

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

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| Semester, Year | FALL, 2026 |
| Course Title | THEORIES & METHODS OF FAMILY THERAPY I |
| Course Code | COUN 0772 1S & 2S |
| Date and Time | SEPTEMBER 17 – DECEMBER 10, 2026 1S: THURSDAYS, 8:15 – 11:05 AM 2S: THURSDAYS, 11:15 AM – 2:05 PM |
| Delivery Format | SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE |
| Class Information | The classes will be livestreamed at designated time listed above. |
| Instructor | Dr. HERMAN CHOW, RP, RMFT-SM (AAMFT Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor; CACFT RMFT Supervisor Mentor; Certified EFIT, EFCT, & EFFT Therapist and Supervisor) |
| Contact Information | E-mail: hchow@tyndale.ca |
| Office Hours | Thursdays TBA (by appointment only). |
| Course Material | Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only. |

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Theories and Methods of Family Therapy I (COUN 0772) is an examination of current theories of marital and family therapy (Bowenian, Strategic, Structural, Cognitive-Behavioral, and psychoanalysis) along with appropriate intervention methods related to each theoretical orientation. The various therapeutic models are examined in terms of their history, philosophy, theoretical tenets, functional and dysfunctional effects on families, assessment, goals, treatment process, techniques, role of the therapist, and evaluation.

Prerequisites: COUN 0574 and 0677. Counselling majors only or by permission of instructor.

For those interested in Clinical Membership with AAMFT, this course usually fulfils a requirement under “Marriage and Family Therapy”. However, **it is your responsibility to check with AAMFT to see whether it will qualify.**

NOTE: If a student is also registered in “Counselling Major Internship (COUN 0701)”, it would help to provide a copy of this syllabus to his/her supervisor at the beginning of the year.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. identify the distinctiveness of the family therapy approaches studied
2. reflect how the family therapy approaches fit and do not fit with the students’ own clinical approach, value/faith system, and their clients’ experiences
3. conceptualize their clients/families via multiple systemic lenses and develop appropriate treatment interventions
4. construct a treatment plan

CRPO COMPETENCIES TAUGHT IN THIS COURSE

| CRPO Entry-to-Practice Competencies¹ |
|--|
| 1.0 FOUNDATIONS |
| 1.1 Integrate a theory of human psychological functioning and development ^{*2} |
| <i>1.1.2 Integrate knowledge of contextual and systemic factors that facilitate or impair human functioning.</i> |
| <i>1.1.3 Integrate knowledge of the psychological significance of various kinds of human development, such as spiritual, moral, social, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, sexual, gender, and biological development.</i> |
| 1.2 Work within a framework based upon an established psychotherapeutic theory* |
| <i>1.2.1 Integrate knowledge of how human problems develop, from the viewpoint of the therapist's theoretical orientation (e.g., knowledge of the impact of trauma on psychological functioning)</i> |
| <i>1.2.2 Integrate a theory of change consistent with the therapist's theoretical orientation.</i> |
| 1.3 Integrate knowledge of comparative psychotherapy relevant to practice* |
| <i>1.3.3 Recognize the benefits, limitations, and contraindications of differing psychotherapeutic approaches.</i> |
| 4.2 Establish and maintain an effective therapeutic relationship* |
| <i>4.2.1 Employ empathy, respect, and authenticity.</i> |
| <i>4.2.2 Establish rapport.</i> |
| <i>4.2.5 Assume non-judgmental stance.</i> |
| 4.5 Structure and facilitate the therapeutic process* |

¹ Revised for Program Recognition mapping tool 2015 CRPO

² Asterisks (*) indicate these are competencies subjected to more detailed scrutiny by CRPO review

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| <i>Structure the therapeutic process</i> |
| <i>4.5.1 Formulate an assessment.</i> |
| <i>4.5.2 Formulate a direction for treatment or therapy.</i> |
| <i>Facilitate the therapeutic process</i> |
| <i>4.5.10 Facilitate client exploration of issues and patterns of behaviour.</i> |
| 5.0 PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE & APPLIED RESEARCH |
| 5.1 Access and apply a range of relevant professional literature |
| <i>5.1.1 Access current professional literature relevant to practice area.</i> |
| <i>5.1.2 Analyze information critically.</i> |
| <i>5.1.3 Apply knowledge gathered to enhance practice.</i> |
| 5.2 Use research findings to inform clinical practice |

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

There is only one book required for this course (the same one in Theories and Methods of Family Therapy II):

Nichols, M.P. & Davis, S. (2021). [*Family therapy: Concepts and methods*](#). 12th ed. MA: Pearson Education Inc.

