
October 9	FALL BREAK—NO CLASS	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None

October 16	Article Discussion #5: Satir's Human Growth Model Role Play #5	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gehart Ch. 8 ○ McGoldrick Ch. 7 & 8 <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Article Discussion #5 ○ Case Conceptualization #4 (with updated genogram)
October 23	Guest Lecture Genogram Meetings	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None ○ McGoldrick Ch. 9 <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Case Conceptualization #5 ○ Draft of Genogram
October 30	Article Discussion #6: Symbolic-Experiential Family Therapy Role Play #6	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gehart Ch. 9 <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Article Discussion #6
November 6	Article Discussion #7 Solutions-Focused Family Therapy Role Play #7	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NonGehart Ch. 12 <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Article Discussion #7 ○ Case Conceptualization #6
November 13	Narrative/Collaborative Family Therapy Role Play #8 Termination: Student Formed Families	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gehart Ch. 13 & 14 <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Case Conceptualization #7
November 20	Article Discussion #8 Genogram Presentations	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Case Conceptualization #8 ○ Article Discussion #8
November 27	THANKSGIVING BREAK	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None
December 4	Genogram Presentations/Wrap Up	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None <u>Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Genogram Paper

CLASS POLICIES

1. **Attendance:** Students should inform instructors and/or supervisor if they plan to be absent from class and/or supervision. Excused absences from more than two classroom sessions may result in an incomplete in the class. Two unexcused absences from the class will result in NO CREDIT for the

course. Students will be expected to be on time and lateness will reflect in the class participation grade for that day. In order to receive full participation points for each class, each student must be on time *and* verbally contribute to the discussion at least once per class. Students are welcome to inquire about their participation grade throughout the semester.

2. **Religious Holidays:** Students are encouraged to observe religious holidays as they discern. *If students plan to be out of class because they are participating in a religious observance not designated as a holiday by the university, please notify the instructor as soon as possible so that an alternate arrangement may be made for the role plays.*
3. **Electronics:** In the interest of preserving an effective learning environment, all cellular phones/laptops/electronic devices need to be turned off or placed in non-audible mode (“silent”) while in the classroom. **The use of cell phones is not permitted in class.** Please close other programs and tabs to allow for your full attention. Participation is a significant part of your grade therefore distractions will adversely impact your participation grade for the day.
4. **Professionalism:** This is a graduate level course; therefore, students are expected to treat class time as they would a job or other professional role. Students should conscientiously attempt to be as knowledgeable as possible (given their current level of professional development) of the ethical and legal issues involved in counseling and that they will conform to the legal requirements of the profession and conduct themselves ethically in and out of class.
5. **Self-disclosure:** One objectives of family therapy training is to help trainees understand, destigmatize, and use their life experiences to deepen their work as therapists. Much of best family therapy work lies in the intersection of the personal and professional self and this class is designed to create a space to learn how to use our life stories to do more profound work with clients. I very much encourage students to explore their discomfort around discussing certain themes from their family of origins both in class and in their own therapy. In our line of work, to manage countertransference and serve our clients well, we need to be able to fully see ourselves, including our wounding and our shadows. This does not mean we need to fully heal from our traumas before becoming therapists, but it does mean we have to be willing to be curious about them.

However, I also expect that students make intentional choices around what and how they choose to self-disclose. Sharing information or insights about family of origin is welcome, but not expected. We will discuss topics related to cultural and individual identities, some of which may be “invisible” such as sexual orientation, social class, religion, etc. Please honor your own comfort level in disclosing such identities. A simple way to politely decline sharing is to say, “that’s all I’d like to say about that,” or “I’d prefer not to go into more detail.” When discerning whether to self-disclose or not, students may want to frame their disclosure in terms of how a particular dynamic or experience they had shows up in the counseling room with clients. I am always here to help you triage things about your family of origin that may come up as you learn to do this work and progress through the course. I encourage all therapists to invest in their personal and professional development by going to their own therapy and am more than happy to find a good referral if you don’t already have a therapist.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

