

Department of Family Relations & Applied Nutrition  
University of Guelph

**FRAN 6160 – Introduction to Systemic Practice in Couple & Family Therapy  
(limited to students in the CFT Program)**

**Fall 2013**

**Course Outline**

**Instructor:** Ruth Neustifter, Ph.D. **Phone:** Ext. 53975  
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*Response by next working day. Do not expect a response on weekends.*

**Classes:** Monday 11:30 a.m. – 3:20 p.m.

**Course Description**

This course features an introductory survey of family therapy concepts to establish a foundation for exploring diversity in family structures and functioning [EG-4]. Best practice standards of professionalism will be introduced [EG-3]. The course has an applied focus featuring basic facilitation, communication and observational skills. The applied focus will enable students to connect theory to practice; it will include weekly practice and evaluation of beginning interviewing, observational, and analytic skills in simulated and actual therapeutic settings [\*\*EG-5 *Clinical Application preliminary*]. This course will include an introduction to current knowledge in the area of interpersonal neurobiology, which will also provide a framework for self-reflection. This focus on self-awareness will allow students to develop skills in building therapeutic relationships that attend to client need with awareness of therapist response [\*\*EG-1 *Theoretical Foundations preliminary*].

*Note that evaluated Educational Goals [EG] and Expected Student Learning Outcomes [ESLO] are attached below. For complete listing of these, see the Student Orientation Manual.*

*\*\*asterisks refer to preparatory and preliminary introduction of concepts and practices that will facilitate subsequent learning and assessment in the areas of theory and practice, these EG will not be formally evaluated in this course.*

**Course Objectives**

1. To examine and critique selected concepts in the field of couple and family therapy including an introduction to concepts related to systems theory, clinical process and integrative frameworks; post-modern conceptualizations and current understanding in the field of interpersonal neurobiology and attachment. \*\*[EG-1]
2. To practice basic interviewing methods related to facilitating therapeutic change. \*\*[EG-5]
3. To develop effective engagement, observation, assessment, and conceptual skills for beginning therapeutic practice. \*\*[EG-5]
4. To foster conceptual flexibility as it pertains to therapeutic practice. \*\*[EG-5]
5. To examine issues of power and privilege relative to family diversity, especially diversity pertaining to family structures and multi-cultural frames. [EG-4]
6. To increase self-reflective abilities, self-evaluation skills, and awareness of own responses and sensitivity to diverse experiences of others. [EG-3; EG-4; \*\*EG-5]
7. To work with “best practices” standards of professionalism as set out in *The CFT Centre Operations and Procedures Manual*. [EG-3]

Educational Goals and Expected Student Learning Outcomes		Incorporation and Assessment
<b>EG-3 PROFESSIONALISM, ETHICAL CONDUCT and ACCOUNTABILITY</b>		
<b>Educational Goal:</b> Students will develop a professional identity as a couple & family therapist who consistently applies the principles of ethical practice in their work with clients, maintains high standards of conduct – including following “best practices” regarding the delivery of therapy services, and engages in critical, reflexive self-evaluation.		
<b>ESLO 3 a.</b> Student will gain and understanding of the principles of ethical behaviours and practice within the frame of the AAMFT Code of Ethics.	Incorporated through assigned reading of CFT Procedures Manual and AAMFT Code of Ethics; class discussions. Assessment: Assignment 1.	
<b>ESLO 3 c.</b> Students will consistently demonstrate “best practices” professional skills as outlined in the CFT Centre Operations & Procedures Manual.	Incorporated through assigned reading of CFT Procedures Manual; class discussions and role-plays. Assessment: Assignment 1.	
<b>EG-4 SOCIAL CONTEXT AND POWER RELATIONS</b>		
<b>Educational Goal:</b> Students will integrate a sophisticated sensitivity to diversity into their professional identity as a couple and family therapist, privileging attention to social location/socio-cultural context and including an understanding of social justice issues and awareness of how direct and systemic marginalization, discrimination, and abuse may impact people’s everyday lives.		
<b>ESLO 4 a.</b> Students will critically analyze how their social location, values and beliefs shape their professional identity.	Incorporated through assigned reading; class discussions. Assessment: Assignments 2.1, 2.2, and 3.	
<b>ESLO 4 d.</b> Students will learn strategies to explore and address issues of diversity, marginalization, discrimination, and abuse in therapy with clients.	Incorporated through assigned readings; class discussions; role plays in class. Assessment: Assignment 2.2	