(Please note: This is an e-text only.)

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Tyndale recommends [STEPBible](#) – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Group Project: Video Analysis of a Therapy Session (15%); Due Date: Oct 8 During Class

This group assignment will help students develop the ability to identify and critique the distinctiveness of a couple or family therapy approach.

Prior to coming to the assigned date of the group project (see schedule), each student would have to watch the assigned video: **Emotionally Focused Therapy in Action (by Sue Johnson)** – *you only need to watch Part 2 (the actual session with Matt and Rhea)*

You can have free access to the video via [Psychotherapy.net](https://www-psychotherapy-net.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/stream/tyndale/video?vid=178) via Tyndale:

<https://www-psychotherapy-net.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/stream/tyndale/video?vid=178>

On the group discussion date (see schedule), each student will be assigned to a group of 4-5 people. You will not know your group members until the scheduled date. Each group will have about 1.5 hours to discuss their video analysis.

The schedule is as follows:

8:15 class: 8:20-9:30 discussion, 9:30-9:45 break, 9:45-10:15 discussion, 10:15-10:30 Group Process Evaluation form

11:15 class: 11:20-12:30 discussion, 12:30-12:45 break, 12:45-1:15 discussion, 1:15-1:30 Group Process Evaluation form

The class will reconvene after completing the Group Process Evaluation form (10:30 am or 1:30 pm).

The focus of the analysis and discussion is on four areas (see some sample questions – please note, the sample questions are not exhaustive; you need to come up with your own reflection):

- a. **The therapist's micro-interventions:** what interventions were used, how well they were used, what was helpful to you or not helpful, etc.
- b. **The therapeutic process:** what direction is the therapist going, how well and not well is the therapist moving the clients, how effective is the therapist tuning in to the clients, etc.
- c. **The client's response:** how was the therapeutic alliance, what were the clients' reactions, what kind of motivation did you notice in the clients, etc?
- d. **The self-as-therapist reflection:** what are some of your own reactions watching the therapist, what came up strongly for you, what do you notice about your own body response, etc.

Group Process Evaluation

Since this is a group project, each student is expected to contribute fully to the work. You will use the **Group Process Evaluation form**³ to privately and fairly evaluate your fellow group members according to their contributions. There are four areas to evaluate their:

1. Critical Thinking: Your ability to critically analyze
2. Communication: Your ability to effectively communicate
3. Preparation: Your ability to prepare for the discussion
4. Equitability: Your ability to collaborate

³ The Group Process Evaluation form is located on your Moodle Page.

After entering the score for each category for each person, please add up the scores. Each person is to offer a sound evaluation of their group members (i.e., not too harsh and lenient). Remember that to score 100% in anything, you must meet all the requirements in all respects. If a score of 100% is given, please justify your score, and you will receive an inquiry from your professor about it.

At the end of the group discussion, each member will complete the form privately and submit it via Moodle by 11:59 pm today. 1 out of 15 points will be deducted for late and incomplete submission. Your group members' highest and lowest scores will be removed from the calculation of your grade. The average of the remaining scores will be used to calculate each person's mark.

