

Note:

Course content may be changed, term to term, without notice. The information below is provided as a guide for course selection and is not binding in any form, and should not be used to purchase course materials.

COURSE SYLLABUS

DBMF 610

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY SYSTEMS: FOUNDATIONS, MODELS AND TECHNIQUES

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of marriage and family systems, specifically looking at the foundations, models, and techniques necessary for effective marriage and family counseling. A wide range of marriage and family issues and definitions are examined. Ethical concerns and multicultural factors are also considered.

RATIONALE

It is important to present effective marriage and family models and techniques to help marriages and families lay a solid biblical foundation and navigate difficult issues within a culture that often opposes these family values.

I. PREREQUISITE

For information regarding prerequisites for this course, please refer to the [Academic Course Catalog](#).

II. REQUIRED RESOURCE PURCHASE

Click on the following link to view the required resource(s) for the term in which you are registered: <http://bookstore.mbsdirect.net/liberty.htm>

III. RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

American Psychological Association. *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (Current ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Clinton, T., & Trent, J. (2009). *The quick-reference guide to marriage & family counseling*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. ISBN: 9780801072246.

Dobson, J. (2001). *Bringing up boys*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. ISBN: 9781414391335.

Dobson, J. (2014). *Bringing up girls*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. ISBN: 9781414391328.

Dobson, J. (2015). *Building confidence in your child*. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell. ISBN: 9780800726942.

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Petry, S. (2008). *Genograms: Assessment and interventions* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: W.W. Norton. ISBN: 9780393705096.

IV. ADDITIONAL MATERIALS FOR LEARNING

A. Computer with basic audio/video equipment

- B. Internet access (broadband recommended)
- C. Blackboard [recommended browsers](#)
- D. Microsoft Word

V. MEASURABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Identify current trends, issues, and threats to the family system in the 21st century.
- B. Define both “marriage” and “family” from a Judeo-Christian perspective rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures.
- C. Debate and defend the Judeo-Christian definition of marriage and family against the current cultural attempts to redefine it.
- D. Describe how marriage between a husband and wife is biblically and scientifically the healthiest environment to raise children who thrive.
- E. Create and analyze a genogram of his/her family history.
- F. Identify and support families facing a wide range of special family issues including, but not limited to, infertility/miscarriage, single parenting, family crises, postpartum depression, homosexuality, stepfamilies, technology, and stress.
- G. Identify and describe characteristics of family systems regarding developmental stages including: infancy, early childhood, middle childhood, pre-adolescence, and adolescence.
- H. Describe techniques for raising spiritually healthy and vibrant children.

VI. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Textbook readings and lecture presentations/notes
- B. Course Requirements Checklist

After reading the Course Syllabus and [Student Expectations](#), the student will complete the related checklist found in Module/Week 1.

C. Discussion Board Forums (4)

Discussion board forums are collaborative learning experiences. Therefore, the student is required to create a thread in response to the provided prompt for each forum. The student must answer questions for each forum with a minimum of 400 words, based on that particular module/week's readings (Dr. Dobson's works and/or the core text), as well as video/audio content. The student will also be required to post at least 2 replies of 200 words each to other students' threads.

D. Diverse Family Systems Paper

The student, using outside research, will study dominant family systems in 2 distinctly different ethnic cultures and compare and contrast them with one another. The student will also compare and contrast them with the scriptural definition of family based on the course text, *God, Marriage, and Family*. The student will write a 3–4-page summary (not including Title Page and References) in current APA style outlining the different traits, beliefs, rituals, and parenting techniques of the studied cultures and how they align with biblical standards for marriage and family.

E. Research Paper

The student will write a research paper about 1 of the following theoretical models:

- Adlerian Family Therapy
- Bowenian Family Therapy
- Attachment Theory
- Cognitive Behavioral Family Therapy
- Milan Systemic Family Therapy
- Structural Family Therapy
- Emotion-Focused Family Therapy
- Other Family Therapy (must be approved by instructor)

The paper will be 8–10 pages (not including Title Page and References) in current APA format with at least 10 references (5 must be from research/ journal articles) and describe the foundational philosophy behind the chosen model, as well as any primary techniques and the rationale behind the techniques.

The student will conclude the paper with a discussion of the chosen approach to family systems through the lens of Scripture. In addition to offering a theological critique, the student must then offer practical biblical applications that could accompany the techniques of the selected model to reach the goal of spiritual formation within the family system.

F. Family Member Interview

The student will conduct a 45–60-minute interview of a married grandparent, great aunt/uncle, or the eldest living relative in the family who was also a parent. The interview will incorporate questions relating to their life including, but not limited to, their experience and philosophy of marriage, parenting, faith, and the values system they worked to instill in the family lineage.

Finally, the student will write a 3–4-page summary (not including Title Page and References) in current APA style, documenting both the experience and his/her personal responses to the interview.

G. Family Genogram

The student will spend time researching his/her family lineage and create a genogram to discover relational, work/career, personality, and other patterns. The genogram must account for at least 3 generations of the student's own family of origin. One generation must include the student as the "identified person" and the second generation must include his/her parents. The third generation may either be the student's children (if appropriate) or his/her grandparents. The inclusion of additional generations such as the student's own grandchildren (if appropriate) or great-grandparents, is encouraged, but not required. Genograms will be reviewed in a confidential manner.

