



Course Syllabus:
COUN 5323 Marriage and Family Counseling
Gordon T. & Ellen West College of Education and Professional Studies
Semester Credits: 3
COUN 5323
Summer I, June 1 – July 2, 2026

*Important! This course's weeks start on Monday and end on Sunday, except for the last week, which ends on Thursday.

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Dara Brown, Ph.D., LPC
Office: online
Office hours: By appointment
E-mail: Dara.Brown@msutexas.edu

Course Description

A comprehensive study of the major theories of marriage and family counseling. Skill building through media, modeling, and role playing

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Gladding, S. T. (2021). *Family therapy: History, theory, and Practice*. 7th Ed. Pearson.

Course Objectives

Knowledge and Skill Learning Outcomes: CACREP Standards

Upon successful completion of this course, students will learn:

Section 3.A.6. professional counseling organizations, including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current issues

Section 3.B.10. guidelines developed by professional counseling organizations related to social justice, advocacy, and working with individuals with diverse cultural identities

Section 3.C.1. theories of individual and family development across the lifespan

Section 3.C.2. theories of cultural identity development

Section 3.E.1. theories and models of counseling, including relevance to clients from diverse cultural backgrounds KPI

Section 3.E.3. case conceptualization skills using a variety of models and approaches

Section 3.E.13. developmentally relevant and culturally sustaining counseling treatment or intervention plans

Section 5.C.8. strategies to advocate for people with mental, behavioral, and neurodevelopmental conditions

Learning Objectives

1. Students will explore historical antecedents to the practice of family system therapy.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the various family systems theories.
3. Students will be able to identify and describe the various family counseling modalities and major theorists associated with family systems modalities.
4. Students will be able to understand the rationale for selecting family systems theories as appropriate modalities of intervention for working with families.
5. Students will be able to understand the legal and ethical considerations when engaging in family systems therapy.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
Online Assignments and Comments	75
History of Marriage and Family Counseling Paper	20
Conceptualizing a Client through Marriage and Family Theory	20
Final Exam	35
Total Points	150

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	135 to 150
B	120 to 134
C	105 to 119
D	90 to 104
F	Less than 90

Homework

Discussion Board, and Class Participation: (75 pts.) Students are required to answer questions or complete assignments regularly related to the weekly topic. Almost every week students will be required to answer questions about the reading, topic or be asked to reflect on a particular internship experience for that week. Students may also be required to engage in short creative projects instead of questions about the readings. If there is a discussion, students are required to participate and comment on at least one other person's thread. ***The assignments and weekly comments are due by Sunday at 11:59 pm at the end of the week, aside from the last week.** Follow directions to get full points each week. Late work will not be accepted See Appendix A for Rubric). **3.A.6., 3.B.10., 3.C.1., 3.C.2., 3.E.1., 3.E.3., 3.E.13., 5.C.8.**

Papers Required

History of Marriage and Family Counseling Paper: (20 pts.) Students will write an academic paper regarding the history of marriage and family counseling. Students will address the following areas within the paper, introduction to the assignment, history of marriage and family counseling, multicultural considerations, professional organizations within marriage and family counseling, and ethics for marriage and family counseling. Students will utilize the outline located within Appendix B as well as the template located within D2L shell. Students will write their paper in APA 7 formatting, using appropriate grammar, and academic writing. (See Appendix B for Rubric). **3.A.6., 3.B.10., 3.E.3.**

Conceptualizing a Client through Marriage and Family Theory: (20 pts.) Students will create a PowerPoint to discuss conceptualizing a marriage or family client through the theory of their choice.

Students will choose one of the theories within chapters seven through 16 of their textbook\ . Students will utilize a fictional marriage or family client for this assignment. Students may use fictional characters from a book, tv show, or movie. Students will give a brief summary of their fictional client of choice. Students will the PowerPoint template located within D2L and the outline within Appendix C. Students will write about their client of choice, theory of choice, multicultural and cultural factors, treatment and intervention, and advocacy (See Appendix C for Rubric). 3.C.1., 3.C.2., 3.E.1., 3.E.3., 3.E.13., 5.C.8.

Final Exam

Final Exam: (35 pts.) *Before you begin, please take 10-30 minutes utilizing mindfulness techniques to create a positive and safe space to take your exam. See examples on Appendix D. Students will complete the final exam. You will have 120 minutes to complete. Each student has two attempts, the best of the attempts will be kept. The content of the exam will come from chapters 1-18 of the course textbook (See Appendix D for Rubric). 3.A.6., 3.B.10., 3.C.1., 3.C.2., 3.E.1., 3.E.3., 3.E.13., 5.C.8.

Extra Credit

There is no extra credit available in this course.

