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| Course ID: | Course Title: | Winter 2024 |
| CC 621 | Marriage & Family Therapy | Prerequisite: CC 501 |
| | | Credits: 3 |

| Class Information | | Instructor Information | | Important Dates | |
|--------------------|-----------|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Delivery: | In Class | Instructor: | Michelle Gritter, MDiv, MA, PsyD ABD, CCC, ACTA | First Day of Class: | January 11, 2024 |
| Days: | Thursdays | Email: | Michelle.Gritter@ambrose.edu | Last Day to Add/Drop: | January 21, 2024 |
| Time: | 6-9 PM | Phone: | 403-690-1244 | Last Day to Withdraw: | March 28, 2024 |
| Room: | L2084 | Office: | n/a | Last Day to Apply for Coursework Extension: | April 2, 2024 |
| Final Exam: | n/a | Office Hours: | TBD | Last Day of Class: | April 11, 2024 |

Important Dates and Information

For a list of all important dates and information regarding participating in classes at Ambrose University, please refer to the Academic Calendar at <https://ambrose.edu/academic-calendar>.

Course Description

An introduction to systems theory and its application to Christian marriage counselling. The developmental stages of a family are examined in addition to didactic study of four to six major systems theorists. Approximately half of the course is devoted to utilizing the theoretical material in the context of Christian counselling both at a pastoral and professional counselling level.

Expected Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, learners will be able to:

1. Distinguish between various theoretical approaches to family and couple therapy and match them with their associated founders;
2. Integrate various theoretical approaches into role plays with fictitious clients, illustrating rudimentary clinical applications for these approaches in the context of ministry settings and entry-level counselling contexts;
3. Appraise when a referral is required for a family or couple who seeks counselling in a ministry context;
4. Assess theoretical approaches to family and couple therapy using a Christ-follower-informed lens;
5. Generate creative ideas for how to support families and couples to thrive in ministry settings;

6. Recognize various stages of development that families and couples experience and design therapeutic responses for the typical challenges that occur during these stages;
7. Detect the signs of abuse in families and couples and determine how best to create safety and to respond ethically after disclosures and/or discoveries of abuse;
8. Determine how best to respond to families and couples experiencing divorce;
9. Devise an effective response for a couple seeking to heal after an affair;
10. Host constructive conversations about healthy sexuality in the context of ministry to families and couples;
11. Advocate for victims of domestic violence in the context of church ministry and generate just responses for perpetrators.

Required and Recommended Textbooks and Readings

Balswick, J.O., Balswick, J.K., & Frederick, T.V. (2021). *The family: A Christian perspective on the contemporary home* (5th ed.). Baker Academic.

Suggested but not Required Reading

Johnson, S. (2019). *Attachment theory in practice: Emotionally focused therapy (EFT) with individuals, couples, and families*. Guildford Publications.

Course Schedule

| Date | Topics | Readings | Assignments Due |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1-11-24 | Theological and Social Perspectives on Family Life Models/Theories: --Sociocultural model | Balswick et al. (2021) Part 1: Chapters 1 & 2 pp. 1-46 | n/a |
| 1-18-24 | Mate selection and Cohabitation; Establishing marriage; A Model for Biblical Marriage Models/Theories: --Developmental Couples Therapy --Family Systems Therapy | Balswick et al. (2021) Part 2: Chapters 3, 4, 5 pp. 47--110 | In-class Quiz covering chapters 1—5 of Balswick et al. (2021) |
| 1-25-24 | Parenting Relationship Empowerment Models/Theories: --Circle of Security --Attachment Therapy | Balswick et al. (2021) Part 3: Chapter 6 & 7 pp. 109--153 | |

