

**PSYC 6350 Clinical Marriage and Family Assessment**  
**New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary**  
**Spring 2015**  
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**Mission Statement:**

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

**Course Purpose, Core Value Focus, and Curriculum Competencies Addressed**

The purpose of this course is to provide theological training designed to enhance a student's potential to respond effectively and redemptively to persons struggling with emotional, relational, and/or spiritual problems. With an emphasis on the core value of Spiritual Vitality, students will be challenged to see how both personally and in the lives of families they can have a part in helping families discover the importance of God in their relationships. This course will specifically address the competencies of interpersonal skills, servant leadership, and spiritual/character formation.

**Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to enable students to assess family systems, to develop knowledge of current family life demographics, and to examine various clinical family assessment techniques and tools. Lectures, discussions, assessments and experiential methods are used to help students gain an understanding of marriage and family styles, symptomatology, and interviewing and assessment techniques. PSYC 6350 is a prerequisite to all other "therapy" courses taught at NOBTS.

At the conclusion of the course, the student will:

1. Demonstrate understanding of a Biblical theology of marriage and family, and use this understanding in activities of assessment and planning for intervention.
2. Possess an enhanced knowledge of family life demographics.
3. Be able to perform multidimensional family assessments which examine the ecological fit, the intergenerational issues, the life cycle issues, the family structure and the communication and transactional patterns of the family.
4. Be able to assess risks in families, and discern special needs, including the risks of family violence, maltreatment of children, misuse of substances, and risks resulting from lack of resources such as homelessness and poverty.
5. Be able to work with diverse family structures in a culturally responsive way, selecting and adapting practice models and intervention strategies which are most effective in the family's cultural context.
6. Be able to develop and contract effective treatment plans which meet the complex needs of families faced with multiple challenges in a manner which empowers families through their involvement in setting goals and making choices.
7. Be able to select and implement intervention strategies appropriate for family needs and treatment goals.
8. Be prepared for more advanced courses in marriage and family therapy.

## Course Teaching Methodology

A variety of teaching methods will be used in this course including lecture, powerpoint presentations, demonstration of the use of various family assessment instruments, videotaped counseling sessions, class discussions, and role plays.

## Required Textbooks:

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Shellenberger, S. (2008). *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention*. N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Co.

Ragg, D.M. *Building Family Practice Skills: Methods, Strategies, and Tools*. Brooks/Cole

## Optional Textbooks

Balswick, J.O., and Balswick, J.K. (1999). *The Family: A Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home* (2d ed.). Baker Books.

DeMaria, Rita, et. al. (1999). *Focused Genograms: Intergenerational Assessment of Individuals, Couples, and Families*. NY: Brunner/Mazel.

McGoldrick, M., (2005). *Ethnicity and Family Therapy* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). NY: The Guilford Press.

## Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Family Culture Assignments	20%
Family Assessment Assignment	
Genogram	15%
Assessment	15%
Treatment Plan (Contract)	15%
Class Participation/Reading	10%
Exercises	10%
Journal	15%

## Assignments Required of All Students:

- Family Culture Paper (20%)** Students will select a cultural group that are different from the culture in which they have been raised. After selecting a cultural group, the student will read and explore the cultural impact on families in that culture utilizing the categories in the cultural ring presented in class. (There is digital copy of the Culture Ring on Blackboard for your use in the assignment). A great resource is McGoldrick, M., (2005). *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*. **Due Feb 10**
  - Application of the Culture Ring using a Digital Copy of the Culture Ring. Hard copy to be turned in at class Feb 10 (60 points of this assignment.)
  - In considering parenting patterns common within the Conservative Religious Groups (chart, p. 82 in Ragg), are there any differences between these practices and the practices of the dominant culture? Please prepare a chart similar to the chart on p. 82 for the culture group you studied. Include a bullet point list at bottom of chart page listing the differences. Hard copy to Be turned in at class Feb. 10. Post this chart on Blackboard/Discussion Board/Cultural Ring Assignment. (25 points of this assignment.)
  - Describe formal and informal supports available for families within this culture here in New Orleans (15 points of this assignment.). Include any websites or group contact information. This should be at the bottom of Culture Ring page.
- Family Assessment Assignment (45% total grade) (3 sections)**

This assignment has three components each due on different dates. Each component builds on the previous work. The first paper requires one to complete a genogram of their family, the second selects a couple from the larger family to perform an assessment, the last element completes a treatment plan (contract)

complete with goals and objectives. All of the content will be drawn from the class materials and your family . The papers are self-reflective but must apply the course concepts.

