



COLLEGE of SOCIAL AND APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY RELATIONS
AND APPLIED NUTRITION

FRAN*6880-01 Sociocultural Attunement and Humility COURSE OUTLINE –FALL 2025

1. GRADUATE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

This course provides a foundational review of current perspectives within and outside of the relational and family therapy and psychotherapy literature that relate to the intersection of culture (race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc.) and oppression. Attention is given to the translation of knowledge about power relations and about diversity discourses into practice when working in a variety of professional settings. This course is offered in a clinical section for MRFT and MP students and a non-clinical section for MA.MH students.

Credit Weight: 0.5 credits

Course Hours: 3-0 (36 lecture; 0 lab/seminar)

Pre-Requisite(s): None

Co-Requisites(s): None

Restriction(s): Clinical section 01: MRFT and MP students only; Non-clinical section 02: MA.MH students only.

2. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a foundational review of current perspectives within the relational and family therapy (RFT) and psychotherapy literature that relate to the intersection of culture and oppression. Culture is defined broadly to include socially constructed dimensions of human diversity (race, social class, ethnicity, gender, disability, etc.). Cultural humility encourages personal growth and reflection to best meet people and their lived experiences where they are at. Sociocultural attunement refers to the awareness of societal systems, culture, and power as well as a willingness to pay attention and be responsive to the experience of others. The complexities and contradictions of various discourses in the literature are addressed. Throughout the course participants will engage in critical reflection on their personal experience, values and positioning with respect to culture and oppression. Attention is given to the translation of knowledge about power relations and about diversity discourses into practice when working in a variety of professional settings.

This foundational course, which highlights issues of power, diversity, oppression, and sociocultural attunement and humility more generally, is designed to complement the program courses that also

provide details about socially constructed dimensions of diversity (e.g., race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, disability) relate to structural inequalities, family dynamics and the therapy process.

This section of this course is designed for MRFT and MP students only and who are preparing to or actively providing direct client contact and receiving supervision through the Maplewoods Centre or approved externship placement. Class discussions, assignments, and class activities will be geared to the integration of theory into clinical practice, and students will be encouraged to appropriately draw on their experience of seeing clients and ways to apply course content to their current practice. Students will also be encouraged to consider how to apply course learning to their everyday lives.

This course is divided into 3 distinct phases, each with its own intention.

Phase 1 (Weeks 1-4) – Location, Language, & Cultural Inheritance

Core Questions:

- What story do I come from?
- How has language shaped my worldview?
- What dominant cultural narrative have I inherited, and how do I live within or against them?
- How do I locate myself in relation to a clients' stories?

Core Text: Exit West by Mohsin Hamid

Phase 2 (Weeks 5-8) - Witnessing & Compassionate Complexity

Core Questions:

- How do I witness suffering without rescuing, judging, or reducing complexity?
- What judgements do I bring into the therapy room, and where do they come from?
- What survival strategies am I least able to understand, and how do I stay curious?
- How does my positionality (power, identity, social location) shape my witnessing?

Core Text: From the Ashes by Jesse Thistle

Phase 3 (Week 9-12) - Integration, Humility, & The Middle Path

Core Questions:

- How do I hold contradiction without collapsing or controlling?

- How can I be grounded in my values while staying open to difference?
- What does humility look like in clinical practice?
- How do I integrate my story, a clients' stories, and the larger sociocultural field?

Core Text: The Prophet by Khalil Gibran

3. TIMETABLE

Lecture: Monday 11:30am to 2:20pm

Location: Rm

4. INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

Course Instructor: Rana Khan MSc, RP, RMFT-SQ

Email: rkhan06@uoguelph.ca

Telephone: 647-293-7642

Office: Rm 139

Office Hours: By appointment. I am on campus Monday-Wednesday

5. LEARNING RESOURCES

Required Resource(s):

1. Hamid, M. (2017) Exit West. Riverhead Books [\$23.39 on Amazon.ca]
2. Thistle, J. (2019) From the Ashes: my story of being Metis, homeless, and finding my way. Simon & Schuster Canada. [\$19.35 on Amazon.ca]
3. Gibran, K. (2005). The Prophet. Arrow Books. [\$9.99 on Amazon.ca]

6. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course Learning Outcomes	Program Learning Outcomes	CRPO Competencies	CAMFT Competencies
Conceptual. To expand knowledge of foundational perspectives on sociocultural attunement and humility, power relations and diversity in therapy. These will include liberal-humanist, ecological, critical post-modern, and collaborative perspectives through relevant scholarly course readings and class discussion. To understand the construction of multiple and fluid identities and its impact on therapeutic work.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3	1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 5.1	1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 3, 4.3, 4.4

