



**St. Cloud State University**

**Marriage and Family Therapy Masters & Certificate Program Handbook**

**Academic Year: 2014-2015**

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*Dear Marriage and Family Therapy Students,*

The Marriage and Family Therapy program at St. Cloud State University is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education and provides comprehensive trainings in the field of Marriage and Family Therapy. Master of Science graduates of the program receive a degree in Marriage and Family Therapy while the Certificate program graduates receive academic and experiential training intended to prepare professionals with Masters' degrees in Human Services or a related field for Marriage and Family Therapy Licensure.

Our program goal is to provide students with the self-awareness, knowledge and skills necessary to function as a family therapist in a variety of mental health and community agency settings. The employment outlook for Marriage and Family Therapist graduates is varied and includes settings such as hospitals, community and social service agencies, in- and out-patient mental health and residential treatment facilities, chemical dependency treatment centers, crisis counseling settings and educational institutions.

We are constantly striving to provide students with the competencies necessary to work effectively in a diverse and dynamic society. We take pride in what we do and overall, we believe that we have an excellent program, faculty, and students.

If you have questions or concerns regarding your program, please feel free to contact the program coordinator or your advisor. We wish you well in your academic pursuits!

Sincerely,  
Program Faculty

## **Mission**

The Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program's mission is to foster highly qualified professionals who possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to improve the quality of well-being for individuals, families, and wider social systems within their diverse and multicultural setting. Clinical training gives balanced attention to the range of physical/organic, interpersonal, relational, and cultural/contextual factors that can cause or exacerbate the issues presented for treatment by providing multiple points of intervention designed to positively impact the client's contextual environment.

## **Philosophy**

Program faculty hold the philosophy that education in Marriage and Family Therapy must occur in a context that is systematically oriented. Experiences in this program emphasize family therapy as integrated with practice and research in family and human development. This context is also informed by gender and cultural perspectives which are presented throughout all coursework and practicum. The faculty believe that theory and practice in marriage and family therapy are best accomplished in synergy; that is, the elements of theory, research, and practice are intertwined and emphasized in all coursework and clinical experiences throughout the student's training. Since the program resides within an academic setting, it is recognized the courses must be somewhat discrete and independent. However, courses cannot be undertaken independently without consideration of their systematic position in the entire program. It is the aim of the program for students to be challenged and encouraged to integrate their learning throughout their entire time in the program.

The curriculum consists of substantive courses in family relations and human development, statistics and research methods courses, marriage and family therapy emphasis courses, and internship. Substantive content/theory courses and clinical practicum must be completed simultaneously. Students must be provided with experiences that enhance their training and practice with a variety of therapy models, family types, presenting problems, therapy settings, and supervisory modes.

## **Goals**

The primary goal of the Marriage and Family Therapy program is to train competent therapists to provide therapy with a wide range of mental health issues. Therapists are trained to help with concerns about marriage, children/adolescents, mental illness, depression, sexual issues, divorce, family, school, health, and emotional difficulties. The following are how we aim to demonstrate we have met our goals:

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**SLO 1: Graduating students and alumni will demonstrate competent clinical skills from a systemic, theoretical, and research based foundation.**

**SLO 2: Students and alumni will demonstrate empathic and respectful interpersonal skills when working with families and individuals from all backgrounds, including cross-cultural.**

**SLO 3: Graduating students will demonstrate the ability to be reflective and ethical in their clinical practice, including recognizing their own biases that may be an extension of their family of origin and cultural heritage.**

**SLO 4: Students and alumni will skillfully assess and evaluate individuals and families of diverse backgrounds in order to build relevant treatment plans.**

**SLO 5: Students and graduates will be able to communicate effectively through oral and written academic work and clinical paperwork.**

### **Program Outcomes**

**PO 1: The MFT program provides students with an educational foundation grounded in family systems theory.**

**PO 2: The MFT program prepares graduates to become licensed in the state of Minnesota as marriage and family therapists and ready for employment in an entry level mental health/clinical job.**

**PO 3: The MFT program will provide opportunities for students to have consistent support from a core group of faculty who will provide them with opportunities to further their academic studies beyond the classroom, such as mentoring and involvement in scholarship.**

