The University of Oklahoma  
College of Continuing Education  
Advanced Programs – Course Syllabus  

Course Title:  
Marriage and Family Therapy  

Course Number:  
HR 5513-491  

Course Description:  
Most marriage and family therapy has as its foundation system theory. System theory operates from the  
principle that to fully understand situations or events, one has to understand the impact upon its  
environment. To be more specific, with regard to marriage and family counseling/therapy one family  
member’s action has an impact upon other members, or in the case of a husband and wife the other  
member; therefore the therapist or counselor must become aware of the impact upon all members of the  
family. Although system theory currently dominates the approach to family therapy there is an emerging  
philosophy within family therapy which basically states “the problem is the cause of the problem.”  
Basically what this approach to counseling/therapy is attempting to do is to remove the burden of guilt or  
responsibility for the problem from the clients and emphasize the solutions that will help overcome the  
problems. The leading proponents of this approach are Narrative therapy and Solution Focused therapy.  
Both approaches, to marriage and family therapy, system theory and the theories that focus on solution  
approach are studied in this course. Therefore, you will receive a comprehensive view of marriage and  
family therapy. The course is designed to examine how each school views the structure of the family; how  
family members communicate with each other and the impact of these communication patterns.  
Additionally the course is designed to explore the impact cultural factors have upon family dynamics, and  
how counselors can exhibit cultural sensitivity in working with families of various backgrounds. Also the  
course is designed to discuss ethical issues.  

Course Dates:  
January 2-April 30, 2014  
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: December 4, 2013  

Site Director:  
This is a three-credit hour online course. Please see your local Site Director or e-mail our online site  
coordinator at aponline@ou.edu  

Professor Contact Information:  
Course Professor: Willie V. Bryan Ed.D  
Mailing Address: 1141 N. Windemere Dr.  
Oklahoma City, OK. 73117  
Telephone Number: (405) 424-2161  
E-mail Address: williebryan@cox.net  
Virtual Office Hours: 7:30-9:30 Monday thru Friday  
Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail to students during the above  
listed Virtual Office Hours and other methods by arrangement.  

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:  
Student materials are available at the OU Follett Bookstore located at 1185 Asp Avenue; Norman, OK.  
Orders can be placed online at www.oklahoma.bkstr.com. Faxed orders may be placed 24 hours a day at  
(405) 325-7770. Representatives are available by phone at (405) 325-3511 or (800) 522-0772 (toll-free)  
or E-mail at 0831mgr@fheg.follett.com from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
on Friday; and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday (CST). Summer hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday (CST). (Text prices are available online.)


3. Materials posted on the Electronic Reserve system: Access the OU Electronic Reserves Page at [http://libraries.ou.edu/eresources/reserves/](http://libraries.ou.edu/eresources/reserves/); enter OU NetID (4x4) and password, and select course and access material. Please contact your local Site Director if you require assistance.

Note: Follett is the Advanced Programs contractual textbook provider. Should text changes become necessary after publication of the course syllabus, Advanced Programs will facilitate text returns/refunds only for texts purchased through Follett.

**OU E-Mail:**

All official correspondence from distance learning instructors will be sent only to students’ ou.edu address.

**Online Learning Resource Center:**

The Online Learning Resource Center of the University of Oklahoma’s College of Arts and Sciences Online Program is here to serve you and assist you with any questions, problems, or concerns you may have. For assistance go to [http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/](http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/) or contact us by telephone at: (405) 325-5854 or Email: casonline@ou.edu

**Course Objectives:**

- To assist students with regard to understanding the foundations of marriage and family therapy.
- To assist students with regard to understanding some of the leading schools of thought in marriage and family therapy.
- To assist students with regard to understanding how and why family members interact with each other.
- To assist student with regard to understanding cultural factors this may impact family dynamics.
- To assist students with regard to understanding ethical issues in marriage and family therapy.
- To assist students develop appropriate techniques with regard to helping manage various family issues and dynamics.