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| 2-1-23 | Family spirituality; Adolescence & Midlife Structural Family Therapy Models/Theories: --Functional Family Therapy --Tomm's PIPs and HIPs Collaborative Approach | Balswick et al. (2021) Part 3: Chapter 8 & 9 pp. 154-178 | In-class Quiz covering chapters 6—9 of Balswick et al. (2021) |
| 2-15-23 | Gender roles and Relations: the Impact on Family Life Models/Theories: --Gottman Method --Relational Life Therapy | Balswick et al. (2021) Part 4: Chapter 11 & 14 pp. 201—216; pp. 259— 269 Articles posted on Moodle | |
| 2-22-23 | NO CLASSES | Catch up on missed reading and enjoy a break | n/a |
| 2-29-23 | Intimate Communication & Sex Models/Theories: --Emotion Focused Therapy --Developmental Couples Therapy --Interpersonal Neurobiology (INPB) | Balswick et al. (2021) Chapter 12 & 13 pp. 217—256 Articles posted on Moodle | Genogram Assignment |
| 3-7-23 | Ethical issues in Family and Couples Counselling in Ministry Contexts: consent, competency, dual relationships, family secrets, duty to report, family violence Models/Theories: Family Systems Theory Social Systems Theory | Balswick et al. (2021) Part 7: Chapter 18 & 19 pp. 315--342 | In-Class Quiz covering Balswick chapters 11--14 |
| 3-14-23 | Divorce, Remarriage, New Family Structures, and Living Single | Balswick et al. (2021) Part 6: Chapter 15, 16, & 17 pp. 270—316 | Ethics Case Study Paper |

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| | Models/Theories: --Family Systems Theory --Attachment Theory | | |
| 3-21-23 | Sitting with Couples in Crisis Models/Theories: --Gottman Theory --Emotion Focused Therapy --Relational Life Therapy --Developmental Couples Therapy | | Group Presentations |
| 3-28-24 | Interpersonal Neurobiology: Loving with the Brain in Mind Models/Theories: --IPNB --Attachment Theory --Psychobiological Approach Couples Therapy (PACT) | Articles on Moodle | In-class Quiz covering Balswick chapters 15—19 Group Presentations (cont.) |
| 4-4-24 | Bringing it all together: Integrating Theory & Practice | | Final Integration Paper |

Course Requirements:

Genogram Assignment (Due: February 29, 2024; Weight in Course: 10% of grade)

Students will create a standard, family genogram that goes back two generations (i.e. grandparents). The assignment should include the level of detail the genogram guide provides (family relationships, gender, children, lifespan, and relationship quality). The assignment can be done by hand, but it must be neatly done. Correct symbols, colours, and lines must be used in the genogram to denote the information required. In addition to the genogram, students will be required to include two paragraphs summarizing and highlighting the main themes of the genogram.

Information about how to make a genogram can be found here:

<https://creately.com/guides/how-to-make-a-genogram/#:~:text=Draw%20the%20genogram%3A,process%20to%20represent%20multiple%20generations>

and here:

<https://www.olivemecounseling.com/blog/genogram>

Note: Students will need to gather information about their family and from their family to complete the genogram assignment. Please begin gathering this information during the first week of the course. Students will be evaluated on their use of the correct symbols, denotation of relationships, the inclusion of behavioural patterns such as addiction, as well as the other relevant information included in a standard, family genogram.

A rubric for the assignment will be provided on Moodle. The basic criteria for this assignment are: *completeness* (i.e. Did the genogram show relationship quality and patterns of behaviour? Were there obvious gaps in information?), *use of symbols, inclusion of a legend, quality of two-paragraph summary* (i.e. did it clearly highlight themes and patterns?).

Course Reading Quizzes (Due: see dates listed below; 5% each of final grade, 20% total of final grade)

150 Ambrose Circle SW, Calgary, AB T3H 0L5
T 403-410-2000 **TF** 800-461-1222
info@ambrose.edu
ambrose.edu

Students will be given four quizzes to measure their knowledge of some of the assigned reading for the course. The quizzes will be multiple choice and short answer, and cover the assigned readings listed in the course schedule. They will be done in class, using paper and pen, on the day listed in the course schedule. The main purpose of the quizzes will be to measure whether the student has read the course reading material.

