

Course Syllabus
Seattle Pacific University
EDCO 6903, sect. 29726
Family Systems Theory and
Consultation Winter Term,

Course Information

EDCO6903: Family Systems Theory and Consultation
Thursday, 5:00 – 7:35 pm
Weekly readings and assignments posted in Canvas
Winter of)
Academic calendar: Credits: 3

Course Professor

Office hours: by appointment
Phone:
E-mail:

Technology Integration

As identified in sections A.14 and A.15 of the Ethical Standards for School Counselors (ASCA, 2016), technology is an important aspect of school counseling. To support this opportunity for growth for future professional school counselors, this course utilizes Canvas (Canvas web site: <https://canvas.spu.edu/>) as integrated technology throughout this course. Students will also use technology to access videos, audio recordings, and other presentation formats on the web. Every effort will be made to use technology or websites available to the general public (aside from SPU's Canvas). Students who experience technical issues accessing materials or Canvas should contact the SPU IT Help Desk: help@spu.edu; 206.281.2982; walk into the Lower Marston Hall for help.

Disability Support Services

Accommodations for students with known conditions or disabilities are approved and coordinated through the Disability Support Services (DSS). Students who feel they need accommodations should contact the DSS. Approved accommodations are sent to all professors for each student by the DSS in a Disability Verification Letter. Accommodations are those that are deemed appropriate for the classroom based on the specific disability or condition.

To contact the [Disability Support Services Office](#):

- dss@spu.edu
- 206.281.2272

- TTY 206.286.7348
- Located in Lower Moyer Hall

Diversity Statement

Respect and appreciation for differences is a requirement for this course. It is not an expectation that you agree with or support all views, but it is expected that you will respond with thoughtfulness and sensitivity toward other views shared in the course. Students should also take the opportunity to consider a diverse perspective, limitations or potential biases in personal worldview, and the contributions of the “lens” of each viewpoint shared. Diversity is appreciated and celebrated in this course. We look forward to hearing and learning from others and the depth, richness, and enhancement of personal growth that naturally stems from seeking to understand and appreciate the experiences and views of others.

Academic Integrity

“Students at Seattle Pacific University are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in their work. Both the students and the instructor have obligations to report and to prevent cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct. Guidelines for how academic dishonesty will be handled are printed in the Graduate Catalog (pp. 25-26). In this class, no credit will be given for an assignment or exam in which it is determined that the student has copied other students’ work, represented someone else’s work as one’s own without properly citing the author, used notes on an exam, or taken notes into an exam setting, even if those notes are not used, or any similar infraction. If such an occurrence is repeated or occurs on the final exam, no credit will be given for the course.”

Emergency Services

To prepare and prevent emergency, please consult SPU’s Emergency and Crisis Management Plan: <https://spu.edu/info/emergency/stophinkactbook.pdf> . During class, if evacuation is necessary, Peterson Hall’s emergency assembly area is the Tiffany Loop (circular driveway in front of Peterson Hall). The secondary location is the Fifth Avenue Streetscape. Please establish a “buddy” early in the course session so all may be accounted for if an emergency does occur.

As an online course, this kind of emergency action would only be required if we decide to gather as a class. However, students might be on campus to do research, study, or conduct other student business that requires a physical visit to campus. Please be aware of your surroundings while on campus. You can also sign up for emergency alerts through the Banner system. Even if you are not required to be on campus for your course work, it is a good idea to stay abreast of campus alerts and notifications that might disrupt your access to campus.

Course Description

This 3-credit online course is designed to provide school counseling students with a foundational understanding of Family Systems Theory, basic skills in family interviewing, consultation to identify family strengths, resources, and needs. It is also intended to encourage enhanced knowledge of research-informed intervention and problem-solving strategies that will contribute to positive development in school-aged children.

It is an online course with scheduled synchronous Zoom sessions every other week where short presentations, case studies, and practice with family systems theories and techniques will take place. Certain case studies will highlight the consultation process, and students will have an opportunity to present a case as they would in actual practice. This course will focus on encouraging case conceptualization of students through a systemic (rather than strictly individualistic) lens. Students will also be asked to reflect on their own identity, interpersonal styles, and world view from a systemic lens to increase their own self-awareness.