**Assignments, Grading, and Due Dates:**

**Discussions:**

Within the Desire2Learn (D2L) system there is a discussion section, there will be questions and/or issues listed for each unit except unit five. You are expected to participate in some or all discussions. The discussion section is a method by which you can explore and explain your thoughts and ideas with your classmates. To be more specific, this is an opportunity for you to learn from each other. Also, within the discussion section there is space for you to introduce yourself to your classmates as well as ask the professor questions.

Unit One

1. Should everyone planning to marry go through marriage counseling/therapy? Defend your answer.
2. Should there be a minimum educational/training requirement for a person to conduct marriage counseling? If yes what should the requirement(s) be? Defend the position you take.

Unit Two
1. Should a marriage and/or family counselor/therapy be married to conduct therapy? Defend your answer.
2. Should a person who is divorced be licensed as a marriage counselor? Defend your answer.

Unit Three
What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the counselor/therapist helping professional being of the same or similar ethnic/racial background?

Unit Four
What is your favorite family counseling therapy and why?

Unit Papers:

Unit One:
Marriage and Family systems dynamics---Students are required to write two papers (minimum length five pages each). With regard to the first paper, students must explain system theory as it relates to marriage and family counseling. Stated in other terms, the student must explain what system theory is and how this theory and its components impact family counseling. With regard to the second paper, students must explain solution focus theory and the narrative family therapy concept. With regard to explaining these counseling approaches, the student must explain what these approaches are and how they differ from the system theory counseling approach. Each paper is worth 10 points; total number of points for this unit is 20.

Class Notes are found by reading chapters one, two and four in the text The Essentials of Family Counseling, reading chapter nine in the text The Helping Professional.

Unit Two:
Personality Development---Students are required to write three papers (minimum length five pages each). With regard to paper #1, students are required to select one of the following three family therapies: Strategic Family Therapy, Structural Family Therapy or Experiential Family Therapy and write a minimum of five pages providing a brief explanation of the therapy. With regard to paper #2, students are required to write a minimum of five pages briefly explaining Psychoanalytical Family Therapy. With regard to paper #3, students are required to write a minimum of five pages briefly explaining Cognitive Behavioral Family Therapy. Each paper is worth 10 points; total number of points for this unit is 30.

Class Notes are found by reading chapters six, seven, eight, nine and ten in Nichols’ text Family Therapy.

Unit Three:
Understanding the dynamics of Cultural Differences---Students are required to write two papers (minimum of five pages each). With regard to the first paper, the students are required to discuss how culture may influence human behavior. Stated in other terms, what are some of the cultural variables that a person has acquired that may be impacting his/her behavior. With regard to the second paper, students are required to discuss how cultural components of a client’s personality may influence his/her reactions to a helping professional. Offered as an example, a counselor is working with a client with regard to abuse of alcohol, however, the client was reared in an environment where excessive alcohol use was acceptable; in fact use of alcohol was somewhat of a rite of passage to adulthood. The student in writing the paper is not only expected to identify some problems that may be presented with regard to cultural differences, he/she is expected to offer solutions to the problems identified. Each paper is worth 10 points; total number of points are 20. Class notes are found by reading chapter five in The Helping Professional text.
Unit Four:
Theory and Techniques of Marriage and Family Therapy---Students are presented with a case study which includes a series of questions to be answered. The answers to the case study questions require students to apply theories and concepts obtained from units one two and three. **Paper is worth 15 points.** Class notes are found by reading chapters six, seven and nine in The Helping Professional text and reading chapters’ five to ten and twelve and thirteen in The Nichols text.

Unit Five:
Theory and Techniques of Marriage and Family Therapy---Students are presented with a case study which includes a series of questions to be answered. This unit is different from Unit Four in that cultural and ethical issues are emphasized. The answers to the case study questions require the students to apply theories and concepts obtained from units one thru three. Paper is worth 15 points. Class notes are found by reading chapters five thru ten in the Nichols text and reading chapter nine in The Helping Professional text.

