



**CP 5103 Marriage and Family Counselling**  
**Instructor:** Dr. Melanie Thiessen, MA.,DMin  
**Contact information:** melanie.thiessen@prov.ca

**May 2-6, 2011 (Mon thru Fri 9am-4pm)**  
Otterburne Campus

**\*\*Important Note:** Pre-Course work Group presentation Assignment B requires students to sign up for a group/theory presentation. Choices will be based on those who sign up first. E-mail the professor directly by April 12<sup>th</sup>

## SYLLABUS

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will serve as an introduction to the theory and practice of marriage and family therapy. Classical and post-modern theoretical models of marriage and family therapy will be examined and provide students the foundation for developing the roots of their own clinical 'style'. Significant classroom attention will also be given to examining contemporary trends in research and treatment of divorce, ineffective communication patterns, extra-marital affairs, and low sex/ low desire marriages

### COURSE OUTCOMES

*By the completion of this course the student will:*

- Understand and apply multiple theoretical approaches to marriage and family therapy
- Gain greater appreciation and objectivity in understanding how one's own personal family of origin and nuclear family influence his/her role as a therapist.
- Achieve increased knowledge, competency and clinical application in the following areas:
  - Intake and assessment for marital and family systems
  - Formulating treatment plans
  - Divorce and Infidelity
  - Mental illness and medical related issues in the family
  - Constructing intervention strategies to disrupt relational patterns inhibiting effective communication, conflict resolution and emotional intimacy.
  - Developing an integrative approach to treating sexual desire and sexual disorders.

## REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

- Johnson, SM. (2004) *The Practice of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* Routledge: NY  
\*\*non Counselling majors can choose to read “*Hold on Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love*” by Sue Johnson.
- McGoldrick, Gerson, & Petry. (2008). *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.* Norton Professional Books
- Spring, JA & Spring M. (1996). *After the Affair: Healing the Pain and Rebuilding Trust When a Partner Has Been Unfaithful.* Harper Collins: ON
- Schnarch, D & Maddock, J (2003). *Resurrecting Sex: Solving Sexual Problems and Revolutionizing Your Relationship.* Harper:ON
- Weeks, G. & Treat, S. (2001). *Couples in Treatment: Techniques and Approaches for Effective Practice 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* Routledge: NY

## RECOMMENDED TEXTS

- Gottman, J. (1999). *Marriage Clinic: Scientifically-Based Marital Therapy* Norton Professional Books
- Johnson, SM. (2008). *Hold on Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love.* New York, Little, Brown and Company.
- Kalter, N. (2006). *Growing up with Divorce: Helping Your Child Avoid Immediate and Later Emotional Problems.* Free Press
- Kerr & Bowen. (1988). *Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory.* Norton, W.W. & Company
- Nichols, MP. (2008) *Essentials of Family Therapy, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* Allyn & Bacon
- Patterson, Williams, Grauf-Grounds, & Chamow. (1998). *Essential Skills in Family Therapy: From First Interview to Termination.* New York University Press
- Quick, E. (2008). *Doing What Works in Brief Therapy: A Strategic Solution Focused Approach.* Matthews Medical Books
- Wallerstein & Blakeslee. (2004). *Second Chances: Men, Women and Children a Decade After Divorce.* Houghton Mifflin Company
- Weiner-Davis, M. (2003) *The Sex-Starved Marriage: Boosting Your Marriage Libido.* Simon & Schuster

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Pre-Course Work

#### A. Group Presentation

Working in pairs/groups, students will be assigned one of the schools of family and marital therapy for a more in-depth study and classroom presentation. Be as creative as you'd like (media scenes, video recorded or in-class role play, visual diagrams/illustrations, etc). Presentations are to be approximately 45 minutes in length and highlight the major principles of the theory. Remember that your classroom role reverses from student to that of 'teacher' in these presentations. View this assignment not as a course requirement for completion, but as an opportunity to broaden your knowledge and skills as a practicing clinician.

***DUE DATE: Presentations starts on Tuesday May 3, 2011***

#### B. Small Group Book Discussion Preparation

Before the class begins students will need to read, *After the Affair: Healing the Pain and Rebuilding Trust When a Partner Has Been Unfaithful*, and prepare two reflection questions for group discussion and be prepared to highlight two specific areas of application to one's counselling/ministry setting. (format: state two questions and use point form to expand on the two application areas...max 1 ½ page). Bring to first class two copies one for yourself and one for instructor.

