

Bowen Center for the Study of the Family

Sample Course Syllabus for Continuing Studies 2023-2024

October 2023 *Evolution, family emotional process, and differentiation of self* Robert J. Noone, PhD

Required readings

- Kerr, Michael E. 2019. *Bowen Theory's Secrets: Revealing the Hidden Life of Families*. New York: Norton
- Papero, Daniel. Video, 49th Symposium (2012). The Family and the Brain: An Integrated Circuit.

Each month also includes: Supplemental readings, video integration discussions, and journal/research entries: Also see assignment information below in Overview and Guidelines.

November 2023 *The Nuclear Family Emotional System* Kathleen Smith, PhD

Required readings:

- Kerr, Michael, 2019. Bowen Theory's Secrets.
- Papero, Daniel. Video, 55th Symposium (2021). THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE FAMILY SYSTEM - Lecture #1.

December 2023 *Triangles* Barbara Laymon, PhD MPH LPC

Required readings:

- Kerr, Michael, 2019. Kerr, Michael, 2019. *Bowen Theory's Secrets*.

January 2024 *Family Projection Process and Sibling Position* Carrie Collier, PhD.

Required readings:

- Kerr, Michael, 2019. Kerr, Michael, 2019. *Bowen Theory's Secrets*.

February 2024 *Multigenerational Transmission Process* John Millikin, PhD

Required readings:

- Kerr, Michael, 2019. *Bowen Theory's Secrets*.

March 2024 *Cutoff* Anne McKnight, PhD

Required readings:

- Kerr, 2019. *Bowen Theory's Secrets*.
- Estrangement Pellimer: <https://youtu.be/L75oJPFw7cU>

April 2024 *Differentiation of Self* Mariana Martinez, Psy.D

Required readings:

- Kerr, Michael, 2019. *Bowen Theory's Secrets*.

May 2024 *Bowen theory and Diversity* Kent Webb, MA

Required readings:

- Kerr, Michael, 2019. *Bowen Theory's Secrets*.

Overview and Guidelines

Continuing Studies consists of eight presentations with discussions, readings, eight videos with discussions, consultation sessions and a journaling exercise.

Presentations. The presentations are listed in the syllabus with a title of the topic, the presenter, and meeting dates for both the Tuesday and Thursday sections. The presentations have a specific order, from an introduction of general theory to a study of the main concepts and ending with an example of an application. There are eight meetings in total. Each meeting lasts 2 hours and is divided into the presentation and time dedicated for discussion for both the presentation and the reading.

Readings. The readings are in-depth descriptions of the theory, primarily from Michael Kerr's *Bowen Theory's Secrets*. Participants are expected to complete the readings (in some instances watching a video for the presentation date) and have several comments ready for each meeting. Questions to consider before each reading are: What are my goals for this reading? What are concepts that stand out as significant for me? What am I learning about myself and my own functioning? What concepts do I need more clarification on? How does the reading clarify or challenge the thinking I use in my profession? Readings will be discussed during the eight presentations.

Supplemental readings. Supplemental readings are suggested readings that will not be covered in the presentation discussions. These readings will help participants increase their understanding of the concepts and assist in building a strong foundation in the theory.

Videos. The videos complement the reading and presentation topics. There are eight separate meeting dates for videos. Various faculty members will lead the one-hour discussion. Video discussion meetings are driven by participation. Participants are expected to view the video and have comments and questions reading for each meeting. Questions to consider before each reading are: What stands out as important new knowledge? What am I learning about my own functioning in my family? What concepts do I need more clarification on? How does the video content clarify or challenge my professional approach? The video discussion meeting will also be an opportunity to integrate readings, journaling, and previous presentations.

Consultation. Participants have eight meetings with a Bowen theory consultant starting in mid-September/early October and finishing by late May. It is the participant's responsibility to schedule and prepare for each consultation session. Consultation sessions involve developing one's family diagram and making connections between present functioning and one's multigenerational system. These sessions are an opportunity to collect multigenerational 'facts of functioning' and to clarify goals of one's defining self in family and work.

Journaling. Each participant will monitor the amount and content of the journaling assignment. The journal will not be turned in or reviewed by anyone else. The recommended amount of time for 'thinking on paper' is at least a half-hour per week. Journaling will give participants an opportunity to integrate the presentations, readings, videos, and consultation to one's work on self. One suggestion is to think about the journal as a differentiation journal and as an opportunity to clarify one's principles and beliefs, one's part in his/her own relationship systems, and general reflections of one's functioning in family and/or work environments. The supplemental exercise below can be incorporated into this journaling exercise.

Supplemental journaling exercise. The journal can also be used for developing research ideas. For example, participants can choose a topic to research such as a concept in Bowen theory or in the life sciences. The topic can be solely academic, theoretical, or a concept applied to your work on self. Examples of questions to address are: What is the topic? What is a working hypothesis for the topic of concept?