**Note that various Core Competencies are demonstrated across a variety of courses in the CFT program. The following are integrated into this course and demonstrated through your preparation and participation in class, as well as in your graded assignments.**

AAMFT Competency	Sub-Domain	Competency	Demonstration of Knowledge
1.1.1	Conceptual	Understand systems concepts, theories, and techniques that are foundational to the practice of marriage and family therapy.	Participation in class discussions and role-plays; graded assignments 1 & 3
1.1.2	Conceptual	Understand theories and techniques of individual, marital, couple, family, and group psychotherapy.	Participation in class discussions and role-plays; graded assignments 1 & 3
2.1.1	Conceptual	Understand principles of human development; human sexuality; gender development; psychopathology; psychopharmacology; couple processes; and family development and processes (e.g., family, relational, and system dynamics)	Participation in class discussions; graded assignments 1 & 3
2.1.6	Conceptual	Understand the strengths and limitations of the models of assessment and diagnosis, especially as they relate to different cultural, economic, and ethnic groups.	Participation in class discussions; graded assignment 1
6.1.1	Conceptual	Know the extant MFT literature, research, and evidence-based practice.	Course readings and preparation for class discussions

6.3.1	Executive	Read current MFT and other professional literature.	Course readings and preparation for class discussions
6.3.3	Executive	Critique professional research and assess the quality of research studies and program evaluation literature.	Course readings and preparation/participation in class discussions
6.4.1	Evaluative	Evaluate knowledge of current clinical literature and its application.	Participation in class discussions; graded assignments 2 & 3

**Organization:**

You might like to think about this course as having three ‘strands’:

- ***Self-of-therapist:*** opportunity to develop self-awareness and skills for managing internal responses.
- ***Systemic and Therapeutic orientation:*** introduction to ideas that frame interventions, developing basic skills in conceptualizing and interviewing.
- ***CFT Centre/AAMFT Standards of Practice:*** from a best practices perspective, to orient you to “how things are done” in the CFT Centre.

There are several ways in which we will focus on these strands:

- ***Self-of-therapist:***
  - *Personal journaling in response to reading about interpersonal neurobiology presented from a parenting perspective (easily accessible, added value of thinking about some of the issues related to parenting and trauma that may present in therapy sessions, some similarities in thinking about parent position and therapist position – although not entirely congruent) with guidelines for reflections. [prep for EG-1,5; EG-4]*
  - *Skill-building in-class activities focusing in particular on mindfulness and grounding practices.*
  - *An assignment [#2 Reflection on Journaling Experience] that allows you to reflect on what you have learned through the process of journaling, reading and practicing skill-building in the area of attending to yourself as a therapist [EG-4]. Evaluation will be based on your demonstration of your ability to reflect on what you have learned and to take this to a level of application to self-care/self-awareness while engaging in work as a therapist, as well as an articulation of skills you will require or that you will be developing over time in order to position yourself as a self-aware therapist who can attend primarily to the needs of the people with whom you are working.[ESLO-4a]*
- ***Systemic and Therapeutic Orientation:***
  - *Weekly class readings provide introduction to these ideas. Your reading and preparation for class discussions may be enhanced by a reading journal – guidelines provided for ‘writing to learn’ with added value of developing some strategies for managing reading load associated with CFT program*
  - *Weekly class discussions require reading and preparation prior to class and willingness to bring questions, challenges, links to other learning to discussion. Discussion will contribute to making direct links to how clinical work is conceptualized.[prep for EG-5]*
  - *Role plays in class will allow for practice of beginning interviewing skills. This will require your willingness to take some risks and to respect the risks others take to enhance group and individual learning. [prep for EG-5]*
  - *An assignment [#3 Observation and Conceptualization of Clinical Practice] associated with observing the work of Practicum III interns will enhance your own observation and conceptualization skills as applied to actual therapeutic setting [prep for EG-1,3,4,5]. This will be evaluated based on your demonstration of an awareness of therapeutic interventions and process, and an ability to conceptualize the presenting client system/issues with attention to your own position.[ESLO-3c,4a]*
- ***CFT Centre/AAMFT Standards of Practice:***
  - *Readings from CFT Centre Manual and AAMFT Code of Ethics have been assigned across a number of weeks in order to allow you time to read and understand these important procedures. Sometimes these readings will be brought into class discussion immediately, and sometimes a couple of weeks will elapse to allow you time to read all of the required sections and develop questions to bring to class discussion (this distinction is noted in course outline).*
  - *Class discussions will allow for these procedures to be clarified by the instructor and for you to ask questions that arise. Role plays in class will allow for practice of some aspects of these procedures.[EG-3]*
  - *Practice of CFT standards for file preparation will be associated with an assignment [#1 File Documentation] and this will be evaluated in the context of meeting the standards discussed.[ESLO-3a,c]*

