

FAMILY STRUCTURES  
CANADIAN BIBLE COLLEGE - CANADIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY GST 303  
FEBRUARY 1996  
ASSOC. PROFESSOR: MARGI HOLLINGSHEAD

## SYLLABUS

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** By the end of the course, the student should be able to:

1. describe the characteristics and properties of a family system
2. explain the circumplex model of family structure
3. identify the life cycle stresses of adolescence and midlife
4. apply family systems theory to case situations
5. construct and analyze a genogram
6. compare and contrast one's own family of origin with a Christian model of family

### COURSE SCHEDULE:

\* the general daily schedule will consist of a devotional, lecture, discussion, case study and role play in the morning and video analysis and critique in the afternoon. All assigned readings are in Balswicks' book.

**Monday** [1:00 to 4:30 with break; 6:30 to 8:30]  
definition of family; characteristics, properties and paradoxes of family systems  
Homework - case study; read pp. 19-37 (through paragraph #1)

**Tuesday** [8:30 to 9:30; 10:30 to 12:00; 1:00 to 4:30 with break]  
genogram construction and analysis  
Homework - read 41-50, 133-147; case study

**Wednesday** [8:30 to 12:00 with break; 1:00 to 4:30 with break]  
circumplex model; adolescence and midlife stresses  
Homework - case study; read 93 -108

**Thursday** [8:30 to 9:30; 10:30 to 12:00; 1:00 to 4:30 with break]  
boundaries, differentiation and emotional triangles  
Homework - case study

**Friday** [8:30 to 12:00 with break; 1:00 to 4:30 with break]  
getting in and out of emotional triangles

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**35% (CTS 25%) Interaction with THE FAMILY text** - from the perspective of your own family of origin (your parents, siblings and self) compare and contrast your knowledge and experience with the text [omit chapters 7,10, 15(unless applicable), 16,17]. First, identify your family constellation by names and ages at the time when you were a teen. Then discuss the ways in which your family's journey at that time supported or departed from the Balswick material. Your interaction should be comprehensive, including each of the assigned chapters. For example, in interacting with chapter 1, you should discuss your opinion about the four stage theology of family relationships and how you saw each of those components in your adolescent family, using brief examples as appropriate. Length, 10 - 12 pages, double-spaced. Due: Friday, March 8 before 5 p.m.

**30% (CTS 40%) Genogram** - Construct your family of origin's genogram according to the specifications provided and discussed in class. You may wish to use multiple copies or transparent overlays to show your data. Analyze and interpret as to family structure, life cycle fit, pattern repetition, life events, and balance. Length, 6 pages plus genogram. [CTS: After reading Friedman, include assessment of (1) levels of differentiation in your family, (2) generational transmission of patterns, and (3) any significant triangles, your understanding of how they were formed and how they are perpetuated. For any triangles that you are a part of, suggest ways of detriangling. Your mark on this assignment will reflect your understanding and assessment per Friedman. Length, 10 - 12 pages, plus genogram] Due Friday, March 8 before 5 p.m.

**20% Final Exam** - This take-home exam will include 2 case studies for you to evaluate and apply family systems principles. You may use class notes and should limit yourself to one sitting and 3 hours for the exam. Marks will be deducted if it looks too polished! Due: Friday, March 1 before 5 p.m.

**15% Class Participation** - You may select 3 of 4 classroom activities on which to be evaluated for this portion [ a 10 min. a.m. devotional; involvement in role plays; analysis of case studies; critique of videos]. A sign-up sheet will be circulated on Monday to record your choices. **N.B.** Due to the nature of the course, it is expected that students will attend all sessions on time. Marks will be deducted for absences.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

- 1) All written work, except the final exam, should be typed, double-spaced with appropriate documentation in either APA or Turabian format. Written communication skills are expected to reflect college-level competency.
- 2) The final exam needs to be legible. The onus is on you to make sure it's readable.
- 3) Non-resident students may be eligible for due date extensions of the two papers. Please discuss with professor.
- 4) Non-resident students should have assignments posted by the due date. Mail to: Associate Dean for Extension and Continuing Education, CBC/CTS, 4400 4th Ave., Regina, Sk. S4T 0H8. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you wish assignments returned to you.

## **COURSE TEXT**

### **Required for all:**

Balswick, Jack O. and Judith K. Balswick. 1989. The family: A Christian perspective on the contemporary home. Grand Rapids, Mi.: Baker Book House.

### **CTS additional:**

Friedman, Edwin H. Generation to generation: Family process in church and synagogue. 1985. New York: The Guilford Press. [on 2 hour reserve]