### **COAMFTE Accreditation**

The Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) is the national program accrediting body for the MFT field and is under the oversight of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). Program accreditation brings national recognition and opportunities to a program, the faculty, and the students. A primary value to graduates of a COAMFTE accredited program is increased portability of education and experience across state lines in terms of practice opportunity and licensure. You can find out more about AAMFT and COAMFTE at: <http://aamft.org/>

The SCSU MFT program is fully accredited and graduates will receive all the rights and privileges of COAMFTE accreditation, e.g. portability of education for licensure in all states with MFT licensure.

### **Employers**

Graduates of the Marriage and Family Therapy program find employment as Marriage and Family Therapists and work for varieties of agencies such as crisis clinics, correctional settings, schools and public and private mental health facilities. Typically our students find their first jobs through their internships, networking, or watching online sites – such as the Minnesota Association of Marriage and Family Therapy. Graduate school is one way of networking and reaching job security, thus it is important to be professional with each other and at your internship sites.

## **Admission deadline for the Masters and Certificate in MFT**

Fall semester, spring semester & summer sessions: **February 1**

## **Criteria for Admission for the Masters Program**

Applicants who meet the following standard may be admitted to the M.S. Program in Marriage and Family Therapy.

1. Bachelors degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education.
2. Complete application materials required by the College of Graduate Studies.
3. A cumulative graduate grade point average of 3.00 or higher, on a 4.00 scale, in most recent degree program completed.
4. Successfully complete an interview with the program faculty. Careful attention will be given to interpersonal skills, past individual and familial psychopathology, and commitment to the field of Marriage and Family Therapy.
5. Provide 3 letters of recommendation.
6. A current resume listing educational background, professional experience and volunteer and community involvements.
7. A personal statement addressing the following:
  - a. A brief description of the applicant's background, training and experience.
  - b. A statement of short- and long-term professional goals.
  - c. A statement of purpose regarding the interest in your degree program.
  - d. Identify areas of strength and challenges in pursuing this program.

## **Required Orientation Program**

All new students (both full-time, part-time, and Certificate) must attend the fall orientation meeting held in early fall semester. Important information about the graduate program is presented at this meeting. Also, there is time for students to ask questions of faculty and second year students. Equally important, the meeting provides the opportunity for students to meet and socialize with each other and the faculty.

## **Definitions**

**Full-time students:** The university, including the Financial Aids Office and Graduate Studies Office, view graduate students who have eight or more credits per semester as being "full-time". However, in the Marriage and Family Therapy Program, 12 to 15 credits per semester constitutes full-time status. Students who will complete their program in four semesters are considered to be full-time students. The maximum credit load is 16 credits. The approval of the graduate dean and your adviser is necessary to take more than the maximum credit load.

**Part-time students:** Graduate students who have fewer than six credits per semester are considered to be part-time by the university. In the Marriage and Family Therapy program, graduate students who have less than 12 to 15 credits per semester have part-time status. It is important to note that part-time students may have more difficulty scheduling classes. Full-time students have priority in registration

over part-time students. Also, some classes are offered only once per year or every two years. Therefore, it is imperative the part-time students work closely with their adviser.

### **Schedules and Registration**

Registration is done online through the office of registration and records website. You can find classes listed online one or two semesters in advance at the following website: <http://www5.stcloudstate.edu/registrar/courseschedule/Search.aspx>

You will need permission for graduate classes. The program director will let you know when permission has been entered into the system for the next semester.

### **Financial aid**

Graduate students may apply for several forms of financial aid. They include loans, workstudy and scholarships. Students interested in applying for loans and/or workstudy need to contact the Financial Aid Office which is located in the Administrative Services Building. Scholarships, handled by each department, occasionally are available. Students interested in applying for scholarships should see the department secretary, Room B210 of the Education Building, phone number 320-308-2160, to see if any scholarships are available at that time. Some scholarships may also be available through the School of Graduate Studies, Administrative Services Building AS-121, phone number 320-308-2113. Students who are interested in scholarships through the school that are need-based must be sure to complete the financial information form at the Financial Aids Office.