Dates of quizzes: January 18, February 1, March 7, and March 28

Group Project Assignment (Due: March 21, 2024; Weight=20% of final grade)

Students will work in groups to present a model for couple therapy. Using an interactive approach, and limited to only **six power point slides**, students will research and present on the following aspects of their assigned model:

1. The type of assessment used in the approach.
2. Main features of the approach.
3. The main “flag bearer” or originator of the approach.
3. The typical length of treatment for couples and the approach’s explanation of that length of treatment.
4. A description of the approach:
 - a. What would a typical session intervention look like? Sound like? Feel like?
 - b. What key interventions does this approach use?
 - c. What is the role of the counsellor in this approach?
 - d. How is the couple’s distress conceptualized?
 - e.g. Does the couple need to grow in their maturity about communicating honestly with each other? Does the couple need to cultivate more emotional safety with each other? Does the couple need to learn how to repair ruptures more effectively? Does the couple need to learn a set of behavioural strategies to experience improvement?
5. What is your group’s evaluation of the approach?
 - a. Does the approach have good empirical support?
 - Do some research to find empirical articles (2016 or newer) showing that the approach has been and is being tested empirically, in a research context.
 - b. Would this approach work for most couples, in your view? For which couples would it not be suitable and why?
 - c. Are there any groups or populations for whom this approach would not work? (e.g. Has it been proven successfully with same-sex couples? Culturally diverse couples?)

*Submit a 2-3 page written summary of the presentation, in correct APA formatting, including a title page and reference section, that provides a summary of the research conducted in preparation of the presentation. Submit a copy of the powerpoint presentation your group used for the presentation. Submit a short description of the contributions of each group member towards the presentation.

Ethics Case-Study Paper (Weight=20% of final grade)

Students will construct a 4-page paper describing the discernment, decision-making, and support process for a case study featuring the need for an ethical response by a leader in a church context. Students will be required to identify the ethical principles involved in the case, point to the Canadian laws implicated in the case, outline an ethical response, and demonstrate their understanding of managing safety for vulnerable people in faith-based contexts.

Due date for ethics paper: March 14, 2024

Final Paper: Family of Origin Analysis (30% of final grade)

Students will construct a 7-8 page research paper conceptualizing their family of origin using one of the theoretical lenses from the field of family therapy. They will explore patterns of communication, interpersonal patterns of behavior, and the quality of attachment connection in their family of origin. Papers will describe the sociocultural context from which the family of origin took its cues. Course textbooks may be used for this paper, but not as the main source for the research. Students must employ at least three, peer-reviewed articles (2017 or newer) to support their explanations and use clinical terminology to exhibit their comprehension of their chosen model. Additionally, students will discuss how cultivating a thorough, deep, and reflective understanding of the patterns exhibited in their families of origin will help them as future leaders in faith-based contexts.

Due date: April 4, 2024

Attendance:

Students must **attend all classes** unless proper notification and a sound reason is provided to the instructor BEFORE the required absence. (Michelle.Gritter@ambrose.edu).

Grade Summary:

| Grade | Percentage Equivalence | Interpretation | Grade Points |
|-------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| A+ | 97-100 | Mastery: Complete Understanding of Subject Matter | 4.00 |
| A | 93-96 | | 4.00 |
| A- | 90-92 | | 3.70 |
| B+ | 87-89 | Proficient: Well-Developed Understanding of Subject Matter | 3.30 |
| B | 83-86 | | 3.00 |
| B- | 80-82 | | 2.70 |
| C+ | 77-79 | Basic: Developing Understanding of Subject Matter | 2.30 |
| C | 73-76 | | 2.00 |
| C- | 70-72 | | 1.70 |
| D+ | 67-69 | Minimal Pass: Limited Understanding of Subject | 1.30 |
| D | 60-66 | | 1.0 |
| F | 0-59 | Failure: Failure to Meet Course Requirements | 0.00 |
| P | n/a | Pass | No Grade Points |

Because of the nature of the Alpha 4.00 system, there can be no uniform University-wide conversion scale. The relationship between raw scores (e.g. percentages) and the resultant letter grade will depend on the nature of the course and the instructor's assessment of the level of each class, compared to similar classes taught previously.

