

*“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.”*

<b>Course</b>	<b>FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY</b> COUN 0677
<b>Date and Time</b>	JANUARY 13 – APRIL 7, 2021 WEDNESDAYS 2:15-5:05 PM
<b>Instructor</b>	<b>DR. HELEN NOH, PhD</b> Email: <a href="mailto:hnoh@tyndale.ca">hnoh@tyndale.ca</a>
<b>Class Information</b>	The classes will be livestreamed on Wednesdays from 2:15-5:05.  Students may participate in live-streamed office hours as posted below/on the course page.  Office Hours: By appointment.
<b>Course Material</b>	Access course material at <a href="http://classes.tyndale.ca">classes.tyndale.ca</a> or other services at <a href="#">Tyndale One</a> . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only. <a href="#">Learn how to access and forward emails to your personal account.</a>

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A critical appraisal of basic theoretical concepts in Family Systems Theory. Topics: historical and conceptual development of Family Systems Theory; introduction to General Systems Theory; family rules, roles, structure and interaction patterns; functional and dysfunctional family systems; life cycle issues in marriage and family and ethnicity and family therapy.

*Prerequisites: COUN majors only or by permission of instructor.*

## II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- Identify the differences between individual/intrapsychic and a systemic/interpersonal perspectives of human behaviour.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical concepts of family systems theory.
- Recognize system dynamics in individual, couple and family behaviours.
- Apply systems theory to the therapeutic relationship, assessment, change techniques and termination of therapy.
- Examine one's self in relation to one's own family of origin.
- Integrate an understanding of the impact of one's self and context on the therapeutic relationship.

## III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### A. REQUIRED READING

Becvar, D. S. & Becvar, R. J. (2018). *Systems theory and family therapy: A primer* (revised 3rd ed.). Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books. ISBN 978-0-7618-6981-8

An [e-book](#) version of this book is available in Tyndale's library.

Richardson, D. (2011). *Family ties that bind*. (4th ed.) North Vancouver, BC: Self Counsel Press. ISBN 978-1-77040-086-3

An [e-book](#) version of this book is available in Tyndale's library.

Smith-Acuna, S. (2011). *Systems theory in action: Applications to individual, couples, and family therapy*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. ISBN 978-0-470-47582-9

An [e-book](#) version of this book is available in Tyndale's library.

### B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

McGoldrick, M. & Shellenberger, S. (1999). *Genograms in family assessments*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN 0-393-70294-4

Tyndale recommends [www.stepbible.org](http://www.stepbible.org) – 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. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR HYBRID COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- Livestream attendance 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

## **D. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

**Regular attendance and punctuality to all LIVE lectures is expected.** Absence from more than 2 classes may result in the loss of credit.

### **1. RICHARDSON QUESTION FORUMS: Due Dates noted on Course Schedule (10% of final grade)**

From the Richardson text, students will be required to submit their answers to at least THREE of the “Questions” embedded in the required reading for that week in a Discussion Forum format. Grading of the assignment will be based on both the completed submission and the engagement with other group members’ posts. There will be five discussion forums worth 2% each for a total of 10% of the final grade. Detailed instructions will be provided in class. Note: Information in this text is very useful for preparation for Family of Origin paper and genogram (assignment #4).

### **2. QUEST #1: FEB 3, 2021 (10% of final grade)**

This will be a short answer quiz/test (quest) in which the student must define various systems terms of 1<sup>st</sup> Order Cybernetic Theory discussed over the first three lectures.

### **3. QUEST #2: MARCH 10, 2021 (10% of final grade)**

This will be a short answer quiz/test (quest) in which the student must define various systems terms of 2<sup>nd</sup> Order Cybernetic Theory discussed over Lectures 4 to 7.

### **4. FAMILY OF ORIGIN PAPER AND GENOGRAM: Due MARCH 31, 2021 (35% of final grade)**

Through the course of our lives we interact in many systems. However, it is the first system with which we interact, our family of origin, that has the most powerful and persistent influence on how we think and feel about ourselves and on how we interact with others. It is this system that has the most powerful impact, both positive and negative, on our future relationships. (Fredda Herz Brown)

An individual acquires from his/her early-family experiences, or "family of origin," a set of explicit and implicit expectations, values, attitudes, and beliefs which serve as points of reference for the evaluation of all interpersonal life experiences. These interactions with the family of origin begin with the birth of an individual and continue to exert an influence throughout life. (Brian Canfield)

Both of these quotes point to the influence of the family of origin on the individual. Understanding oneself, especially oneself within relationships, requires some understanding of the interpersonal dynamics of one's family of origin.

