

The Family in Crises
FCS 4845
Spring 2012

Klehm Hall 2321

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Office Hours: M, W 11:00-12:30
Thursday 1:30-2:30
or by appointment

Course Description:

This course will define what is meant by family crises, identify some of the major theoretical frameworks for studying families in crises, consider major life-style transitions, and explore the major catastrophic crises families face. It will also examine resources and strengths that enable families to deal with crises more adequately.

Text:

McKenry, P.C. & Price, S. J. and Price, C. A. "Families & Change: Coping with stressful events and transitions" (4th edition). London: Sage

Prerequisite:

FCS 1800 **OR** FCS 2800

Course Objectives:

- Define what is meant by family crisis
- Identify and explain the major theoretical frameworks for studying families in crisis and be able to integrate theory and practice.
- Identify the major life-cycle transitions of families and be able to explain their potential for crisis.
- Explain the meaning of situational stressors, the potential crises involved in this area, and the issues to be addressed at the personal and social levels for more effective functioning.
- Develop an understanding of the major catastrophic crises families face and examine current research that addresses these crises.
- Identify effective methods employed by professional and clinicians to help families cope with crisis.
- Examine the resources and strengths that enable some families to weather crises better than other families.
- Develop an understanding of the issues and implications of family crisis in own and other's lives.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

1. ***Autobiographical Sketch of Personal or Family Crisis:*** The intent of this paper is to explore a crisis in light of your readings, class discussions, etc. with regard to theoretical frameworks, preventive possibilities, and crisis intervention. Your assignment is to use a combination of Hill's ABC-X and McCubbin's Double ABC-X models of family stress to explore your own family crisis. You will, therefore, need to be knowledgeable about both models. At an assigned time before the papers are due, students are to turn in an outline of the paper indicating how they plan to use the models in the paper. If help is needed with the assignment, please make an appointment with the instructor. A serious and sincere approach to the paper is critical. **(Total Points: 100 maximum)**

The paper will be evaluated on:

1. Application of theoretical models.
2. The degree to which the reading, discussion, etc. are incorporated and reflected in the content.
3. Capacity to express oneself clearly and grammatically.

Paper length: approximately **5-8 typed pages**. Strict confidentiality is guaranteed for this and all assignments that involve personal issues.

2. ***Written Examination:*** Two exams will be given; the mid-term will be given during the semester and a final will be given during the final exam period. These **MUST** be taken on the date assigned. **(Total points: 200 maximum)**
3. ***Team Presentation:*** Teams of approximately 4-5 students will be responsible for a 35-40 minute presentation of a topic relevant to the course. Each team member will submit a **detailed summary** of his/her part of the presentation on the specified due date. **(Total points: 100 maximum)**

The Team presentation will be evaluated on:

1. The accurate content and incorporation of the relevant research
2. Application of the stress theory, circumplex model or any other appropriate theory discussed in the course
3. Usage of audiovisual or multimedia techniques
4. Effective presentation techniques: e.g. eye contact, voice level
5. Effective team work.
6. Professional attire

4. ***In-class/Short-term Assignments:*** Individual or small group assignments may be incorporated as additional activities. Students must be present to receive credit for in-class assignments/activities. Short-term assignments must be submitted when due; late assignments will not be accepted. **(Points will vary)**
5. ***Option Assignment:*** Students are given options concerning additional out-of-class assignments.
Students are limited to options that have a total maximum value of **100 points**. You cannot attempt over 100 points for evaluation purposes. For example, if you choose to do

the genogram worth 100 points, you may not choose to do additional options for evaluation points. E.g. If you got 85/100 in your optional assignments, you cannot then go back and do additional work to make up the 15 points. Your grade for this assignment would remain at 85. Therefore, it is important to choose your option(s) wisely and do quality work on those chosen. Option work must be typed. Due dates are on the class schedule. **No optional work will be accepted after the due date.**

You may choose from the following:

- a. **Review of Journal Articles:** 2-3 page written reviews of articles from professional journals related to this course. No news articles or articles from lay periodicals will be accepted. The following format is to be used:
 1. Source – provide a complete citation
 2. The nature of the problem (what the article is about)
 3. Sample (if this is a research article)
 4. Method used (if this is a research article)
 5. Major findings
 6. Author’s principal conclusions
 7. Your evaluation of the article and implications for the family in crisis. (this item is particularly important in the assignment evaluation) **10 points maximum per article**