The student will submit, along with his/her genogram, a 3–4-page summary and analysis of his/her family history (not including Title Page and References) in current APA format, noting generational trends and issues or problems. These can be both positive trends and/or things that have been problematic (i.e., trending your family's spiritual history, education, career choices, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, illness/disease, divorce, addictions, mental/emotional problems, geographic proximity, etc.). In addition, the student will suggest positive patterns he/she would like to instill in his/her own children for successive generations, as well as negative patterns to be avoided. The primary purpose is for the student to be able to answer the following 2 questions:

- What does your family history tell you?
- What do you want your family legacy to be?

VII. COURSE GRADING AND POLICIES**A. Points**

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Course Requirements Checklist | | 10 |
| Discussion Board Forums | (4 at 100 pts ea) | 400 |
| Diverse Family Systems Paper | | 100 |
| Research Paper | | |
| Topic | | 50 |
| Outline | | 50 |
| Final | | 200 |
| Family Member Interview | | 100 |
| Family Genogram | | 100 |
| | Total | 1010 |

B. Scale

A = 940–1010 A- = 920–939 B+ = 900–919 B = 860–899 B- = 840–859
 C+ = 820–839 C = 780–819 C- = 760–779 D+ = 740–759 D = 700–739
 D- = 680–699 F = 0–679

C. Instructor Availability

Instructors will answer emails within 24–48 hours. Written feedback will be given on written assignments. Instructors will comment on some, but not all, Discussion Board Forum posts.

D. Dual Relationship

The faculty is responsible to interact with counseling students in a supervisory capacity/role. As such, faculty may provide students professional principles, guidance, and recommendations as it relates to the context of the student-client setting. The faculty is responsible to avoid dual relationships with students such as entering a student-counselor or student-pastor relationship. Thus, the faculty does not provide personal counseling addressing student personal problems. If a faculty member perceives that a student is in need of personal or professional counseling, then that faculty member will recommend that the student pursue either pastoral or professional assistance from a counselor in their community.

E. Limits of Confidentiality

In the event of a student's disclosure, either verbally or in writing, of threat of serious or foreseeable harm to self or others, abuse or neglect of a minor, elderly or disabled person, or current involvement in criminal activity, the faculty, staff, administrator, or supervisor will take immediate action. This action may include, but is not limited to, immediate notification of appropriate state law enforcement or social services personnel, emergency contacts, and notification of the appropriate program chair or online dean. The incident and action taken will become part of the student's permanent record.

F. Disability Assistance

Students with a documented disability may contact Liberty University Online's Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) at LUOODAS@liberty.edu to make arrangements for academic accommodations. Further information can be found at www.liberty.edu/disabilitysupport.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DBMF 610

Textbooks: Dobson, *Complete Marriage and Family Home Reference Guide* (2000).
 Dobson, *Your Legacy: The Greatest Gift* (2014).
 Kostenberger & Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family* (2010).

| MODULE/ WEEK | READING & STUDY | ASSIGNMENTS | POINTS |
|-------------------------|---|--|----------------|
| 1 | Dobson (2000): chs. 1–4, 6 Dobson (2014): chs. 1–2 Kostenberger & Jones: ch. 1 5 presentations 1 article | Course Requirements Checklist Class Introductions DB Forum 1 | 10 0 100 |
| 2 | Dobson (2000): chs. 7–10 Dobson (2014): chs. 3–4 Kostenberger & Jones: chs. 2–4 4 presentations 1 article | Diverse Family Systems Paper | 100 |
| 3 | Dobson (2000): chs. 11, 14, 16–18 Dobson (2014): chs. 5–6 Kostenberger & Jones: chs. 5–6 3 presentations 1 article 2 audio clips | DB Forum 2 Research Paper – Topic | 100 50 |
| 4 | Dobson (2014): chs. 7–8 2 presentations 1 article 2 audio clips | Family Member Interview | 100 |
| 5 | Dobson (2014): chs. 9–10 3 presentations 1 article 2 audio clips | DB Forum 3 Research Paper – Outline | 100 50 |
| 6 | Dobson (2000): ch. 25 Dobson (2014): chs. 11–12 Kostenberger & Jones: chs. 7–10 4 presentations 1 article 1 audio clip | Family Genogram | 100 |

| MODULE/ WEEK | READING & STUDY | ASSIGNMENTS | POINTS |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|---------------|
| 7 | Dobson (2000): chs. 15, 20, 22–23 Dobson (2014): ch. 13 Kostenberger & Jones: ch. 11 3 presentations 1 article 1 audio clip | DB Forum 4 | 100 |
| 8 | Dobson (2000): chs. 12–13 Kostenberger & Jones: chs. 12–14 4 presentations 1 article | Research Paper – Final | 200 |
| TOTAL | | | 1010 |

DB = Discussion Board

NOTE: Each course module/week begins on Monday morning at 12:00 a.m. (ET) and ends on Sunday night at 11:59 p.m. (ET). The final module/week ends at 11:59 p.m. (ET) on **Friday**.