



### **Syllabus**

Marriage, Family, and Systems Psychology  
PSYC 6133, Section 201  
Spring 2024

### **Contact Information**

Professor: Michael A. Vandehey, Ph.D.      Office: O'donohoe 112  
Office Hours: MW 11-11:30, F 11-12, TR 9:30-11:00  
Class Time: MWF 12:30-1:50      Location: OD 110  
Phone: 940-397-4026      Cell: 940-733-4388

I check D2L email sporadically. Please email me at:  
[michael.vandehey@msutexas.edu](mailto:michael.vandehey@msutexas.edu).

### **Goals:**

1. Become familiar with systems theory, concepts, and terms.
2. Develop interview skills via the Genogram and Ecomap. Use both to document information in the file.
3. Become acquainted with a thorough review of the MFT research literature.
4. Develop professional writing and presenting skills.

### **Texts:**

*Stapler:* Yes you read that correctly. I will not accept unstapled papers.

Gottman, J. M. & Schwartz Gottman, J. (2018). *The science of couples and family therapy: Behind the scenes at the love lab*. New York, NY: Norton.

Bush, K. R., & Price, A. P., (2021). *Families and change: Coping with stressful events and transitions* (6th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Petry, S. (2020). *Genograms: Assessment and Treatment* (4th ed.). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.).*  
(2020). Washington D. C.: American Psychological Association.

**Course Requirements:** Grades will be based on your performance on student generated essay questions and answers, a family interview paper, and a final.

The student generated essay questions and answers are as follows (100 points):

- a. Only write questions out of Bush & Price.
- b. Each chapter will have one question, answer, and page number(s) of answer.
- c. Write fourteen short answer essay questions (1/2-3/4 page).
- d. Write two long answer essay questions (1-2 pages).
- e. Type should be single-spaced.

**Goals:** Develop information identification skills. Become skilled at writing essay questions. Discover what other people think is important.

I will choose some of the questions for the final. I reserve the right to re-write any of the questions.

The **final exam** will be worth 100 points and will have multiple choice and essay sections. The goal is to demonstrate conceptual knowledge of marriage and family therapy concepts. Typical essay format: Pick 4 out of 5 questions and provide a short answer (1/2 a page). Pick 2 out of 3 questions and provide a long answer (1-1/2 pages). Analyze a vignette (1.5-2 pages). The format may change based upon class participation/dynamics.

The **family interview paper** is worth 100 points and will be written in biopsychosocial format. It should be 5+ pages single spaced. A genogram must be completed and should highlight information in the paper. The paper should include the following sections:

- a. presenting problem
- b. problem history and attempted solutions
- c. family history, relationships, family roles
- d. family medical history, alcohol/drug use
- e. friends/agencies outside of the family
- f. clinical assessment of the family (apply Gottman & Gottman's concepts; use the family life cycle)
- g. recommendations for treatment
- h. a genogram attached at the back of the paper
- i. a total of 5 references from referred journals or books (in addition to the two class text books) should be used in the clinical assessment and recommendations sections (sections f & g).

300 points are possible:

270-300 = A	210-239 = C	179 or less = F
240-269 = B	180-209 = D	

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. Since we only meet twice a week, a student is allowed **3** absence without penalty. The **4<sup>nd</sup>** absence results in 1 grade drop, the **5<sup>rd</sup>** absence results in a grade of 'F.' Being tardy three times will count as an absence. Afterwards, every additional tardy counts as an absence.

*By enrolling in this course, the student expressly grants MSU a 'limited right' in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The 'limited right' shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student's work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, and educational purposes.*

### **Note**

Students with disability must be registered with Disability Support Services before accommodations can be provided. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact me and must provide documentation by Disability Support Services. The Director of Disability Support Services serves as the ADA Coordinator and may be contacted at (940) 397-4140, TDD (940) 397-4515, or 3410 Taft Blvd., Clark Student Center 168.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Midwestern State University does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's disability and complies with Section 504 and Public Law 101-336 (Americans with Disabilities Act) in its admissions, accessibility, treatment and employment of individuals in its programs and activities.

A copy of the ADA Compliance Document is available online at [disability faq](#). It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications. Students who require special accommodations must register with Disability Support Services before these accommodations can be provided. An Accommodation Request Form can be obtained at [Accommodation Request](#).

### **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.

- a. Brightspace (maker of D2L) has tutorials available on YouTube. Please go to [Brightspace YouTube](#) for additional help.

**Informed Consent:** This information is to inform the student of the limits of confidentiality while enrolled at MSU Texas or any other state school. Due to federal and state law, faculty and staff working for a university are required to report any information that falls under Title IX. Any student who indicates experiencing sexual abuse/misconduct, physical/emotional abuse, domestic violence, stalking, suicidal/homicidal ideation, or related experiences will have an incident report sent to either the MSU Texas Title IX and/or the Dean of Student's office. Student disclosure may occur via a face-to-face meeting, in-class self-disclosure, email, statement made in a written assignment, etc. If a student asks a faculty or staff person not to share the information, please note that by law, we have to report and I will report. Please note that as students, you may be aware of classmates/dormmates struggling and can make an incident report at: [Student Referrals and Incident Reporting Forms](#) or <https://cm.maxient.com/reporting.php?MSUTexas>

Report forms are:

Bias Incident Reporting Form	Sexual Misconduct Report Form
Campus Incident Report Form	Student Alert Form
Concerning Student Behavior Form	
General Student Complaint Form	

### **College Policies and Procedures**

Can be found at the bottom of the MSU home page or at [Human Resources Policy](#)

#### **Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures**

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, use of AI (e.g., ChatGP), 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. Any evidence of cheating will result in a grade of "F" and being reported to the [Dean of Students](#).

