

9-1995

# School of Social and Systemic Studies Department of Family Therapy M.S. Program Student Handbook [1995]

Nova Southeastern University

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**M.S.**

**School of  
Social &  
Systemic  
Studies**

**NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY**

School of Social and  
Systemic Studies

**Practicum**

**Therapy Specialization**

**Department of  
Family Therapy  
M.S. Program  
Student  
Handbook**

**Master of Science**

**Evaluations**

**Degree Plans**

**Collaboration**

*352-866-8990*



**NSU**

## Mission Statement: Nova Southeastern University

Nova Southeastern University provides educational programs of distinction from prekindergarten through the doctoral level at times and in locations convenient to students, prepares students for leadership roles in business and the professions, encourages research and community service, and fosters an atmosphere of creativity and innovation utilizing technology where appropriate.

Approved by the Board of Trustees, June 22, 1992

## Mission Statement: The School of Social and Systemic Studies

The School of Social and Systemic Studies focuses on academic excellence and leadership in the education of professionals who provide effective intervention in difficult and problematic human relationships. The school offers innovative and creative programs in professional training, clinical and community service, and applied research.

The School develops curriculum and teaching methods for undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, and continuing education. The cornerstone of academic education in the School is the teaching and learning of professional ethics and social responsibility. Students and faculty together integrate theory and practice through the free exchange of ideas in class and seminar discussion, applied research projects, and community service activities.

# **Department of Family Therapy**

## **Student Handbook - M.S. Program**

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# **Department of Family Therapy Student Handbook - M.S. Program**

## **Introduction**

This handbook provides information specific to the M.S. Program in Family Therapy. You will find details about the policies and procedures of the program, as well as a suggested degree plan. Rules and regulations that are school-wide, as well as course descriptions and curricula of each of the school's programs, can be found in the catalog.

We ask that you read the catalog and handbook through, attest to having done so by signing and dating the back page of this handbook, and then submit this page to the program office prior to the fall semester. The catalog and handbook are, in a sense, contracts. You enter into the program under the policies outlined in these documents; any changes made in the program subsequent to your entry into it can be voluntarily adopted by you, but you maintain the right to continue to be governed by the rules set out below. By signing the back page, you also agree to abide by these rules.

## **The Program**

The M.S. in Marriage and Family Therapy is a 48 credit hour program. To enter the program, you must have at least a bachelor's level degree. Some of our M.S. students hold other graduate degrees as well. The program is designed to foster clinical excellence; graduates are prepared to practice in a wide variety of settings. Graduates are also provided with a solid research and theoretical foundation, sufficient to allow them to pursue further study towards a doctoral degree, should their career plans come to include teaching and supervising at this level. The program meets the academic and practicum requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist in the state of Florida, and for clinical membership in the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Both credentials require additional, supervised, post-master's experience. The program requires residence in or near the area, so the student may attend classes and benefit from close supervision of his or her clinical work.

The program will take two full years to complete if you attend full time. The expectations for full time study are nine semester hours (3 classes, or 2 classes and 1 practicum) per semester. Part-time students take 6 semester hours (2 classes, or 1 class and 1 practicum) per semester. Part-time students will take three years to graduate, and may not start practicum until the spring of their second year. Students taking fewer than six hours per semester are recommended to enroll in the postgraduate or another non-degree program. We recognize that many M.S. students are combining their studies with work and family responsibilities. We make every effort to provide a fixed schedule that makes this possible. (See "About The Schedule" below.) We recommend that you attend full time if this is possible for you. It is your responsibility to confer with your advisor about any change you wish to make in your status, from full time to part time or vice versa, so that you may be clear about how this will affect your likely date of graduation.

Your admission into the program is provisional until you have completed your first semester in the program. During your first semester, you will need to complete all course work for which you register with an average of "B" or better. You will be reviewed by the faculty at the end of your first semester for full admission. Criteria for full acceptance will include not only a "B" average in academic work, but also demonstrated professionalism and respect in interactions with clients, students, and faculty. Should academic difficulties arise during this first semester, please request a meeting with your advisor. Should you not gain full admission at the end of your first semester, a meeting will be scheduled for you, with your advisor and the M.S. program director, to discuss whether or not you will be allowed to continue in the program. If you are granted permission to continue for a second semester, and should you not gain full admission after that second semester, you may not continue in the program.