CACREP Standards Alignment

This course is designed to address the following knowledge-based criteria for CACREP common core and specialty standards:

- **Counseling Theories & Techniques** – Certified school counselors use a variety of research-based counseling approaches to provide prevention, intervention, and responsive services to meet the academic, personal/social, and career needs of all students. (Program Standard)
- **Counseling & Helping Relationships** – Theories and modes of counseling; counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence the counseling process; essential interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization skills; developmentally relevant counseling treatment or intervention plans; development of measurable outcomes for clients; evidence-based counseling strategies and techniques for prevention and intervention. (CACREP Common Core Standard)
- **Practice** – Techniques of personal/social counseling in school settings; skills to critically examine the connections between social, familial, emotional, and behavior problems and academic achievement. (CACREP Specialty Standard)

This course offers an overview of family systems and consultation for the development of basic counseling skills. By the end of the course, students will:

1. Understand family strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations, including multicultural competencies (CACREP II.G.2.d).
2. Understand theories of family development and transitions across the life span (CACREP II.G.3.a).
3. Understand a systems perspective that provides an understanding of family and other systems theories and major models of family and related interventions (CACREP II.G.5.e).
4. Understand the use of research to inform evidence-based practice (CACREP II.G.8.e).
5. Recognize the importance of family, social networks, and community systems in the treatment of mental and emotional disorders (CACREP CMHC.C.8).
6. Know the history, philosophy, and trends in marriage, couple and family counseling (CACREP MCFC.A.1).
7. Know the roles and functions of marriage, couple, and family counselors in a variety of practice settings and in relation to other helping professionals (CACREP MCFC.A.3).
8. Know the professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling (CACREP MCFC.A.4).
9. Understand a variety of models and theories of marriage, couple and family counseling (CACREP MCFCd.A.5).
10. Understand family development and the life-cycle, sociology of the family phenomenology, contemporary families, family wellness, families and culture, aging and family issues, family violence, and related family concerns (CACREP MCFC.A.6).
11. Understand the impact of crises disasters and other trauma-causing events on marriages, couples, and families (CACREP MCFC.A.6).

12. Understand issues of marriage, couple, and family life-cycle dynamics; healthy family functioning; family structures; and family of origin and intergenerational influences in a multicultural society (CACREP MCFC.C.1).
13. Recognize specific problems (e.g., addictive behaviors, domestic violence, suicide risk, immigration) and interventions that can enhance family functioning (CACREP MCFC.C.2).
14. Understand professional issues relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling, including recognition, reimbursement, and right to practice (CACREP MCFC.C4).
15. Understand how living in a multicultural society affects couples and families (CACREP MCFC.E.1).
16. Understand marriage, couple, and family assessment tools and techniques appropriate to clients' needs in a multicultural society (CACREP MCFC.G.2).
17. Understand the impact of addiction, trauma, psychopharmacology, physical and mental health,, wellness, and illness on marriage, couple, and family functioning (CACREP MCFC.G.3).

WAC Alignment

This course addresses the knowledge base criteria for the Washington State ESA certification in school counseling according to the WAC 181-78A-270 (5a). Retrieved from <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/AC/default.aspx?cite=181-78!-270>.

Specifically, but not limited to:

- (v) **Equity, fairness, and diversity** – Certified school counselors value and show respect for all members of the community; demonstrate fairness, equity, and sensitivity to every student, and advocate for equitable access to instructional programs and activities; use data for designing and implementing plans that remove barriers to learning; and help to close achievement gaps among sub-groups of students.
- (vi) **School climate** – Certified school counselors establish and foster a safe, inclusive, and nurturing learning environment for students, staff, and families and use strategies designed to prevent or resolve problems that could limit or diminish the capacity of students to learn and achieve at their highest levels.
- (iv) **Counseling theories and technique** – Certified school counselors demonstrate an understanding of established and emerging counseling theories through effective use of individual and group techniques for working with a diverse population.
- (xi) **Professionalism, ethics, and legal matters** – Certified school counselors develop a professional identity congruent with knowledge of all aspects of professional functions, professional development, and state and national school counselor organizations. They adhere strictly to the profession's codes of ethics, especially those that have been established by the American Counseling Association (ACA), the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), and other relevant codes of ethics. They are familiar with state and federal policies, laws, and legislation relevant to school counseling
- (xii) **Reflective practice** – Certified school counselors integrate knowledge, skills, and life experiences to respond effectively to new or unexpected critical events and situation; serve as change agents by using their understanding of schools as social, cultural, and political systems within a larger organizational context; monitor practice with continuous, in-depth reflection; and make adjustments as needed.

