

# Doctor of Philosophy in Marriage and Family Therapy

The MFT doctoral program is a unique program offering one of a kind specializations within a curriculum designed to enhance the theoretical knowledge and advanced practice of MFT. The program is designed to resemble the old fashioned apprentice model, where individuals were able to work alongside of a master craftsman to be nurtured and mentored to improve their talents and skills. Specializations in working with couples, developing and enhancing business and leadership skills and integrating psychophysiological knowledge and interventions provide students with a one of a kind learning experience.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** This program is pending Higher Learning Commission approval at the time of Catalog publication.

MF 704	Advanced Family Systems	3
MF 718	Advanced Models of MFT	3
MF 740	Advanced Research Methods I	3
MF 755	Advanced Spirituality and the Family	3
MF 769	Advanced Ethics and Professional Issues in MFT	3
MF 782	Advanced Models of Couples Therapy	3
MF 840	Advanced Research Methods II	3
MF 890	Internship I	4
MF 891	Internship II	4
MF 892	Internship III	4
MF 895	Dissertation	11
MF 896	Dissertation Continuation	1

**Choose five courses from this list. Four courses must be from one specialization and one course must be from a different specialization.** 15

## Leadership

MF 750	Marketing in MFT	
MF 777	Advanced Entrepreneurship in MFT	
MF 800	Strategic Human Resource Management	
MF 835	Leadership Foundations	

## Couples

MF 820	Communication Processes in Couples	
MF 821	The Couple Life Cycle	
MF 822	Attachment and Differentiation in Couple Therapy	
MF 823	Couples in Crisis	

## Psychophysiology

MF 805	Neuroscience and Emotional Regulation	
MF 841	Neurophysiological Essentials for Treatment	
MF 843	Complementary and Alternative Healthcare	
MF 844	Principles and Application of Neurofeedback	

Total Hours 60

## Academic Requirements

All courses must be passed with a grade of "B" (B- does not count) or higher.

See the MFT section (<http://catalog.mtmercy.edu/graduateprograms/curriculum/masterofartsinmarriageandfamilytherapy>) of this *Catalog* for

more information on the Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy.

## Courses

### **MF 503 Family Systems: 3 semester hours**

Marriage and family therapists emphasize the systemic viewpoint of human functioning, which hold that the individual is influenced in important ways by the family, then extended family and the society surrounding him or her. This course studies the family as a system, including family life cycle stages, tasks and difficulties. Communication patterns and interpersonal perceptions and expectations make up a large part of the therapeutic focus of marriage and family therapy. Students will be able to articulate how the systemic viewpoint differs from individual models of human functioning, and how the systemic model would conceptualize the goals of therapy, the process of change and the role of the therapist.

### **MF 518 Models of Marriage and Family Therapy: 3 semester hours**

This graduate seminar is designed to introduce models of marriage and family therapy. These include strategic, structural, Bowen, intergenerational, contextual, communications, behavioral, cognitive, object relations, solution-focused, narrative, and collaborative language systems. Current trends in assessment and intervention in marriage and family therapy will also be covered. If a student has not taken an undergraduate course in individual theories of counseling and psychotherapy, supplemental reading will be expected. Students will be able to conceptualize cases from each perspective, stating the goals of therapy, the process of change and the role of the therapist.

### **MF 524 Human Development and the Family: 3 semester hours**

This course is designed to supplement material taught in lifespan development, PS 124 Developmental Psychology (or equivalent). The course is designed to emphasize how developmental issues impact systems, especially families. The course will emphasize the family life cycle and family subsystems. Students will be able to describe their own developmental path, as well as the predicted outcome of several developmental issues.

### **MF 545 Micro-Counseling: 3 semester hours**

This experientially-based course will review the values, knowledge and skills necessary to work theoretically with individuals, counselors and families. Counseling practice with peers and community volunteers is required. If a student has not taken an undergraduate course in basic counseling skills, supplemental reading a practice will be required. Students will be able to demonstrate listening and basic helping skills.

