

**COURSE OUTLINE<sup>1</sup>**

**FRAN\*6100 Clinical Issues in Couple and Family Therapy II: Attachment, Development, & Disruptions**  
*Summer 2013*

**Instructor:** Olga Sutherland, Ph.D., C. Psych., RMFT

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**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Class Time:** Online: June 10 - 14, July 1 - 5, & July 30 - August 2; Face-to-face: Tuesdays May 14 - August 2 (9:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.)

**Course Description**

This course focuses on specific clinical issues relevant to couple and family therapists' work with clients. Relevant topics include immigration experiences, separation and divorce, poverty, spirituality, and so forth. Building on concepts of family resilience, social justice, and attachment students will have an opportunity to reflect on their own assumptions in addressing these issues. Systemic and social constructionist practice and thinking will be highlighted throughout the course.

**Course Objectives**

1. Refine understanding about how oppressive structures and ideologies related to intersecting dimensions of gender, race, class, age, culture, religion, sexual identity, ability, etc. constrain individuals seeking therapy as well as those practicing it. *EG-4 (ESLO 4a-d)*
2. Consider how spiritual and religious aspects of clients' lives can be drawn upon as resources in the therapeutic endeavor. *CC 1.2.1*
3. Increase understanding of immigrant family experiences from a strength-based transcontextual perspective, which highlights resilience and resistance in the face of oppressive structures and practices in the country of settlement. *EG-4 (ESLO 4c), CC 2.4.3*
4. Understand issues experienced by members of blended families, as well as those related to divorce and separation. *CC 2.1.1*
5. Develop a greater understanding of suicidality and non-suicidal self-injury as major mental health concerns from a bio-psycho-social-spiritual perspective. *CC 2.1.2, 2.3.5*
6. Enlarge self-awareness regarding personal strengths and challenges related to working as a family therapist, including sensitivity to how personal history, values, and context influence professional practice. *EG-1 (ESLO 1a), EG-4 (ESLO 4a)*

<b>EXPECTED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>	
<b>EG-1 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS</b>	<b>Method of Assessment*</b>
<b>Educational Goal:</b> Students will gain a broad understanding of the range of epistemological assumptions and core theoretical frameworks within the field of couple & family therapy, including an historical and critical analysis of significant theoretical issues and developments.	
<b>ESLO 1a.</b> Students will critique and compare selected CFT approaches and their applications	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 1 & 3

<sup>1</sup> Special thanks to Anna Dienhart and Jean Turner for their assistance with the development of this course.

<b>ESLO 1b.</b> Students will demonstrate verbal and written ability to critique and to apply theoretical conceptualizations of selected post-modern/social constructionist couple & family therapy approaches to case-study and client situations	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 1 & 3
<b>ESLO 1c.</b> Students will articulate the theoretical basis and practice implications of their preferred approach to couple & family therapy, including an examination of the congruency with the underlying values and assumptions of the approach and their personal professional positioning.	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 1 & 3
<b>EG-2 SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY AND CRITICAL EVALUATION</b>	
<b>Educational Goal:</b> Students will develop a professional identity encompassing an interdisciplinary sensibility, informed by relevant research-based information from related disciplines (family therapy, sociology, psychology, social work, health, etc.) and supported by the principles of critical appraisal of knowledge.	
<b>ESLO 2b.</b> Students will demonstrate an ability to write coherently about integrating theory, research, and practice skills related to their professional work.	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 1
<b>ESLO 2c.</b> Students will have knowledge of current research developments in the couple & family therapy field, including empirically validated and evidence-based therapy approaches	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 1 & 3
<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 4a.</b> Students will critically analyze how their social location, values and beliefs shape their professional identity.	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 2 & 3
<b>ESLO 4b.</b> Students will develop abilities to critically and reflexively analyze power relations of a given situation and/or embedded in the construction of knowledge, including attention to one's own participation in these processes.	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 1, 2, & 3
<b>ESLO 4c.</b> Students will demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to multi-dimensional aspects of diversity in the everyday lives of clients, including an ability to explore and articulate with clients the pertinence of potential social location issues on their experience of current concerns for therapy.	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 1, 2, & 3
<b>ESLO 4d.</b> Students will learn strategies to explore and address issues of diversity, marginalization, discrimination, and abuse in therapy with clients.	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 1
<b>AAMFT Core Competencies</b>	
2.1.1 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).	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 1, 2 & 3