Group Process Evaluation Your name: _____ Your group #: _____

It is important that each group member contributes equitably to the group assignment. Once you have completed the assignment, you will have an opportunity to privately evaluate the contributions of each member of your group (Your scores of your classmates are confidential). The highest score and the lowest score that you received will be removed. An average of the remaining scores will be used for your grade.

| Group Assignment | Measurables | Max. Weight | Group Name #1: | Group Member #2: | Group Member #3: | Group Member #4: | Group Member #5: | Group Member #6: |
|--|-------------|-------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Add Last Names & First Names (Lopez, Mia): | | | | | | | | |
| Aptitude (Demonstrated Abilities) | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Critical Thinking (e.g. analysis, reflection, etc.) | | 35 | | | | | | |
| 2. Communication (e.g. clarity, conciseness, etc.) | | 15 | | | | | | |
| Attitude (Demonstrated Willingness) | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Preparation (e.g. readiness, participation, fully present, etc.) | | 25 | | | | | | |
| 4. Equitability (e.g. allow mutual sharing, collaboration, etc.) | | 25 | | | | | | |
| Total Score for Each Group Member | | 100 | | | | | | |

Comments (Optional):

****Please note: A written submission is not required because I want everyone to fully immerse in the discussion without worrying about writing a paper.***

If you missed the group project ...

If you are away on the presentation day for a legitimate reason, the weight of this paper will be evenly applied to your next two assignments. ***If you don't have a legitimate reason for missing the group presentation, you will get 0% for this assignment.***

2. Critique Paper: (40%); Due Date: Nov 12 at 11:59 pm

This assignment evaluates how well you can critique and notice the distinctiveness of the various family therapy models studied in this course.

You need to write a personal critique paper on **two** of the family therapy models (You have to choose from: **Bowenian, Strategic, and Structural**). With each of the two models selected, critique how they fit and do not fit with you personally in **2 areas**: 1) your clinical approach and 2) your personal value or faith system.

When appropriate, as you reflect on your clinical approach and your personal values or faith system, including **elements** such as,

- a) contextual factors (e.g. culture, gender, racism, religion, etc.),
- b) past experiences (e.g. family of origin experience, personal counselling experience, supervision experiences, etc.), and/or
- c) personal feelings (e.g. I feel ... surprised, confused, etc.)

You should include at least one element in each model as you reflect on them.

There is **no need for an introduction or conclusion** for this assignment. The paper should be four pages. It will be typed, double-spaced, 12-point Arial font, with 1-inch margins, in PDF format only, and a proper title page. **The grader does not read beyond the page limit.**

Please save the file only in PDF format and submit it via Moodle.

See the rubric for details of expectations.

3. Treatment Plan Paper: (45%); Due Date: Dec 10 at 11:59 pm

This assignment evaluates how well you can prepare an integrative treatment plan.

Assignment: Using the movie “**The Descendants**” (George Clooney, Shailene Woodley, etc.) as the backdrop for a case study, students will create a treatment plan for the King family.

- Burke, J. (Producer), & Payne, A. (Director). (2011). *The descendants*. United States: Fox Searchlight Pictures.

We already have access to *The Descendants*. It is available in Criterion-On-Demand. Use this link to get to the Criterion platform:

<https://go.openathens.net/redirector/tyndale.ca?url=https://go.openathens.net/redirector/tyndale.ca?url=https%3A//www.criterionondemand.com/>

If students have signed into their class website or their Tyndale email they will be automatically authenticated. Once in Criterion they just need to search for the movie title.

Context: A few weeks after the end of the movie, Matt, Alex, and Scottie came to you for counselling. They expressed that ***their goal was to improve their relationship as a family***. You saw them for one session and gathered enough information (whatever you learned from the movie) to propose a treatment plan as a family therapist. The treatment plan should be **six pages** in length. **The grader does not read beyond the page limit.**

Along with a title page, a reference page, and an appendix page, you should include the following three sections and a genogram (appendix):

a. Conceptualizations (3 pages)

You are to use system language to describe what contributes to the problem (i.e. what prevents the family's goal of connection). You should discuss with depth at least 4 conceptualizations. You can include from various systems: individual, interactional, inter-generational, family life cycle, community – whichever you feel are the most relevant to the case. You need to include examples pertaining to this family with each conceptualization, system language, and at least 2 research to support your treatment models/interventions and referrals (you don't need to support all of your models/interventions/referrals, just a selection of them). Please note: The research portion belongs to the conceptualization section of the paper. This section is about 3 pages.