### **MF 546 Pre-Practicum: 3 semester hours**

This course is designed as an orientation to the clinic, including observation of counseling through a one-way mirror, or by way of a video camera. Students also discuss cases, learn a model for an intake interview, demonstrate skill in conducting an intake interview and learn to write case notes. Prerequisites: MF 518, MF 524 and MF 545.

### **MF 550 Systemic Sex Therapy: 3 semester hours**

This course is designed to supplement material taught in SW 250 Human Sexuality (or equivalent). The course is designed to emphasize how normal and abnormal sexuality affect family systems, including sexual addiction. If a student has not taken an undergraduate course in human sexuality, supplemental reading will be expected. Students will be able to describe the categories of sexual disorders and interventions to treat them, as well as stating strategies for sexual enrichment.

**MF 569 Ethical and Professional Issues in Marriage and Family Counseling: 3 semester hours**

This course deals with ethical, legal and professional responsibilities of MFT counselors. The ethical code of the AAMFT will be examined and ethical dilemmas will be discussed. Students will examine legal responsibilities and liabilities of MFTs, issues in independent practice and the role of the professional organization. Students will be able to state categories of ethical concerns and apply ethical principles to hypothetical cases. They will be able to state legal responsibilities of MFTs and apply the law to hypothetical cases.

**MF 571 Introduction to Play Therapy & Family Therapy: 3 semester hours**

This course offers an overview of the essential elements and principles of play therapy. The course will address both theoretical and practical interventions for using play therapy in the treatment of a variety of presenting problems. This course will include a review of the history of play therapy and the profession, the role of the play therapist in a variety of settings. Participants will discover basic and advanced play therapy techniques. In addition, the process for becoming credentialed as a play therapist will be examined along with the increasing international demand for therapists with specialization in play therapy. Students will be introduced to the Association for Play Therapy and the State of Iowa branch for play therapy.

**MF 582 Models of Couples Therapy: 3 semester hours**

This course focuses on dynamics in dyadic relationships. A variety of therapeutic interventions and therapeutic models intended to enhance and improve couples' relationships will be examined. Special attention will be given to Evidence Based Methods (Gottman and Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy, Johnson). Marital Enrichment and pre-marital programs will also be considered.

**MF 590 Practicum in Marriage and Family Therapy I: 4 semester hours**

The practicum courses are intended to place the student in a professional counseling setting where they will provide direct client services under the supervision of a licensed mental health care provider. Students will be encouraged to develop sites that are of particular interest to them or to choose from a list of approved sites. Students will be required to accumulate 300 direct client contact hours providing therapeutic services and a minimum of 60 hours of supervision over the course of three courses. In addition to on-site supervision students will receive supervision in a weekly group supervision section at the University.

**MF 602 The Cross-Cultural Family: 3 semester hours**

This course will examine the impact of culture on individual and family functioning. The course will emphasize the family in social context, both historically and contemporarily. It will study the impact of changing social conditions on individual and family functioning. Students will be able to describe how culture has impacted him/herself, as well as hypothetical clients.

**MF 605 Neuroscience for Marriage and Family Therapy: 3 semester hours**

This course will introduce students to the basic facts of developmental neurobiology, brain structure, relation of structure to function and the physiological and psychological effects of environment on the brain. Special emphasis will be placed on the reciprocal influence of relationships on brain development and the influence of brain development on relationships and their effects on couples and families.

**MF 610 Treatment of Substance Abuse with Marriage and Family Therapy: 3 semester hours**

This course will introduce students to the basic theoretical and practical dimensions of Marriage and Family Therapy in the treatment of Substance Abuse Disorders (SA). The course will examine the etiology, progression and short and long term effects of SA on individuals, families and society. Traditional and investigational models of SA treatment will be discussed and opportunities for assessment, treatment planning and treatment options will be provided.