Late Work

All papers and assignments must be turned in the day they are due. ***No exceptions.** If you have an emergency, please let me know in advance, and/or email me your assignment the same day it is due. Any late papers will be lowered ***2pts per day.** Late papers can only be turned in before the deadline for the following assignments. Please observe that your assignments are worth a considerable number of points and skipping even one assignment will most likely significantly lower your grade. Please begin planning your semester schedule accordingly.

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: July 17, 2026. Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
Deadline to file for graduation: June 22, 2026. Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" June 17, 2026. Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Class attendance is crucial to successful completion of this course since much of the training cannot be learned in textbooks. Therefore, GRADUATE STUDENTS are expected to be on time and to attend ***every** session online and all required face to face classes. Tardiness, leaving early, and absences are considered evidence of lack of dependability, and are taken seriously.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. **Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.* Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. ***Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Instructor Class Policies

Department of Counseling students are expected to demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior, consistent with their counselor-in-training roles. Counselors-in-training are expected to convey attentiveness and respect in all professional and classroom settings. Specifically, these include:

- Avoiding tardiness and late arrival to class.
- Being attentive and participative in class and online.
- Not using cell phones and text messaging during class.
- Not surfing the web, emailing, tweeting, or using instant messaging (IM) during class.
- Minimizing eating and disruptive snacking during class.
- Avoiding personal conversations with students during class, which are disruptive to fellow students and the learning environment.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring

accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "*Run. Hide. Fight.*" which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: "[Run. Hide. Fight.](#)"

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 6/1 to 6/7	Class Introductions, Syllabus Review, and Class Instructions. Read Part One	Discussion Board Post and Comment Due 6/7
Week 2 6/8 to 6/14	Read Part One History of Marriage and Family Counseling Paper Appendix B Paper	Do Discussion Board, Post and Comment. Read Part One Complete History of Marriage and Family Counseling Paper Appendix B Paper due 6/14 by 11:59 pm on D2L.
Week 3 6/15 to 6/21	Read Part Two Work on your PowerPoint and read for the Final Exam.	Do Discussion Board, Post and Comment. Read Part Two Work on your PowerPoint and read for the Final Exam.
Week 4 6/22 to 6/28	Read Part Two Conceptualizing a Client through Marriage and Family Theory Appendix C Paper due.	Do Discussion Board, Post and Comment Read Part Two Complete Conceptualizing a Client through Marriage and Family Theory Appendix C Paper due 6/28 by 11:59 pm on D2L and Tk20.
Week 5 6/29 to 7/2	Read Part Three Final Exam Appendix D due.	Do Discussion Board, Post and Comment Read Part Three Complete Final Exam Appendix D due by Friday, 7/2 by 11:59 pm on D2L.

Note: Tables are already set up for compliance. If you wish to add another table, make sure do the correct compliance setup for tables which you can find in the [How To – Word Doc ADA Compliance PDF](#).

APPENDENCIES

Appendix A

Online Assignments and Comments (75 pts.)

Rubric of Online Assignments and Comments (Possible 75 Pts.)

Week	Points Earned
Week 1 (15 pts)	Out of 15 points
Week 2 (15 pts)	Out of 15 points
Week 3 (15 pts)	Out of 15 points
Week 4 (15 pts)	Out of 15 points
Week 5 (15 pts)	Out of 15 points
Total Points Earned	Out of 75 points

Appendix B

History of Marriage and Family Counseling Paper: (20 pts.) Students will write an academic paper regarding the history of marriage and family counseling. Students will address the following areas within the paper, introduction to the assignment, history of marriage and family counseling, multicultural considerations, professional organizations within marriage and family counseling, and ethics for marriage and family counseling. Students will utilize the outline located within Appendix B as well as the template located within D2L shell. Students will write their paper in APA 7 formatting, using appropriate grammar, and academic writing.

(See Appendix B for Rubric). 3.A.6., 3.B.10., 3.E.3.

APA 7 Cover Page

Introduction to the Assignment

History of Marriage and Family Counseling

Multicultural Considerations

Professional Organizations

Ethics in Marriage and Family Counseling

APA 7 References

History of Marriage and Family Counseling Paper Rubric: (20 pts.)

