

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Berrien Springs, MI 49104

**RLED 658 Internal Dynamics of Families
Summer 2010**

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Classroom: S120
Session dates: July 11-16, 2010
Class Times: Sunday: 7-9:00 pm; Mon-Fri: 8:00 am – 5:30 pm

“It is only in Christ that the marriage alliance can be safely formed... Only where Christ reigns can there be deep, true, unselfish affection.” Ellen G. White, *Adventist Home*, p. 64.

Course Description:

A study of family systems theory and its application to key issues in internal family dynamics. This course will examine and critique biblical models of marriage and provide an understanding of family strengths and weaknesses and how family members relate to each other. This course will also examine the seasons that youth, singles, and marrieds pass through, and the Christian response, for “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it” (Psalm 127:1).

Rationale for the Course:

Modeled after the *Internal Dynamics of Families* content area endorsed by the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR), this course strives to set the foundational knowledge of Family Life Education and its ministry implications. The course aims to provide an understanding of family strengths and weaknesses and how family members relate to each other.

Required Text

Strong, B., DeVault, C., & Cohen, T.F. (2010). *The marriage and family experience: Intimate relationships in a changing society*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Recommended Reading

- Anderson, R.S., & Guernsey, D.B. (1985). *On being family: A social theology of the family*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Balswick, J.O. & Balswick, J.K. (1991). *The family: A Christian perspective on the contemporary home*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Brown, J. & Brown, P. (1999). *The total marriage: A guide to successful marriage*. Grantham, UK: Autumn House.
- Brown, J. (2001). *Single and gifted: Making the most of your singleness*. Grantham, UK: Autumn House.
- Brown, J. & Brown, P. (2003). *A guide to parenting: On the winning team with your children*. Grantham, UK: Stanborough Press.
- Brown, P. (2009). *What on earth am I doing? Leadership lessons for clergy spouses*. Belleville, Ontario: Guardian Books.
- Garland, D.S. & Pancoast, D. eds. (1990). *The church's ministry with families*. Dallas: Word Publishing.
- Garland, D. (1999). *Family ministry: A comprehensive guide*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Grunlan, S. (1984). *Marriage and the family: A Christian perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Jones, T.P. ed. (2009). *Perspectives on family ministry: Three Views*. Nashville: B & H Publishing Group.
- June, L., ed. (1991). *The black family: Past, present, & future. Perspectives of sixteen black Christian leaders*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Kettler, C. & Speidell, T. eds. (1990). *Incarnational ministry: The presence of Christ in church, society, and family*. Colorado Springs, CO: Helmers and Howard.
- National Council on Family Relations. (2006). *Making a difference: Your guide to strengthening marriages and families* (2nd ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Author.
- Powell, L.H., & Cassidy, D. (2007). *Family life education: Working with families across the lifespan*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Rainey, D. (2001). *Ministering to twenty-first century families*. Nashville: W. Publishing Group.
- Sell, C. M. (1995). *Family ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.
- White, E.G. (1954). *Child Guidance*. Nashville: Southern Publishing Association.
- White, E. G. (2001). *The Adventist home*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Course Topics and Desired Student Outcomes:

Knowledge

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will understand:

- Internal Social Processes (including cooperation and conflict)
- Communication patterns and problems in husband-wife relationships and in parent-child relationships (including stress and conflict management)
- Conflict management
- Decision-making and goal-setting

- Normal family stresses (transition periods in the family life cycle, three-generation households, caring for the elderly, and dual careers)
- Family stress and crises (divorce, remarriage, death, economic uncertainty and hardship, violence, substance abuse)
- Special needs in families (including adoptive, foster, migrant, low income, military, clergy, new believer, blended families, families with disabled members)

Skills

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

- Recognize and define healthy and unhealthy characteristics pertaining to family relationships and family development
- Analyze family functioning using various theoretical perspectives
- Assess family dynamics from a systems perspective
- Evaluate family dynamics in response to normative and non-normative stressors
- Evaluate family dynamics in response to crises
- Facilitate and strengthen communication processes, conflict-management, and problem-solving skills
- Develop, recognize, and reinforce strategies that help families function effectively

Values

Upon successful completion of this course, students will value:

- Research knowledge as an important basis for program development;
- Confidentiality when working with families;
- The local church as a supporting and teaching agency of families;
- Care-giving and care providers who are faithfully serving their family members;
- Family ministry as a means to serve their community and improve its quality of life.

Pre-Intensive Assignments

Reading

Read chapters 1 – 16 in the course textbook and then take the web-based quizzes for each chapter. You will need to pass the exams with a score of 80% or greater in order to get the 100 points allotted for this learning activity. You are allowed to take the exams as many times as you need to in order to demonstrate this level of proficiency. **Value: 30 points.**

Intensive Assignments

Research presentation

Develop and present research on a topic of your choosing, related to this course. The topic must be approved by the instructor. You will make use of at least 5 books from the recommended reading list and at least 5 peer-reviewed empirical research articles. You will present the findings of your research in class, demonstrating an effective grasp of knowledge, skills, and values. **Value: 25 points.**

Post-Intensive Assignments

Intervention Plan

Identify a family life crisis or deficiency in your community and create an intervention plan that could be implemented in a church to address it. Length: 10 pages (minimum). The plan should:

- Discuss what the need is and how you can/will document the need.
- Show how research has addressed this problem (at least 10 research sources).
- Demonstrate from the research what seems to work with this population and this problem.
- Offer information about resources needed to implement this intervention.
- Identify the key players that could help or hinder your plan.
- Develop a time/event sequence for your intervention.
- Clarify how you will get the target audience to participate.
- Note in your plan how you will evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. You will need an evaluation form to do this; if one does not already exist, develop one of your own. **Value: 45 points.**

TOTAL 100 points

Letter grades will be based on the following distribution:

- A = 95-100 points
- A- = 92-94 points
- B+ = 85-91 points
- B = 80-84 points
- B- = 74-79 points
- C+ = 70- 73points
- C = 65- 69 points
- C- = 60- 64 points
- F = Below 60 points