2.1.2. Understand the major behavioral health disorders, including the epidemiology, etiology, phenomenology, effective treatments, course, and prognosis.	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 1, 2 & 3
6.1.1. Know the extant MFT literature, research, and evidence-based practice.	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 1 & 3
6.3.1. Read current MFT and other professional literature.	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 1 & 3
6.3.3. Critique professional research and assess the quality of research studies and program evaluation in the literature.	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 1 & 3
6.4.1. Evaluate knowledge of current clinical literature and its application.	Incorporated through course readings and online/in-class participation. Assessment 1 & 3

\*Grade “B” or higher on an assignment indicates that a competency or learning outcome has been met.

### **Course Organization**

The course is designed to provide a dynamic and interactive face-to-face and online learning process for each student in the course. Each course participant (student and instructor) brings a wealth of experience about human nature, development, and experience. Throughout the semester, the course will evolve as students and the instructor dynamically interact using these resources. The classes will be based in part on assigned readings. It is assumed that each class member will come to class prepared to discuss the readings. The course is structured as 12 classes (8 face-to-face and 3 online) that cover a broad range of clinical issues and topics.

*Online Participation:* The course instructor will provide online instructions and discussion questions related to the topic of the week. Students will be expected to respond to the discussion questions as the week progresses (from Monday to Friday). The discussion questions will be posted in the weekly Discussions Forum (accessed from the navigation bar on Courselink). Once questions have been posted, students may contribute and post their ideas at any time. Students are required to log on 2-3 times a week. However, logging on more frequently will facilitate reciprocal and ongoing discussion. At times this class may evoke some challenging emotional experiences. It is assumed that awareness of one’s emotional reactions and experiences related to course topics is a critical part of growth as a burgeoning therapist. Students are encouraged to do whatever is needed during class to take care of themselves, including contracting the course instructor to debrief their experience.

### **Personal Self-Disclosure**

The CFT field of study recognizes that professional development in the field is often enhanced by exploring the interface between the personal and the professional. Students are generally encouraged to thoroughly explore this interface. This is particularly important in specific instances where their personal history and experience closely parallels the course subject matter and client situation. Generally, a student should only reveal (as little or as much) information as he or she is comfortable sharing with the instructor and colleagues. The evaluation of student performance is *not* dependent upon student disclosure of personal information.

### **Required Course Readings**

- Afifi T.O., Boman J., Fleisher W., & Sareen J. (2009). The relationship between child abuse, parental divorce, and lifetime mental disorders and suicidality in a nationally representative adult sample. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 33(3), 139–147
- Dostoevsky, F. (1993). *Crime and punishment* (Trans. R. Pevear & L. Volokhonsky). New York: Vintage Classics.