**MF 626 Psychopathology and the Family: 3 semester hours**

This course will provide systemic and relational perspectives for the Diagnostic and Statistics Manual of the American Psychological Association (DSM) as well as an introduction to the how the DSM is organized and the diagnostic categories and content of the Manual. A biopsychosocial and systemic framework will be utilized to conceptualize and understand the cause and effect of mental illness as well as alternative conceptualizations of mental illness from a systemic epistemology. Students will be able to describe the symptoms of major categories of mental illness, distinguish between different diagnostic categories and demonstrate competence in assigning DSM diagnoses and relating those diagnoses to relational and family issues.

**MF 640 Research Methods for Marriage and Family Therapy: 3 semester hours**

This course will introduce students to basic research methods in the social sciences, research methods used predominantly in MFT, and exposure to both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Students will be able to access, read and interpret research articles in primary MFT and related mental health journals in order to critically evaluate and apply research findings to clinical practice.

**MF 655 Spirituality and the Family: 3 semester hours**

This course will explore the place of spirituality in the family functioning, including mindfulness, meditative practice, spiritual disciplines and forgiveness. The role of spirituality in mental health, addictive behavior and substance abuse will be explored. Interventions with a spiritual focus will be addressed. Students will state how spirituality affects their own functioning, as well as describing how a hypothetical family is affected by spiritual issues.

**MF 660 Play Therapy Theory: 3 semester hours**

This course will cover the key theoretical concepts and history in the field of play therapy. The students will learn about Child-Centered Play Therapy, Adlerian Play Therapy, Jungian Play Therapy and other important theories including recent trends in the field. Students will learn about the importance of having a strong theoretical orientation to drive practice and identify theories that fit with their own practice. Prerequisite: MF 571.

**MF 665 Applications of Play Therapy: 3 semester hours**

Applications of Play Therapy provides students with the opportunity to further their education and training in play therapy following completion of the course Introduction to Play Therapy and Family Therapy. Students will learn and practice a variety of key play therapy treatment interventions including Sand Tray Therapy, Designing Metaphors along with play therapy treatment for special populations such as trauma, autism and behavior disorder. Prerequisite: MF 571.

**MF 671 Therapeutic Techniques with Parents and Children: 3 semester hours**

This course covers interventions in families with children and teens. Students will be trained in assessment of children and adolescents, and in therapeutic techniques in families, such as parent education, behavior modification and play therapy. Students will be able to conceptualize cases from each perspective, including describing interventions from that perspective.

**MF 677 Entrepreneurship in MFT: 3 semester hours**

This course is designed to provide marriage and family therapy students with basic information about business administration and economics as they relate to the field of MFT. Students in this course will learn about the economics of mental health and the different facets of management that need to be understood to operate effectively in this realm. Topics for this course will include how to start a business, how to motivate employees, financial management, and effective marketing. Students will learn the necessary steps for starting a business and the process of creating a business plan.

**MF 690 Practicum in Marriage and Family Therapy II: 4 semester hours**

The practicum courses are intended to place the student in a professional counseling setting where they will provide direct client services under the supervision of a licensed mental health care provider. Students will be encouraged to develop sites that are of particular interest to them or to choose from a list of approved sites. Students will be required to accumulate 300 direct client contact hours providing therapeutic services and a minimum of 60 hours of supervision over the course of three courses. In addition to on-site supervision students will receive supervision in a weekly group supervision section at the University.

**MF 692 Practicum in Marriage and Family Therapy III: 4 semester hours**

The practicum courses are intended to place the student in a professional counseling setting where they will provide direct client services under the supervision of a licensed mental health care provider. Students will be encouraged to develop sites that are of particular interest to them or to choose from a list of approved sites. Students will be required to accumulate 300 direct client contact hours providing therapeutic services and a minimum of 60 hours of supervision over the course of three courses. In addition to on-site supervision students will receive supervision in a weekly group supervision section at the University.

**MF 695 Thesis: 3 semester hours**

The thesis is a culminating experience that provides a record of a student's achievement in the program. The thesis requires research leading to the discovery of new knowledge or enhancement of existing knowledge in the field of interest. A project that helps solve a practical problem may also be acceptable. The thesis is a complete documentation of the research study, including the theoretical background, description of the problem, the method used to investigate or solve the problem, presentation of results, interpretation of results, and explanation of the significance of the results. The thesis is optional but is recommended for students considering an advance degree.