b. Interventions (2.5 pages)

In this section, you will select only two family therapy approaches from this course (**Bowenian, Strategic, Structural, Cognitive-Behavioral, and Psychoanalytic**) as your treatment interventions. You should discuss in-depth how you will use at least four interventions from the two selected models to help with some or all of the mentioned conceptualizations in (a). You may choose to use your referrals (from c) to address some of the conceptualizations. You should have addressed all the conceptualizations between your interventions (b) and your referrals (c). You need to include the following for this section: the choice of therapies used, specific interventions/techniques, and some examples of what the techniques will look like. Whenever possible, always incorporate depth and system language.

c. Referrals (0.5 page)

In this section, you are to offer at least four appropriate referrals for your family to further their goal of connection. You should have addressed all the conceptualizations between your interventions (b) and your referrals (c). Referrals can include: books, community resources, support groups, therapists, etc. You should clearly convey why these referrals are helpful in your conceptualizations.

Appendix: Genogram

With only the information provided in the movie, you need to create at least a three-generation genogram (static and dynamic) of the family (along with relevant info and nodal events) and its relational patterns. A hand-drawn genogram is equally as good as a computer-generated genogram. A legend must be included. Please attach the genogram to your appendix (this is not part of the six written pages). No diagrams should be part of the body of writing.

The introduction and conclusion are not necessary for this assignment. The paper must be typed, double-spaced, 12-point Arial font, 1-inch margins, and in PDF format only. During the lecture, a detailed discussion of how to design the treatment plan will be presented. Please note: You need to write this in paragraph form. No point form is allowed in this paper. There is no need to retell the story except for what is necessary to describe the family patterns. **The grader does not read beyond the page limit.**

Please save the file only in PDF format and submit it via Moodle.

See the rubric for details of expectations.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Expected written standards:

Please pay attention to the following writing guidelines; marks will be allocated accordingly:

- Documentation and notes should be consistent with **APA guidelines** articulated in the Guidelines for submission to the Counselling Department.
- ***Stay within the page limit: You will need at least the minimum number of pages to convey your points. Also, the grader does not read beyond the maximum number of pages.***
- The title page for all written work ought to include: the title of the paper, the name of the course, the professor's name, the date of submission, the name of the student and the class time. An abstract is not necessary.
- Number all your pages.
- The paper should be free of spelling mistakes, punctuate correctly, and adhere to basic grammar rules.
- The paper needs to be written in a clear, organized, and straightforward academic manner. It should present a coherent position and arguments that support that position.
- Ensure you have accurately and thoroughly documented sources used in your paper. You need to pay careful attention to intellectual property matters, honesty and integrity. Plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs and will not be tolerated in any form whatsoever. See the attached policy on Academic Honesty for a comprehensive discussion of the Seminary's policy on plagiarism.

Submission and Grading:

All papers are submitted via Moodle. Your assignments should be in PDF format only. You will receive your grades via Moodle.

Late assignments:

Papers handed in on or before the due date will get everything they deserve! Except for "extreme and extenuating circumstances," all late assignments (1 day to 1 week) will be deducted one-third grade point deduction (i.e., B to B-). No paper is accepted after one week past the due date.

Request for Extension on Assignments

Requests for an extension due to a medical diagnosis are usually made through the Accessibility Services at Tyndale. You need to arrange this with them. Please note: Your accommodation plan only allows up to two ***weeks of extension, but you are not guaranteed the entire two weeks.*** ***You need to submit in writing how many days you need and why. It is typically from a few days to a week. All extensions are negotiated and approved by the professor no later than seven days before the original due date.***

All other requests for extension must be in writing, indicating the reason and how many extension days are requested. It is a case-by-case situation. Proper documentation (e.g. doctor or counsellor's note indicating the time frame) is usually accompanied by your written request (whenever possible). *Please note: unusual circumstances such as a death in the family, medical emergency or prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician are considered. Reasons such as too many assignments due, vacations, and technology-related issues are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.*

INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY

If you have any course-related concerns, please speak to me directly as soon as possible. I am available for brief chats before and after class. Please make an appointment during my office hours for issues requiring a more formal setting.