- Butler, M., Rodriguez, M. A., Roper, S. O., & Feinauer, L. (2010). Infidelity secrets in couple therapy: Therapists' views on the collision of competing ethics around relationship-relevant secrets. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity: The Journal of Treatment & Prevention*, *17*, 82-105.
- Edwards, R., Caballero, C., & Puthussery, S. (2010). Parenting children from 'mixed' racial, ethnic, and faith backgrounds: Typifications of difference and belonging. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *33*(6), 949-967.
- Gentry, D. (1997). Including children in divorce mediation and education: Potential benefits and concerns. *Family and Society*, *78*(3), 307-315.
- Greenwood, J. L. (2012). Parent-child relationships in the context of a mid- to late-life parental divorce. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, *1*, 1-17. doi:10.1080/10502556.2012.635959
- Hertlein, K. M., & Piercy, F. P. (2012). Essential elements of Internet infidelity treatment. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *38*(1), 257-270. OPTIONAL
- Iasenza, S. (2010). What is queer about sex?: Expanding sexual frames in theory and practice. *Family Process*, *49*, 291-308.
- Jencius, M., & Sager, D. E. (2001). The practice of marriage and family counseling in cyberspace. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, *9*, 295-301.
- Jory, B., & Anderson, D. (1999). Intimate justice 2: Fostering mutuality, reciprocity, and accommodation in therapy for psychological abuse. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *25*(3), 349-365.
- Keitner, G. I., Archambault, R., Ryan, C. E., & Miller, I. W. (2003). Family therapy and chronic depression. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *59*, 873-884.
- Klonsky, E. D., & Muehlenkamp, J. J. (2007). Self-injury: A research review for the practitioner. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *63*, 1045-1056. doi: 10.1002/jclp.20412
- Knudson-Martin, C., & Laughlin, M. (2005). Gender and sexual orientation in family therapy: Toward a postgender approach. *Family Relations*, *54*(1), 101-115.
- Kosutic, I. et al. (2009). The critical genogram: A tool for promoting critical consciousness. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, *21*, 151-176.
- Lebow, J., & Newcomb Recart, K. (2007). Integrative family therapy for high-conflict divorce with disputes over child custody and visitation. *Family Process*, *46*, 79-91.
- Liu, W. M., Soleck, G., Hopps, J., Dunston, K., Pickett, T. (2004). A new framework to understand social class in counseling: The social class worldview model and modern classism theory. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, *32*(2), 95-122.
- Lewis, S. P., Heath, N. L., Michal N. J., & Duggan, J. M. (2012). Non-suicidal self-injury, youth and the Internet: What mental health professionals need to know. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, *6*(13): doi:10.1186/1753-2000-6-13.
- Marterella, M. K., & Brock, L. J. (2008). Religion and spirituality as a resource in marital and family therapy. *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, *19*(4), 330-344.
- McDowell, T., Melendez-Rhodes, T., Althusius, E., Hergic, S., Sleeman, G., My Ton, N. K., & Zimpfer-Bak, A. J. (2013). Exploring social class: Voices of inter-class couples. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *39*(1), 57-71.
- Nichols, M. (2006). Psychotherapeutic issues with kinky clients: Clinical problems, yours and theirs. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *50*(2/3), 281-300.
- Noël-Miller, C. M. (2013). Repartnering following divorce: Implications for older fathers' relations with their adult children. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *75*(3), 697-712.
- Nolte, L. (2007). White is a colour too: Engaging actively with the risks, challenges and rewards of cross-cultural family therapy training and practice. *Journal of Family Therapy*, *29*, 378-388.
- Oravec, J. A. (2000). Internet and computer technology hazards: Perspectives for family counselling. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, *28*, 309-324.
- Portie, T., & Hill, N. R., (2005). Blended families: A critical review of the current research. *The Family Journal*, *13*, 445-451.
- Rowe, C. (2012). Family therapy for drug abuse: Review and updates 2003-2010. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *38*(1), 59-81.
- Seshardi, G., & Knudson-Martin, C. (2013). How couples manage interracial and intercultural differences: Implications for clinical practice. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *39*(1), 43-58.

Shalay, N., & Brownlee, K. (2007). Narrative family therapy with blended families. *Journal of Family Psychotherapy, 18*, 17-30.

Sumner, C. C. (2013). Adult children of divorce: Awareness and intervention. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 54*, 271–281.

Walsh, F. (2010). Spiritual diversity: Multifaith perspectives in family therapy. *Family Process, 49*(3), 330-348.

**Student Evaluation**

Participation in class/online discussions	25%
Newspaper Column	20%
Reflection Paper	25%
In-class Presentation	30%

**1) Participation (25%):** Students are expected to attend all classes, actively participate in face-to-face and online class discussions, and be prepared to discuss the assigned readings. If you are not used to participating or feel there is no space to introduce ideas, please let me know earlier or when this becomes an issue. If you know you have a tendency to dominate discussions, please give others a chance to share their ideas. Quantity is less important than quality. A useful comment examines issues addressed in assigned readings, offers a unique and relevant perspective, moves the discussion forward, respectfully critiques dominant explanations, explored underlying values and assumptions, and builds on prior comments.