### **Genogram (15%) – 1 large page**

The genogram assignment builds the skills associated with tracking family patterns. This is a critical skill for family work. While some students may have completed similar assignments in the past, it is important to complete this assignment as it provides a foundation for future assignments in this course. Make sure you have the following three sections on your genogram.

1. Draw a three generational genogram. Make sure you include your parents' parents, your parents and yourself. If you are married do the same for your partner. What you want to have is a clear genogram of who has been influential in the family system over three generations. (25 points)
2. Identify intergenerational patterns (interaction, roles). On the genogram, use a legend and lines to identify the relationships among the members. Be sure to identify very close, conflicted and tenuous relationships as they occurred in the family systems. Also include notes to identify critical roles (e.g., family hero, scapegoat, peacemaker, rescuer, clown) played by the different members and content to reflect the themes associated with the different members. These notations should be brief and included on the genogram. Be sure to refer to the document "Break the Power of the Past" on Blackboard/Documents. (37.5 points)
3. Identify triangles and coalitions. On the genogram, review the patterns outlined in section 2 and identify critical triangles and coalitions. Use a highlighter to illustrate the triangles/coalitions and at the bottom of the genogram, briefly describe how they operated in the family system. (37.5 points) **Feb 24**

### **Assessment (15%)**

If you are in a marital relationship base this assignment on yourself. If not, try to use your family of origin. (See BlackBoard for more instructions, forms, and grading rubric.)

1. Using a four-cell model (p. 137 Ragg), extract from your genogram your biological and environmental influences. Jot the critical themes in the boxes on the four-cell model. (10 points)
2. From these themes, identify next the belief systems and affective processing that emerged from living in your family structure. (10 points)
3. For each processing/belief system, identify in the behavior cell the corresponding action/interactions. (10 points)
4. Repeat steps 1 – 3 for your partner (or other parent if parents are used) (20 points)
5. Using a split model (split on beliefs and behaviors) identify the similarities and differences between partners. (20 points)
6. Write an assessment statement (sample begins page 179) outlining the challenges that emerge through the two models as they combine. Outline how each model has similarities or differences that contribute to different types of challenges in the relationship (30 points). **Due March 3**

### **Treatment Plan (15%)**

This assignment builds on the previous assignments. In this assignment one assumes that engagement has occurred and you are proceeding with service. This assignment is to develop a treatment plan. *This assignment is an embedded assignment that will be completed by all students for all sections of this course. The rubric for grading this assignment is attached to this syllabus. Please complete the assignment according to this rubric.* (See Blackboard for more instructions and a form.)

1. Identify one or two goals that would help the family members from the engagement assignment resolve their situation. (see Ragg 192 and following) (20 points)
2. For the goals, identify objectives that would need to be met to achieve those goals. (20 points)
3. Identify how goal achievement would be measured and integrate the measures into a contract through outlining an evaluation plan. (20 points)
4. Identify the types of service activity that you would use to achieve each goal and objective. (20 points)
5. Identify other people or supports that you would try to include. Make sure you identify the roles that each would play and how they would fit into the goals. (20 points). **March 17**

### **4. Participation/Reading (10%)**

**In any class period that I believe you have not read, I will request a reading report, which if is below 90% of the assignment read will count as an absence.**

This course is a combined seminar and lecture which will require active participation. Active participation involves: 1) being in class on time, 2) being prepared for discussion by completing the assigned readings, 3) talking during discussions, 4) applying the readings during discussion, 5) staying on topic and focused during discussions, and 6) Students are expected to attend all classes. Attendance also involves being in class on time and ready to work. NOBTS regulations declare class failure if a student misses more than 9 hours in a 3 credit course (6 class periods). However, part of your participation grade will be based on how many absences the student has. The following guidelines is used to help calculate the class attendance part of the grade for participation: 0-2 absences -0 pts/ 3-4 absences -1 pt/5-6 absences -2 pts. 3 tardes are equal to one absence.