Email: hchow@tyndale.ca

Office hours: by appointment only

Emergency: Cell 416-953-4072

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance and punctuality for all classes (small groups) are expected. Out of respect for your colleagues, please try to be on time. You may fail the course if you have three or more unexcused absences. (See Attendance Policy for details).

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

| Assignment | Due | % |
|----------------------------------|--------|-------------|
| 1. Group Project: Video Analysis | Oct 8 | 15% |
| 2. Critique Paper | Nov 12 | 40% |
| 3. Treatment Plan Paper | Dec 10 | 45% |
| Total Grade | | 100% |

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Sep 17: Introduction and Review of System Concepts

(Nichols, chapters 1, 2)

Sep 24: Bowenian Therapy

(Nichols, chapter 4)

Oct 1: Bowenian Therapy

(Nichols, chapter 4)

Oct 8: Group Project: Video Analysis of a Therapy Session

Oct 15: Treatment Plan / Strategic Therapy

(Nichols, chapter 5)

Oct 22: Strategic Therapy

(Nichols, chapter 5)

****** Reading Days (...Oct 29) ******

Nov 5: Structural Therapy

(Nichols, chapter 6)

Nov 12: Structural Therapy

(Nichols, chapter 6)

***Critique Paper**

Nov 19: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

(Nichols, chapter 9)

Nov 26: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

(Nichols, chapter 9)

Dec 3: Psychoanalytic Approaches

(Nichols, chapter 8)

Dec 10: Psychoanalytic Approaches

(Nichols, chapter 8)

***Treatment Plan Paper**

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Nichol's book (our main text) offers a comprehensive bibliography list in his recommended readings and reference section for each of the discussed topics. Please refer to them for resources. Additional handouts and material may be provided online.

VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COURSES

A. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVESTREAM INTERACTION (SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE COURSE ONLY)

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

**exceptions with permission from professor*

C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each

other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

4. Grading Rubric

Please consult the rubric provided for each assignment on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

5. Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.

For proper citation style, consult [Citation Guides](#) for different styles. Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Turnitin Text-Matching Software

Tyndale has a subscription to Turnitin, a text-matching software that ensures the originality of academic writing and verifies the proper citation of all sources. The instructor for this course will use Turnitin for assignments submitted through your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca. Upon submission, you will receive a summary that includes your submitted files along with a similarity report generated by Turnitin. Please be aware that Turnitin can also detect AI-generated content from tools like Grammarly, so students should be mindful of when using such software. It’s advisable to confirm with your instructor before using any AI tools into your assignments. Below are some useful resources:

- [Student](#) Guides for Turnitin via classes.tyndale.ca course resource page
- Interpreting Similarity ([Guide](#), [Video](#), [Spectrum](#))

6. Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (seminaryoffice@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

7. Late Papers and Extensions Policy

All papers and course assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Unless the instructor already has a policy on grading late papers in the course syllabus, grades for papers submitted late without an approved extension will be lowered at the rate of two-thirds of a grade per week or part thereof (e.g., from "A+" to "A-," from "B" to "C+"). Please note that some programs, such as cohort-based or intensive courses, may follow a different policy due to the nature of the program.

Faculty may not grant an extension beyond the last day of exams for the semester. Requests for extensions beyond this date must be addressed in writing to the Registrar by filling out the [Extension Request Form](#). The application will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, medical emergency, hospitalization of oneself or immediate family member or prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician. Factors such as assignments for other courses, holidays, and technology-related difficulties are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.

A temporary grade of incomplete ("I") may be granted by the Registrar. Once an extension is granted, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and make satisfactory arrangements to complete the outstanding work. A grade of "F" will be recorded for students who do not complete the outstanding work by the deadline.

E. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential, and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

F. LIBRARY RESOURCES

[Tyndale Library](#) supports courses with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).

G. GRADING SYSTEM & SCALE

For each course's grading rubric, please refer to your course syllabus or classes.tyndale.ca. For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary [Grading System & Scale](#).