COUN 6991 - Family Systems Counseling

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 01, CRN 42479,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Jennifer Yensel

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Public Instructor Information

Instructor: Jen Yensel, PhD., LPCC-S

Principal Lecturer

Department of Psychological Sciences and Counseling

Instructor Educational Qualifications:

Ph.D. Counselor Education and Supervision, Kent State University, 2018

M.Ed. Community Counseling, Kent State University, 2006

B.S. Therapeutic Recreation, Kent State University, 2002

B.A. Psychology, Kent State University, 2002

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Course Description

6991. Family Systems Counseling. Systems theory as applied to family functioning. Major theoretical approaches to family counseling, including ethics and techniques, will be addressed. 3 s.h.

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	Family Therapy: History, Theory, and Practice (7th ed.).	Gladding	

Additional Required Readings: All readings will be provided to students via BlackBoard

Adverse Childhood Experiences: HCRC Fact Brief. (n.d.) Retrieved from http://cpcp3.org/uploads/4/1/9/1/4191814/aces.pdf

Carter, B., & McGoldrick, M. (Eds). (2005). The expanded family life cycle: Individual, family, and social perspectives (3rd ed.). Pearson.

Deacon, S. A., & Piercy, F. P. (2001). Qualitative methods in family evaluation: Creative assessment techniques. The American Journal of Family Therapy, 29, 355-373.

Johnson, S. & Brubacher, L. (2016). Emotionally focused couples therapy: Empiricism and art. In T. Sexton & J. Lebow (Eds.), Handbook of family therapy. Routledge.

Lebow, J., & Stroud, C. B. (2012). Assessment of effective couple and family functioning: Prevailing models and instruments. In F. Walsh (Ed.). Normal family processes: Growing diversity and complexity (4th ed., pp. 501-528). Guilford Press.

McGoldrick, M., & Gerson, R. (1985). Constructing genograms. In Genograms in family assessment. W.W. Norton & Co.

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Petry, S. (2008). Genograms: Mapping family systems. In Genograms: Assessment and intervention (3rd ed.). W.W. Norton & Co.

Walsh, F. (2003). Family resilience: A framework for clinical practice. Family Process, 42,1-18.

Walsh, F. (2011). Family therapy: Systemic approaches to practice. In J. Brandell (Ed.), Theory and practice in clinical social work. Sage.

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Day	Date	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
Mon	8/24	Gladding prologue; ch. 1-3 Walsh, 2011 (discuss in class) Carter & McGoldrick, 2005 (discuss in class)	Course overview, review of syllabus Foundations of family therapy The theoretical context of family therapy Types and functionality of families Lifespan development and normal family developmental processes Introduction of role play experience Time to create families	CACREP. 3.C.1
Mon	8/31	Gladding, ch 4-5 Walsh, 2003 (discuss in class) McGoldrick & Gerson, 1985 (discuss in class) McGoldrick, Gerson, & Petry, 2008 (discuss in class)	Working with single-parent and blended families Working with culturally diverse families Family resilience Genograms	3.C.1 Due: Submit family info Due: Mission Statement
Mon	9/7	No Class		
Mon	9/14	Gladding, Ch 7, 17 Deacon & Piercy, 2001 (discuss in class) Lebow & Stroud, 2012 (discuss in class)	The process of family therapy Assessment, problem identification, and treatment planning processes The role of diagnosis in family therapy	Structural family therapy Techniques and processes of structural family therapy
Mon	9/21	Gladding, Ch 13		
Mon	9/28	Gladding, Ch 9 & 10	Psychodynamic family theory and Bowen family systems theory Techniques and processes of transgenerational theories Family role plays	
Mon	10/5	Gladding, ch 12	Experiential family therapy Techniques and processes of experiential family therapy Family role plays	3.C.1
Mon	10/12	Gladding, ch. 11	Behavioral and cognitive-behavioral family therapy Techniques and processes of behavioral and cognitive behavioral family therapy Family role plays	
Mon	10/19	Gladding, Ch 14	Strategic family therapies Techniques and processes of strategic family therapies Family role plays	
Mon	10/26	Gladding, Ch 15 & 16	SFBT and narrative family therapy Techniques and processes of SFBT and narrative family therapy Family role plays	
Mon	11/2	Gladding, Ch 8	Couple and marriage therapy and enrichment Family role plays	Due: Family Perspective Paper
Mon	11/9	Johnson & Brubacher, 2016 (discuss in class)	Emotionally-focused couple therapy Techniques and processes of EFT	3.C.1
Mon	11/16	Gladding, Ch 6, 18, epilogue ACEs Fact Brief (discuss in class)	Working with substance related disorders, domestic violence, and child abuse Ethical, legal, and professional issues	
Mon	11/23		Group Presentation (Special Topics)	Due: Group Presentations
Mon	11/30		Case study presentations	Due: Integrated case study assignment
Mon	12/7		Wiggle room	

The course schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better learning.