1. **Plagiarism** You are expected to submit original work and adhere to the academic policies outlined in the University of Utah Student Conduct Code. Any acts of academic dishonesty, cheating or plagiarism, will be reported.
2. **The Americans with Disabilities Act.** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this

class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

3. **Addressing Sexual Misconduct.** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which Includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).
4. **COVID-19 Campus Guidelines.** *Students are required to self-report if they test positive for COVID-19.* To report, please contact: **COVID-19 Central @ The U**, 801-213-2874, coronavirus.utah.edu. To reduce the spread of COVID-19 on campus, **face coverings are required in all in-person classes for both students and faculty.** Based on CDC guidelines, the University requires everyone to wear face coverings in shared public spaces on campus. **If you repeatedly fail to wear a face covering in class, you may be referred to the Dean of Students for a possible violation of the Student Code. Some courses may require attendance due to hands-on coursework.** Please read the syllabus and attendance requirements for the course thoroughly. **Some students may qualify for accommodations & exemptions from these guidelines through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).** Accommodations should be obtained prior to the first day of class. If you believe you meet these criteria, contact: **Center for Disability & Access**, 801-581-5020, disability.utah.edu.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND INFORMATION

1. **Accessibility:** Your success in this class is important. I wish to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. If you have a disability or particular circumstance that may have an impact upon your work in this class, please contact me early in the semester so that we can work together to adapt assignments to meet your needs and the requirements of the course. The Center for Disability Services (<http://www.diversity.utah.edu/directory/2resources/disability.php>), 162 Union Bldg, 581-5020 (V/TDD). Students need to provide documentation of a disability to this office in order to receive official university services and accommodations.
2. **Nondiscrimination:** Discrimination is defined at the University of Utah as less than favorable treatment based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam Era Veteran. Sexual Harassment is also a form of discrimination. The University of Utah expects members to treat one another with respect. Any behavior that results in sexual abuse, harassment, or intimidation of another person, or any unwanted objectionable sexual attention towards another person is considered to be sexual harassment and will not be tolerated. As a student of the University of Utah, you are entitled to participate in University programs and activities

free of sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination. **Anti-racism in Academia:** an important part of the work we have to do as a society is dismantling the racial inequities that exist within our respective fields, and within our society as a whole; this includes our classroom setting. Neither overt nor covert racism will be tolerated in the classroom setting. **Microaggressions:** As we are all human beings from diverse background, situated within a society that places different advantages for different identities and life experiences, we all have the capacity to unintentionally harm one another through microaggressions. Should this occur between yourself and another classmate, you may consider contacting me if this is impeding your learning process. If you become aware that you have perpetuated a microaggression, you may want to consider the suggested process for receiving feedback: (1) listen to feedback from others without engaging in defensiveness; (2) apologize sincerely for the impact that you may have had – remember that intention does not negate impact; (3) allow yourself to reflect on this interaction as a learning opportunity and engage in self-care activities. Not everyone will be willing to point out microaggressions when they happen as they often take considerable emotional effort and inherent risk. When we receive feedback about a microaggression that we may have perpetuated, this feedback can be valuable for our own personal and professional growth to help us understand our own areas of growth. If a microaggression happens in class that has affected you, you can consider contacting me if you need any additional support.

3. **Wellness Statement.** Your personal health and wellness are essential to your success as a student. Personal concerns like stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, or cross-cultural differences can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive in this course and at the University of Utah. Please feel welcome to reach out to your instructor or TA's to handle issues regarding your coursework. For helpful resources to manage your personal wellness and counseling options, contact: **Center for Student Wellness**, 801-581-7776, wellness.utah.edu.
Or The **Women's Resource Center**, 801-581-8030, womenscenter.utah.edu.
4. **University Safety Statement.** The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.
5. **Inclusivity at the U**
The Office for Inclusive Excellence is here to engage, support, and advance an environment fostering the values of respect, diversity, equity, inclusivity, and academic excellence for students in our increasingly global campus community. They also handle reports of bias in the classroom as outlined here: *Bias or hate incidents consist of speech, conduct, or some other form of expression or action that is motivated wholly or in part by prejudice or bias whose impact discriminates, demeans, embarrasses, assigns stereotypes, harasses, or excludes individuals because of their race, color, ethnicity, national origin, language, sex, size, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, or religion.* For more information about what support they provide and links to other resources, or to report a bias incident, view their website or contact: **Office for Inclusive Excellence**, 801-581-4600, inclusive-excellence.utah.edu