## **Faculty Advisors and Other Student Support**

Each new student is assigned a faculty advisor upon his or her provisional acceptance into the program. You may arrange a meeting with your advisor at any point in the program to discuss your progress. It is your responsibility to arrange such a meeting, prior to registration, if the schedule you plan for yourself for a particular semester deviates from the standard full time or part time track, as described below (see "Degree Plans"). You should also schedule a meeting with your advisor: if you plan to go from full to part time, or part to full time; if you are experiencing difficulties with any class, instructor, or degree requirement; and/or if you are aware that your grades for a particular semester may be problematic. Your advisor can often be helpful to you with suggestions about balancing work, family, and study, and about preparing for employment. Please feel free to also access the M.S. program director as needed.

At times, in addition to academic and logistical planning, students find they would benefit from personal counseling. It is against both AAMFT and school policy for faculty to become involved in therapeutic relationships with students. Your advisor or the M.S. program director can provide you with a list of therapy services in the community, including several staffed by graduates of our Ph.D. program in family therapy.

There are a variety of university-sponsored support services available to you, including financial aid, housing information, child care referrals, and employment assistance; we cannot help you with a problem, though, if you do not let us know you need help. Please make it your responsibility to appropriately access the support services you need, and to keep your advisor posted on your situation.

## **Transfer of Credit**

M.S. program applicants may request up to nine hours (three courses) of transfer of credit for graduate courses taken at other regionally accredited universities. All courses to be transferred must be substantially equivalent to courses taught at Nova Southeastern University.

To receive transfer of credit, fully complete the transfer-of-credit application form and submit official course descriptions and syllabi to document the content of the course(s) you wish to transfer. The course descriptions should be copied from the original catalog and pasted into the application; the respective syllabi should each be clearly labeled and appended to the back of the application. No more than two courses may be used to establish equivalence with a Nova Southeastern course.

To be considered for transfer, courses must have been completed prior to admission to the master's program and less than seven years prior to the beginning of the student's first semester. Also, course grades must be "B" or higher. The complete request for transfer of credit must be submitted to the program office prior to the first semester in the program. Transfer requests are considered by the faculty as a whole. Courses which are approved will be recorded on your Nova Southeastern transcript.

## **About the Schedule**

Schedules are developed after consultation with the M.S. students and faculty. We must consider availability of classrooms, faculty schedules, and conflicts with other required classes, as well as be responsive to individual student concerns. In general, we plan a schedule such that full time students are required to be on campus no more than two days a week by 3 p.m., and part time students are required to be on campus no more than one day a week at 3 p.m. Keeping to this policy, and allowing sufficient flexibility for practicum and internship times as well, does mean that we will need to offer classes four evenings a week (Monday through Thursday). The following is a tentative schedule for the next several semesters, offered to you here as a sample for planning purposes; alterations in this schedule may be necessary, but, if so, ample notice will be given.



### Sample Schedule:

#### Fall Semester:

	3:00 - 6:00 p.m.	6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Monday	Clinical Practice in Marital and Family Therapy Introduction to Systems Theory	Introduction to Marital & Family Therapy
Wednesday	Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues	Diversity in Development

NOTE: Supervision and internship hours for Practicum III, offered in the fall, are scheduled by appointment.

#### Winter Semester:

	3:00 - 6:00 p.m.	6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday	Critical Issues in Systems Theories Individual and Group Psychotherapy	Theories of Marital and Family Therapy Research in Marital and Family Therapy

NOTE: Practicum I, offered in the winter, is available on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, from 3 - 9 p.m. and on Saturday from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Supervision and internship hours for Practicum IV, offered in the winter, are scheduled by appointment.

### Summer Semesters:

	Summer I	Summer II	Summer I and II
Monday	Assessment in Marital and Family Therapy (3 - 9 pm)		
Tuesday			Practicum II (3 - 9 pm)
Wednesday	Human Sexuality and Gender (3 - 9 pm)	Theories of Personality and Psychopathology (3 - 9 pm)	
Thursday			Practicum II (3 - 9 pm)
Saturday			Practicum II (9 - 3 pm)

### Degree Plans

Two sample degree plans are offered below. The first sets out a suggested sequence of classes for people who will be attending school full-time. The second offers a sequence for those who will be attending part-time.