Simulated Clinical Application. To practice translating this knowledge and theory into action that is relevant to therapy through activities in class, such as role play or demonstration videos.	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, 7.1, 7.5	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 4.3, 4.5, 5.2	1.2, 2.1, 3, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4
Reflectivity and Humility. To understand as far as possible the experience of subjugation and the impact of marginalization and oppression on family process and the process of therapy. To develop ability to reflexively and critically analyze power relations in interactions at the micro-level, including those interactions in which one is a participant, through reflective assignments and class discussions.	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.4, 5.1, 7.3	1.4, 1.5, 3.4, 4.3	1.5, 2.1, 3, 4.2, 4.3
Critical Thinking and Engagement. To practice engaging in generative dialogues with others regarding power relations and diversity, including exploring and addressing these topics with those seeking therapy and those providing therapy services, through presentations and/or class discussion.	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 5.2, 7.1, 7.3, 8.2	1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 2.1, 2.3	1.1, 3, 4.2, 4.3
Safe Effective Use of Self. To critically review one's preferred professional identity (values, intentions, personal ethics) with respect to how this identity reflects one's understandings about power relations and diversity, including those understandings that relate to the legacy of one's personal history and those that are related to more recent experiences through written reflective assignment.	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.4, 6.2, 7.3	1.4, 1.5, 3.3, 4.3	1.5, 2.1, 4.2, 4.3

7. TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES/CLASS SCHEDULE

Week	Topics	Assigned Readings & Guest Speakers
1	<p>Phase 1 – Location & Language – Why Words Matter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on personal language history and worldview; explore client language as a window into meaning. 	<p>Exit West (Ch. 1-3)</p> <p>Tan, A. (1990). Mother Tongue. <i>The Threepenny Review</i>, 43, 7–8.</p> <p>Alex Kapitan & Lynn Kapitan (2023) Language is power: anti-oppressive, conscious language in art therapy practice, <i>International Journal of Art Therapy</i>, 28:1-2, 65-73, https://doi.org/10.1080/17454832.2022.2112721</p>
2	<p>Western Thought – Critique & Inheritance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify dominant cultural narratives; explore inheritance vs. critique 	<p>Exit West (Ch. 4-6)</p> <p>Dalrymple, T. (2001). <i>What we have to lose</i>. City Journal. https://www.city-journal.org/article/what-we-have-to-lose</p>
3	<p>Borders & Belonging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand borders as physical, relational, and internal Introduce Midterm Assignment - ‘What is a Border?’ (Due Week 6 – Sunday 12pm) 	<p>Exit West (Ch. 7-9)</p> <p>Gutierrez, N. S., & Loette Snead, K. (2023). An integration of collaborative language systems and symbolic experiential family therapy with transnational families. <i>The Routledge International Handbook of Couple and Family Therapy</i>, 483–501. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003297871-36</p>
4	<p>Story as Bridge & Barrier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore whose stories get told, practice listening for omissions and implications 	<p>Exit West (Ch. 10-12)</p> <p>Adichie, C. N. (2009, July). The danger of a single story [Video]. TED Conferences. https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/up-next</p>
5	<p>Phase 2 – Witnessing & Complexity – Attuning to Pain without Pity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore shame, survival, storytelling, differentiate pity from compassion 	<p>From the Ashes – Lost & Alone (1979-1987)</p> <p>Weingarten, K. (2010). Reasonable hope: Construct, clinical applications, and supports. <i>Family Process</i>, 49(1), 5–25. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2010.01305.x</p>

Week	Topics	Assigned Readings & Guest Speakers
6	Class, Poverty, & Moral Judgement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deconstruct ideas of success and functioning, explore class bias in therapy Midterm Assignment Deadline Sunday 12pm 	From the Ashes – Falling Apart (1988-1996) Dalrymple, T. (2004). <i>The frivolity of evil</i> . City Journal. https://www.city-journal.org/article/the-frivolity-of-evil
7	Intercultural Relationships & Family of Origins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore how family history and family of origin stories shape dynamics in therapy 	From the Ashes – The Stolen Streets (1997-2000) Boss, P. (2016). The context and process of theory development: The story of ambiguous loss. <i>Journal of Family Theory & Review</i> , 8(3), 269–286. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12152 Boss, P. (2010). The trauma and complicated grief of ambiguous loss. <i>Pastoral Psychology</i> , 59(2), 137–145. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-009-0264-0
8	Witnessing without Domination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice staying present without rescuing, explore therapist positionality; witness, rescue, fixer stances 	From the Ashes – Reconciliation (2008-2017) Weingarten, K. (2012). Sorrow: A therapist's reflection on the inevitable and the unknowable. <i>Family Process</i> , 51(2), 170–173. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2012.01394.x
9	Phase 3 – Integration & Middle Path – Holding Opposing Truths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice holding paradox; connect emotional complexity to attunement 	The Prophet – On Joy & Sorrow Brooks, D. (2023, October 19). Opinion the essential skills for being human (published 2023). New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/19/opinion/social-skills-connection.html
10	Power, Giving, & Ethical Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on giving as relational; explore boundaries and humility 	The Prophet – On Giving/On Work Paglia, C. (2004). The magic of images: Word and picture in a media age. <i>Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics</i> , 11(3), 1–22. Trustees of Boston University. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20163935