Most families, however, with all their inadequacies, generally care for their members. To celebrate this reality, however, we need words that identify and validate family strengths as well as family limitations.

The texts for this course have a system's orientation. Considering the information gained in these readings and in the lectures, students will be required to do the following:

- a. Construct a "Family-of-Origin Genogram" (incorporating 3 generations). You may do this free-hand or use a computer program for genograms such as Genopro. Whatever method you choose, you **must include a legend to indicate** what the various symbols mean.
- b. Analyze your family and identify family patterns to understand how the themes, issues and interactional patterns are transmitted across generational lines. Please use system's terminology where it applies. Apply the concepts from the texts and the content of the course (Family Systems Theory) to your reflections on your family and to the genogram. Interviewing willing family members to get adequate information for this project is expected.
- c. Identify problematic patterns in your family of origin and how they have influenced you as an adult, and how they will impact safe and effective use of self as a therapist.
- d. Identify qualities and strengths in your family of origin and how they enriched your adult life.

You will then hand in your completed genograms and an 8 to 12 page paper in which you will consider the dynamics you identify in your family system, using family system terminology.

I am especially interested in your reflections on how, in the light of your family of origin study, you understand yourself, your current relational patterns, and the impact of those patterns on you as a therapist.

PLEASE NOTE: The research and reflection for this assignment is extremely time consuming. In order to complete this assignment satisfactorily you will need to begin early in the semester.

#### **5. FINAL VIDEO SUMMATIVE: Due APR 7, 2021 (30% of final grade)**

To encourage this process of translating theory into practice, there will be a video presentation most weeks and students will participate in a family system's analysis of each video. The final assignment will be a video summative on the last day of the course that will focus on your ability to analyze the relational dynamics using Family Systems terms and understandings and to 'think' in family systems terms.

The content which you will be expected to master will be drawn from the class discussions, the texts, and from any handouts that are distributed during the course. This summative will involve watching a portion of a 'professor-selected' video. Then you will be required to answer questions which will reflect your understanding from a systems perspective of the dynamics in that family in the video. The summative will include questions on the processes of counselling as well (type of therapeutic relationship, therapist's use of self, therapeutic plan and change processes, etc.). In preparation for this, students are encouraged to review the lectures, their take-home quiz, and in-class video discussions as well as the texts.

#### **6. SEUS REFLECTION: DUE anytime before APRIL 9, 2021 (5% of final grade)**

**In addition to the above assignments, all counselling majors are now mandated to have 6 "self-awareness" counselling sessions with counsellors at the Tyndale Counselling Services.** These sessions will be scheduled during the Family Systems course for all beginning counselling students. The sessions will be \$25.00 each. If students want to also engage in therapeutic goals beyond this mandated goal, that would be their decision. During these 6 sessions, students will be expected to read 25 pages of suggested readings prepared for each session (150 pages in all), which will be discussed during their sessions. The suggested references are attached below and the reading is not limited to this list. When these sessions are completed, the student will receive a Certificate of Completion which will be held by the instructor and placed in the students file for graduation.

Students will be required to hand in a 2-3 page reflection on their understanding of SEUS and any relevant issues that were discussed and discovered in the counselling sessions. This reflection can be handed in anytime throughout the semester (when the student has completed all six sessions), with the LATEST date of submission being APRIL 9, 2021.

## E. 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.

## F. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Richardson Question Forums	10 %
Quests	20 %
Family of Origin and Genogram Paper	35 %
Final Video Summative	30 %
SEUS Reflection	5%
<b>Total Grade</b>	<b>100 %</b>

## G. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

1. Your work should demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Reports of psychological research should follow the rules set forth in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.* (2019).
- All parts of the report are typed double-spaced, and without justifying the right hand margin. Use a 12 point font (“Times New Roman” or “Courier” is preferred).
- The [APA Style Guide](#) is a helpful web site for all questions regarding APA style.

For non-psychology/counselling students, Chicago style may be used.