Degree-plan forms are available from the program office. Consult the templates below, and then create a plan for yourself that fits your particular situation. Once you have completed the form, meet with your faculty advisor (see **Faculty Advisors**, above) at your earliest mutual convenience and present your proposed plan. If your advisor approves your plan, have him or her sign in the space provided, sign it yourself, and then return the form to the program office. A copy will be made and returned to you, and the original will go into your student file.

#### *Degree Plan A: full-time study*

##### **Year 1**

**Fall:** 9 credits

Introduction to Systems Theory (SFTM 5310)

Introduction to Marital and Family Therapy (SFTM 5320)

Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues (SFTM 6340)

**Winter:** 9 credits

Individual and Group Psychotherapy (SFTM 6374)  
Theories of Marital and Family Therapy (SFTM 5321)  
Practicum I (SFTM 5360)

**Summer:** 9 credits

**Full-Summer Semester:** (14 weeks)  
Practicum II (SFTM 6360)

**Summer I:** (7 weeks)

Human Sexuality and Gender (SFTM 6332)

**Summer II:** (7 weeks)

Theories of Personality and Psychopathology (SFTM 6333)

## **Year 2**

**Fall:** 9 credits

Clinical Practice in Marital and Family Therapy (SFTM 5322)  
Diversity in Human and Family Development (SFTM 6331)  
Practicum III (SFTM 6361)

**Winter:** 9 credits

Critical Issues in Systems Theory (SFTM 5311)  
Research in Marital and Family Therapy (SFTM 5350)  
Practicum IV (SFTM 6362)

**Summer I:** 3 credits (7 weeks)

Assessment in Marital and Family Therapy (SFTM 6320)  
Preparation for Comprehensive Examination

It is possible to graduate even sooner than this full time schedule permits, if the student can take on additional hours during the first summer in the program, or take a course in the summer preceding admission into the program. Please consult with your advisor about this.

## ***Degree Plan B: part-time study***

### **Year 1**

**Fall:** 6 credits

Introduction to Systems Theory (SFTM 5310)  
Introduction to Marital and Family Therapy (SFTM 5320)

**Winter: 6 credits**

Individual and Group Psychotherapy (SFTM 6374)  
Theories of Marital and Family Therapy (SFTM 5321)

**Summer: 6 credits**

**Summer Session I: (7 weeks)**

Human Sexuality and Gender (SFTM 6332)

**Summer Session II: (7 weeks)**

Theories of Personality and Psychopathology (SFTM 6333)

**Year 2**

**Fall: 6 credits**

Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues (SFTM 6340)  
Diversity in Human and Family Development (SFTM 6331)

**Winter: 6 credits**

Practicum I (SFTM 5360)  
Research in Marital and Family Therapy (SFTM 5350)

**Summer:** 6 credits

**Summer Session I:** (7 weeks)

Assessment in Marital and Family Therapy (SFTM 6320)

**Full-Summer Session:** (14 weeks)

Practicum II (SFTM 6360)

### **Year 3**

**Fall:** 6 credits

Practicum III (SFTM 6361)

Clinical Practice in Marital and Family Therapy (SFTM 5322)

**Winter:** 6 credits

Practicum IV (SFTM 6362)

Critical Issues in Systems Theory (SFTM 5311)

**Summer:**

Additional internship hours as required.

**Please Note:** You are required to obtain 500 client contact hours before graduation. The bulk of these hours will be obtained in Practica III and IV, the internship practica. Even as a part-time student, you must consider a significant commitment of time to your internship sites if they are to obtain these hours on schedule. If you cannot obtain your 500 hours within the allotted time period, you will be required to register for additional practica.

### **Practicum Sequence**

To complete the M.S. degree in marriage and family therapy, you must complete 500 hours of client contact, 100 of which may be obtained from behind the mirror teamwork. You are responsible for documenting your clinical hours, using the forms provided at Family Therapy Associates. Your first two practica are at Family Therapy Associates. During Practicum I, you may see cases with live supervision during practicum hours. The expected number of client contact hours per week is from 3 to 5 (two to four behind the mirror, one in the room), for a total of approximately 36 to 48 hours a semester (both direct and behind the mirror).

In practicum II, you will have a very similar practicum experience, accruing roughly the same number and type of hours as in Practicum I. However, you may petition your Practicum II supervisor for permission to see clients outside of practicum hours, with live supervision from a doctoral student, and if the practicum supervisor and the clinic director approve, you may begin accruing additional hours in this way.