Week	Topics	Assigned Readings & Guest Speakers
11	Letting Go of Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore guiding vs. Controlling; trust in the client process 	The Prophet – On Children/ On Teaching White, M. (2004). Working with people who are suffering the consequences of multiple trauma: A narrative perspective. <i>International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work</i> , (1), 44-75. Retrieved from https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/working-with-people-who-are-suffering/docview/2618173332/se-2
12	Integration, Farewell, & The middle Path <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on growth; identify contradictions they can now hold; course closure Final Assignment Deadline before class (Sunday 12pm) 	The Prophet – On Death/ On Farewell

Note: This is a tentative schedule; however, due to various unknown factors there may be changes. Any changes will be announced during class and an announcement will be posted on the CourseLink site.

8. ASSESSMENT DETAILS

Assessment	LOs Addressed	Due Date	% of Final
In-Class Participation	1.2, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 5.2, 7.1, 7.3, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3	Throughout Course	20
Weekly Journal Reflections	1.2, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 5.2, 7.1, 7.3, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3	Throughout Course	20
Midterm – What is a Border?	1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.4, 5.1, 7.3, 8.2	Week 6	30
Final – The Middle Path Reflection	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, 7.3, 8.2	Week 12	30
Total:			100%

Assessment Details

1. In Class Participation – Participation is not just about speaking up. It is about deep engagement with the learning space. In this course, participation means contribution thoughtfully, listening actively, and helping build a climate of curiosity, respect, and courage. As therapists-in-training students are expected to model the same attentiveness, openness, and presence they would bring to a client session.

What this includes:

- Presence – attending class regularly, arriving on time, and staying engaged
- Attentive listening – listening to peers without interruptions, showing curiosity for differing perspectives
- Quality of contributions – offering comments, questions, or reflections that connect reading, class discussion, and personal insight
- Risk-taking – willingness to enter difficult or uncertain conversations with humility and respect
- Supportive engagement – responding constructively to peers' ideas and experiences; helping create a safe space for vulnerability

Evaluation will be based on:

- Depth over frequency (40%)– contributions demonstrate thoughtfulness and integration of course material
- Attentiveness and respect (25%) – consistent listening, care in how responses are offered
- Engagement with tensions (20%) – willingness to lean into complexity without dismissing or dominating
- Preparedness (15%) – evidence of having completed readings and reflected before class

2. Weekly Journal Reflections – Journals are a space for critical self-reflection and integration of readings, class discussions, and personal insight. Submit weekly due Sunday at 12pm. You are welcome to identify at least one tension, questions, or contradiction you are holding that week and explore that tension might show up in clinical work.

Evaluation will be based on:

- Depth of reflection (40%)– goes beyond surface reactions engaged with complexity and vulnerability
- Integration of course material (30%) – thoughtful connection to readings, themes, or concepts
- Connection to clinical identity (20%) – clear links between self-reflection and potential therapeutic stance
- Clarity and flow (10%) – well-organized, readable, and on time

3. Midterm Assignment – What is a Border?

This assignment bridges Phase 1 (self-location, language, and cultural inheritance) and Phase 2 (witnessing and complexity). It asks students to reflect deeply on the concept of a border – physical, emotional, relational, cultural, or internal, to situate themselves in relation to it. The goal is to move beyond the geographic metaphor and explore borders live in the body and shape human relationships. This assignment will be due Sunday at 12pm before Week 6.

Instructions – write a 5–6-page reflective paper that:

- Defines “border” from your perspective, using course concepts, readings, and your own lived experience
- Select one personal or observed border (this could be related to culture, family, identity, belonging, class, language, belief system, etc.)
- Describe this border in detail, including – how it was formed, or encountered? How you became aware of it? What emotions, relationships, or life events are tied to it?
- Reflect on its impact – how has this border shaped your sense of belonging, self, or relationships?
- Integrate at least two course texts or discussions to connect your personal reflection to sociocultural attunement
- Consider the therapist’s role – how might awareness of this border inform your clinical stance when working with clients?