Please note that final grades will be available on student registration system. Printed grade sheets are not mailed out.

Other:

Important notice: This course has been adapted from a similar course offered in a graduate level counselling program and is not designed to equip learners to offer professional counselling to clients in professional settings. The course is designed to equip lay leaders with theoretical, conceptual, and practical information in offering pastoral guidance to couples, families, and individuals in a faith-based context. It will seek to equip leaders to clarify when and how to refer parishioners for professional counselling.

Students may be invited to participate in role-plays in class but can choose not to participate, if desired. Students will be encouraged to draw from their own story for these role plays only to the extent that they are comfortable.

Ambrose University Important Policies & Procedures:

Registration

Registration is the process of selecting and enrolling in classes for upcoming semesters. Only students who are registered will be permitted to attend class and receive a grade for the course. You are responsible for ensuring that the courses you take are appropriate for your program, that they do not have any scheduling conflicts, that they have the necessary prerequisites and that they meet all degree requirements.

Withdrawal From A Course

Prior to the Add/Drop deadline: through the student registration system whereby course(s) will be removed with no academic or financial penalty. After the Add/Drop deadline and until the Withdrawal deadline: through submission of the 'Withdrawal from Course' form whereby course(s) will remain on the permanent academic record/transcript with the symbol 'W'. (See ambrose.edu/registrar/request-forms.) Students who withdraw from more than 30 credits attempted at Ambrose University will be required to withdraw from their program. Students considering withdrawing from courses are encouraged to discuss with their Faculty Advisor and/or the Office of the Registrar questions relating to their withdrawal decision specifically relating to financial assistance, study permit requirements, prerequisites for subsequent courses, readmission, and/or graduation timeline. Students who do not formally withdraw from a course are still considered registered in the course, even if they are no longer attending classes. In this case, students will be assigned a grade based on coursework completed as per the course syllabus and are responsible to pay the tuition and fees assessed for the course. Under extenuating circumstances, students may request from the Office of the Registrar a course(s) withdrawal after the Withdrawal deadline and until the last day of classes. Extenuating circumstances typically consider situations such as medical emergencies, compassionate grounds, or unforeseen conditions/situations beyond the students' control that arise after the start of the semester and are considered on a case-by-case basis. Supporting documentation from a physician or Registered Health Professional must accompany this request.

Coursework Extensions

Should a request for a time extension on coursework exceed the end of the term, a *Coursework Extension Application* must be completed and submitted to the Office of the Registrar. The extension (if granted) will be recorded on the student record. Extensions are granted at the discretion of the instructor and registrar. If granted, time extensions do not excuse you from a final examination where one has been scheduled for the course. More conditions apply.

Exam Scheduling

Students who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a *Revised Final Exam Time Application* to the Office of the Registrar by the deadline noted in the Academic Calendar. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; or 2) the scheduled final examination slot results in three consecutive examination periods. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

Communication

Your Ambrose email account is the University's primary and official mode of communication with you. Information delivered to your Ambrose email is considered official notification. Ambrose University is not responsible for your failure to receive important information delivered to your Ambrose email.

Lecture Recording

The recording of lectures or any other classroom academic activity, other than an audio recording as an accommodation, is prohibited except at the discretion of the instructor. Any use other than that agreed upon with the instructor constitutes academic misconduct and may result in suspension or expulsion. Permission to allow a lecture recording is not a transfer of any copyrights, so such recordings may be used only for individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class and may not be reproduced, transferred, distributed or displayed in any public or commercial manner. Student must destroy recordings in any, and all formats at the end of the semester in which they are enrolled in the class. All students recording lectures, must sign the Permission Form to audio record lectures which is available through the Office of the Registrar.