By the time you begin Practicum III, you will have about 100 client contact hours (both direct and behind the mirror), plus whatever hours have been accrued during Practicum II seeing clients outside of practicum hours. At the beginning of Practicum III, you will develop, with the help of the Practicum III supervisor, a vita and plan for the internship experience. You will then be recommended to an internship site. You must get a copy of the internship contract signed by the Practicum III supervisor, the M.S. program director, the FTA clinic director, and the internship site supervisor. You should plan on a *minimum* of 15 client contact hours a week to be sure of completing the required client contact hours on time; most students will need to schedule additional time at the internship sites to complete paperwork, allow for missed appointments, etc. Thus, 20 hours a week committed to the internship site is realistic. This time may include evenings, weekends, and weekdays, at your and the site's convenience. If you cannot commit this much time to a site, you should prepare for this possibility by accruing additional hours during Practicum II, but even so, you may still have to register for an additional Practicum IV, which must be repeated indefinitely for credit until you have accumulated the 500 client contact hours. If you want a more diverse experience, or are not accumulating hours rapidly enough at one internship site, it is quite possible to contract with more than one internship site. The internship contract should be clearly understood by all parties.

Practica are evaluated by faculty supervisors, using the program's practicum evaluation forms. These forms were designed by faculty to closely assess clinical skills. A copy of the practicum evaluation form will be made available to all practicum students, and students will be invited to assess their own performance as well. A theoretical article detailing the construction of the practicum evaluation form and the reasons for including each item has been written by three program faculty, including the m.s. program director, and is available for students to read. The article was published in a leading family therapy journal.

## **Medical Family Therapy Specialization**

The Medical Family Therapy Program is offered as a specialization within the Master's Degree Program in Family Therapy. The program focus is on teaching and research of the relationships between psychosocial medicine, biomedicine, and the effects of illness on patients and families. Students are taught the basics of biopsychosocial theory, practice, and collaboration.

The program emphasizes the personal and professional development of students, and prepares them to offer medical family therapy in a variety of settings including: primary care and specialist offices, hospitals, family medicine residency programs, community clinics and hospices. Through classroom learning and hands-on clinical research, students have ample opportunities to gain practical expertise. The students' growth as reflective practitioners is encouraged through clinical research in physician/patient/therapist/family communication, adjustments to acute, chronic, or terminal illness, social effects and ethical dilemmas of new medical technologies, and other issues which transcend historical distinctions between physical treatment and psychosocial interventions.

The cornerstone of this specialization program is a commitment to teaching collaboration across the curriculum. This dedication is realized in the program both through course content, as well as through an exploration of collaborative relationships between students, faculty, and community health care providers in the curriculum development and implementation of this program. To meet this goal, Nova Southeastern University has developed a variety of innovative and productive partnerships between the Medical Family Therapy Program and a number of health care providers in South Florida, such as the Chemical Dependency Unit at Aventura Hospital and Medical Center, Planned Parenthood of Broward and South Palm Beach, and the Health Professions Division of the University.

The curriculum for the specialization entails four courses as well as Practicum III and IV of the Master's Program being taken in a medical setting. The course numbers for the Medical Family Therapy Practica are FSHC 5100 for Practicum I (equivalent to Practicum III in the Master's Program) and FSHC 5110 for Practicum II (equivalent to Practicum IV in the Master's Program). The requirements for the two medical practica are the same as those listed in the section in the handbook regarding Practicum III and IV. The schedule of the classes is as follows:

**Year 1**

**Winter:** Family Systems Health Care 1 (FSHC 5000)

**Summer:** Family Systems Health Care 2 (FSHC 5010)

**Year 2**

**Fall:** Medical Concepts for Non-physicians (FSHC 5300)  
Practicum I in Medical Family Therapy (FSHC 5100)

**Winter:** Research in Medical Family Therapy (FSHC 5200)  
Practicum II in Medical Family Therapy (FSHC 5110)

For the students' convenience, classes are generally held before the Master's Program classes, usually from 12 - 3 PM, with Master's classes starting at 3 PM.

Upon satisfactory completion of the program, students are awarded a Specialization in Medical Family Therapy. After graduation, students have found professional employment in hospitals, hospices, mental health HMOs, and private medical practices. This program adds an area of expertise to the graduates' family therapy skills which can increase their options in the family therapy profession.