**Course requirements include the following:**

1. **Assigned Reading:** Each student will be expected to read **all** assigned readings prior to each class. You are expected to come to each class with prepared questions and ideas about how the ideas presented in the readings can be applied to clinical work. Use of a Reading Log will structure your reading- and writing-to-learn skill-

development. You are expected to be ready, at the beginning of each class, to participate in discussions and practice activities.

2. **CFT Centre Operations Standards:** Each student is expected to read **all** sections of the *CFT Centre Operations and Procedures Manual* and develop a basic ability to apply these policies, procedures and practices to case specific material. You will be expected to engage in discussion of the clinical implications of these policies and practices as they apply in your own developing professionalism within the field of couple of family therapy.
3. **Professionalism:** Prior to and/or during the first class, each student will read the [\*AAMFT Code of Ethics\*](#). After discussion in the first class meeting, each student will sign the CFT Program “Ethics Agreement”.
4. **Skill Development (Role Play):** Each student will participate in frequent role-play exercises in class in order to practice a variety of therapeutic interviewing skills. There will be a variety of approaches to setting up these role-plays in which students will have opportunities to be the interviewer, person being interviewed and members of a reflecting team. The intent of these exercises is to ensure that you begin to feel comfortable in listening, asking questions and conceptualizing presenting concerns and interventions with clients.
5. **Skill Development (Videotaping):** As a participant in this course, each student will consent to be videotaped during selected class activities for the purpose of enhancing self-reflection and clinical skill development.<sup>1</sup>
6. **Skill Development (Observation):** Each student will observe two different advanced clinical colleagues (i.e., students in Practicum III) working with clients. These observation experiences will be structured and will form the basis for a written project – Assignment #3 Observation & Conceptualization of Clinical Practice.
7. **Skill Development (Self-of-Therapist):** Each student will engage in a structured self-reflective practice. You will be expected to increase your awareness of your own responses to client presentation and various circumstances that arise during the course of practicing therapy, and encouraged to use this knowledge of yourself to develop practices that enable you to be both self-aware and attentive to client needs. Such self-awareness is also key to maintaining professionalism in your interactions with other interns and professionals, supervisors and clinic staff. Evidence of this personal reflection will be shared in the form of a Meta-Reflection Assignment that will demonstrate your learning in terms of developing therapist practice. This is **not** a requirement to disclose personal information to other students or the instructor (see Disclosure of Personal Information below, and description of assignment evaluation).
8. **Teamwork:** Each student is expected to provide feedback to their student colleagues throughout the semester. It is expected each class participant will provide feedback in a respectful and constructive manner at all times.
9. **Written Assignments:** Each student will submit the following written assignments [*see separate documents for description of assignments*] -
  - #1 File Documentation
  - #2 Reflection on Journaling Experience (Parts I & II)
  - #3 Observation and Conceptualization of Clinical Practice

### **Disclosure of Personal Information:**

Self-awareness is an important component of this course. As a developing professional it is important to be able to identify what is happening for you now, in the moment, as well as how past experiences and social location influence your perspective on yourself and others. While you will be encouraged to explore your own responses and what they mean for you, you will not be expected to disclose personal information with the class, in large or small groups, or with the instructor that you do not feel comfortable sharing. Evaluation of your participation in this class and of your class assignments is not dependent on your disclosure of personal information. You will be asked to reflect, both in class and in written assignments, on what the process of self-examination is teaching you about how best to approach being in a therapist position. This attention to ‘process’ is different from a focus on content. If at any time you are unclear about this distinction, please talk to the instructor for clarification.

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<sup>1</sup> Electronic recording of classes by students is expressly forbidden without prior consent of the instructor [or, where appropriate, student or guest presenter] and notice to all class participants. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for this course and may not be reproduced, or transmitted to others, without further express written consent.