Graduate students may also apply for graduate assistantships. Limited aid may be available through the department in this form. Graduate assistantships require full-time status and include some work responsibilities (usually 10 to 20 hours a week). Graduate assistants are required to work the number of hours per week that are assigned.

There are other assistantships available elsewhere on campus (i.e. Counseling Center, Career Services, Students Disability Services, Atwood Center, and other departments). Students may qualify for these assistantships by taking as few as eight credits. For more information please go to:

<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/graduatestudies/current/ga.asp>

Graduate assistants can expect the following of their assistantships:

*First priority:* Enhancement of graduate assistants' program of study.

*Second priority:* Enhancement of instruction in classes.

*Third priority:* Assistance to faculty involved in graduate programs.

For necessary application form, see the Community Psychology secretary in Room B210, Education Building, phone number 320-308-2160.

### **E-mail Address**

If students don't already have an e-mail address, they should apply for a HuskyNet account and an e-mail address early during the first semester. For more information on HuskyNet Access, go to: <http://husynet.stcloudstate.edu> Program announcements will be sent via e-mail. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail daily.

### **Advising / Fall registration**

Each new student is assigned an adviser upon acceptance into the Marriage and Family Therapy program. Not all advisers are immediately available for conferences, particularly in the summer. In these cases, the program coordinator or any adviser will assist you. For most students, it is not necessary to plan a program of study with an adviser before fall semester. If you are a full-time student, we will give you permission for classes but you will still need to register online. See instructions for registration in your Fall Semester Schedule. Part-time students wishing to take a "Permission Required" course will need to contact the faculty member teaching that particular course. Part-time students should meet with their adviser or coordinator of the Marriage and Family Therapy program to plan their fall semester registration. All part-time students should plan to see their adviser early in fall semester to plan their program of study.

### **Thesis versus non-Thesis Option**

#### **(Plan A versus Plan B)**

Before completing "Proposed Program of Graduate Study" blue forms for candidacy (see next section), students need to decide whether to follow Plan A or Plan B, thesis or non-thesis option, respectively. For those planning to pursue a doctorate degree at some time, conducting research and/or publishing a work should strongly be considered. Research can be done with either Plan A or Plan B.

### **Marriage and Family Therapy**

#### *Plan A: 12 Credits*

MFT 675 Research Methods, 3 Cr. Spring( Prerequisite: CEEP 678)

CEEP 678 Introduction to Graduate Statistics, 3 Cr. Fall

MFT 699 Thesis, 6 Cr. Fall, Spring, Summer

#### *Plan B: 6 Credits*

CEEP 678 Introduction to Graduate Statistics, 3 Cr. Fall

MFT 675 Research Methods, 3 Cr. Spring (Prerequisite: CEEP 678)

Major: Plan A or B, 46 Cr.

MFT 619 Professional Orientation and Ethics, 3 Cr. Spring

MFT 620 Family Systems, 3 Cr. Fall

MFT 621 Family Conceptual Framework, 3 Cr. Fall

MFT 624 Family Assessment, 3 Cr. Summer

MFT 627 Clinical Issues in Marriage and Family Therapy, 3 Cr. Fall (Pre-requisite MFT 671)

MFT 628 Child Development and Treatment, 3 Cr. Summer

MFT 630 Seminar: Individual and Family Development, 3 Cr. Spring

MFT 658 Family and Culture, 3 Cr. Fall (Pre or Co requisite MFT 621, 671)

MFT 659 Psychodiagnosis, Assessment and Treatment Planning, 3. Cr. Spring

MFT 668 Professional Skills and Procedures, 3 Cr. Fall

MFT 669 Clinical Practicum . 4 Cr. Spring (Prerequisites: CPSY 621; Pre or Co-requisite MFT 668, 659, 619, & 671)



MFT 671 Theories of Marriage and Family Therapy, 3 Cr. Spring (Prerequisite MFT 621)

MFT 672 Couple and Family Therapy: Advance Theory and Practice, 3 Cr. Spring (Prerequisites: MFT 621, 671)

MFT 696 Supervised Internship, Min. 6 Cr. Fall, Spring, Summer (600 hours)  
(Pre-requisites: MFT 619, 620, 621, 624, 659, 671)

### **Thesis**

Students who are planning to write a thesis should carefully read the Graduate Bulletin, “Field Studies, Thesis, Creative Works, and Starred Papers”. Note that the book “A Manual for the Preparation of Field Studies, Theses, Creative Works, or Starred Paper(s)” should be obtained from the Graduate Studies Office in AS-121.