***DUE DATE: 9:00 am May2, 2011***

### Course Week Requirements

#### C. Class Attendance

Each student must attend all class sessions and actively participate in class discussions.

#### D. Reading Requirement

Read the book, *The Practice of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy* (or non counselling major's choice) in preparation for EFT lecture/practice day.

***DUE DATE: 9:00 am May 6<sup>th</sup> (Turn in confirmation of reading)***

### Post Work Requirements

#### E. Genogram Assignment, Self Reflection

Complete a 3 generations genogram on your family of origin. This exercise is intended to expand the developing therapist's self-awareness and objectivity in their role as clinician. Understanding the influence of family of origin on the development of our belief systems is critical to avoiding unproductive counter-transference. After completing the genogram, write a 5 page paper examining how your family of origin influenced your belief system across such areas as:

- Power struggles, decision making and conflict management
- Allowing for personal differentiation / individuality in marriage and family
- Expression of affection (non-sexual intimacy)
- Expression of sexual intimacy
- Communication styles
- Tolerating anxiety and stress
- Addictions and mental illness
- Involvement of extended family and in-laws
- Parenting roles
- Other areas as identified by the student

***DUE DATE: June 10, 2011***

#### **F. Self-Directed Research**

As an opportunity to expand the clinical specialties and professional development of the therapist in training, students will write a 5-7 page research paper on a topic of their choosing. The research paper is to include a minimum of 5 reference sources, and highlight the current trends in research findings and clinical treatment of the individual, marital and/or family system related to the given topic. Some examples of study are:

- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Infidelity
- Sexual Disorders
- Domestic Violence
- Divorce
- Step or Blended Families
- Adolescent therapy
- Pre-marital counselling
- Alcoholic Families
- Mental Illness or Medical Related Issues and Impact on Family/Marriage

***DUE DATE: June 24, 2011***

#### **G. Marital Intake Interview and Essay**

##### ***Option A***

##### ***Part I. Marital Inventory / Genogram***

Identify a couple from your clinical practice or social network. Over the course of two 'sessions' complete a marital assessment and 3 generations genogram. This is to be considered an 'information gathering course assignment' and not formal counseling. Should the couple indicate a need for counseling, professional referrals are to be made immediately available to them.

### ***Part II. Marital Assessment***

Using the above assessment tools, first provide an overview of what appear to be the couples strengths and potential areas of growth. Provide the genogram and assessment form as supporting data.

Next, evaluate the marital relationship on the following aspects: marital satisfaction/contentment, commitment, communication, conflict management, closeness/intimacy, and other factors clinically indicated in the assessment.

### ***Part III. Marital Therapy***

Use Johnson and Gottman to develop a six-session treatment plan. Indicate the therapeutic concepts and interventions from these authors that you would apply to counseling the couple. Be specific about why you would apply a particular intervention and what the anticipated outcome would be. Briefly describe how you would terminate therapy and what follow-up plan, if any, you would prescribe. Total length of paper 10-15 pages.

### ***Or Option B***

Student Project (ie. develop a pre-marital manual, marriage seminar, etc) or participate in an depth practical training/application in marriage or family therapy. (ie. EFT training, Couple Communication etc.). Students must submit a written proposal by May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011 for pre-approval to the professor.

***DUE DATE: July 29, 2011***

## **GRADING**

Attendance and Participation (Requirements B,C,D)	10 marks
Group Presentation (Requirement A)	20 marks
Genogram (Requirement E)	20 marks
Research (Requirement F)	25 marks
Marital Inventory & Essay (Requirement G)	<u>25 marks</u>
	<b>100 marks</b>

## **PLEASE NOTE:**

- *All papers must follow the **APA format**, be free of grammatical and spelling errors, and reflect Masters-level scholarship*
- *Assignments other than Requirement F must be hard copy.*
- *Assignments should be at the school or postmarked by the due date. Extensions generally will only be granted under extenuating circumstances. Late assignments will be deducted 1 mark per day up to 5 marks per assignment. All assignments need to be in by July 29, 2011 unless a formal extension has been granted by the Registrar's office.*