

University of Waterloo: Department of Psychology

PSYCH 605: Family Systems & Family Therapy

Instructor: Dillon Browne

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Course Outline

This course will provide an intensive training experience in the clinical foundations of family systems theory and family therapy practice. Classical and contemporary theoretical, clinical, and research applications will be reviewed so that students obtain the fundamental knowledge and skills surrounding family therapy. We will cover the systemic view of human functioning that gives rise to a particular form of intervention (family therapies). Clinical formulation will be heavily emphasized, and family-based formulation will be compared with individual psychological formulation. Students will develop a holistic perspective on “family therapy intervention”, with particular emphasis on Structural and Emotion-Focused Family Therapy. Direct clinical work and case review will be emphasized. Trauma-informed and multicultural lenses will also be utilized. Specifically, students will have opportunity for direct (i.e., “face to face”) clinical contact, either with their own or a shared (co-therapy) client at the CMHRT. In winter 2021, due to the COVID-19 crisis, the course will be offered completely online, and telehealth intervention will be utilized. Thus, this course is only open to students in the clinical psychology program. Graded on a CR/NRC basis.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

- A) Develop familiarity with Family Systems Theory and Family Therapy practice
- B) Understand the role of various “systems” in biopsychosocial phenomena
- C) Formulate traumatic stress from a systemic perspective across levels of analysis
- D) Confidently engage in evidence-based family therapy intervention with supervision

Required Text and Readings

- 1) *APA Handbook of Contemporary Family Psychology* (Online @ Library)
- 2) Lafrance, A., Henderson, K.A., & Mayman, S. (2020). *Emotion-Focused Family Therapy: a Transdiagnostic Model for Caregiver-Focused Interventions*. Washington, District of Columbia: American Psychological Association. Print.
- 2) Chapters & journal articles available online through MS Teams.
- 3) Optional: Walsh, F. (2016). *Strengthening Family Resilience* (Third Edition). Guilford.

Course Requirements and Assessments

Your final grade is based on weekly discussions (class participation), a midterm presentation, and final assignment. A large amount of information is presented in this course, which places heavy demands on higher-level critical thinking, which will be reinforced throughout weekly classes. The break-down of grades is as follows: Class Participation (30%), Midterm Discussion Facilitation (30%) and Final Case Study Assignment (40%). Recall, the course is based upon a CR/NCR basis.

Class Participation (30%)

A central component of this course is the strengthening of competence in oral case conceptualization and presentation skills. This dovetails with the family therapy core competence of “spontaneity” in clinical practice, where clinicians are required to think quickly, notice transactions, reflect observations, and generate interventions.

Midterm Discussion Facilitation (30%)

Students will conduct a 45-minute discussion facilitation on a special topic in family therapy. Topics could include a particular intervention skill (e.g., enactments, circular questioning), a particular model of intervention (e.g., structural family therapy, narrative family therapy), or a particular clinical presentation in the context of family therapy (e.g., substance use, parenting skills, eating disorders).

Final Paper: Case Study (40%)

A final assignment requires students to integrate their theoretical, clinical, and research skills by completing a case study of the family with which they have been conducting (or observing) therapy. Case reviews must incorporate Family Systems Theory, Family Therapy and the trauma-informed framework into your work. Please see the assignment write-up for a full description.

Text matching software (Turnitin®) will be used to verify that use of all materials and sources is documented. Students who do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin may submit their assignment directly to the instructor along with hard copies of cited material in which cited information is highlighted. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and assignments that are plagiarized may, at the instructor’s discretion, receive a hefty penalty (e.g., a grade of 0) and be referred to the Dean.

Roles and Responsibilities

The instructor is available to address questions about any aspect of the course. The instructor is available to review tests and to assist with the final written assignment.

Class attendance is mandatory. Students must attend classes as they will contain information that will not be covered in the readings nor detailed on the slides. Slides are intended to serve as a framework for note taking (not as a substitute for attendance). Power point files will be provided. Students are encouraged to ask questions when material is unclear.

