

Course Description

This course will introduce students to family systems perspectives. The focus is on preparing students to think systemically and to learn about family concepts, dynamics, and theories. Issues across the family life cycle will be discussed. Strategies and techniques in pastorally working with families will be explored. As the use of self is extremely important for those engaged in the healing, spiritual, and pastoral ministries, students will be invited to apply the concepts learned in this course to their own self-understanding and formation of pastoral identity.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course:

1. Students will be able to describe and apply family systems theory and other relevant theories in working with individuals/couples/families;
2. Students will apply their understanding of the developmental phases of family life and how the phases predict certain stressors and opportunities for change when working with individuals/couples/families;
3. Students will discuss how to engage individuals/couples/families with increased awareness of problems that impede family functioning, including issues related to socioeconomic disadvantage discrimination and bias, addictive behaviors, and other contextual factors;
4. Students will apply concepts of diversity to working with diverse types of families;
5. Students will recognize the impact of one's own family-of-origin life experiences in the context of one's pastoral identity and the use of self in pastoral care/counseling.

Course Method

Online discussions held Tuesday evenings at 6:30 pm CST*, Blackboard discussion, reading assignments, lecture notes, videos, and written assignments. There is also a two day intensive in St Louis, July 12-13, 2013.

Required Texts

Friedman, E. H. (1985, 2011). *Generation to generation: Family process in church and synagogue*. New York: Guilford Press. ISBN-10: 1609182367; ISBN-13: 978-1609182366.

Richardson, R. W. (2005). *Becoming a healthier pastor: Family systems theory and the pastor's own family*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. ISBN-10: 0800636392; ISBN-13: 978-0800636395.

Richardson, R. W. (2010). *Couples in conflict: A family systems approach to marriage counseling*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. ISBN-10: 080069628X; ISBN-13: 978-0800696283.

Satir, V. (1988). *The new peoplemaking*. Mountain View, CA: Science and Behavior Books. ISBN-10: 0831400706; ISBN-13: 978-0831400705

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to complete all assignments by the deadline indicated. Late submissions will result in reduction of grades, with one grade reduction each additional week. Attendance, class participation, weekly reflection, genogram, interview and self-assessment, and integration papers.

Dates

Class will meet for 8 weeks beginning the week of June 3 and ending July 29th. One hour Adobe Connect video conference each Tuesday (except July 2) at 6:30 pm CST*. Two day intensive in St Louis, MO July 12 (9 am – 8 pm (with breaks for lunch and dinner) and July 13 (9 am – 1pm)

*- time may be adjusted based on student availability