**Evaluation:**

<b><u>Assignment #1: File Documentation</u></b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>DUE DATE - November 4, 2012 (in class)</b> [See separate document for description of assignment]	
<b><u>Assignment #2: Reflection on Journaling Experience &amp; Application of Questions</u></b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>DUE DATES – Part I Reflection October 21, 2012 (in class)</b> <b>Part II Reflection &amp; Application December 2, 2012 (by 6 pm)</b> [See separate document for description of assignment]	
<b><u>Assignment #3: Observation &amp; Conceptualization of Clinical Practice</u></b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>DUE DATE - November 28, 2012 (in class)</b> [See separate document for description of assignment]	

**Assignment Submission Guidelines:**

Note that assignments are **due in class on the due date** (hardcopies handed in during class time, e-submissions are submitted to the appropriate part of CourseLink **prior to class**). Extensions will be given for medical or compassionate reasons. **Class members are expected to inform the instructor immediately and in writing should an extension be required.** Keep a copy of each assignment you hand in.

**Late penalties** will be applied at a rate of 2% per day to assignments submitted after midnight on the due date or previously arranged extension.

**Academic Misconduct:**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt.

Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Graduate Calendar:

[http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/sec\\_d0e1692.shtml](http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/sec_d0e1692.shtml)

**Course and Instructor Evaluation:**

You are invited to talk to the instructor, outside of class time, if you have suggestions for changes at any point during the course. At the halfway point in the semester, we will review the course to date. You will have an opportunity for formal evaluation of the course and instructor at the end of the course.

**Absences/Class Attendance:**

This course depends heavily on collaborative and active engagement of class members in learning activities. In the unlikely event that you are unable to attend class, or know in advance that you will be late, please contact the instructor by e-mail (rneustif@uoguelph.ca) or voicemail (ext. 53975) **prior to class**. If you must leave class early, you are expected to advise the instructor in advance.

**Required Textbook:** Siegel, D.J., & Hartzell, M. (2003). *Parenting from the inside out: How a deeper understanding can help you raise children who thrive*. NY: Penguin.

Readings, other than the text, are available through the D2L Course website

- Logon to [CourseLink](#) using your UofG user name and password
- Click on **FRAN\*6160** on Registered Student tab – journal papers and chapters are listed under 'Content' – 'Course Readings' – 'Ares course reserve'
- *CFT Centre Manual* is posted on the Couple and Family Therapy Centre CourseLink site, which is on the Guest tab – again look under 'Content' on this site.

You will be able to read these papers on-line or save them to your own directory to read electronically. Note that **you may not use the CFT Centre printer to print course readings – this is a very important reminder.** Printing readings for your own use does not violate copyright laws, and printers are available at a cost at various on-campus locations (you will need a vendacard from the main library).

**Accessibility:** The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/csd/>

Week, date, and topic of class	Come prepared by having read	Assignment due
Week 1 – Sept. 9  Introduction to the Course, CFT Manual, and AAMFT Code of Ethics	Centre Operation & Procedures Manual Sections 1, 2, 3, and 17  AAMFT Code of Ethics (CFT Centre Operation & Procedures Manual Appendix B or AAMFT website)	Sign CFT Program “Ethics Agreement” in class.
Week 2 – Sept. 16  Listening Skills and Responsiveness	Anderson, H. (2007). Dialogue: People creating meaning with each other and finding ways to go on. In H. Anderson & D. Gehart (Eds.), <i>Collaborative therapy: Relationships and conversations that make a difference</i> (pp.33-41). New York: Routledge.	Journal activity on Siegel & Hartzell chapters 1 and 2.
Week 3 – Sept. 23  Listening Skills (Pt. 2) and Attunement	CFT Centre Operation & Procedures Manual Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, and 11	Journal activity on Siegel & Hartzell chapters 3 and 4.  Deadline for submitting fictionalize client Intake Form for Assignment #1 role-plays
Week 4 – Sept. 30  Systemic Orientation / Mapping	Iversen, R.R., Gergen, K.J., & Fairbanks II, R.P. (2005) Assessment and social construction: Conflict or co-creation? <i>British Journal of Social Work</i> , 35, 689-708.  Madsen, William (2011). Collaborative helping maps: A tool to guide thinking and action in family-centered services. <i>Family Process</i> , 50, 529-543.  See link to Kathleen Galvin's website on Genograms (available on courselink) Basic Genogram Components: <a href="http://faculty-web.at.northwestern.edu/commstud/galvin/components.html">http://faculty-web.at.northwestern.edu/commstud/galvin/components.html</a>	Book therapist-client role-plays for Assignment #1 between Sept. 30 and Oct. 21

