STMA 581 Family Systems in Ministry

School of Theology and Ministry
Seattle University
Fall Quarter, 2007

Faculty: Rev. Douglas Anderson, Ph.D., LMFT
Phone: 253 839 1697, x1
Time: Tuesdays, 5.45 – 8.35 p.m.
Classroom: HUNT 100

Required Texts

1. Course Reader
2. Nichols, Michael P. (2007) The Essentials of Family Therapy, 3rd Ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon
3. Richardson, Ronald W. (2005) Becoming a Healthier Pastor. Minneapolis: Fortress Press
4. Richardson, Ronald W. (1996) Creating a Healthier Church. Minneapolis: Fortress Press

Course Description

The field of family systems therapy has been exploring exciting ideas about how individuals and families change. This course will survey the evolution of these ideas and of major conceptual models within the field of family therapy. These ideas and models will be focused upon the person of the pastor/pastoral counselor, and students will be encouraged to integrate these approaches by reflecting upon their own development and functioning within their family systems. Further application will be made to practicing pastoral counseling with individuals, couples and families. Students will also explore applying these ideas toward enhancing the health of the local congregation, itself understood as an emotional system.

Course Objectives

1) Increase familiarity with the systems way of thinking.
2) Develop understanding of several foundational theoretical models of family therapy
3) Foster growth in self-understanding of one's own functioning in family and other systems
4) Encourage theological and spiritual reflection both upon therapeutic models and upon one's own personal and professional experiences.
5) Discover new ways to use one's thinking, relational abilities and personal qualities creatively in counseling persons in families.
6) Explore approaches for coaching and consulting with congregational leaders.

7) Co-create "the membership" of the class community by practicing together honest dialogue through careful listening and responding as we engage together in the pleasure of learning.

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

1) Oct. 2 – The Systems Way of Thinking
   Reading: Nichols, Chap.1

2) Oct. 9–Evolution of Family Therapy; Bowen Family Systems Theory
   Reading: Nichols, chaps. 2, 4 and 5

3) Oct. 16–Systems Therapy and One's Own Family
   Reading: Richardson (2005), chaps. 1-10
   First Paper Due

4) Oct. 23– Structural and Psychoanalytical Family Therapy
   Reading: Nichols, chaps. 7 and 9

5) Oct. 30– Experiential Family Therapy
   Reading: Nichols, chap 8
   Reader: articles by Satir and Napier/Whitaker

6) Nov. 6– Models Influenced by Milton Erickson
   Reading: Nichols, chaps. 6 and 12
   Reader: articles by Damman and Leveton
   Second Paper Due

7) Nov. 13–Emerging and Integrative Models
   Reading: Nichols, chaps. 11, 13 and 14
   Reader: articles by Hoffman and Duhl

8) Nov. 20– Applications to Pastoral Family Therapy
   Reading: Nichols, chap. 3
   Richardson ((1996), chap 13
   Reader: Two articles by Anderson

9) Nov. 27– Applications to Congregational Consultation
   Reading: Richardson, (1996), chaps. 1 – 12
   Richardson, (2005), chaps. 11-14
   Third paper Due

10) Dec. 4- Comparisons and Summary
    Reading: Nichols, chap. 15

Course Requirements

1) Attendance at all classes and participation in class activity.
2) Weekly reading of assigned texts and articles in preparation for class discussion
3) Completion of three reflection papers, 5-6 double-spaced pages. These papers must be turned in on these due dates: Oct. 16, Nov. 6, and Nov. 27.

First Paper: Apply some of the concepts of Bowen theory as explained by Nichols and Richardson to your own family of origin. Include a three-generational family diagram [see symbols in Richardson (2005), pp. 45 and 82]. What are a few of the central issues and emotional processes in your multigenerational family? What has been your own functional role in the family? How have you modified your functioning and what next step/s might you plan for your own work?

Second Paper: Recall and briefly describe a conflicted scene from your original or current family. Selecting four of the therapists discussed in the readings for weeks 4 – 6, describe how you might imagine each of the four responding uniquely to your family's conflict. Choosing one of these four imagined responses, comment on this therapeutic moment from a spiritual or theological perspective.

Third Paper: A hypothetical therapy case will be distributed in class. Imagining yourself as therapist or coach to this family, describe how you would plan to approach them. How might you assess their situation from a preferred therapeutic model? How might you respond to these persons from your model? What personal qualities, values, experiences, etc. of yours could serve as resources? How might Divine Grace/Love move through you and these persons?

Grading

25% of the final grade for class participation and 25% for each of the three papers.

Additional Recommended Readings (Optional)

Aponte, Harry J. (1994) Bread and Spirit: Therapy with the New Poor. New York: Norton

Berry, Wendell (2000) Jayber Crow. Washington D. C.: Counterpoint

Berry, Wendell (2004) Hannah Coulter. Washington D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard

Burton, Laurel, Ed. (1992) Religion and the Family. New York: Haworth

Carter, Betty and Monica McGoldrick, Eds. (2004) The Expanded Family Life Cycle, 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Duhl, Bunny S. (1983) From the Inside Out and Other Metaphors. New York: Brunner/Mazel.

Fischer, Kathleen (1990.) Reclaiming the Connections: A Contemporary Spirituality. Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward

Gilbert, Roberta (2006) Extraordinary Leadership: Thinking Systems, Making a Difference. Falls Church VA: Leading Systems Press

Hart, Thomas (2002) Hidden Spring: The Spiritual Dimension of Therapy. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Hoffman, Lynn (2002) Family Therapy: An Intimate History. New York: Norton.

Jordan, Merle (1986) Taking on the gods: The Task of the Pastoral Counselor. Nashville: Abingdon.

Kerr, Michael and Murray Bowen (1988) Family Evaluation. New York: Norton.

Simon, George M. (2003) Beyond Technique in Family Therapy: Finding Your Therapeutic Voice. Boston: Allyn & Bacon

Steere, David (1997) Spiritual Presence in Psychotherapy. New York: Brunner/ Mazel

Titelman, Peter, Ed. (2005) The Therapist's Own Family.. Jason Aronson, Inc.

Walsh, Froma, Ed. (1999) Spiritual Resources in Family Therapy. New York Guilford.

Welwood, John (2006) Perfect Love, Imperfect Relationships. Boston: Trumpeter.