During each of the 3 online classes, students are expected to participate in an online discussion forum containing a set of questions for discussion. Participation marks will be awarded to students who contribute weekly to the discussions. Students are expected to make substantive contributions to the forum dialogue. To do so, they must have read the required materials and given considerable thought to the concepts and issues presented. In general, scholarly work involves the ability to critically analyze information, to synthesize information from a variety of sources, to compare and contrast similar theoretical structures across different theories, and to raise relevant examples to illustrate principles. Participation in the online discussions is evaluated on the basis of both the frequency of posting to the forums and the quality of online comments. The specific grading criteria for these two components are described below.

<b>Evaluation Component</b>	<b>Grading Criteria</b>	<b>Weight (25 marks)</b>
Extent of Participation	<p><i>Minimum Requirements: One response to each of the questions or issues raised in the weekly forum PLUS two responses per week in response to the postings of other students.</i></p> <p>Responses to questions or issues posted in the forums must be between 100 and 200 words. Students should look at their participation in the discussion forums as roughly equivalent to the three hours they would traditionally spend in an on-campus graduate course. Reading, preparation, and assignment time take place in addition to those three hours.</p>	10 marks
Quality of Comments	<p>At least one of postings each week should incorporate specific reference to the core readings or additional resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core constructs accurately identified and described</li> <li>• Material from previous discussions is integrated</li> <li>• Self-awareness, sensitivity to others, openness to personal growth</li> <li>• Unique insights related to issues raised</li> <li>• Relevant readings and research is cited to support claims</li> </ul>	15 marks

	<p><i>Marks are awarded for a pattern of responses; individual responses are not graded.</i></p> <p><i>EG-2 (ESLO 2b), EG-3 (ESLO 3d), EG-4 (ESLO 4a &amp; b); AAMFT CCs: 1.2.1, 2.1.1, 5.4.2</i></p>	
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**2) Assignment 1: Newspaper column (20%):** This is a brief popular article (550-750 words) giving an opinion or perspective on a topic relevant to family relations, wellbeing, and mental health. Please submit 3 topics/questions (ranked 1-3 based on your preference) to the instructor by June 4, 2013 (via email). Once the instructor confirms the topic, you are welcome to write a column. The purpose will be to inform general audience on a particular issue and offer practical suggestions/advise. Your column will be submitted to a local newspaper with information about the CFT Centre, advertising its services (if you prefer that your column is not submitted to a newspaper, please inform the instructor by the due date). Popular articles do not typically reference or cite sources. **DUE July 2, 2013 (please submit to the Dropbox)**

*Allocation of Grade:*

- 1) Comprehensiveness (Is it comprehensive or does it cover a narrow aspect of the topic?) – 4 marks
- 2) Critical appraisal (Does the information appear to be well-researched or is it questionable and unsupported by evidence?) – 4 marks
- 3) Instructive value (How informative or instructive is the article? Does it contain information that an audience can use or apply?) – 4 marks
- 4) Entertainment value (Does the article hold the attention and interest of an audience?) – 4 marks
- 5) Quality and clarity of writing (Is the article written in easy to understand language or is it technical and advanced?) – 4 marks

*EG-1 (ESLO 1a, b, c), EG-2 (ESLO 2b & c), EG-4 (ESLO 4b, c, d); AAMFT CCs: 1.2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 3.1.1, 5.3.8, 6.1.1, 6.3.1, 6.3.3, 6.4.1*

**3) Assignment 2: Reflection Paper (25%):** Write a five (5) page paper that critically explores one or more issues (or their intersection) featuring in *Crime and Punishment* written by Dostoevsky (e.g., class/SES, age, education, gender, blended family issues, child maltreatment, spirituality/religion/morality, mental health, larger systems, cultural/historical context). This is another opportunity to attend to the socio-cultural context and understand how marginalization, discrimination, and abuse may impact people’s lives.

