A Guide for Marriage and Family Therapy Master's Students
Department of Human Development

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1. WELCOME LETTER

Dear Student:

Welcome to the Marriage and Family Therapy Program at Virginia Tech's Northern Virginia Center. You are entering what we believe is an exciting and challenging program.

The purpose of the Student Guide is to inform you of the policies and procedures of the master's degree program and to guide you through the many details involved in going through the program. We hope that you will not feel overwhelmed by this information, but will become familiar with the policies and procedures involved. We have included an overview of the master's degree program, which we hope will assist you in viewing the program from a larger perspective.

Please feel free to ask any questions you may have concerning these procedures. Faculty and staff will be happy to assist you in any way that we can. It is our goal to support and assist you as you pursue your master's degree in marriage and family therapy.

Sincerely,

Mariana K. Falconier, Ph.D.
Program Director

Jeffrey Jackson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

Bertranna Muruthi, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

Ashley Landers, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

Ellie Cunanan-Petty, M.S.
Clinical Director

Assistant Clinical Professor
2. MISSION STATEMENT AND PROGRAM GOALS

VT MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Virginia Tech Marriage and Family Therapy Program is to provide the training necessary for our graduates to become competent, research-informed clinicians, able to work systemically in varied settings with individuals, couples and families from diverse populations, and to become active contributing members to the MFT field.

VT MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY PROGRAM GOALS

1. Students and graduates will be competent systemically oriented MFT professionals.
2. Students and graduates will be competent research-informed MFT professionals.
3. Students and graduates will be contextually competent MFT professionals committed to social justice.
4. Students and graduates will be active contributing members of the MFT profession.
3. AFFIRMATION OF RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIVERSITY

The Marriage and Family Therapy Program at Virginia Tech in Falls Church is committed to respect for human diversity. This is not just a statement but is a foundational belief at the core of our program. We believe that all individuals are entitled to compassion, respect, understanding and equal treatment. Family therapists must learn to understand and support individuals whose age, race, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and physical ability or other characteristics may be different from their own. This goal cannot be achieved solely through reading textbooks and class work. Befitting our location in a widely diverse and multicultural metropolitan area, and as part of a public university, we expect students to be open to encountering and working respectfully with clients, fellow students, staff, and faculty whose backgrounds, beliefs and life choices may not mirror their own. As a program, we expect that all of us will support each other as we encounter others who challenge us and that we will each work to create a safe environment in which different views can be shared and discussed.

The Marriage and Family Therapy Program in Falls Church affirms and upholds Virginia Tech's policies and philosophy concerning equal opportunity and affirmative action. As per the university's statement, Virginia Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, relationship status, health status or veteran status, or otherwise discriminate against employees or applicants who inquire about, discuss, or disclose their compensation or the compensation of other employees or applicants, or on any other basis protected by law.
4. INTRODUCTION

The Marriage and Family Therapy Program at Virginia Tech's Northern Virginia Center consists of the Master of Science Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy and the Post-Master's Certificate in Marriage and Family Therapy. The Center for Family Services is the program's clinical training facility and provides family therapy for the Northern Virginia area. The program is a component of the Department of Human Development: College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences located at the main Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, VA.

This guide outlines the program and describes the related policies and procedures of the Department of Human Development. It is available to all students in the program and is updated periodically. Changes will be distributed and you should keep this guide up to date.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO BE FAMILIAR WITH THIS INFORMATION, SO YOU CAN FOLLOW DEPARTMENT PROCEDURES IN PROPER SEQUENCE WITHIN THE REQUIRED TIME LIMITS.

For information not contained in this Guide, contact your advisor or Patricia Meneely, MFT Program Coordinator, Department of Human Development, Northern Virginia Center, Virginia Tech, Room 202F, 7054 Haycock Road, Falls Church, VA 22043-2311. Telephone: (703) 538-8460. Email: pmeneely@vt.edu. Web address: www.nvgc.vt.edu/mft
5. OVERVIEW OF THE M.S. PROGRAM IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) is a discipline for people who are interested in providing mental health services to individuals and families from a systems or relational perspective. This program prepares students to be family therapists who are well-grounded in systems theory and research methods and who are competent to diagnose and treat mental illness. Students have the opportunity to receive intensive supervision of their clinical work with a broad range of individuals, couples and families at the Department's Center for Family Services. The Master's program at Virginia Tech in Northern Virginia is fully accredited by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy's Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education. For additional information, please see our website at http://www.nvc.vt.edu/mft.

COURSEWORK

An undergraduate or graduate course in Abnormal Psychology and an undergraduate course in Statistics are recommended. Students may be admitted with deficiencies on the condition that the required courses are taken as soon as possible. A total of 51-54 credit hours are required for graduation. There are 13 academic courses (39 hours) in addition to 9 credits of practicum and 3-6 credits of thesis or independent study required for the master's degree program. Full-time students usually complete the sequence of courses in three years. Part-time students usually complete the sequence of courses in 3-4 years. Courses include clinical and theoretical study in systems theory, marital and family therapy, ethics, human sexuality, life-span development, and research methods. Maximum time to complete the master's degree program is 7 years.

Clinical and theoretical courses cover a range of approaches to systems therapy including structural, strategic, constructivist, brief and solution focused, intergenerational, emotion focused, internal family systems, and cognitive-behavioral. We include explicit examination of gender and ethnicity issues in our teaching, and encourage students to explore clinical ideas that go beyond areas of our own expertise.