5. **Exercises (10%)**

Fifteen chapter exercises will be used as part of class discussions. Students will receive 6.66 points for completing each of the chapter exercises assigned and handing them in the day of class. The exercises must be completed before class. Exercises need to be type written on a separate sheet of paper, with questions included.

6. **Course Journal (15%)**

The student will keep a journal throughout this course. There are 8 entries assigned, but students are encouraged to make more entries if they desire.

As you complete the journal assignments, you should continually be assessing your interactions, thoughts, emotions that reflect your understanding of the strengths and resilience in your family, and reflecting on how these observations and experiences help your personal and professional development. The Journal assignments are listed after the Reading and Writing Assignments. These Journal Assignments can also be accessed by downloading the syllabus from Blackboard.

Please copy and paste each Journal Assignment at the top of each entry.

The journal will be kept in a soft three pronged folder, not a binder. Each entry can be turned in alone, then when returned to the student, added to the folder.

The complete journal will be turned in with Journal assignment #8, then returned at the final. All Journal Assignments need to be turned in as hard copies.

**Reading Assignments/Class Assignments and Journal Schedule:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Content/Objectives</b>	<b>Reading / Class Assignments Due For This Week</b>
<b>Week 1 Tuesday Jan 20</b>	Introduction/ Review of Syllabus/ Theology of Marriage and Family (Review) Family In the USA	
<b>Week 2 Tuesday Jan 27</b>	<b>Thinking Family: Theories &amp; Frameworks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the context for family-based practice:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introducing variations in family structure</li> <li>• introducing trends in family intervention</li> <li>• introducing the basic functions of the family</li> </ul> </li> </ul> Highlight the differences between individual to systemic thinking concepts	<b>Readings Due:</b> Ragg: Ch 1 McGoldrick: Ch 1 & 2  <b>Journal #1</b>
<b>Week 3 Tuesday Feb 3</b>	<b>Thinking Family In A Cultural Context</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review different approaches to thinking family including parental functions</li> <li>• Explore diverse systems of achieving functions</li> </ul> Explore diversity in family boundaries	<b>Readings Due:</b> Ragg: Chapter 2 & 3 McGoldrick: Ch. 3 <b>Exercise Due:</b> 2.1 <b>Journal #2</b>