Intellectual Property

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of the course instructor as well as others. Intellectual property includes items such as: Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof); Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course; Questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams); and Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor or used by the instructor with permission of the copyright owner, course readings, etc.).

Course materials and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student's educational experience. However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner's permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others online (e.g., to an online repository).

Permission from an instructor is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or online. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may have already given their consent).

Electronic Media and Health Record Policy

Students are requested to turn cell phones off and to close distracting applications (e.g., email, chat) during class time. Given that this course is being offered out of the Centre for Mental Health Research and Treatment (CMHRT), all policies related to the clinic in terms of storing videos and electronic health records must obviously be followed.

Course Schedule

Each week, class will be structured into (1) check-in, (2) review and discussion of reading materials and (3) group supervision. Weekly reading materials will generally cover an overarching topic in family systems/therapy and EFFT, specifically. Students are required to have read materials before class and to come prepared with discussion questions. Weekly requirements for preparing group supervision participation will be outlined in class.

Week 1: Course Overview

(No Readings 😊)

Week 2: Introduction to Family Systems Theory

Prime, H., Wade, M., & Browne, D. T. (2020). Risk and resilience in family well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. *American Psychologist*, 75(5), 631-643.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/amp0000660>

Lafrance, EFFT: Intro & What is EFFT?

Week 3: Taking a Trauma-Informed Approach

Lieberman, A. F. (2007). Ghosts and Angels: Intergenerational Patterns in the Transmission and Treatment of the Traumatic Sequelae of Domestic Violence. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 28(4), 422-439.

Lafrance, EFFT: Emotion Coaching

Week 4: Family Perspectives in Research and Practice

Browne, D. T., Plamondon, A., Prime, H., Puente-Duran, S., & Wade, M. (2015). Cumulative risk and developmental health: An argument for the importance of a family-wide science. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science*, 6, 397-407.

Goldenberg, I., Goldenberg, H. & Pelavin, E. G. (2011). *Family Therapy*. In R. J. Corsini & D. Wedding (eds.) *Current Psychotherapies* (9th Ed.) (pp. 417-451). Brooks/Cole.

Lafrance, EFFT: Caregiver Blocks

Week 5: Microskills in Family Therapy

Ivey, A. E., & Daniels, T. (2016). Systematic interviewing microskills and neuroscience: Developing bridges between the fields of communication and counseling psychology. *International Journal of Listening*, 30(3), 99-119.

Lafrance, EFFT: Behaviour Coaching

Week 6: Family Structure (Feb 24th)

Colapinto, J. (2019). Structural Family Therapy. In B. Fiese (Ed.), *APA Handbook of Contemporary Family Psychology* (Volume 3; pp. 3-19). Washington, DC: APA.

Lafrance, EFFT: Therapeutic Apologies

Week 7: Family Functioning (March 3rd)

Browne, D. T., Norona, J., Busch, A., Armstrong, K., Crouch, S., Ernst, T., ... & Ihle, E. C. (2020). "Is it us or is it me?": Family experiences of connectedness following a reflecting team intervention. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*. Available Online: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jmft.12468>

Lafrance, EFFT: Clinician Blocks

Week 8: Family Diversity & Beliefs (March 10th)

Walsh, F. (2020). Loss and resilience in the time of COVID-19: Meaning making, hope, and transcendence. *Family process*, 59(3), 898-911.

Lafrance, EFFT: FAQ and Epilogue

Week 9: Student Discussion #1 (March 17th)

Grief, Death and Dying (e.g., Lieberman Book)

Week 10: Student Discussion #2 (March 24th)

Family Separation and Divorce (e.g., McHale, Amato)

Week 11: Student Discussion #3 (March 31st)

Immigration, Multiculturalism and Family Therapy (e.g., Sue)

Week 12: Conclusions & Future Directions in Family Practice (April 7th)

(Readings and Resources TBD/Optional)

Additional Resources:

Browne, D. T., Leckie, G., & Jenkins, J. M. (2019). Understanding couple and family dynamics through dyadic methodology. In B. Fiese (Ed.), *APA Handbook of Contemporary Family Psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 335–352). Washington, DC: APA.