**MF 699 Independent Study: 3 semester hours**

If a student wishes to independently study or research a particular topic, he/she may propose to work with an appropriate faculty member within their discipline. No more than 2 courses may be taken as independent study by any student.

**MF 700 MFT Practicum IV: 1 semester hour**

MF 700 - 703 are designed to provide additional registrations for students who do not complete the required number of hours during the regular sequence of practicum courses. Students select the course number based on the number of hours remaining to be acquired.

**MF 701 MFT Practicum IV: 1 semester hour**

MF 700 - 703 are designed to provide additional registrations for students who do not complete the required number of hours during the regular sequence of practicum courses. Students select the course number based on the number of hours remaining to be acquired.

**MF 702 MFT Practicum IV: 2 semester hours**

MF 700 - 703 are designed to provide additional registrations for students who do not complete the required number of hours during the regular sequence of practicum courses. Students select the course number based on the number of hours remaining to be acquired.

**MF 703 MFT Practicum IV: 3 semester hours**

MF 700 - 703 are designed to provide additional registrations for students who do not complete the required number of hours during the regular sequence of practicum courses. Students select the course number based on the number of hours remaining to be acquired.

**MF 704 Advanced Family Systems: 3 semester hours**

Advanced Family Systems will provide an in depth analysis and integration of primary sources and advanced theoretical discussion and application of systemic epistemology as applied to MFT theories.

**MF 718 Advanced Models of MFT: 3 semester hours**

This course will offer students the experience of applying and integrating advanced thinking and analytic skills to the practice of family therapy. The course will integrate advanced knowledge with practice through clinical experiences and teaching of theories.

**MF 740 Advanced Research Methods I: 3 semester hours**

This course will introduce students to basic research methods in the social sciences. If a student has not had a graduate research methods course, supplemental reading will be expected. Students will be able to access, read, and interpret research articles in primary counseling journals in order to evaluate evidence based best practices in counseling and therapy. In addition, students will learn the basics of statistical procedures and multiple research methodologies including quantitative and qualitative. Students will be able to design and interpret a basic research study.

**MF 750 Marketing in MFT: 3 semester hours**

In today's healthcare market one of the often overlooked aspects for operating effectively in this industry is the need for substantive marketing and promotion. This course will discuss the stigma associated with marketing in the mental health fields and ways this stigma can be overcome. Effective marketing strategies will be taught and students will have an opportunity to apply them through the development of a marketing plan. Some of the topics covered in this class include: social dynamics of power, buying motives in behavioral healthcare, networking, and website development.

**MF 755 Advanced Spirituality and the Family: 3 semester hours**

Advanced Spirituality in MFT will offer students the opportunity to direct and develop spiritual and holistic interventions and experiences for themselves and clients. A deep integration of alternative and complimentary healing strategies will be presented.

**MF 769 Advanced Ethics and Professional Issues in MFT: 3 semester hours**

Advanced Family Therapy will offer students the experience of applying and integrating advanced thinking and analytic skills to the practice of family therapy. The course will integrate advanced knowledge with practice through clinical experiences and teaching of theories.

**MF 777 Advanced Entrepreneurship in MFT: 3 semester hours**

This course provides marriage and family therapy doctoral students with information about business administration and economics within the field of MFT. Topics for this course will include how to start a business and complete a business plan, how to motivate and retain employees, financial management and accounting, and effective marketing within the mental health industry. Students will learn the necessary steps for preparing a comprehensive business plan and create an actual plan for a new business. Students in this course will also learn about creating a unique presence in the local healthcare market.

**MF 782 Advanced Models of Couples Therapy: 3 semester hours**

Advanced Models of Couples Therapy will provide an opportunity to become proficient in the application and function of models of couple's therapy beyond the introductory level of the master's class. Students will have the opportunity to integrate theory with practice in class role plays and in actual client contact in the clinic. Students who have not had the Master's level introductory courses will have to do additional readings and in class work to demonstrate competency.