*EG-2 (ESLO 2b), EG-4 (ESLO 4a & b); AAMFT CCs: 1.2.1, 2.1.1*

**ALTERNATIVELY**, write a five (5) page paper that outlines your childhood/adolescence experiences related to any topic discussed in class (e.g., divorce, blended family, maltreatment, spirituality, infidelity, resiliency). While you are asked to primarily focus on childhood experiences, you are welcome to describe events of your life up to adulthood. *Be sure to disclose only that with which you are comfortable. These papers will be graded based on the depth of critical reflection and insight rather than level of self-disclosure.* Discuss how your personal experiences have informed your work with clients and provide specific examples from your professional practice to support your ideas. Feel free to include your family map. **Due July 30, 2013 (please submit to the Dropbox)**

*EG-4 (ESLO 4a, b, c); AAMFT CCs: 1.2.1, 2.1.1*

*Allocation of Grade:*

- Insight and Depth of Reflection:           20 marks  
Organization, Writing, & APA style:       5 marks

**4) Assignment 3: In-class Presentation (30%):** During the first class you will have an opportunity to pair up with 1-2 other students and choose a topic of interest (e.g., child maltreatment). The instructor will make the final decision during the first day of class regarding when you will present to accommodate as many students’ preferences as possible. In your groups you will be expected to attenuate the focus of the topic (e.g., working

with children who witnessed domestic violence). Please discuss the topic you plan to address with the instructor at least one week prior to the presentation.

*By May 21, 2013 please email the instructor references for two (2) peer-reviewed academic articles on your topic (ideally published in the last 5 years). The instructor will obtain the copyright permission for these articles and will make them available (course reserve). All students will be expected to read these articles for the day of the presentation.*

The presentation should be applied (i.e., focus on how theory and research on this topic inform CFT practice). The focus should be on what CFT practitioners need to know about the topic and how they could work with clients when these issues are relevant and significant. Ethical and professional issues pertaining to this topic should be explored, as well as relevant socio-cultural factors. Students are expected to spend 30 minutes presenting the information on the topic. They are encouraged to facilitate discussion rather than present the material in a predominantly didactic manner. The remaining 45 minutes should be spent on an experiential (e.g., creative, interesting, applied) learning activity aimed at enhancing other studies' awareness of and/or competencies in addressing this particular clinical issue. (1h 15 min) **DUE DATE: TBD**

<b>Presentation Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Allocation of Grade</b>
<i>Breadth of Understanding</i> —Students display comprehension of the material and demonstrate mastery of content. <i>EG-1 (ESLO 1a &amp; b), EG-2 (ESLO 2c); AAMFT CCs: 1.2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.4, 2.3.5, 2.4.3, 3.1.1, 3.1.4, 4.3.7, 5.3.8, 6.1.1, 6.3.1, 6.3.3, 6.4.1</i>	5 marks
<i>Critical Appraisal</i> —Students display critical appraisal skills when discussing theoretical and empirical literature on the topic and socio-cultural and professional/ethical issues relevant to the topic. <i>EG-1 (1c), EG-2 (ESLO 2c), EG-4 (ESLO 4a, b, c); AAMFT CCs: 6.3.3, 6.4.1</i>	5 marks
<i>Clinical Application</i> —Students are able to integrate theory, research, and practice skills. <i>AAMFT CCs: 3.1.1, 5.3.8, 6.4.1</i>	5 marks
<i>Creativity/Visual Aids</i> —Students creatively facilitate their colleagues' learning and utilize visual aids, well coordinated with content and used effectively.	5 marks
<i>Discussion Facilitation</i> —Students facilitate class discussion and effectively address questions raised by the audience.	5 marks
<i>Organization</i> —Students present the material in a clear, concise, well-organized manner. Points are easy to follow.	5 marks

### **Academic Misconduct**

All members of the University of Guelph community are *required* to be familiar of what constitutes academic misconduct. Students are encouraged to become familiar with academic integrity issues and to consult the University of Guelph's policy regarding academic misconduct, which is available in the University of Guelph Graduate Calendar at: [www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/sec\\_d0e1340.shtml](http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/sec_d0e1340.shtml) Pursuant to University policy, suspected cases of academic misconduct will be forwarded to the Department Chair.

### **Late Assignments**

Deadlines for course material are firm. When you find yourself unable to meet in-course requirements due to illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor in writing. Consistent with University of Guelph policy, documentation is required. Where possible, this should be done in advance of the missed work or event, but otherwise, just as soon as possible after the due date, and certainly no longer than one week later. Unless appropriate documentation is provided, all late work will be assessed a penalty of 10% per day.