Week, date, and topic of class	Come prepared by having read	Assignment due
Week 5 – Oct. 7  Systemic Interventions / Questions	Tomm, Karl. 1988. Interventive interviewing: Part III. Intending to ask lineal, circular, strategic, or reflexive questions? <i>Family Process</i> . 27:1-15.  Fleuridas, C., Nelson, T.S., & Rosenthal, D.M. (1986). The evolution of circular questions: Training family therapists. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i> , 12(2),113-127.	
Oct. 14 – <b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>
Week 6 – Oct. 21  Reflecting Team Practice	Andersen, T. (1987). The reflecting team: Dialogue and meta-dialogue in clinical work. <i>Family Process</i> , 26, 415-428.  Carey, M. & Russell, S. (2003). Outsider-witness practices: Some answers to commonly asked questions. <i>International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work</i> , 2003(1), 3-16.	Assignment #2 / Part I – Reflection of Journaling Experience due. Submit in class.  Deadline for completing role-plays for Assignment #1
Week 7 – Oct. 28	Falicov, Celia (1995). Training to think culturally: A multidimensional comparative framework. <i>Family Process</i> , 34(2),373-388.  Hays, Pamela (2008). Addressing cultural complexities in practice: A framework for clinicians and counsellors (Chapter 1: Seeing the forest and the trees, pp. 3-20; Chapter 2: Becoming a culturally responsive therapist, pp. 21-39). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.	Journal activity on Siegel & Hartzell chapter 5.  Schedule therapy sessions for Assignment #3 between Oct. 28 and Nov. 11 (daytime or evening).  AAMFT student membership application submitted by Nov. 1st, confirmation to Kara McFarlane.
Week 8 – Nov. 4  Suicide Risk Assessment; Child Abuse / Neglect Assessment & Reporting; Assessing for Intimate Partner Violence; Assessing for Substance Abuse / Gambling Behaviours	CFT Centre Operation & Procedures Manual Sections 12, 13, and 14.	Journal activity on Siegel & Hartzell chapter 6.  Assignment #1 File Documentation due in class.



Week, date, and topic of class	Come prepared by having read	Assignment due
Week 9 – Nov. 11  Best Practice Procedures / Supervision / Self-of-Therapist	CFT Centre Operation & Procedures Manual Sections 8, 9, 10, and 16.  Markham, Laurie & Chiu, Jane (2011). Exposing operations of power in supervisory relationships. <i>Family Process</i> , 50, 503-515.	
Week 10 – Nov. 18  Language in Therapeutic Dialogues	Lock, Andy & Strong, Tom (2012). Discursive therapy: Why language, and how we use it in therapeutic dialogues, matters. In A. Lock & T. Strong (Eds.), <i>Discursive                      perspectives in therapeutic practice (pp.1-                      22)</i> .Oxford: Oxford University Press.  Flaskas, Carmel (2010). Frameworks for practice in the systemic field: Part I – continuities and transitions in family therapy knowledge. <i>The Australian and New Zealand                      Journal of Family Therapy</i> , 31, 232-247	Journal activity on Siegel & Hartzell chapter 7.
Week 11 – Nov. 25  Self of Therapist – Neuroscience and Attachment in Therapy	CFT Centre Operation & Procedures Manual Sections 15 and 18.  Fishbane, M. (2007). Wired to connect: Neuroscience, relationships, and therapy. <i>Family Process</i> , 46, 395-412.  Codrington, R. (2010). A family therapist’s look into interpersonal neurobiology and the adolescent brain: An interview with Dr. Daniel Siegel. <i>The Australian and New                      Zealand Journal of Family Therapy</i> , 31, 285- 299.	Bring a hardcopy of your current draft of section (f) from Assignment #3 to class for discussion.
Week 12 – Nov. 28 <b>Note that this is a Thursday</b>  Pulling it All Together	Re-read the assigned reading from this course that was, for you, most <i>significant</i> or most <i>challenging</i> in preparation for a discussion of what questions were answered and what questions were generated for you over the course of this semester.	Assignment #3, Observation and Conceptualization of Clinical Practice, due. Submit document in class.
Finals Week – Dec. 2		Assignment #2 / Part II – Reflection on Journaling Experience due. Submit to instructor by 6:00pm.