Course Objectives

Objective 1: Knowledge & Values

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of major ecological and family systems theories, their relevance and application in a school context, and their limitations.
- Understand the role of the family structure and atmosphere, attachment patterns, communication dynamics, rules and expectations, and life cycle issues in children's learning and psychosocial development.

Objective 2: Competence in Collaborative Problem-Solving and Consultation Skills

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate basic family interviewing and culturally competent consultation skills.
- Use effective listening, problem-solving, conflict resolution, goal-setting and strategic planning to enhance family-school collaboration and positive development in children.

Objective 3: Critical & Analytical Thinking

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Critically evaluate and integrate data and information from multiple sources and client's ecological contexts for case analysis and planning
- Consider case planning in the context of school/educational systems

Objective 4: Professional Identity & Development

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Recognize personal, cultural, and structural barriers and solutions that can impede or enhance successful family-school partnerships
- Recognize the importance of referrals to appropriate community resources and professionals and to conceptualize the continued supportive role that school counselors can play before, during, and after making a community referral

Required Text, Readings, & Materials

- Nichols, M.P. & Davis, S.D. (2017). *Family therapy: Concepts & methods*. (11th ed.) Hoboken, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Two movies – A list of guiding questions will be provided, and discussions will occur in Zoom.
 - *Ordinary People* (could also read the book) - [Ordinary People \(1980\) - IMDb](#)
 - *The Florida Project* - [The Florida Project \(2017\) - IMDb](#)

Other movies that lend themselves well to the application of family systems theories application (not required for class):

- *Terms of Endearment* - [Terms of Endearment \(1983\) - IMDb](#)
- *Steel Magnolias* - [Steel Magnolias \(1989\) - IMDb](#)
- *Moonlight* - [Moonlight \(2016\) - IMDb](#)
- *Kramer Versus Kramer* - [Kramer vs. Kramer \(1979\) - IMDb](#)

- Professional and/or Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles (TBD – links provided in Canvas Modules)
- Web-Based Video, Presentations, and/or Audio Recordings (TBD – links provided in Canvas Modules)

Course Schedule & Text Reading Timeline

Date	Topic	Readings
Zoom	Course Introduction & Overview Syllabus Review Family Practitioner as a Person and a Professional Professional/Personal Boundaries Referral Process in Schools School-Based Case Conceptualization	Forward & Intro Chapter 1 Check Canvas Module
Canvas	Basic Techniques and Fundamental Concepts of Family Therapy Watch <i>Ordinary People</i> – A list of guiding questions and topics will be provided.	Chapter 2 Chapter 3 Check Canvas Module Ordinary People
Zoom	Bowen Family Systems Strategic Family Therapy	Chapter 4 Chapter 5 Check Canvas Module
Canvas	Structural Family Therapy Experiential Family Therapy	Chapter 6 Chapter 7 Check Canvas Module
Zoom	Psychoanalytic Family Therapy Cognitive-Behavioral Family Therapy Student Presentations (2-3)	Chapter 8 Chapter 9 Check Canvas Module
Canvas	Family Therapy in the 21 st Century Solution Focused Family Therapy Narrative Family Therapy	Chapter 10 Chapter 11 Chapter 12 Check Canvas Module
Zoom	Comparative Analysis Research on Family Therapy Interventions Student Presentations (2-3)	Chapter 13 Chapter 14 Check Canvas Module
Canvas	Consultation in Schools Watch <i>The Florida Project</i> – A list of guiding questions and topics will be provided.	Check Canvas Module The Florida Project
	Consultation in Schools – Exchanges/Releases of Information and Safety Plans	Check Canvas Module