- b. **Book Reports:** Book reports should be about 3-4 pages long and include 1.) summary, 2.) indication of relevance to the course (is the author’s assessment accurate?) Support your position, and 3.) the book’s effect on your thinking, attitudes, etc. **50 points maximum**

- c. **Volunteer Service:** Students may choose to do volunteer service in institutions in the area or in hometowns. Students will submit a **written report** of their hands on experience with an attached statement signed by the person in authority indicating the number of hours of volunteer service completed. **10 points per hour, 50 points maximum**

- d. **Genogram:** The genogram was developed from research on family systems by Murray Bowen and is widely used to help people understand the relationship patterns of their family members and help pinpoint their talents, strengths, and weaknesses. To create your own genogram, your task is to explore key events in your parents’ and grandparents’ generations – **births, weddings, deaths, divorce, family changes, health status, addictions, physical/sexual abuse, special achievements, financial windfalls or bankruptcies.** What important family events did you witness or hear talked about, and what were the reactions to them? How did people cope with life transitions – happy turning points as well as difficult times? Discuss this all in a **paper** about **4-5 pages** long along with the **Graphic Representation** which should include the title, course name, student’s name and a key to explain the important events. Perfection and neatness should be kept in mind. **Maximum possible points are 100**

- e. **Film Review:** This option is designed to examine the concepts, issues, and dilemmas related to Family in Crisis through the study of contemporary film. Your task is to

critique one or more films. Each film review will include: 1.) a summary of the film, 2.) the relevance or illustration of concepts in the course, and 3.) personal reaction. A list of films of attached. **25 points per film, 50 points maximum**

Graduate Credit: An additional assignment is required in order to receive graduate credit. The nature of this assignment will vary and will be determined after consultation between the individual student and the instructor. Past examples include a special class presentation, a resource file, a literature review paper, and a teaching module. **(75 points)**

- 6. Attendance/ Participation:** Students are expected to attend all class sessions and contribute to each other's learning through class discussion. Students who arrive late or leave early will lose attendance/participation points and if absent from class will not receive attendance/participation points or points for whatever class activities that have been missed. It is the responsibility of the student to get instructions for assignments made during missed classes. More than three missed classes (without official written documentation) will affect the final grade. Perfect attendance and participation can make a difference in a borderline grade at the end of the semester.

Please note that calling in does not excuse the absence.

7. Evaluation:

Personal or Family Crises Paper	100 points
Written Examinations (2x100)	200 points
Team presentation	100 points
Optional Assignments	100 points
Attendance (4 points/class)	120 points
In-class assignments	<u>40 points</u>
	660 points

Grading Scale:

- A= 90 - 100 % of possible points
- B= 80 - 89 % of possible points
- C= 70 - 79 % of possible points
- D= 60 - 69 % of possible points
- F= below 60 % of possible points

8. General Information:

1. Class attendance and participation are expected; class attendance will be taken each class period. In the event of an excused (determined by the professor) absence, then you are responsible for initiating discussion with the professor about missed assignments, information, and announcement. You are also responsible for notifying the professor of an absence prior to the start of class.
2. Students are expected to observe all principles of academic integrity. Violation of academic integrity includes intentional misrepresentations or attempts to gain undeserved intellectual advantages such as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized possession of exams,

etc. Any student suspected of violation of the standard of academic integrity will be disciplined according to University policy.

3. Late assignments: All assignments not submitted on the designated due date will receive a grade of “F” unless the professor states otherwise.

4. The professor reserves the right to alter or amend the syllabus, including the tentative course schedule.

5. The professor reserves the right to make subjective judgments about the grades that are assigned to students.

6. Any student having difficulties with a special disability (sight, hearing, mobility, etc.) that may affect class activities should inform the professor verbally and with a written explanatory note. The professor reserves the right to adjust the grading procedure accordingly. If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

7. If you are having difficulties with the course, talk with the professor. The professor will be glad to discuss the material and expectations of the course. It is in the best interest of the student and the professor if discussion is initiated by the student as early in the semester as possible.

8. The professor expects that students thoroughly read and understand the syllabus, including class assignments and projects. The excuses of “I didn’t know it was due today” or “I didn’t know how to do the project” are not acceptable.

9. Students are advised to keep copies of work submitted and retain returned assignments until course grades have been submitted.

9. **Announcement:**

All students who are FCS majors or have a minor in FCS are required to submit a Core Portfolio demonstrating achievement of the Core Learning Objectives for FCS. A successful portfolio includes graded assignments from a variety of classes. It is important to save major assignments from this and all FCS classes so that you can select the assignment you wish to include