Week	Content/Objectives	Reading/Class Assignments Due For This Week
<b>Week 4</b> <b>Tuesday</b> <b>Feb 10</b>	<b>Assessment 1: Conducting the Assessment/Exploration</b> Explore and apply family-based exploratory questioning strategies Explore the use of sculpting and expressive methods of assessment.	<b>Readings Due:</b> Ragg: Ch 4 McGoldrick: Ch. 5 <b>Exercises: 4.1 &amp; 4.2</b> <b>Journal #3</b> <b>Culture Ring Assignments Due</b>
<b>Week 5</b> <b>Tuesday</b> <b>Feb 17</b>	<b>Assessment 2: Structuring The Assessment</b> Explore assessment frameworks including genograms, the four-cell model, parental functions and risk assessment	<b>Readings Due:</b> Ragg: Chapter 5 McGoldrick: Ch. 6 & 7 <b>Due:</b> <b>Exercise: 5.3</b> <b>Journal #4</b>
<b>Week 6</b> <b>Tuesday</b> <b>Feb 24</b>	<b>Contracting and Plans of Care</b> Explore family contracting and goal setting	<b>Readings Due:</b> Ragg: Chapter 6 McGoldrick: Ch 9 <b>Written Work Due:</b> <b>Family Genogram</b> <b>Exercise: 6.1 &amp; 6.2</b> <b>Journal #5</b>
<b>Week 7</b> <b>Tuesday</b> <b>March 3</b>	<b>Building Working Alliance: Preliminary Engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify problem perspectives and the need for consensus</li> <li>• Explore decisions about who to include and how to provide counseling.</li> </ul>	<b>Readings Due:</b> Ragg: Chapter 7 <b>Exercise:</b> 7.3 <b>Written Work Due:</b> <b>Assessment Assignment</b>
<b>Week 8</b> <b>Tuesday</b> <b>March 10</b>	<b>Interactive Engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice framing the problem in a full family context</li> </ul> Practice inclusion strategies	<b>Readings Due:</b> Ragg: Chapter 8 <b>Exercise 8.1 &amp; 8.2</b> <b>Journal #6</b>
<b>Week 9</b> <b>Tuesday</b> <b>March 17</b>	<b>Positioning For Change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the use of problem frames to set the stage for change.</li> <li>• Discuss change focused questioning strategies</li> </ul> Practice setting goals that can promote change.	<b>Readings Due:</b> Ragg: Chapter 9 <b>Written Work Due:</b> <b>Exercise: 9.1 &amp; 9.2</b> <b>Treatment Plan Due</b>
<b>Week 10</b> <b>Tuesday</b> <b>March 24</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>	
<b>Week 11</b> <b>Tuesday</b> <b>March 31</b>	<b>Action System Interventions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental empowerment interventions</li> <li>• Working with child behavior within the family context</li> </ul> Enhancing parental functioning	<b>Readings Due:</b> Ragg: Chapter 10 <b>Exercise: 10.3</b>

<b>Week</b>	<b>Content/Objectives</b>	<b>Reading/Class Assignments Due For This Week</b>
<b>Week 12 Tuesday April 7</b>	<b>Processing System Interventions</b> Explore application and adjustment of strategies with economically vulnerable and intellectually impaired parents.	<b>Readings Due:</b> Ragg: Chapter 11  <b>Exercise:</b> 11.1 & 11.2
<b>Week 13 Tuesday April 14</b>	<b>Indirect Interventions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore methods for enhancing emotional individuation with parent-child systems.</li> </ul> Discuss strategies for challenging inherited belief systems and changing family stories.	<b>Readings Due:</b> Ragg: Chapter 12 McGoldrick: Ch. 4 <b>Exercise:</b> 12.1 <b>Journal #7</b>
<b>Week 14 Tuesday April 21</b>	<b>Issues Associated with Hard-to-Serve Families</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dealing with issues of abuse and violence</li> <li>Risk assessment and responses</li> </ul> Promising Interventions with violent family members	<b>Readings Due:</b> Ragg: Chapter 13
<b>Week 15 Tuesday April 28</b>	<b>Working with Multiple Agencies</b> Explore mandate-based conflicts and problems achieving a family focus Explore methods of negotiating multiples systems	<b>Readings Due:</b> Ragg: Chapter 14 <b>Journal #8</b>
<b>Week 16 Tuesday May 5</b>	<b>Programming with Hard to Serve Families</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximizing informal supports</li> </ul> Multiple family group methods	<b>Readings Due:</b> Ragg: Chapter 15
<b>Week 17 Tuesday May 12</b>	<b>Final Exam: 12:00- 2:00</b>	

**Journal Assignments:**

**#1: Spiritual Assessment (Week 1)**

**A. My Family Experience—Beliefs and Preferences**

Self-awareness is important to working with other families. Reflect on your family experiences and how these will impact practice. You draw your values and ethical stances from the context of family experiences. Identify 5 things you learned from your family that will make you a good practitioner and how these can influence you in helping families.

**B. Assess the degree of commitment, grace, empowerment, and intimacy that existed in your family of origin. (Review Balswick and Balswick—summary available on Blackboard/)**

Discuss the changes that you would like to make in your family/future family related to commitment, grace, empowerment, intimacy, and the exercise of faith.