Zoom	Student Presentations (2-3)	
Canvas	Consultation in Schools -- Section 504 and Individual Education Plans (IEPs)	Check Canvas Module
	Deadline for All Assignments	Check Canvas Module

Assignment Schedule

Date(s) Due	Assignment	Total Point Value
	<p>Participation in Live Zoom Meetings, Discussions, and “Labs” Attending Zoom sessions, participating, and submitting a reflection on your learning. Students will earn 1 point for attendance, 1 point for participation, and 3 points for the connected reflection.</p>	<p>25 (1 point for attendance, 1 point for participation, and 3 points for the connected reflection)</p>
	<p>Bi-Weekly Canvas Discussion Posts & Replies A discussion topic or question will be posted in Canvas. Students will write their own reflection and respond to at least three others.</p>	<p>15 (2 pts. each, and * will be worth 5 additional points due to the extent of reading, reflection, and responding to other students’ work)</p>
	<p>Special Topic Report Each student will gather information on the one of the following topics and gather information from professional literature as it relates to working with families. More than one student can report on the same topic, but this is not a group assignment. No more than two students may report on the same topic. These “reports” will be posted in a Canvas discussion. For this assignment, students will be expected to read and reply to all student reports. A format for feedback will be provided to facilitate quality Canvas discussions. This is a “best practices” assignment and is meant to challenge students to critically analyze how systems theories might be applied (in whole or in part) to a variety of circumstances. Key questions to consider while researching and writing your report are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What are some common family dynamics in families experiencing this situation?” • “What are some common relationship patterns, ‘rules,’ or systemic pressures that might develop in these populations?” • “What from a systems perspective helps counselors be more sensitive to families coping with these situations?” <p>Students can choose from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness • Poverty / “Working Poor” • Families with incarcerated member(s) 	<p>20</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families with medically fragile, mental health diagnoses, or severe learning challenges • Military families • Families with undocumented member(s) • Grandparents or extended family who parent • LGBTQ families • Foster Youth • Adoptive Families 	
	<p>Family Theory Presentation & Feedback Students will work in pairs for this assignment and will present on one chosen theory in an assigned week over Zoom. Presentations will be 10-15 minutes and must include research beyond the textbook. At a minimum, students must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key theoretical assumptions • Concepts, ideas, and terms unique to the theory • Circumstances in which its use seems appropriate and shortcomings of the approach • Techniques unique to the approach • Modeling one technique for the class <p>Students can present in their chosen format (Power Point, Whiteboard, handouts with discussion or supporting materials, videos, etc.). Students are required to include a minimum of 3 references beyond the textbook from professional journals or peer reviewed research periodicals. Relying solely on websites is strongly discouraged.</p>	20
	<p>Family History Project – Students will write an 8-12 page APA formatted paper that explores the impacts of their own family of origin on their own development and relationships. References and citations are required beyond the textbook. There are two main goals for this assignment: 1) for students to gain self-awareness, and 2) for students to apply theories to their own lives. Consider such questions as: What are the multi-generational themes that exist in my family? What impact did each parent have on personal and social identity? What are the spoken and unspoken rules in my family? What strengths exist in my family? What coalitions exist in my family? When and who in the family has been involved in triangulation? How was that handled in the family? What role did and do you and other members play in your family? What, if anything, remains unresolved in my family? How cohesive is my family? How flexible is it? What countertransference issues might you need to be mindful of as you work with students and their families?</p>	20
	<p>Final Day for Assignments to be Submitted</p>	<p>Total Points Possible = 100</p>

Assignment Procedures & Class Process

Guidelines and instructions will be posted in Canvas as the course progresses. Please do not ask for every detail about every assignment in the first week of class! This syllabus serves as an introduction to assignments and course expectations. Students are encouraged to post any questions they have about assignments in the Canvas module dedicated to course assignments *AFTER* reading all directions given in this syllabus and within the Canvas assignment *and* reading the Canvas module dedicated to assignment questions. Unless a question is of a personal nature, please keep questions in the Canvas community so that all can benefit. Doing so allows us all to maximize time toward instruction, learning, and shared understanding of our work together. All assignments are individual (no group assignments required) but be aware that we remain a class of people learning together. Sharing your questions in Canvas is synonymous to raising your hand in class with a question that might help everybody.

