

Approved HES: 4-19-04  
CCHS: 5-5-04

**SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY  
COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Department of:** Human Environmental Studies      **Course No.:** CF209  
**Title of Course:** Introduction to Family Systems      **Revision:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**New:** Fall 2004

**I. Catalog Description and Credit Hours of Course:**

Introduction to Family Systems Theory including basic concepts and principles, subsystem alignments, and change mechanisms within the family framework.  
(3 credit hours)

**II. Prerequisite(s):**

None

**III. Purposes or Objectives of the Course:**

The student will:

- A. Demonstrate an understanding of Family System principles and theory.
- B. Identify the components of the family subsystem including alignments, coalitions and triangulation.
- C. Demonstrate family mapping skills.
- D. Analyze current research regarding Family System Theory in practical (non-clinical) application scenarios.
- E. Demonstrate an understanding of the interconnectedness of the family system.

**IV. Expectations of Students:**

Students will be expected to attend class, participate in discussions, and successfully complete all assignments and examinations. Each student will cooperate as a productive member in class work groups assigned to solve primary family issues. Each student will be expected to accurately map a variety of family structures.

<b>V. Course Outline:</b>	<b>Hours</b>
A. Overview of the history of Systems Theory	3
1. Analytical/Mechanistic Theory	
2. Reductionism	
3. Living systems	
4. GST	
5. Family Systems Theorists	
B. Principles of Family Systems Theory	9
1. Interconnections/interdependence	
2. Balance/change	
3. Boundaries	
4. Wholeness – non summativity	
5. Hierarchy	
6. Communication/Feedback	
7. Causality	
8. Equifinality	
9. Entropy	
C. Family Systems Framework/Interaction	12
1. Subsystem Organization	
2. Rituals/Traditions	
3. Power	
4. Stress (Centripetal-Centrifugal) Patterns	
5. Alignment & Coalitions	
6. Boundary	
7. Crises	
8. Process of individuation	
D. System Assessment (non-clinical)	10
1. Observation strategies	
2. Interview techniques	
3. Identifying cues and clues	
E.. Application & Intervention Strategies	11
1. Mapping techniques	
2. First-order and second-order change	
3. System perturbing	
4. Primary – Secondary prevention issues	
Total	45

**VI. Textbook:**

Bristol, M.W. (2003). 3rd edition. *Individuals, and Family Systems in Their Environments*. Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company

**VII. Basis for Evaluation:**

Written Exams and Quizzes	45%
Work Group Assignments/Projects	30%
Article Analysis	10%
Genographs/Mapping Assignment	15%