Essential Information

Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available in the Essential Information section at http://support.nts.edu.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose Degree Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- Handbook for Inclusive Language

Instructor Information

Professor: Judith Schwanz, Ph.D.  
Email: jaschwanz@nts.edu
Office: (816) 268-5491
Office Hours: by appointment

Catalog Description

This course provides an understanding of family systems theory as applied to the local church congregation or any other organized social network. Within this framework, students will consider health and dysfunction in both congregation and pastor and the implications of both for pastoral counseling.

Course Narrative & Rationale

More than simply a collection of individuals, the church is a relational system with emotional, structural, economic and cultural dynamics at work. Through case studies and discussion, student will apply an understanding of family systems theory to congregational life and to their
own relationship systems; this will help the pastor/pastoral counselor function as a better leader and facilitate emotional health within the system of the church. Students will gain skills through actual counseling exercises/sessions with couples and reflection on those sessions.

**Degree Objectives**

1. **Mature knowledge of God and self, attained through practices of Christian formation and personal discipline, exhibited in the following outcomes; the student will:**
   - c. Articulate self-knowledge of personality characteristics, strengths and weaknesses
   - d. Engage individual traits for growth in personal devotion, relationships of integrity, and ministry effectiveness

2. **Development of wisdom and discernment through engagement with the literature of the Christian faith through critical, scholarly study of the history and theology of Christianity and the application of that heritage to personal and corporate Christian life, exhibited in the following outcomes; the student will:**
   - f. Apply theological convictions to personal and corporate life both in and beyond the church

3. **Cultivation of gifts, practical skills, and vocational identity as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through engagement in and reflection on the pastoral arts, exhibited in the following outcomes; the student/graduate will:**
   - a. Facilitate the formation of a community of faith as the called and gathered, centered in Christ, and sent people of God
   - b. Model and facilitate Christian witness and spiritual transformation
   - c. Communicate effectively in written, spoken, artistic, and other forms
   - d. Engage the holistic nature of the church in redemptive ministries of restoration
   - e. Lead in such a way as to develop the leadership potential in others

**Course Outcomes**

1. To expose students to the dynamics of human systems, and to basic family system concepts. (All texts, Case studies, class discussions)
2. To assist students in their understanding of collaborative and leadership functions in systems environments. (Case studies, Church assessment paper, class discussions)
3. To equip students to conduct marital, couple, and group counseling within a brief therapy framework. (Case studies, texts, class discussions)
4. To challenge students to apply systems learning to their own families of origin and life experiences. (Family of Origin paper, class discussions)
5. To enable students to apply systems learning to understand the dynamics of organizational functioning, and to improve relational functioning within the church as a system. (Case studies, Church assessment paper, class discussions)
Church of the Nazarene COSAC Competencies
CP 12 – Ability to appropriately express pastoral care & concern for individuals & families in crises, passages, & the normal routines of life
CP 13 – Ability to offer spiritual counsel & to discern for referral counseling needs beyond the minister’s ability
CP 14 – Ability to apply the knowledge of basic helping skills gained from historic Christian & appropriate contemporary models

Required Texts & Course Materials


Recommended Texts & Course Materials

Course Outline
I. Basic Systems Principles
   a. Distance and closeness
   b. Genograms
   c. Triangulation
   d. Anxiety
   e. Differentiation
II. Application of principles to relationship systems (family)
III. Application of principles to social systems (church)
IV. Brief therapy techniques with couples’ counseling

Course Assignments & Requirements
Pre-module Assignments
1. The student should read all texts before the class sessions begin on August 19. (Outcomes #1-5)
2. Family of Origin paper: write a 12-15 page paper which demonstrates your assimilation of course texts and personal reflection on your family. *Part 1* of this paper is a *Three Generation Genogram* (1 page). This is to include people in your immediate family, your parents, and your grandparents, the key relationships represented by appropriate symbols and lines and key events and dates. Guidelines will be found in the Richardson text. *Part 2* is a *Timeline* (1 page) of all family members who have died, with their date, year, and cause of death, and of all family birth dates, and other key events (e.g., moves, job losses, traumas, significant positive surprises, etc.) *Part 3* is a *Map* (1 page) of the earliest neighborhood you can remember. Include as much detail as you can. Who lived where? What were the secret places? Where were your friends? How did your family “fit” into the neighborhood? *Part 4* is a *Systems Assessment* (6-8 pages). Using text material and personal reflection, write an assessment of your family system. You may want to interview various family members to gather as much information as possible concerning your family and its uniqueness. What does it mean to be “a member of this family,” including strengths, struggles, potential counter-transference issues, secrets, and unknowns? How has this shaped who you are as a person today? The Richardson text will provide helpful questions to get you started on this section of the paper. *Part 5* is a written reflection on *Personal and Professional Implications* (3-5 pages). In this section you will identify your past and present strengths, struggles, and potential issues in light of your analysis. Include in this section a plan for your continued growth and how you will address these issues in your counseling of others. (Outcomes #3,4) Due Friday, August 16.