Criteria	1 Improvement Needed	2 Developing	3 Proficient	4 Accomplished
Introduction to the Assignment	Student does not write an introduction to the assignment section.	Student vaguely writes an introduction to the assignment section.	Student appropriately writes an introduction to the assignment section.	Student exceptionally writes an introduction to the assignment section.
History of Marriage and Family Counseling	Student inaccurately describes history of marriage and family counseling. Student does not use academic resources to back up ideas. Student does not use appropriate in-text citations.	Student appropriately describes history of marriage and family counseling, but lacks academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations.	Student appropriately describes history of marriage and family counseling, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has some academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.	Student exceptionally describes history of marriage and family counseling, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has little to no academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.
Multicultural Considerations when Utilizing Marriage and Family Therapy	Student inaccurately describes multicultural considerations. Student does not use academic resources to back up ideas.	Student appropriately describes multicultural considerations, but lacks academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations.	Student appropriately describes multicultural considerations, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has	Student exceptionally describes multicultural considerations, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has

	Student does not use appropriate in-text citations.		some academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.	little to no academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.
Professional Organizations within Marriage and Family Counseling	Student inaccurately describes professional organizations. Student does not use academic resources to back up ideas. Student does not use appropriate in-text citations.	Student appropriately describes professional organizations, but lacks academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations.	Student appropriately describes professional organizations, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has some academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.	Student exceptionally describes professional organizations, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has little to no academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.
Ethics in Marriage and Family Counseling	Student inaccurately describes ethics in marriage and family counseling. Student does not use academic resources to back up ideas. Student does not use appropriate in-text citations.	Student appropriately describes ethics in marriage and family counseling, but lacks academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations.	Student appropriately describes ethics in marriage and family counseling, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has some academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.	Student exceptionally describes ethics in marriage and family counseling, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has little to no academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.
Total points out of 20				

Appendix C

Conceptualizing a Client through Marriage and Family Theory: (20 pts.) Students will create a PowerPoint to discuss conceptualizing a marriage or family client through the theory of their choice. Students will choose one of the theories within chapters seven through 16 of their textbook. Students will utilize a fictional marriage or family client for this assignment. Students may use fictional characters from a book, tv show, or movie. Students will give a brief summary of their fictional client of choice. Students will the PowerPoint template located within D2L and the outline within Appendix C. Students will write about their client of choice, theory of choice, multicultural and cultural factors, treatment and intervention, and advocacy (**See Appendix D for Rubric**). **3.C.1., 3.C.2., 3.E.1., 3.E.3., 3.E.13., 5.C.8.**

First Slide Cover Page
Marriage or Family Client
Theory of Choice
Multicultural and Cultural Factors
Treatment and Intervention
Advocacy
Last Slide References

Conceptualizing a Client through Marriage and Family Theory Rubric (Possible 20 Pts)

Criteria	1 Improvement Needed	2 Developing	3 Proficient	4 Accomplished
Marriage and Family Client	Student does not summarize the marriage and family client of choice.	Student vaguely summarizes the marriage and family client of choice.	Student appropriately summarizes the marriage and family client of choice, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has some academic writing,	Student exceptionally summarizes the marriage and family client of choice, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has little to no academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.

			grammatical, or APA errors within the section.	
Theory of Choice	Student inaccurately describes the theory of choice. Student does not use academic resources to back up ideas. Student does not use appropriate in-text citations.	Student appropriately describes the theory of choice, but lacks academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations.	Student appropriately describes the theory of choice, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has some academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.	Student exceptionally describes the theory of choice, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has little to no academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.
Multicultural and Cultural Factors	Student inaccurately describes the multicultural and cultural factors. Student does not use academic resources to back up ideas. Student does not use appropriate in-text citations.	Student appropriately describes the multicultural and cultural factors, but lacks academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations.	Student appropriately describes the multicultural and cultural factors, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has some academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.	Student exceptionally describes the multicultural and cultural factors, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has little to no academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.
Treatment and Intervention	Student inaccurately describes the treatment and intervention strategies. Student does not use academic resources to back up ideas. Student does not use	Student appropriately describes the treatment and intervention strategies, but lacks academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations.	Student appropriately describes the treatment and intervention strategies, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has some	Student exceptionally describes the treatment and intervention strategies, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has little to no academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.

	appropriate in-text citations.		academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.	
Advocacy	Student inaccurately describes utilizing advocacy. Student does not use academic resources to back up ideas. Student does not use appropriate in-text citations.	Student appropriately describes utilizing advocacy, but lacks academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations.	Student appropriately describes utilizing advocacy, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has some academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.	Student exceptionally describes utilizing advocacy, and utilizes academic resources, or appropriate in-text citations. Has little to no academic writing, grammatical, or APA errors within the section.
Total points out of 20				

Appendix D

Final Exam: (35 pts.) Students will complete the final exam. You will have 120 minutes to complete. Each student has two attempts, the best of the attempts will be kept. The content of the exam will come from chapters 1-18 of the course textbook (See Appendix D for Rubric). **3.A.6., 3.B.10., 3.C.1., 3.C.2., 3.E.1., 3.E.3., 3.E.13., 5.C.8.**