## #2: Your Understanding of Gender, Culture, and Ethnicity

1. Draw a three-generation family genogram depicting culture and ethnicity.  
To understand the role of uniqueness and culture in the formation and development of the family system, place cultural symbols on the genogram.
2. Include any information you have about your family's cultural background.
3. Include what messages did your family express about people who are different from the racial or ethnic orientation of your family or of different sexual orientation, or different in social class? About the roles of men and women? About the place of children? Who is defined as an outsider and insider and how are they treated? What impact have these messages had on how your view yourself and others?
4. Identify some of the biases, prejudices, and stereotypes you learned from your family of origin about socioeconomics, ethnicity, types of work, handling money, and education.

## #3. Family of Origin Structure, Roles, and Expectations.

Identify themes, patterns, and self-understanding and the impact your family has had on your own development. Use the following questions to stimulate your thinking.

1. Describe your family system by examining the family structure, roles, and expectations of the membership of your family. Include your family of origin experience of marriage, separation, divorce, and multi-generational family connection.
2. What expectations do you have about your family structure for the future? Describe your thoughts about marriage, separation, divorce, and multi-generational families.
3. Write about a special situation or event that impacted your family structure, role(s) or expectations that occurred during your childhood.
4. What do you consider unique about your family or characteristics about your family?
5. What do you think was the most meaningful influence from your family?
6. What roles did you play growing up in your family? What role do you currently play in your family? Is there another role you would prefer? Why?

## #4. Messages/Rituals/Traditions

Identify themes, patterns, and self-understanding and the impact your family has had on your own development. Use the following questions to stimulate your thinking.

1. What messages did you receive from family members about the importance or role of children?
2. Identify examples and the sources of the following family traditions:
  - a. A ritual of emotional connection
  - b. A ritual of cultural belonging
  - c. A dilemma that has affected more than one generation of your family
  - d. A tradition that has been changed, altered or corrected.
3. What is the importance of identifying traditions in your life? How do these traditions work for you and support the ways you cope with everyday life? How do these traditions work against you?
4. Design a new ritual to change the family pattern of behavior. How would you initiate or assist a family in development a ritual?

#### #5. Family Connections

Identify themes, patterns, and self-understanding and the impact your family has had on your own development. Use the following questions to stimulate your thinking.

Think about your family relationships and the significance of these relationships.

1. Who in your family had a strong influence on your development?
2. How did you feel about being cared for by people other than your parents?
3. What was your relationship with extended family members such as aunts, uncles, and cousins?
4. What role did your grandparents play in your life?
5. Did your family have a problem (such as mental illness, unemployment, or poverty?)  
How was that understood in your family?
6. What rules and expectations were present for boys and girls? What form of discipline was used in your family most often? Was the discipline the same for girls and boys?
7. Who participated in the decision-making process?
8. What types of rewards were given for family and individual successes?
9. Describe what you hope may be the same or different in your future family compared to your family of origin.

#### #6. Personal Engagement Qualities

Describe what you have experienced in your family, done in the past, inherited, or learned from reading about families that will make you a good family practitioner. What unique characteristics do you bring to this process that facilitate family engagement? How did you learn this about yourself?

#### #7. Life Course Perspective

Learn about applying the life course perspective to family assessment by first exploring your own life course in a Web-based activity. Paste the following Web tool into your Internet browser to explore your own life course:

[www.OurTimeLines.com](http://www.OurTimeLines.com).

Enter your birth year to see a comprehensive list of important historical events that have occurred during your lifetime.

Enter specific important events or transitions you have made. These might be choices you made related to when to get married, how long to remain employed, or at what age to become a parent. They might also be unexpected events like illness, death, surrendering to the ministry, etc.

Now enter specific events or transitions made by your significant others. How have you altered your time line to adjust to their choices?

How do your individual choices promote or constrain opportunities for your significant other?

How do large societal historical events, technological changes, disasters, and such impact your time line?

What kinds of transitions caused the most disruption to your time line?

- #8. Your final entry is to evaluate what, in this course material, has brought the greatest change (a) to your thinking about yourself and your family, and (b) to your thinking about counseling families. This final entry should consist of an integration of yourself and the insights that you discovered, as well as your understanding of how this impacts your professional family counseling practice.