Module Assignments

3. Attendance: each class will involve active participation by class members making it difficult to make-up work. Unless it is an emergency, let the instructor know ahead of time if you will miss a class. It is your responsibility to make-up all work. Attendance will reflect on your final grade.

Post-module Assignments

4. Practice Case Studies: Choose two couples/pairs (e.g. parent and child, roommates, close friends, or married couples. One of the couples could include yourself). As the course calendar indicates, use interventions provided in the Worthington text with both of these pairs and write 2-4 pages summarizing the experience. Written papers should include a brief description of the pair, the intervention you chose to use, and an evaluation of the outcome. (Outcomes #2,3) Due Fridays September 6, 20, 27, October 4, 11.

5. Church/organization assessment paper: Using systems concepts and diagrams, “assess” your current congregation. [If you are not currently involved in a local congregation, write about the church or another organization you consider yourself a part of.] Draw on course readings and discussions in your assessment. This paper should be 10-12 pages, including diagrams. (Outcomes # 2,4) Due Friday, October 11.
6. Collateral reading: minimum of 300 pages of reading, excluding texts. Include books and/or journals. Note: do NOT count reading reported in another class. Reading should pertain to class topics. Report on reading will include full bibliographic citation of all sources read, total number of pages read, and a reaction paper of at least 1,000 words. The reaction paper may include questions raised by the reading, new insights gained, critiques of counseling methodology, personal applications, etc. (Outcomes #1,2,3,5) Due Friday, September 13.

**Distribution of Student Learning Hours**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>pre-module hours</th>
<th>module hours</th>
<th>post-module hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face Class Sessions</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Assignments and Learning Activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams &amp; Quizzes</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>66</td>
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**Method for Submitting Assignments**
All assignments should be submitted through Moodle no later than 11:55 PM of the due date listed for the assignment.

**Form and Style Expectations**
All papers shall be written using Turabian format for form and style.

**Inclusive Language**
NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

**Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams**
All written work is expected to be handed in by 23:55 (11:55 PM – Central Time) on the due date given. Late work will be marked down 10% for every week (or portion thereof) that it is late.
Course Grading

Final Grade
The final grade will be based on the following criteria:

- Family of Origin paper: 30%
- Church Assessment paper: 25%
- Collateral Reading report: 10%
- Case Studies (4% each): 20%
- Attendance and Participation: 15%

Grading Scale:

- A=93-100
- B+=90-92
- B=87-89
- B-=84-86
- C+=81-83
- C=78-80
- C-=75-77

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly, NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies that have been beneficial for the student in the past.

Class Attendance
Attendance at classes is essential for realizing the maximum benefit of your education. If you must be absent because of extenuating circumstances, contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss the situation.

If a student is absent for 8 hrs of a one week module or is absent (does not participate) four or more weeks of the pre/post module, the professor may automatically fail the student.

Daily attendance records must be reported for those obtaining V.A. and Department of Education benefits. Students must make the professor aware if their attendance must be recorded.
Audio and Video Recordings

In order to foster a safe learning environment in which various viewpoints are respected, audio or video recordings or transcripts thereof by students is prohibited without the permission of the faculty member in charge of the course. If permission is granted, redistribution of these recordings or transcripts thereof outside the scope of the course is prohibited.

Course Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction yourself to the professor and students in the course via the Introductions forum on Moodle; Begin reading texts</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Read texts</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Read texts</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Read texts</td>
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<td>Aug 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Read texts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Read texts; Family of Origin paper due 8/16</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Module Face to Face Begins</td>
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<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Reading and Research Week</td>
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<td>Sept 2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Practice case study #1 due 9/6: (First Interview observation – pp. 90-91 Worthington text)</td>
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<td>Sept 9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Collateral reading report due 9/13</td>
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<td>Sept 16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Practice case study #2 due 9/20: (any intervention in ch. 7-8 Worthington)</td>
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<td>Sept 23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Practice case study #3 due 9/27: (any intervention in ch. 9-10 Worthington)</td>
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<td>Sept 30</td>
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<td>Practice case study #4 due 10/4: (any intervention in ch. 11-12 Worthington)</td>
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<td>Oct 7</td>
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<td>Course Evaluations (approximate release time by the Dean’s Office)</td>
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<td>Practice case study #5 due 10/11: (any intervention in ch. 13-14)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Church Assessment paper due 10/11</td>
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Bibliography