Evaluation will be based on:

- Depth of reflection (40%) – complexity, vulnerability, and clarity in exploring the border
- Integration of course materials (25%) – effective use of readings, class discussions, and concepts
- Connection to clinical practice (20%) – insight into how this awareness could inform therapeutic work
- Writing quality (15%) – organization, clarity, and flow

4. Final Assignment – The Middle Path Reflection

This assignment is the culmination of Phase 3 (integration and humility). It invites students to revisit their journey throughout the course and articulate how their understanding of sociocultural attunement has evolved, especially their capacity to hold contradiction without collapsing or dominating.

Instructions – write a 6–8-page reflective paper that:

- Defines your current understanding of sociocultural attunement and humility as it relates to therapy
- Identify 2-3 key tensions or contradictions you can now hold with more grace than at the start of the course
- Trace your growth: how have readings, discussions, and experiences shifted your perspective from Phase 1 – Phase 2 – Phase 3?
- Draws on at least 3 course texts showing how each shaped your thinking
- Connects to your emerging clinical identity – how will this stance show up in your clinical work with individuals, relational, and families?
- Includes a “middle path statement” - a concise, 1-2 sentence declaration of your current ethical stance or guiding principle as a therapist

Evaluation will be based on:

- Integration of course journey (35%) - demonstrate understanding of the course arc and personal evolution
- Depth of insight (30%) - shows capacity for nuance, humility, and holding paradox
- Use of course material (20%) - thoughtful engagement with readings and concepts
- Clarity and writing quality (15%) - clear organization, flow, and language

9. COURSE STATEMENTS

Land Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge that the University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer our respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours as we strive to strengthen our relationships with them.

Acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we learn and work.

Course Website:

There is a course website at <http://courselink.uoguelph.ca>. All components of this course will be housed on the CourseLink site including this course outline, assignments, and links to further resources. Your assignments will be submitted through the Dropbox function. Marks and feedback will also be released on the site. Please familiarize yourself with this website as soon as possible and visit it regularly throughout the semester.

Late Assignments:

Late assignments will be accepted up to 5 days following the due date and will receive a penalty of 10% per day EXCEPT under documented grounds for compassionate consideration.

Assignments submitted more than one week late without documented grounds will receive a grade of zero. If you are going to hand an assignment in late, you must contact your course instructor to inform them when you will be submitting your assignment.

Receipt of Grades:

After you receive a grade on CourseLink, please review your feedback. Any inquiry or dispute over the grade must be made within two weeks from the date they are posted. If you fail to protest any grade during this time limit, changes to the grade will not be considered.

Turnitin Software:

In this course, your instructor will be using Turnitin, integrated with the CourseLink Dropbox tool, to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to maintain academic integrity at the University of Guelph.

All submitted assignments will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

A major benefit of using Turnitin is that students will be able to educate and empower themselves in preventing academic misconduct. In this course, you may screen your own assignments through

Turnitin as many times as you wish before the due date. You will be able to see and print reports that show you exactly where you have properly and improperly referenced the outside sources and materials in your assignment.

10. UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS

E-mail communication:

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

When you cannot meet a course requirement:

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a

teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Graduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for [Academic Consideration](#).

Drop date:

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the last day of classes; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of classes in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for [Dropping Courses](#) are available in the Graduate Calendar.

Copies of out-of-class assignments:

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Accessibility:

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 14 days in advance, and no later than November 1 (fall), March 1 (winter) or July 1 (summer). Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time.

More information: www.uoguelph.ca/sas

Academic misconduct:

The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) is outlined in the Graduate Calendar.

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.

Instructors **shall not** determine if academic misconduct has occurred. This is up to the Associate Dean Academic's office. Instructors shall not assign a grade of zero even if they believe that the student has committed some form of academic misconduct (e.g., copied material from a website like CourseHero) on an assignment or exam.

Instructors **can** determine if a student has poorly paraphrased and/or improperly cited material and can provide a grade accordingly as long as this is clearly identified as part of the assessment criteria via a rubric or other assessment tools.

For more information about Academic Integrity resources and how to prevent Academic Misconduct see: <https://csahs.uoguelph.ca/faculty-research/hub-teaching-learning-excellence/academic-integrity>

Recording of materials:

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources:

The [Academic Calendars](#) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

Disclaimer:

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings, changes in classroom protocols, and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via Courselink and/or class email.

This includes on-campus scheduling during the semester, mid-terms and final examination schedules. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

Illness:

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

COVID-19 Safety Protocols:

For information on current safety protocols, follow these links:

- <https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campus/how-u-of-g-is-preparing-for-your-safe-return/>
- <https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campus/spaces/#ClassroomSpaces>

Please note, that these guidelines may be updated as required in response to evolving University, Public Health or government directives.