

The Family in Crisis – FCS 4845
Fall 2012

Instructor: Sonja A. Foster, M.A., M.S.
Office: Klehm Hall 2050
Phone: 217-581-6356

Email: safoster@eiu.edu
Office Hrs: M, W (11-12) and T, Th (2-3)
Other Times: 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:

Price, S. J., Price, C.A., & McKenry, P.C. (Eds.) 2010. *Families & change: Coping with stressful events and transitions* (4th edition). Los Angeles: Sage

Prerequisite:

FCS 1800 and 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 Policies and Procedures: The instructor reserves the right to alter or amend the syllabus, including the tentative course and guest speaker schedule.

Students are expected to attend class regularly. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain all notes, assignments, and handouts. If you are tardy to class, it is also **your responsibility** to catch up on any missed announcements, etc. You will need a valid, EIU e-mail address and regular access to WebCT to receive course announcements and to correspond with me and your classmates. **I strongly encourage you to check your WebCT accounts daily for any announcements, materials, etc. related to this class. I will do my best to respond to your emails within 48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) after your initial email.**

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated by the School of Family and Consumer Sciences. All students are expected to comply with University rules and regulations on academic integrity and honesty. Disciplinary sanctions may be imposed for violations of these rules and regulations. Eastern Illinois University is committed to the learning process and academic integrity that is defined in the Student Conduct Code (1.1). To encourage original and authentic written work, any written assignments created in this course may be submitted for review to turnitin.com and will become a searchable document with the Turnitin-protected and restricted use database. **The Turnitin information will be posted on WebCT.**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability, have emergency medical information to share with me, or need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please notify me as soon as possible. Also, contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services at 581-6356.

Classroom Courtesy and Professionalism – Attendance will be taken during the first 5 minutes of class. Students who arrive after that time are welcome to stay for class, but will be counted as absent for the day (unless I am notified BEFORE the start of class). Students are not allowed to leave class until dismissed, in other words, no packing up materials and/or leaving before the end of the allotted class time. Laptops and cell phones (including texting) are not allowed in the classroom. Cell phones must be turned off and put away during class time. Magazine reading, newspaper reading, and working on materials for classes or projects other than those for this class are prohibited. iPod/MP3 player use is also prohibited.

Inappropriate dress (such as sagging pants, low-cut tops, “extremely short” shorts) and conversations will not be tolerated in the classroom. **Students who fail to follow these requirements may be asked to leave the class and if necessary, face additional disciplinary action.**

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Unless otherwise noted, **ALL** assignments are due at the beginning of class time on the date listed on the schedule*. **Ten percent will be deducted from late assignments (exceptions may be made at the instructor’s discretion), per date late, including the due date. No assignments will be accepted after one week from the due date. Also, I will not accept late assignments via Panthermail or WebCT, unless you have official documentation that would support such a submission.** Any concerns, questions, or comments must be addressed to the instructor within one class period after the assignments are graded and returned to the students. Grade appeals will not be entertained after that point.

* I will allow **one free "pass"** (within 24 hours, **including weekends and holidays**) for students who may have issues with submitting an assignment. This pass DOES NOT apply to the Statement of Understanding assignment. I strongly suggest that you use this "pass" wisely.

Assignments prepared out of class are required to be typed using a 12 point font with one-inch margins, double spaced, and proof-read (not just computer spell check) by the student. Grading will be based, in part, on the appearance of the work, including grammatical and typographical errors. APA style is to be used and used correctly. **Make sure to staple any submitted work longer than one page. Unstapled papers will not be accepted and are subject to point deductions due to lateness.**

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 – Outline: 20 points and Final Paper: 80 points).**

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, and 3) the capacity to express oneself clearly and grammatically.

Paper length: approximately 4-5 typed pages. Strict confidentiality is guaranteed for this and all assignments that involve personal issues. The final draft will be submitted to Turnitin.com

2. **Examinations:** Two exams will be given. Students will be unable to make up an exam without documentation of an excused absence. If a student is unable to attend class on exam day, the instructor must be notified PRIOR to exam time (**Total points: 200 maximum**)
3. **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**)
4. **Optional Assignment:** Students are given options concerning additional out-of-class assignments. Students are limited to options that have a **total maximum value of 25 points**.

You may choose from one of the following:

- a. **Volunteer Service:** Students may choose to do volunteer service in institutions in the Charleston area or in their respective hometowns. **Students will submit a written report giving a detailed description of the experience, along with an attached statement (on official organization letter head)** signed by the person in authority indicating the number of hours and dates of volunteer service completed. The volunteer assignment must be approved by the instructor: **5 points per hour, 25 points maximum**
- b. **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, household moves, 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? **25 points**

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**)

Total Points:

Personal or Family Crises Paper	100 points
Written Examinations	200 points
Optional Assignment	25 points
Graduate Credit	75 points
In-class assignments	Varies

Grading Scale - The best way to get the grade you want in this class is to: attend every week, read and study the assigned readings, actively participate in classroom discussions, and complete the assignments (correctly and on time).

A = 90-100% B = 80-89% C = 70-79% D = 60-69% F = 59% and below

STUDENT RIGHTS:

It is important to recognize that while there are rules and regulations that students must follow within the classroom, students do have rights regarding their education. Cornwell Strickland, writing in *Excellence in University Teaching*, has noted the following student rights:

1. the right to be recognized as an individual, even in large classes,
2. the right to have a professor interested in teaching,
3. the right to instruction based on adequate preparation,
4. the right to express opinions and to (respectfully) challenge those of the instructor,
5. the right to personalized instruction, relevant to student needs and interests,
6. the right to access to the professor at times other than class sessions, and
7. the right to know the system by which he or she is graded.

I have received, read, and understand the requirements stated in the class syllabus.

Signed by:

Student Signature

Date

Instructor Signature

Date