**Wikipedia**

At no time will a student be allowed to use Wikipedia as a source for any project or paper in this class. If it is determined that Wikipedia was used as a source for a project or paper, the student will be given a grade of zero automatically.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Written assignments will be run through a plagiarism and AI checker called Turn It In. If at any point Turn It In identifies that a student used AI to complete an assignment (such as ChatGPT), an automatic grade of zero will be given to the assignment.

**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 MSU TEXAS 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 FBI 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](#)

### **Student Code of Conduct**

MWSU's official policy in the University's Code of Student Conduct on page 52, states:

**Instructor Drop:** An instructor may drop a student any time during the semester for excessive absences, for consistently failing to meet class assignments, for an indifferent attitude, or for disruptive conduct. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to dropping the student from the class. An instructor’s drop of a student takes precedence over the student initiated course drop of a later date. The instructor will assign a grade of either WF or F through the first 9 weeks of a long semester, the first 6 weeks of a 10 week summer term, or the 12th class day of a 4 or 5 week summer term consisting of 20 days. After these periods, the grade will be an F. The date the instructor drop form is received in the Office of the Registrar as the official drop date. A student dropped from a class by a faculty member for disruptive behavior has the right of appeal to the Student Conduct Committee through the Student Conduct office.

#### Midwestern State University Student Honor Creed

*"As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so."*

As students at MSU, we recognize that any great society must be composed of empowered, responsible citizens. We also recognize universities play an important role in helping mold these responsible citizens. We believe students themselves play an important part in developing responsible citizenship by maintaining a community where integrity and honorable character are the norm, not the exception. Thus, We, the Students of Midwestern State University, resolve to uphold the honor of the University by affirming our commitment to complete

academic honesty. We resolve not only to be honest but also to hold our peers accountable for complete honesty in all university matters.

We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any unauthorized material in examinations, or to present, as one's own, work or ideas which are not entirely one's own. We recognize that any instructor has the right to expect that all student work is honest, original work. We accept and acknowledge that responsibility for lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty fundamentally rests within each individual student.

We expect of ourselves academic integrity, personal professionalism, and ethical character. We appreciate steps taken by University officials to protect the honor of the University against any who would disgrace the MSU student body by violating the spirit of this creed.

**Written and adopted by the 2002-2003 MSU Student Senate.**

**Cell Phones and Pagers:** Please turn all cell phones and pagers off (no sound) during class. DO NOT text message during class. DO NOT answer your cell phone in class. Exceptions include emergency calls (e.g., birth of child, family member in hospital). Students who are unable to comply will not be allowed to attend class.

**Travel Plans:** Please do not make travel plans that would hinder your access to a computer or the internet. You are responsible for maintaining electronic(s) equipment and internet access every day during this semester.

### **Tentative Reading and Exam Schedule**

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

#### Days of Class

#### Reading Assignment

**Mc**=McGoldrick

**B**=Bush & Price

**G**=Gottman & Schwartz Gottman

1/15

*Martin Luther King's Birthday, no classes*

1/17-1/24:

Semester Overview/Course Requirements  
Intro to family systems concepts, triangles, and the family life cycle (lecture)

**1/17-2/19**

**Mc** = Chapter 1-Chapter 9 (read as fast as you can)

**1/17-3/6**

**B**=Read 16 chapters

- 1/29-2/14      **G** Chapter 2: What Might Be Regulation in Family Homeostasis?  
**G** Chapter 3: What is Trust?  
**G** Chapter 4: What is Commitment? What is Betrayal?  
**G** Chapter 5: A Good Theory Needs Data
- 2/14-2/29ish:      Intro to genograms  
 Movie
- 2/12      *Last day to file for May graduation*
- 2/29-3/6      **G** Chapter 6: So, What's a Relationship?  
**G** Chapter 7: Flooding and Physiological Calm  
**G** Chapter 8: Change  
**G** Chapter 9: The Demand-Withdraw Pattern
- 3/18ish:      Advanced genograms  
 Movie
- 3/6      Student Generated Essay Questions/Answers Due (Price)**
- 3/11-3/15      *Spring Break-no classes*
- 3/18-5/1      **G** Chapter 10: Our Mighty Theory: The Sound Relationship House  
**G** Chapter 11: What's Behind Demand-Withdraw: Meta-emotion Mismatch  
**G** Chapter 12: The Power of Turning Toward  
**G** Chapter 13: Examining Relationship Stability
- 4/3:      Family Interview & Genogram Due**
- 3/25      *Last day to file for a "W"*  
 3/27-3/29      *Holiday Break-no classes*

**Additional Topics Throughout the Semester:**

Intimacy and Divorce  
 Family Secrets  
 Family Rituals  
 Communication Styles  
 Social Support and Family Networks  
 Ecomap  
 Family Sculpting

**Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> is the Final from 3:30-5:30 pm**