**Grading:**
This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

**Notice:** Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.

**Policy for Late Work:**
Please contact the professor regarding his/her policy for late work

**Important Notice - Penalty for late submission:**
Unless permission is given by the instructor for late submission, one point is deducted for each day an assignment is submitted late.

**Attendance Policy:**
In addition to interaction via Desire2Learn and E-mail contact, students are required to contact the instructor via E-mail or telephone BEFORE the beginning of the course term for an initial briefing. Although physical class meetings are not part of this course, participation in all interactive, learning activities is required.

Student assignments and student/instructor communications will be conducted via Desire2Learn, although students may contact the instructor via telephone, postal mail, e-mail, or fax as needed

**Incomplete Grade Policy:**
A grade of “I” is not automatically assigned, but rather must be requested by the student by submitting to the instructor a “Petition for and Work to Remove an Incompleted Grade” form. An “I” can never be used in lieu of an “F” nor can an “I” be assigned because of excessive failure to participate in class activities.

**Technical Support Information:**
If you experience technical problems, contact Information Technology by visiting their website at: [http://webapps.ou.edu/it/](http://webapps.ou.edu/it/) or contacting them by telephone at: (405) 325-HELP (4357).
Procedures for Completion of Course Evaluation:

Upon completion of the course students should go to the Advanced Programs Distance Learning webpage and click on the applicable semester link under “Course Evaluations” which will direct them to the evaluation. The evaluation will take approximately five minutes to complete. Completion of the online evaluation is an important tool allowing Advanced Programs to gain information and student feedback for improvement of courses.

Your responses will be kept confidential. They will be reviewed by the department and only supplied to the professor once grades for the course have been submitted.

Important information you should know about online courses:

- To sign on to Desire2Learn (D2L), log in using your 4+4 and your OU network password (note that this is the same 4+4 and password that you use to access your OU email). Once you are logged in, please look for “My Courses,” locate your course and click on it. Remember to check your course site on D2L every day.

- Students enrolled in online courses may be required to take the CAS student orientation in Desire 2 Learn. To take the orientation, sign-on to D2L and then click on “Self Registration” at the top left corner of the page. Information about and instructions for the orientation can be found at http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/public/students/orientation.htm
POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Note: Attendance/absences do not apply to online courses. However, participation in all course activities is extremely important to student success in online courses.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution’s policy regarding “I” (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy. Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any “I” (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on “financial aid probation.” If the “I” grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student’s Financial Aid may be suspended make the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Honesty

Honesty is a fundamental precept in all academic activities and … [you] have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty. Academic misconduct in any form is inimical to the purposes and functions of the University and is therefore unacceptable and is rigorously proscribed. Academic misconduct includes:

- cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; assisting others in any such act; or attempting to engage in such acts.

All acts of academic misconduct will be reported and adjudicated as prescribed by the student code of the University of Oklahoma. All students should review the Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity

Accommodation Statement

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your local OU Site Director.

Course Policies

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course.

Copyright

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: http://www.goou.ou.edu/
INSTRUCTOR VITA
Willie V. Bryan, Ed. D

Education:
- 1972 M Ed, Counseling, University of Oklahoma, Norman Ok.
- 1968 MS, Psychology, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater Ok.
- 1966 BA, Education, Central State College, Edmond Ok.

Current Positions:
- Professor Emeritus University of Oklahoma
- Adjunct Professor, Human Relations, University of Oklahoma
- Adjunct Professor, College of Liberal Studies, University of Oklahoma

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses
- Helping Relationships
- Psychosocial Aspects of Disabilities

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest
- Counseling
- Disabilities
- Cultural and Social Diversity

Representative Publications and Presentations

Representative Honors and Awards Received
- Superior Teaching Award—College of Liberal Studies—University of Oklahoma, 2009
- Rufus G. Hall Faculty Award—College of Liberal Studies—University of Oklahoma, 2008

Major Professional Affiliations
- Golden Key National Honor Society
- University of Oklahoma Black Faculty and Staff