**MF 800 Strategic Human Resource Management: 3 semester hours**

In today's competitive global economy leading and managing people efficiently, effectively, and ethically is more important than ever. Too many organizations do not recognize the strategic importance of engaging HR in high-level business and organizational decisions. The focus of this course includes: change management and developing employees' capabilities and management of employees and other HR relationships. Emphasis will be placed on how to apply these concepts to the field of marriage and family therapy. Prerequisite: MF 777.

**MF 805 Neuroscience and Emotional Regulation: 3 semester hours**

This course will focus on attachment influences on behavior throughout the life cycle, with an emphasis on concomitantly changing neuroscience. The course will give students the opportunity to inquire into relationships from both an emotional and neuroscientific stance. The course will examine attachment with respect to etiology, intervention, assessment and diagnosis, and treatment from a systemic perspective. In addition the course will include discussion about evaluation of study designs and outcomes.

**MF 820 Communication Processes in Couples: 3 semester hours**

This course will enable students to observe, analyze and intervene in the communication processes of couples. Principles of communication theory and systemic processes of communication will be studied and applied to intimate human communication with the intent of being able to interrupt or modify dysfunctional patterns and establish healthy ones.

**MF 821 The Couple Life Cycle: 3 semester hours**

A systemic epistemology inclines us to perceive the world in a very different and non-linear process. From this perspective we are primarily interested in exploring and understanding how patterns of interaction serve as the building blocks of our perception of reality. In traditional developmental thought individuals pass through set steps of development in an effort to become fully realized and developed human beings. In systems, development is understood to happen in a relational manner that may ebb and flow in an unpredictable but comprehensible form. This means that couples or families may also be described as developing and as having a life cycle. This course will examine, analyze and seek to apply this form of thought to facilitate effective and compassionate couple's and family therapy.

**MF 822 Attachment and Differentiation in Couple Therapy: 3 semester hours**

A growing body of research over the past 60 years has compelled counselors, therapists and psychologists to take into account the experience of attachment and differentiation in individuals and families. Additional study has revealed that the influence of attachment and differentiation on individual development has a profound effect on how a couple is able to form and provide healthy interactions and human bonding. This course will seek to better understand how attachment theory is integral to couple's happiness and function. It will also examine how to use this understanding to best effect change and growth in distressed or unhappy couples.

**MF 823 Couples in Crisis: 3 semester hours**

MFTs tend to experience two sorts of couples as initiators or seekers of therapy. One type realizes that things are not going as well as they might and they are unhappy and the seek therapy as a possible resource to improve their relationship. Another type of couple is one that is in severe crisis and who present as needing a sort of "emergency" treatment. This may be as a result of domestic violence, a trauma experienced by one or another of the members, a sudden and unexpected shift in attachment and relationship. This course will train students to know how to assess and intervene in "emergency" situations presented by the second type of client. Students will learn what theories are most suited, what things to be cautious of, when to refer for more extensive or perhaps medical treatment and the all-important, when to say no.

**MF 835 Leadership Foundations: 3 semester hours**

The focus of the course is to provide a review of Leadership theories both from an historical perspective and the current day leadership styles that have evolved over the decades since the Industrial Revolution. The course will include the opportunity for students to self-assess, develop and create their own leadership style. The changing role of marriage and family therapists from provider to leaders in the healthcare market will be highlighted. Prerequisite: MF 777.

**MF 840 Advanced Research Methods II: 3 semester hours**

In this course students will move from a basic understanding of research to full implementation and analysis. Students will design, interpret and complete an independent research project that was conceptualized in the first research course. Students will be required to understand and apply statistical or qualitative methodology appropriate to a wide range of projects, as well as demonstrate knowledge of alternative methods and research principles. The course focuses heavily on appropriate data analysis and interpretation of results. Prerequisite: MF 740.