### **Candidacy**

Admission to graduate studies does not constitute candidacy for a Marriage and Family Therapy degree. Rather, a student who has been admitted to graduate studies is advanced to degree candidacy upon the recommendation of the Marriage and Family Therapy faculty. Candidacy forms will be reviewed two times each year. The deadline date to hand in these forms is March 3 of each year. Advancement to degree candidacy requires that the candidate must:

1. Have completed between 12 and 24 semester hours of graduate study at St. Cloud State University with a minimum grade point average of 3.0.
2. Have submitted to the adviser one completed program form signed by the student.
3. Have clearly demonstrated the aptitude and ability to pursue graduate work and exhibited a commitment to Marriage and Family Therapy as a profession.
4. Have demonstrated potential for a successful career in the field of study selected.

Admission to degree candidacy is not an automatic process, but rather the advancement to candidacy is approved by the faculty only after careful evaluation of all pertinent factors.

Program forms may be obtained from the department secretary, Room B210 of the Education Building, phone number 320-308-2160. Note that it is important to have program forms submitted before or at the time of completing an internship contract. (See section on “Supervised Marriage and Family Internship”)

### **Academic review and retention policy**

The Marriage and Family Therapy Program faculty meet regularly to discuss the progress of students in the program. The following elements are reviewed: Academic progress and promise; therapy skills acquisition and development; personality traits or personal issues that may be interfering with progress in the program; legal and ethical issues. In the event that there is faculty concern about a student regarding any of these areas a faculty member will meet with the student to discuss necessary remediation and steps to take toward improvement or to offer assistance to the student in finding a more suitable field of study.

During practicum regular evaluations are made by faculty to determine whether the student is prepared to proceed to internship or whether the practicum experience needs to be repeated or other assistance is necessary to continue in the program. Reasons for not progressing to internship include:

1. Failing a pre-requisite class

2. Not following ethical guidelines during practicum
3. Not meeting core competencies in practicum

During the internship regular assessments are made by the site supervisor documenting the pre-professional progress and readiness for recommendation for graduation and licensure.

A student may be considered for dismissal from the program for any of the following reasons:

1. Failing practicum
2. Being fired from an internship
3. Plagiarism and/or cheating on an exam
4. Breaking confidentiality of fellow cohort members or clients
5. Failing the comprehensive exam
6. Violating the student code of conduct

### **Code of Conduct**

The Student Code of Conduct and Related Procedures is available at the Student Life and Development Office in Atwood Center. It is also available on the World-Wide Web at <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/studenthandbook/code/default.asp> Included in the Code of Conduct are interpretations of regulations, discipline responsibility, standards of due process, regulations regarding bias motivated offenses, prohibited conduct, responsibility of student groups and organization, interim suspension rules, the disciplinary process, student rights, pre-hearing procedures, information on the judicial panel hearing, appeal procedures as well as policies and procedures for handling student complaints concerning faculty, the grade appeals policy, and a list of student concerns with the appropriate referral for help given.

### **Professional and Student Organizations**

Involvement in professional and student organizations is strongly encouraged. Membership in professional organizations can keep students informed of opportunities for practical learning and of new developments in the Marriage and Family Therapy field. Students may also benefit from meeting MFT professionals through organizations. The list below contains only a few examples of organizations to choose from. Advisers may be contacted for more information. Organizations hold conferences nationally and locally. The program will advise you of upcoming conferences. They are a useful place to network, meet potential employers, and gain useful knowledge about specific populations you may want to work with in the future.