Standards of Behaviour in the Classroom Setting

Learning is an active and interactive process, a joint venture between student and instructor and between student and student. Some topics covered within a class may lead to strong reactions and opinions. It is important that Students understand that they are entitled to hold contradictory beliefs and that they should be encouraged to engage with these topics in a critical manner. Committing to this type of "active learning" significantly increases the learning experience for both teacher and student, and reflects the Christian imperative to pursue truth, which lies at the heart of the Ambrose educational experience. However, active discussion of controversial topics will be undertaken with respect and empathy, which are the foundations of civil discourse in the Classroom Setting. Primary responsibility for managing the classroom rests with the instructor. The instructor may direct a student to leave the class if the student engages in any behaviour that disrupts the classroom setting. If necessary, Ambrose security will be contacted to escort the student from class.

Academic Integrity

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to acknowledge to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar that

deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student's permanent record.

Academic Policies

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Academic Calendar. The academic calendar can be found at <https://ambrose.edu/academics/academic-calendar>

Privacy

Personal information (information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual) may be required as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.

Academic Success and Supports

Accessibility Services

Academic accommodation is provided to Ambrose students with disabilities in accordance with the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Provision of academic accommodation does not lower the academic standards of the university nor remove the need for evaluation and the need to meet essential learning outcomes. Reasonable accommodations are tailored to the individual student, are flexible, and are determined by considering the barriers within the unique environment of a postsecondary institution. It can take time to organize academic accommodations and funding for disability-related services. Students with a disability who wish to have an academic accommodation are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services as early as possible to ensure appropriate planning for any needs that may include accommodations. Staff can then meet with students to determine areas to facilitate success, and if accommodations are required, ensure those accommodations are put in place by working with faculty.

Ambrose Writing Services

Ambrose Writing services provides academic support in the four foundational literacy skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It also assists students with critical thinking and the research process. Throughout the academic year, students can meet with a writing tutor for personalized support, or they can attend a variety of workshops offered by Academic Success. These services are free to students enrolled at Ambrose University. Academic Success serves all students in all disciplines and at all levels, from history to biology and from theatre to theology. To learn more, please visit <https://ambrose.edu/sas/writing-services>

Ambrose Tutoring Services

Ambrose Tutoring Services provides support in specific disciplinary knowledge, especially in high-demand areas such as chemistry, philosophy, math and statistics, and religious studies. These tutors also coach students in general study skills, including listening and note-taking. During the academic year, Ambrose Tutoring Services

offers drop-in tutoring for courses with high demand; for other courses, students can book a one-to-one appointment with a tutor in their discipline. These services are free to students enrolled at Ambrose University. To learn more, please visit <https://ambrose.edu/tutoring>.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. We encourage students to build mental health supports and to reach out when help is needed.

On Campus:

- Counselling Services: ambrose.edu/counselling
- For immediate crisis support, there are staff on campus who are trained in Suicide Intervention Skills and can help you access mental health support. See <https://ambrose.edu/student-life/crisissupport> for a list of staff members.
- For additional wellness resources go to the Ambrose wellness page: <https://ambrose.edu/wellness>

Off Campus:

- Distress Centre - 403-266-4357
- Alberta Mental Health Helpline - 1-877-303-2642 (Toll free)
- Sheldon Chumir Health Care Centre - 403-955-6200
- Emergency - 911

Sexual Violence Support

We are committed to supporting students who have experienced gender based sexual violence in the past or while at Ambrose. Many of the staff, faculty, and student leaders have received Sexual Violence Response to Disclosure training. We will support you and help you find the resources you need and you can access information about reporting. Information about the Sexual Violence policy and on and off campus supports can be found on our website— ambrose.edu/sexual-violence-response-and-awareness.

Off Campus:

- Alberta's Oneline for Sexual Violence - 1-866-403-8000 call or text
- Clinic: Sheldon Chumir Health Centre - 403-955-6200
- Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse - 403-237-5888
- Chat: www.calgarycasa.com

Note: Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records.