**FAMILY BASED PRACTICE  
TREATMENT PLAN RUBRIC**

**STUDENT:**

1.     \_\_\_/20     Family service goals – 1 or 2 goals provide a general statement to guide intervention, goals are appropriate for the family described, goals indicate a direction for change, goals fit a family based context, goals are specific to behaviors or dynamics, goals fit criterion for goals.  
          \_\_\_/10     The underlined area is weak.  
          \_\_\_/5     The underlined areas are weak or missing.  
          \_\_\_/     The underlined areas have problems, lets talk.
2.     \_\_\_/20     The contract provides objectives for each goal, the objects clearly operationalize the goal, objectives will accomplish the goal if all are completed, objectives contain clear tasks to be accomplished, tasks have logical link to the goal, objectives lead one to know what will be done about the problems  
          \_\_\_/10     The underlined area is weak.  
          \_\_\_/5     The underlined areas are weak or missing.  
          \_\_\_/     The underlined areas have problems, lets talk.
3.     \_\_\_/20     Measurement – each goal is framed so it can be measured, the measures are described, the measures are appropriate for the goal, goal accomplishment will be evident using the measures, steps or objectives are evident, the measures clearly will document goal accomplishment.  
          \_\_\_/10     The underlined area is weak.  
          \_\_\_/5     The underlined areas are weak or missing.  
          \_\_\_/     The underlined areas have problems, lets talk.
4.     \_\_\_/20     Methods – each goal includes a procedure to achieve the goals, the procedure is achievable, the procedure is appropriate to the goal, the procedure involves family involvement or action, the procedure will promote goal achievement.  
          \_\_\_/10     The underlined area is weak.  
          \_\_\_/5     The underlined areas are weak or missing.  
          \_\_\_/     The underlined areas have problems, lets talk.
5.     \_\_\_/20     Other people/supports to be used -- the student indicates others that will be engaged in helping this family, the supports fit with the goal, the supports maintain (vs. fragment) the family focus, the supports compliment the methods, the supports are consistent with family realities.  
          \_\_\_/10     The underlined area is weak.  
          \_\_\_/5     The underlined areas are weak or missing.  
          \_\_\_/     The underlined areas have problems, lets talk.

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## **The Department of Psychology and Counseling**

has adopted the following policies for use in all psychology and counseling classes.

### **Papers or Assignments**

All assignments are to be typed in either Times New Roman 12 or Courier 10. Any deviation in this will result in the deduction of points.

Assignments will be turned in at the beginning of the class on the date it is due. Papers or assignments turned in after this time will be considered late.

Late assignments will result in a deduction of eight points per class period.

Assignments must be turned in to the professor, grader, or administrative assistant. The time and date of submission will be noted. No assignments may be submitted by fax or e-mail without prior approval.

All counseling students will write papers in accordance to standards set in the APA Publication Manual.

### **Quizzes**

Quizzes will not be given to students late for class. A grade of zero will be given for any missed quiz. No makeup quizzes will be given.

### **Exams**

If there is a conflict with a scheduled test, you may request to take it early. Only under extreme circumstances will late exams be administered. If you find yourself in an extreme circumstance, please contact the professor, grader, or the departmental secretary as soon as possible. Taking a late final exam requires the approval of the registrar's office.

### **Study Guide**

Students should not assume that the study guide, if one is given, is comprehensive to what will be on the exam.

### **Academic Honesty Policy**

All graduate and undergraduate NOBTS students, whether on-campus, Internet, or extension center students, are expected to adhere to the highest Christian standard of honesty and integrity when completing academic assignments for all courses in every delivery system format. The Bible provides our standard for academic integrity and honesty. This standard applies whether a student is taking tests, quizzes, exams, writing papers, completing Discussion Boards, or any other course requirement.

### **Class Participation**

Working on assignments for other classes or playing games on electronic devices during class time are examples of behavior that will not be tolerated. If you feel the need to study during class time, then please choose to be absent that day.

\* Any exceptions to any of the above policies require unanimous approval of all faculty members in the department.