American Association for Marriage & Family Therapy: [www.aamft.org](http://www.aamft.org)

Minnesota Association for Marriage and Family Therapy: [www.minnesotafamilies.org](http://www.minnesotafamilies.org)

International Family Therapy Association: [www.ifta-familytherapy.org](http://www.ifta-familytherapy.org)

National Council for Family Relations: [www.ncfr.org](http://www.ncfr.org)

### **Pre and Concurrent Clinical Practicum Core Courses**

All Marriage and Family Therapy emphases include a common core of course work that need to be taken prior to or concurrently with the supervised clinical practicum experience.

MFT 621, Family Conceptual Framework, 3 Credits  
MFT 668, Professional Skills and Procedures, 3 Credits  
MFT 619, Professional Orientation and Ethics, 3 Credits  
MFT 671, Theories of Marriage and Family Therapy, 3 Credits (Prerequisite: MFT 621)

### **Clinical Practicum**

This four-credit experience follows the core courses and will provide for the application of theories and techniques to marriage and family therapy experience. All full-time students are automatically placed in a Marriage and Family Therapy practicum. However, each part-time student must apply in writing to the Coordinator of Marriage and Family Therapy Program for placement in a Marriage and Family Therapy practicum at a minimum of seven months before beginning practicum. Late applications might not be admitted. This may result in delayed internship and graduation.

### **Marriage and Family Therapy Internship**

**Internship Requirements:** The internship involves a total of 600 hours. Of the 600 hours, 300 hours need to be supervised clinical *contact* hours with individuals, couples, and families. 150 of the 300 hours should be with couples and families. Internship will be in a clinical setting in Central Minnesota and surrounding communities. Acceptance for internship requires approval of the Coordinator of Marriage and Family Therapy Program following the completion of all course work. Counseling practicum and majority of the coursework should be completed before taking internship.

The internship experience will provide practical agency experience in a work setting. Students should determine and investigate at least three possible internship sites in the Marriage and Family Therapy field. In general, the sites should 1) give interns an opportunity to do Marriage and Family Therapy, 2) have someone who licensed supervisor (Licensed Psychologist, Licensed Independent Social Worker, or Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist), and 3) be within a 60-mile radius of St. Cloud. The selected sites must have final approval of the MFT faculty. A list of approved sites can be obtained from the Coordinator of Marriage and Family Therapy Program.

Students must also determine the duration of their internship. All students will complete a minimum of 600 hours of internship. Marriage and Family students may intern for 20 hours per week over two semesters, for three credits per semester. If the 300 contact hours are not done by the end of the second semester, students need to register for another 3 credits on their third semester ( unless they have less than 20 contact hours left)

Students in all emphasis areas, full-time and part-time, must complete the following application requirements prior to the deadline (which is to be determined) for all internships to be conducted during the succeeding academic year. Requirements include:

1. Attend internship orientation meeting usually scheduled for the end of January.
2. Complete Internship Approval form (see department secretary B210 Education Building, phone number 320-308-2160).
3. Complete one copy of Proposed Program of Graduate Study (blue form) and have it signed by your adviser and Graduate Dean.
4. Submit a resume with application.

All of the above materials are to be submitted to the assigned supervisor. Finding an internship site that fits your interest as well as the program requirements is competitive. We encourage all students to start seeking an internship site at least one semester before they intend to begin the internship

### **Application for Graduation**

Students should pick up a Graduation Checklist from Graduate Studies within the first two weeks of the semester they expect to graduate. The *Graduate Bulletin* also contains important information concerning graduation under “Graduation or Completion.”

### **Adding or Changing Program Tracks**

Any changes or additions in program will occur only by submitting a form to the Department chair and Graduate Studies office to be approved. During the interview process, which will take place during spring semester of each year, the request will be considered along with other new entering students.

### **Final Comprehensive Examination**

All students will be required to complete a final written comprehensive examination. The student will take the examination during the semester s/he expects to graduate. It is necessary to contact the secretary, Room B210, **no later than the first week of the semester of taking the examination.** The examination is given near the midpoint of the semester. (The midpoint is indicated in the University Calendar as the date the second half of the semester begins).

### **Post degree Requirements**

Full-licensure: A total of 4000 hours (1000 hours must be supervised clinical contact hours in a clinical setting) is required to complete the requirements for Marriage and Family licensure in the state of Minnesota.

