ECC 648: Family Systems Theory and Practice

School of Education and Leadership

3 Credits
Effective Date (first date to be offered, 1/1/2022)
List any Pre-requisite or Co-Requisite: None

Access to the Internet is required.
All written assignments must be in Microsoft-Word-compatible formats.
See the library's APA Style Guide tutorial for a list of resources that can help you use APA style.

Faculty Information

Professional experience information for instructors is found under *Syllabus, Schedule, and Course Team* in the online course menu.

Contact Information

Contact information for instructors is found under *Syllabus, Schedule, and Course Team* in the online course menu.

Course Description

Students examine how aspects of Family Therapy theory and practice address the needs of K-12 students and their families while also establishing and maintaining a positive school climate. Topics include the roles members play in hierarchical systems (family and organizations); therapeutic practices for highlighting family strengths and resilience and for addressing family problems; and methods for analyzing the relationship between family systems. Attention is given to cultural diversity in family patterns. Upon completion of this course, students are able to use a

variety of Family Therapy theories and interventions including genograms for assessment and treatment in family systems.

Course Resources

Required and recommended resources to complete coursework and assignments are found on the course Reading List. Access is provided through the *Reading List* link in your online course as well as from the library homepage ("Find Your Reading List" button).

Note: Required resources that must be purchased by the student are tagged "Purchase from a vendor of your choosing." Required resources with a direct link, "Available through CityU Library", are available electronically at no cost to students.

Students in Canada may purchase course resources from the Canada Bookstore, and students outside the U.S. and Canada should contact their advisor or textbook coordinator for additional information.

Course Outcomes

This course will prepare students to:

- Explore family systems models, history, and current applications
- Explore systems thinking from diverse cultural perspectives (ways of being, doing and knowing)
- Apply systems concepts to one's own family
- Apply systems concepts to school environment
- Develop a systemic perspective of individual and family wellbeing, including culture, gender, social determinants of health
- Demonstrate a collaborative approach through case conceptualization

Program Learning Outcomes

- Collaboration skills - Establish relationships and collaborate with students, professional colleagues, families, and community members to enhance students' participation in education, growth, and wellbeing.

Core Concepts, Knowledge, and Skills

- Family life cycle
- Diverse family constellations
- General systems theory

- Social determinants of health
- Perspective and biases
- Family systems concepts (such as triangulation, structure, boundaries, differentiation)
- Systems approach to case management
- Collaborative practice with family members, school community, and broader community
- Genogram and eco maps as therapeutic tools
- Impact of family of origin and background on school counselling practice

Grading Scale

The grades earned for the course will be calculated using City University of Seattle's decimal grading system, found in the current University Catalog (https://www.cityu.edu/catalog/).

Grading rubrics with details on how each assignment will be graded are located under *Assignments* and/or in *My Grades* in the online course menu. Students should review the rubric for each assignment prior to completing their work in order to understand how it will be assessed.

Course Assignments and Grading

Overview of Required Assignments	% of Final Grade
Genogram Interview and Reflection	15%
Family Dynamics and Genogram Paper	40%
Family systems assessment and intervention plan group assignment	35%
Participation and Engagement	10%
TOTAL	**100%**

Genogram Interview and Reflection (15% of Final Grade)

Students will interview each other in pairs in class to develop genograms. Students will draw the genogram and share their learning and reflections from the experience of doing their classmate's genogram.

Students will write a short reflection on the process of interviewing their colleague about their genogram. This reflection will be submitted along with the genogram.

In this assignment, students explore current applications of family systems and apply systems concepts to their family.

Grading criteria	% of Grade
Genogram drawing	Complete/ Incomplete
Reflection on interview, genogram, and learning	80%
Academic standards	20%

TOTAL	100%

Family Dynamics and Genogram Paper (40% of Final Grade)

Students describe the culture of their family of origin (or significant family of influence if not raised in the same household as family of origin), drawing on key concept in family systems theory. Students choose several concepts to be explored in depth. A list of key concepts is provided separately.

In this assignment, students apply family systems models and concepts to their family and develop a systemic perspective of individual and family wellbeing, thinking from diverse cultural perspectives.

Drawing on assigned readings, students analyze family dynamics in terms of perceived strengths and challenges. Family dynamics are linked to specific theoretical concepts, integrating references throughout. As an appendix to the paper, students create a genogram of their family of origin (or family of influence) displaying at least three generations.

This assignment should be 8 - 10 pages of text (*plus* a title, reference page, and appendix genogram), double-spaced and in APA format.

Grading criteria	*% of Grade*
Insight/ application of theory	40%
Family story/ dynamics	20%
Self-awareness	10%
Academic standards	10%
Appendix Genogram	20%
TOTAL	**100%**

Family Systems Assessment and Intervention Plan (35% of Final Grade)

In groups, students prepare an in-class presentation of a case analysis and the intervention plan, including pertinent aspects of case management for a case provided by the instructor.

In this assignment, students apply systems concepts to the school environment and demonstrate a collaborative approach through case conceptualization.

The group presentation is used to present to the rest of the class, the key components of the case analysis and the intervention plan. The theory used, and key interventions with the family are to be outlined. Groups will select a family systems theory treatment, and describe how they, as school counsellors, would apply that theory in working with a particular family. They will write and present the hypothesis/assessment and intervention using systemic language.