## **Comprehensive Examination**

In addition to completing all course work successfully, and obtaining the 500 client contact hours as discussed above, you must pass a comprehensive examination in order to be awarded the M.S. degree. This clinically focused examination tests the student's ability to apply what has been learned. The examination is offered each semester. You will be eligible to take the examination when you have completed at least 400 of your client contact hours, and will have completed your course work by or before the end of the semester during which the examination is taken. Exemplary prior examinations are on file in the program office for review, and study guidelines are available from the M.S. program director.

The examination will have 10 questions. A score of 8 out of 10 correct is passing. 7 out of 10 questions correct means that you must partially retake the exam, at the next scheduled exam date, repeating only the 3 questions that you previously missed. Less than 7 correct answers is a failing score, and means the exam must be retaken in its entirety. Each examination answer is reviewed independently by three faculty members, who are unaware of the student's identity while they are reviewing each answer. Two out of the three faculty reviewers must independently conclude the answer is incorrect before it is so judged. Students may appeal their comprehensive examination grade to the M.S. program director; the guidelines given in the catalog for grievance and appeal procedures will be followed, as for any other appeal. The comprehensive examination may be attempted again one time after an initial failure; two failed examinations result in termination from the program.

To summarize, the graduation requirements for the program are: successful completion of all course work and practica; the accumulation and clear recording of 500 client contact hours, 250 of which must be relational, and 100 hours of supervision; and a passing score on the comprehensive examination. If you are unsure about your progress towards these requirements, please consult your advisor.

## **Time Limits**

You have five calendar years from the beginning of your first fall semester in the doctoral program to complete your degree requirements. If after five years you have not yet graduated, you will need to retake all courses for which you received transfer of credit. Each semester thereafter you will be responsible for the M.S. courses taken more than five years before that point in time. A one-year extension may be granted under extenuating circumstances. Leaves of absence taken during the course of the program do not extend the five year deadline.



## Plagiarism

The word *plagiarize* comes from the Latin *plagiarius*, kidnapper. Plagiarism is literary thievery and as such is tolerated by neither the program nor the university (see the catalog under **Student Rights and Responsibilities**). In class assignments, your comprehensive exam, and any articles you write for publication, sources for your ideas must be acknowledged. Quotations from, and paraphrases and summaries of, the work of others must be referenced in APA format.

## Student Evaluation of Practica and Classes

At the end of each semester, you are given the opportunity to provide the program with your responses to the courses you took. Your anonymity is protected in the following ways: a) you are asked not to sign your evaluation; b) all evaluations are completed and sealed in an envelope while the faculty member remains outside of the room; c) the envelope is delivered directly to the staff by a student volunteer, and the handwritten comments are typed into the computer; d) the original, handwritten sheets are shredded; e) faculty members do not receive typed copies of the evaluations until after grades have been submitted to the registrar.

## Human Subjects Research Committee

All research projects undertaken at NSU, whether within a particular class, under the auspices of a grant must, or conducted at FTA, must, prior to commencement, be approved by the program's Human Subjects Committee. A proposal must be submitted that includes a detailed description of:

1. Where and with whom the research will be conducted.
2. Your (and your colleagues') role in the project.
3. The research participant's role in the project.
4. How the research participants will understand your role--that is, how you will be identifying yourself to them.
5. What recording materials you will be using.
6. How you intend to ensure the confidentiality of research participants--that is, use of pseudonyms, plans for erasing tapes, etc.
7. The research agreement form you will be giving to the research participants to sign prior to their involvement.
8. How you intend to analyze and use the data--that is, publication and/or presentation plans.

## **Faculty/Student Collaboration**

Students are encouraged to collaborate with faculty on articles and books for publication. Authorship will follow APA guidelines. Students are also encouraged to collaborate with faculty on presentations, and may do cotherapy with faculty as indicated by their practicum supervisor. In general, collaborative relationships are encouraged, within the boundaries of mutual respect and appropriate roles. The faculty follow AAMFT guidelines with respect to potential dual relationships.

## **Further Questions**

If you have questions that are not addressed in this handbook, you may wish to refer to the school catalog. If your query remains unanswered, or if you require clarification, please contact the program office.

Revised 9/95





**School of Social and Systemic Studies  
Department of Family Therapy  
M.S. Program  
Student Handbook Acceptance Letter**

\_\_\_\_\_, 199\_\_

I have read and understood the Family Therapy Student Handbook for the M.S. Program  
agree to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in the handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND  
SYSTEMIC STUDIES

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