**MF 841 Neurophysiological Essentials for Treatment: 3 semester hours**

This course will focus on the knowledge needed to assess and design treatment protocols for application of EEG Biofeedback. Emphasis will be placed on the functional aspects of the brain, especially as measured by EEG. Detailed knowledge of how the brain produces, uses, and integrates electrical aspects into human abilities and normal function will be gained. The ability to discern how and where and in what ways dysfunction in electrical function interferes with normal function will also be discovered. Basic knowledge of brain structure, integration with other physical systems, effects of injury and disease and effects of medication and relational aspects will all be discussed and integrated into a model for effective intervention.

**MF 843 Complementary and Alternative Healthcare: 3 semester hours**

Students in this course will have the opportunity to learn about and experience some of the many complementary and alternative healthcare practices. Mental health care has been involved in integrating a wider range of healing practices into standard mental health care efforts. These include meditation, breath work, acupuncture, neuroscience, supplements, nutrition and diet, and exercise. Students will learn more about these and other practices, how they work, the mechanisms of effect and how to integrate them into MFT. The class will include both theoretical and experiential aspects.

**MF 844 Principles and Application of Neurofeedback: 3 semester hours**

This course will enable students to record, analyze, interpret and apply EEG recordings in order to design and apply protocols to address and change dysfunctional EEG patterns related to distressing symptoms of mental or physical dysfunction. Students will have a hands-on opportunity to set-up and record 19 channel EEG. They will learn to analyze the EEG using computer based normed databases and determine specific training protocols for the individual. They will learn to apply the protocols through individual electrodes or with full cap 19 channel LORETA z score training. They will learn how to provide ongoing assessment and follow-up to insure effective outcomes.

**MF 890 Internship I: 4 semester hours**

Internship is an application course in which students provide clinical services independently while under the supervision of assigned faculty or other designated supervisors with appropriate experience and credentials. Students will have the opportunity to provide and practice a variety of clinical skills and theories to community members who come to the Olson Clinic for issues and problems in their lives. Continued enrollment is required each term of attendance (fall, spring, summer) once course is begun until successful completion.

**MF 891 Internship II: 4 semester hours**

Internship is a non-academic course in which students provide clinical services independently while under the supervision of assigned faculty or other designated supervisors with appropriate experience and credentials. Students will have the opportunity to provide and practice a variety of clinical skills and theories to community members who come to the Olson Clinic for issues and problems in their lives. Continued enrollment is required each term of attendance (fall, spring, summer) once course is begun until successful completion.

**MF 892 Internship III: 4 semester hours**

Internship is an application course in which students provide clinical services independently while under the supervision of assigned faculty or other designated supervisors with appropriate experience and credentials. Students will have the opportunity to provide and practice a variety of clinical skills and theories to community members who come to the Olson Clinic for issues and problems in their lives. Continued enrollment is required each term of attendance (fall, spring, summer) once course is begun until successful completion.

**MF 895 Dissertation: 11 semester hours**

Dissertation/capstone project is the culmination of doctoral studies. Students will be required to enroll in a minimum of 12 credit hours. Students will choose a mentor who will serve as their dissertation/project advisor. Generally, this would be the faculty member in their area of specialization. The student will work closely with their mentor in the design, implementation and completion of their dissertation, research or project. The student will also solicit a committee to aid in the direction and evaluation of the dissertation/research/project. The final results will be presented in a public oral presentation/defense. Continued enrollment is required each term of attendance (fall, spring, summer) once course is begun until successful completion. Course can be taken for a range of 1 - 11 hours. Prerequisite: Completion of all required program coursework.

**MF 896 Dissertation Continuation: 1 semester hour**

This course is required for students who have completed 11 hours of dissertation direction in order to complete their defense. Students will take one credit hour of dissertation continuation until the dissertation has been successfully completed and approved by the student's dissertation chair and committee. Students must maintain continuous enrollment in dissertation to satisfy program requirements for graduation. Prerequisite: Completion of all required program coursework.