The presentation structure will consist of:

1. Introduction to the presenting issues experienced by the family.
2. A hypothesis statement/assessment that indicates an awareness of systems theory.
3. An explanation of how the family's challenges might be addressed in the context of the school setting including a broader case management plan.
4. An explanation of the use of at least one Family Systems theory and examples of practical intervention strategies for use in the school setting.
5. Specific suggestions to address this presenting issue with the student and their family in either an introductory session or a second session after some rapport has been established.

Grading criteria	% of Grade
Core issues	10%
Analysis	25%
Goal and approaches	20%
Case management	20%
Presentation skills	10%
Collaboration skills	15%
TOTAL	**100%**

Participation and Engagement (10% of Final Grade)

Participation and engagement are an integral part of this course. Student preparation for class and participation are essential because the information, knowledge, skills, and expertise they exchange with peers and instructor(s) contribute toward the learning community.

Meaningful participation and engagement include not only participation in class and small group discussions, engagement with course content, and sharing ideas/experiences/resources, but also self-awareness, listening, collaboration, engaging in dialogue, and continuous self-reflection.

Components	% of Grade
Participation and Engagement	**100%**
(including thoughtful engagement, meaningful contribution, collaboration, self-awareness, self-reflection, and responsibility for own learning)	
TOTAL	**100%**

Course Policies

Course policies on topics such as *Late Assignments, Participation,* and *Professional Writing* are found under *Course Information* in the online course menu. Students are responsible for reviewing and applying these policies while enrolled in this course.

University Policies

Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to all of City University of Seattle's academic policies. The most current versions of these policies can be found in the [University Catalog](#) that is linked from the CityU Web site.

Antidiscrimination

City University of Seattle and its staff and faculty are committed to supporting our students. We value equity, diversity, and inclusion as a way of life as well as the educational opportunities it provides. City U will not tolerate any form of discrimination based on race, color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identification, socioeconomic status, or religious values. If you have experienced any discrimination based on any of the above, we encourage you to report this to the University. Please report this to your instructor. If you do not feel safe reporting this to your instructor, please report to the Provost or to the Vice President of Student Affairs.

Non-Discrimination & Prohibition of Sexual Harassment

City University of Seattle adheres to all federal, state, and local civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination in employment and education. The University is committed to ensuring that the education environment is bounded by standards of mutual respect and safety and is free from discriminatory practices.

In the U.S., the University is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to ensure that all of its education programs and activities do not discriminate on the basis of sex/gender. Sex include sex, sex stereotypes, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and pregnancy or parenting status. Sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking are forms of sex discrimination, which are prohibited under Title IX and by City University of Seattle policy. City University of Seattle also prohibits retaliation against any person opposing discrimination or participating in any discrimination investigation or complaint process internal or external to the institution. Questions regarding Title IX, including its application and/or concerns about noncompliance, should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator. For a complete copy of the policy or for more information, visit https://my.cityu.edu/titleix or contact the Title IX Coordinator.

In Canada, in compliance with the British Columbia Human Rights Code, the Alberta Human Rights Act, WorksafeBC, and the Workers' Compensation Board of Alberta, the University believes that its environment should at all times be supportive and respectful of the dignity and self-esteem of individuals. Discrimination, harassment and bullying conduct, whether through person to person behaviour or via electronic communications such as email or social media is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. As an educational institution, it is our responsibility to cultivate an environment of excellence, equity, mutual respect and to recognize the value and potential of every individual. The University will take all necessary steps to meet or exceed the requirements of the law to prevent discrimination, harassment and bullying. The Respectful Workplace Policy for the prevention of discrimination, harassment and bullying policy and

procedure can be found at https://www.cityu.edu/discover-cityu/about-cityu/ under the Policies section or at https://www.cityuniversity.ca/about/.

Religious Accommodations

City University of Seattle has a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The University's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available in the University Catalog and on the my.cityu.edu student portal. Accommodations must be requested by the 20% mark of this course (e.g. day 14 of a ten-week course, day 7 of a 5-week course) using the Religious Accommodations Request Form found on the student dashboard in the my.cityu.edu student portal.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity in students requires the pursuit of scholarly activity that is free from fraud, deception and unauthorized collaboration with other individuals. Students are responsible for understanding CityU's policy on academic integrity and adhering to its standards in meeting all course requirements. A complete copy of this policy can be found in the University Catalog under *Student Rights and Responsibilities* on the page titled *Academic Integrity Policy.*

Attendance

Students taking courses in any format at the University are expected to be diligent in their studies and to attend class regularly.

Regular class attendance is important in achieving learning outcomes in the course and may be a valid consideration in determining the final grade. For classes where a physical presence is required, a student has attended if they are present at any time during the class session. For online classes, a student has attended if they have posted or submitted an assignment. A complete copy of this policy can be in the University Catalog under *Student Rights and Responsibilities* on the page titled *Attendance.*

Final Assignment Due Date

Final assignments for each class at CityU must be due on or before the final date of the course as indicated in the university's course information system. Due dates that extend beyond the final date of the course may negatively impact tuition funding for students.

Support Services

Disability Services Accommodations Statement

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Please contact Disability Support Services at *disability@cityu.edu* or 206.239.4752 or visit the Disability Support Services page in the my.cityu.edu portal. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors.

Library Services

CityU librarians are available to help students find the resources and information they need to succeed in this course. Contact a CityU librarian through the Ask a Librarian service, or access library resources and services online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Smarthinking Tutoring

CityU students have access to free online tutoring offered through Smarthinking, including writing support, from certified tutors 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Contact CityU's Student Support Center at help@cityu.ed to request a user name and password.

Course Schedule

This is an optional tool for building a course schedule as part of the master syllabus.