Nature of the course

This online course is designed to view family dynamics from a systems perspective. Attention will be given to systems theory in general, the central concepts of Bowenian systems theory, the family life cycle, and the interactive process between daily family dynamics and individual functioning. Students will use systemic models to assess and evaluate their own family of origin, as well as their own individual development. A special focus will be upon multigenerational systems theory as developed by Murray Bowen, MD. In this regard, students will be introduced to the basic therapeutic theory and techniques utilized in family systems therapy. Attention will also be given to recent neuroscience research that expands the theory of attachment and an embedded mind concept that influences each individual’s genetic response to life experiences. This scientific data expands and embellishes systems theory and has critical implications for counseling techniques. In addition to a Professional Portfolio requirement and weekly assignments, each student will research and create a workbook on the eight basic concepts that compose Bowen system theory. The concepts include:

- Differentiation of Self
- Triangles
- The Nuclear Family Emotional Processes
- The Family Projection Process
- The Multigenerational Transmission Process
- Sibling Position
- Emotional Cutoff
- Societal Emotional Processes

Objectives of the course

This course has five major objectives: (1) to broaden the student’s knowledge of family dynamics from a systems perspective (CACREP Standard: II.G.5); (2) to increase the student’s understanding of his or her own family of origin from a multigenerational systems paradigm; (3) to enable the student to assess the strengths of his or her own family of origin; (4) to enhance the student’s ability to evaluate how a family system influences daily behavior and can be useful in the diagnosis and treatment of family dysfunctions (CACREP Standard: CMHC.C.8); and (5) to explain how neuroscience can supply scientific data to support a system’s theory understanding of human development and behavior.
Required and Recommended reading

The texts for this course include:

**Required**


**Recommended**

Course requirements

The requirements for this course, as well as the percentage each will count in determining the final grade, are listed below. Weekly assignments will include: [1] the exercises following each chapter in the Blevins text book, [2] a personal evaluation of *The Whole Brain Child* which focuses upon the implications of Siegel’s work for systems theory; [3] the multigenerational workbook, [4] mid-term and final exams, and [5] particular assignments for the *Professional Portfolio*. Mid-Term examination will be on February 19. The final examination will be due April 30, 2015. All other assignments (workbook, Portfolio, and book evaluation) will also be due on or before April 29.

The percentage that each requirement counts in the final grade is as follows:

- Weekly assignments (40%)
- Book evaluation (20%)
- Bowen/Portfolio workbook (15%)
- Mid-Term examination (15%)
- Final examination (10%)

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:
- A (100-92)
- B (91-82)
### Proficiency outcomes

Following a satisfactory completion of this course, each student should be able to define and discuss the following concepts with regard to family process.

- family systems theory
- wholeness
- circularity
- feedback systems
- equifinality
- nonsummativity
- homeostasis
- multigenerational process
- subsystems
- functional roles
- systemic roles
- boundaries
- triangles
- enmeshment/disengagement
- parentification
- scapegoating
- power
- family developmental tasks
- family developmental stages
- family myths, stories, and secrets
- differentiation
- anxiety and adaptation
- anxiety and symptom development
- overt rules
- covert rules
- toxic rules
- healthy/appropriate family rules
- overfunction/underfunction
- pursuer/distancer
- circular dance
- drifting
- anxiety and conflict
• conflictual dance
• linear thinking
• open system
• closed system
• family cohesion
• nuclear family
• family of origin

Assignments and Schedules

A. Multigenerational Systems workbook project
The pioneers of family therapy recognized that current social and cultural forces shape our values about ourselves and our families, our thoughts about what is "normal" and "healthy," and our expectations about how the world works. However, Murray Bowen, MD, was the first to realize that the history of our family creates a template which shapes the values, thoughts, and experiences of each generation, as well as how that generation passes down these things to the next generation. Bowenean theory consists of eight interlocking concepts to explain family development and functioning. These concepts are mentioned at the beginning of this syllabus. Your research assignment will involve two aspects of these concepts: [1] define and describe each individual concept; [2] apply this concept to your own family of origin, briefly appraising how the particular concepts impacted your own family functioning.

In addition to the recommended texts mentioned in this syllabus, you will find the following website from the Bowen Center helpful in understanding Bowenean theory: www.thebowencenter.org

B. Weekly assignments
In general, the weekly assignments are contained at the end of each chapter in the text Your Family-Your Self. Also, the weekly regularity of your online discussions, as well as content, will provide the basis for final evaluation of this part of your grade. Additional assignments will be given to embellish the text assignments with recent studies in neuroscience research.

C. Identification of Course Artifacts for Professional Portfolio

Graduate students in counseling are expected to maintain a Professional Portfolio during their training. The Portfolio must contain samples of at least one key assignment from each GSC course and examples of your professional activities outside of class. You are responsible for selecting and placing samples of your
work in your Portfolio each semester. You will also want to include your professor's evaluation and feedback of your work in your Portfolio.

Your professional products can now be easily stored in an electronic Professional Portfolio identified for your use only. The web address to this electronic Portfolio is: https://eaglenet.cn.edu/GSC. Your login and password to this site are the same as for your CN email.

Projects and products from this course that you may wish to archive in your Professional Portfolio might include: (1) a copy of your appraisal of the value of systems theory in psychotherapy; your review of the Whole Brain Child regarding the importance of neuroscience's impact for counseling, your final paper (included in the final exam) presenting your assessment of how systems theory positively impacts counseling techniques.

General Information

General Information
[1] Your professor encourages you to contact him about any concerns, questions, or issues pertaining to your performance in this course.

[2] Contact Information:

Syllabus and Grade Change Policy
Based on the needs of the student and extenuating circumstances and/or unforeseen events, the instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus and grading scale, as well as the activities required for evaluation to ensure that course objectives are appropriately addressed.

Online Policies
All assignments are due on published schedules and students are responsible for submitting the work in a timely manner. Students will not be penalized and can make up delayed assignments due to a documented illness, the death of immediate family member, an approved delay, or participation in a college-sponsored activity caused the absence. Otherwise, the instructor has no obligation to allow students to make up their work.

All students will be required to meet standards and policies published in the graduate catalog regarding ethics, behavior, online requirements, academic procedures, and financial policies. Please consult the catalog for these policies.

CARSON-NEWMAN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE STUDIES IN COUNSELING
KEY OBJECTIVES ASSESSMENT
## Key Objective Assessment for Clinical Mental Health Counseling Objective – 2. Marriage and Family Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Instructor:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
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**Overall Score**

Instructions: In the column on the right rate the student on each of the standards or goals.

- 5. Knowledge learned and/or skill mastered and integrated into the comprehensive praxis of counseling.
- 4. Knowledge or skill learned and understood at an intellectual level, lacking in consistent demonstration.
- 3. Knowledge or skill learned however no evidence of demonstration or integration
- 2. Knowledge or skill only marginally gained.
- 1. Only minimal evidence of knowledge gained.
- 0. Knowledge or skill not learned or demonstrated.

**CMHC Objective:** 2. Marriage and Family Systems: Gain knowledge of family systems in a multicultural society and apply this understanding to the helping process.

**Course: COUN 569: Introduction to Family Systems in Counseling**

Section II.G.5. HELPING RELATIONSHIPS - studies that provide an understanding of the counseling process in a multicultural society, including all of the following:

- e. A systems perspective that provides an understanding of family and other systems theories and major models of family and related interventions.

**CMHC. Counseling, Prevention, and Intervention-C.KNOWLEDGE**

- 8. Recognizes the importance of family, social networks, and community systems in the treatment of mental and emotional disorders.

**COMMENT:**