Chuang, S. (2019). *The Complexities of Immigration and Families: Theoretical Perspectives and Current Issues*. In B. Fiese (Ed.), *APA Handbook of Contemporary Family Psychology (Volume 2; pp. 437-456)*. Washington, DC: APA.

Davies, P.T. & Coe, J. L. (2019). Family Relationship Dynamics: A Developmental Perspective. In B. Fiese (Ed.), *APA Handbook of Contemporary Family Psychology (Volume 1; pp. 165-187)*. Washington, DC: APA.

Fiese, B., Jones, B. L., & Saltzman, J. A. (2019). Systems Unify Family Psychology. In B. Fiese (Ed.), *APA Handbook of Contemporary Family Psychology (Volume 1; pp. 3-21)*. Washington, DC: APA.

Ferguson, K. T. & Evans, G. (2019). Social Ecological Theory: Family Systems and Family Psychology in Bioecological and Bioecocultural Perspective. In B. Fiese (Ed.), *APA Handbook of Contemporary Family Psychology (Volume 1; pp. 143-163)*. Washington, DC: APA.

Galano, M. M. & Graham-Bermann, S.A. (2019). Traumatic Stress within the Family. In B. Fiese (Ed.), *APA Handbook of Contemporary Family Psychology (Volume 2; pp. 539-555)*. Washington, DC: APA.

Lebow J. L. & Diamond, R. M. (2019). Brief History of Couple and Family Therapy. In B. Fiese (Ed.), *APA Handbook of Contemporary Family Psychology (Volume 3; pp. 3-18)*. Washington, DC: APA.

Walsh, F. (2016). *Strengthening Family Resilience (Third Edition)*. Guilford.

Academic Integrity

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage for more information.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is

unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

Concerns about a Course Policy or Decision

Informal Stage: We in the Psychology Department take great pride in the high quality of our program and our instructors. Though infrequent, we know that students occasionally find themselves in situations of conflict with their instructors over course policies or grade assessments. If such a conflict arises, the Associate Chair for Graduate Affairs (Jonahtan Fugelsang) is available for consultation and to mediate a resolution between the student and instructor: Email: jafugels@uwaterloo.ca.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact Richard Eibach, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Affairs who will provide further assistance; reibach@uwaterloo.ca.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Accommodations for Course Requirements

Students requesting accommodation for course requirements (e.g., final assignment) due to illness should do the following: (1) Seek medical treatment as soon as possible and obtain a completed uWaterloo Verification of Illness Form, (2) Submit that form to the instructor within 48 hours, (3) inform the instructor by the due date for the course requirement that you will be unable to meet the deadline and that documentation will be forthcoming.

In the case of a missed assignment deadline, the instructor will either: (1) Waive the course component and re-weight remaining term work as he/she deems fit according to circumstances and the goals of the course, or (2) Provide an extension.

In the case of bereavement, the instructor will provide similar accommodations to those for illness. Appropriate documentation to support the request will be required. Students who are

experiencing extenuating circumstances should also inform their academic advisors regarding their personal difficulties. Elective arrangements such as travel plans are not acceptable grounds for granting accommodations to course requirements per the uWaterloo Examination Regulations and Related Matters.

Official Version of the Course Outline

If there is a discrepancy between the hard copy outline (i.e., if students were provided with a hard copy at the first class) and the outline posted on MS Teams, the outline on MS Teams will be deemed the official version. Outlines on MS Teams may change as instructors develop a course, but they become final as of the initial class meeting for the term.