Written Assignments

All papers required in this course must adhere to APA style guidelines. Weekly Canvas Discussions and worksheets provided by the instructor do not need to be submitted in APA format but must be typed. Every written assignment should be approached as a professional, graduate-level task with care taken toward organization, proper grammar and spelling, and scholarly curiosity and intention.

Late Work

The deadlines listed on the assignment schedule are strongly encouraged. It will not be possible for students to complete their work in this course without all students staying up-to-date on assignments. For example, half of the points possible for weekly discussion posts rests upon students' ability to respond to posts made by classmates. Similarly, the theory presentation assignment cannot be completed without access to other students' presentations. No points will be deducted for late assignments, but if there is any reason for an assignment to be more than 1 week late, please talk to the instructor regarding your situation. Adult learners have situations that arise and can understandably delay schoolwork *occasionally*. However, as adults in this course, students need to remain aware that late work for some assignments will adversely impact other students' ability in class to complete their work. Students should consider themselves part of an online learning community. Please agree to be a responsible member of that community! ***No assignments will be accepted after midnight on March 14, 2021 due to time needed to review student work and submit grades.***

Grading Scale

100-94 = A	89-87 = B+	*83-80 = B-
93-90 = A-	86-84 = B	

*Per program requirements, you must receive a B or better in this course for credit and to maintain sufficient academic progress. Additionally, you must receive a B or better on the Comprehensive Performance Evaluation prior to progressing in the practicum series. Course performance and learning for mastery is an integral part of this progression.

Grading Criteria

The A to A- Range – Consistently at or above Expectations on all course work

All work is completed according to directions and guidelines and demonstrates the novel or creative application of thought and academic/professional curiosity commonly expected in graduate-level studies. Canvas discussion posts and replies thoroughly but succinctly address all parts of the reflection prompt. Written assignments are organized, completed according to APA guidelines, grammatically correct, and free of spelling errors. Excellent professionalism is present in all completed assignments. The students' thoughts extend beyond what is literal or obvious in individual assignments and might incorporate ideas previously learned or show a connection between units of study. Work shows a depth of thought and questioning that comes directly from the student as a result of their research and study.

The B+ to B Range – Meets expectations on most but not all course work

Work is completed according to guidelines and directions but lack some organization, explanation, or attention to detail found in the A to A- range. Work shows clear evidence of having engaged in the readings or other professional literature, and written assignments are done with minimal expectations or a mostly literal level of response. Work could lack connections or thought beyond exactly what was asked, and there is minimal individual academic risk or curiosity about the given topic or task. Work might also address part but not all of the assignment (i.e., part of a discussion prompt is addressed but not all, a low level of reflection evidenced in what is shared in class, minimal replies or engagement in new thoughts when sharing in class, parts of assignments are missing). There might also be an occasional misrepresentation of information, making it unclear as to whether the student genuinely understands some of the class material. Any lack of understanding is easily explored or corrected through direct feedback from other students or the instructor.

B- or Below – Failing by program standards

A pattern of submitting work that is incomplete, contains significant errors in format and understanding of course material, disorganized, and/or is unprofessional. Work might demonstrate an unwillingness or inconsistent reliance upon required readings or other assigned materials. The student's work might show signs of completing assignments merely for completion and not deep understanding needed to become a professional school counselor. Keep in mind that a grade of "C" is widely considered "average." However, average performance is not sufficient for this program.

Notice: An incomplete grade (INC) will only be considered for students with health or a family emergency.

Evaluation

Students' final grades will be based on the following assignments:

Bi-Weekly Zoom Attendance, Participation, and Reflection	25 points
Bi-Weekly Canvas Discussion Posts & Replies	15 points
Special Topic Report	20 points
Family Therapy Theory Presentation & Feedback	20 points
Family History Project / Paper	<u>20 points</u>
TOTAL POSSIBLE	100 points