### **Marriage and Family Therapy License Eligibility**

The MFT regulatory requirements in Minnesota are among the most stringent in the US and Canada. Once graduation from the SCSU accredited graduate academic program in MFT, the therapist must pass the national MFT licensure examination. Subsequent to two years of post-degree clinical experience under state approved supervision, the licensure applicant must also pass a Minnesota state examination of practice procedures and ethical and legal issues. Application requirements are online at [www.bmft.state.mn.us](http://www.bmft.state.mn.us).

### **Student Governance**

MFT students are encouraged to provide feedback to faculty regarding their educational experience. This may be done formally, such as course evaluations, or informally by requesting a meeting with a faculty member or program director.

## **Graduate Level Marriage and Family Therapy Certificate**

The Certificate program provides academic and experiential training intended to prepare professionals with Masters' degrees in Human Services or a related field for Marriage and Family Therapy Licensure. While the program requires completion of approximately 39-42 credits beyond the Master's degree, prospective students can have their transcript evaluated in advance by the MFT program coordinator to see if some courses that has been taken in another program can be transferred. The total number of transfer credits can not be more than 20.

### **Human Development Electives                      9 Credits**

MFT 630: Seminar: Individual and Family Development, 3 Cr. Spring

MFT 628 Child Development and Treatment, 3 Cr. Summer

MFT 659: Psychodiagnosis, Assessment and Treatment Planning, 3 Cr. Spring

### **Marital and Family Studies                      9 Credits**

MFT 620: Family Systems, 3 Cr. Fall

MFT 621: Family Conceptual Framework, 3 Cr. Fall

MFT 627: Clinical Issues in Marriage and Family Therapy, 3 Cr. Fall

### **Marital and Family Therapy                      12 Credits**

MFT 624: Family Assessment, 3 Cr. Summer (Pre or Co requisite: MFT 671)

MFT 671: Theories of Marriage and Family Therapy, 3 Cr. Spring (Pre-requisite: MFT 621)

MFT 672: Couple and Family Therapy: Advance Theory and Practice, 3 Cr. Spring (Pre-requisite: MFT 621, 671)

MFT 658: Culture and Family, 3 Cr. Fall (Pre or Co requisite: MFT 621, 671)

### **Ethics    3 Credits**

MFT 619: Professional Orientations and Ethics, 3 Cr. Spring

### **Research Method                                      3 Credits**

MFT 675: Research Methods, 3 Cr. Spring

### **Internship    3-6 Credits**

MFT 696: Supervised Internship. Fall, Spring, Summer

(Pre-requisites: MFT 619, 620, 621, 659 & 671)

## **Criteria for Admission**

Applicants who meet the following standards may be admitted to the licensure program in marriage and Family Therapy.

1. A bachelor degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education.
2. A master's degree in counseling, psychology, human development, social work, or other related field from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning.
3. A cumulative graduate grade point average of 3.00 or higher, on a 4.00 scale, in most recent degree program completed.
4. Complete the application materials required by the College of Graduate Studies.

5. Successfully complete an interview with the Program faculty.
5. Provide 3 letters of recommendation.
6. A current resume listing educational background, professional experience and volunteer and community involvements.
7. A personal statement addressing the following:
  - a. A brief description of the applicant's background, training and experience.
  - b. A statement of short- and long-term professional goals.
  - c. A statement of purpose regarding the interest in your degree program.
  - d. Identify areas of strength and challenges in pursuing this certificate.

Careful attention will be given to previous work experience, academic background, scholarship, interpersonal skill, and commitment to the field of marriage and family therapy.

### **Marriage and Family Therapy Internship**

The internship involves 300 supervised clinical contact hours with individuals, couples, and families in a clinical setting in central Minnesota and surrounding communities. Acceptance for internship requires approval of the Coordinator of Marriage and Family Therapy Program following the completion of all course work. An additional 1000 supervised clinical contact hours in a clinical setting are required to complete the requirements of the Marriage and Family Therapy Licensure.

### **Program Inquiries**

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