For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections [10.44 to 10.48](#) and [14.238 to 14.241](#).

### 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.

Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

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.

### 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 ([aau@tyndale.ca](mailto:aau@tyndale.ca)) before proceeding.

## H. 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.

## IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

DATE	LECTURE TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
Jan 13	Introduction to the Family Relational Framework	Becvar: Chps 1 Richardson: Chps 1 Smith-Acuna: Chp 1	
Jan 20	Family Systems Theory: First Order Cybernetics – Key Family Processes	Becvar: Chps 2, 3 (pp 18-29) Richardson: Chp 2 Smith-Acuna: Chp 2, 3	Richardson Chp 2: FORUM #1 (closes by noon)

Jan 27	Family Systems Theory: First Order Cybernetics – Key Family Structures	Becvar: Chp 3 (pp 11-13; 16-17) Richardson: Chp 3 Smith-Acuna: Chp 6	Richardson Chp 3: FORUM #2 (closes by noon)
Feb 3	Family Systems Theory: First Order Cybernetics: Key Family Communication Principles	Becvar: Chp 3 (pp 14-16) Smith-Acuna: Chp 4	<b>QUEST #1 (IN CLASS)</b>
Feb 10	Family Systems Theory (First Order Cybernetics) on Family Systems Therapy: Family Genogram	Richardson: Chp 4 Smith-Acuna: Chp 5	Richardson Chp 4: FORUM #3 (closes by noon)
Feb 17	<b>READING WEEK – NO CLASS</b>		
Feb 24	Family Systems Theory: Shift to Second Order Cybernetics: Core Constructs	Becvar: Chps 4, 5 Richardson: Chp 5	Richardson Chp 5: FORUM #4 (closes by noon)
Mar 3	Family Systems Theory: Second Order Cybernetics and Family Systems Therapy	Becvar: Chps 7, 8 Richardson: Chp 6	Richardson Chp 6: FORUM #5 (closes by noon)
Mar 10	Human Development Theory and Family Systems	Becvar: Chps 9, 10 Smith-Acuna: Chp 7	<b>QUEST #2 (IN CLASS)</b>
Mar 17	Family Life Cycle Theory and Family Systems	Becvar: Chp 6	
Mar 24	Family Systems Therapy: Therapeutic Relationship	Smith-Acuna: Chp 8	
Mar 31	Family Systems Therapy: Therapeutic Processes	Smith-Acuna: Chp 9	<b>FAMILY OF ORIGIN PAPER DUE (by 11:55pm)</b>



Apr 7	CLOSING AND SUMMARY		FINAL VIDEO SUMMATIVE (IN CLASS)
FRIDAY Apr 9	LAST DAY TO HAND IN SEUS REFLECTIONS		

## V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

Beeton, T. A., & Clark, R. A. (2019). *Assessing family relationships: A family life space drawing manual*. New York: Routledge.

Goldenberg, I., Stanton, M., & Goldenberg, H. (2017). *Family Therapy: An overview* (9<sup>th</sup> Ed). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

Napier, A. & Whitaker, C. (1978). *The family crucible: The intense experience of family therapy*. New York, NY: Harper & Row. ISBN 0-06-091489-0

Smith-Acuna, S. (2011). [\*Systems Theory in action: Applications to individual, couples, and family therapy\*](#). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. ISBN 978-0-470-47582-9.

Sperry, L. (2012). [\*Family assessment: Contemporary and cutting-edge strategies\*](#) (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). New York: Routledge.

Walsh, F. (2012). [\*Normal family processes\*](#) (4<sup>th</sup> Ed). New York: Guilford Press.

Watzlawick, P. Weakland, J. & Fisch, R. (2011). *Change: Principles of problem formation and problem resolution*. (Reprint ed.) New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN 0-393-01104-6

Watzlawick, P., Bavelas, J. B. & Jackson, D. D. (2011). *Pragmatics of human communication: A study of interactional patterns, pathologies, and paradoxes*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN 978-0-393-70707-6

Worden, M. (2003). *Family therapy basics* (3rd ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole-Thompson Learning. (ISBN 0-534-51971-7

Yarhouse, M. A., & Sells, J. N. (2008). [\*Family therapies: A comprehensive Christian appraisal.\*](#)  
Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.