We also draw heavily on the skill and knowledge of our colleagues in the surrounding community. Adjunct faculty include clinical psychologists, social workers, licensed professional counselors, psychiatric nurses and other MFT's who specialize in the practice of marriage and family therapy in the Northern Virginia area. In addition, students have the opportunity to gain supplemental training at a variety of agencies in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

CLINICAL TRAINING

After successful completion of four academic courses (Systems Theory, Clinical MFT I, Research Methods, and Advanced Research Methods), students are eligible to apply for the clinical
program. Once accepted into the clinical program (See “Clinical Screening” in Section 6), master’s degree students are required to complete 500 hours of direct client contact. The second year in the program is comprised of several classes plus clinical training at the on-site clinic, The Center for Family Services (CFS).

Student therapists or interns at CFS work with a variety of clients from the surrounding area. These clients come from a broad spectrum of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds and have a wide array of presenting problems including divorce and marital conflict, domestic violence, child custody disputes, chronic illness, school problems, child behavior problems, drug and alcohol abuse, and court ordered therapy. With a supervisor’s oversight, interns may use a variety of theoretical orientations to these cases, including structural, strategic, competency-based, constructivist, and solution-oriented approaches.

During the third year of the program students receive clinical training at one of several approved off-site placements in addition to seeing clients at CFS. It usually takes 2 years to complete these 500 hours; thus, with the coursework and the clinical training, the program usually takes the full-time student approximately 3 years to complete.

**SUPERVISION**

The Clinical Director of the Center for Family Services (CFS) is Ellie Cunanan-Petty. Mrs. Cunanan-Petty oversees the operation with the clinic and all supervision provided there. Students will also have the opportunity to receive supervision of their clinical work from several adjunct supervisors.

The Center for Family Services is equipped with one-way mirrors and video equipment so that supervisors can provide live supervision to therapist interns as they work with families. Supervision is provided by COAMFTE approved supervisors or supervisors in training. Supervision is conducted in small group format, live, video, and through case notes. Additional supervision can be requested if a student feels s/he needs additional guidance.

All therapist interns receive at least one, and frequently more, hour of supervision for every five hours of client contact.

**RESEARCH**

Students and faculty engage in a wide range of clinical and theoretical research projects, from traditional quantitative studies to qualitative and cross-disciplinary research. At times, students and faculty have collaborated on presentations and papers, while at other times, students have pursued their own topics independently, with the active guidance and support of department and adjunct faculty.
Recent student and/or faculty research topics have included a study of the effect of deployment on military youth and the experience of learning mindfulness meditation while in clinical training. Program students and faculty have had numerous sole and first author publications, including articles in *Family Relations, Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, Violence and Victims, and the Journal of Family Violence*. Further, program students have frequently presented their research at national conferences of AAMFT and the National Council on Family Relations, in addition to other statewide organizations.

**CAREERS OF PROGRAM GRADUATES**

Most of our graduates have found rewarding careers in a variety of family related settings, including community mental health services, private agencies, non-profits, psychiatric hospitals, and private practices. Several have pursued doctoral study in Marriage and Family Therapy or related areas.

Most program graduates go on to pursue Licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) in the state of Virginia.
6. FACULTY AND STAFF

PROGRAM FACULTY

Dr. Mariana Falconier is Program Director and Associate Professor in the Marriage and Family Therapy Program. She is from Buenos Aires, Argentina and has been in the U.S. since 1999. She completed her master’s degree in Marriage and Family Therapy and her doctoral degree in Family Studies at the Department of Family Science at the University of Maryland, College Park. She is an AAMFT approved supervisor and a licensed marriage and family therapist in both Virginia and Maryland. She has been working as a therapist since 1992 in both inpatient and outpatient mental health clinics with a wide range of clinical issues.

She has also been a Clinical Director for Washington Assessment and Therapy Services, Vesta, and more recently the Center for Family Services in the MFT program (2008-2016). Her research focuses on how couples cope with stress, with special focus on economic stress and immigration stress in Latino couples. She has developed the TOGETHER curriculum, a psycho-educational program to improve couples’ communication, problem solving, stress management, and financial management skills. She is the recipient of a 6.5 million dollar grant (Administration of Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) to provide and test in randomized control trial the effectiveness of the TOGETHER curriculum when provided with case management and employment support services. She has been teaching MFT courses since 1993 and has been teaches multicultural issues and postmodern approaches in family therapy in the VT MFT master’s program. She has published and presented her clinical and research work nationally and internationall and has co-edited the book Couples Coping with Stress: A Cross-Cultural Perspective.

Dr. Falconier has been married for over 20 years and has a 16 year-old daughter and a 13 year-old son. She enjoys running with friends and travelling with her family.

Research interests: Stress and coping processes in couples, immigration stress, economic stress, Latino families, prevention couples’ programs.

Dr. Falconier is in room 202E and can be reached at 703-538-8461 or by email at marianak@vt.edu.
**Dr. Jeff Jackson** is an Assistant Professor in the Virginia Tech Department of Human Development at the Northern Virginia Center in Falls Church. He is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) in Virginia, California, and Utah, and an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Approved Supervisor. He has experience working with individuals, couples, families, and groups from all life stages and backgrounds in a wide range of areas. He has worked in inpatient and residential settings providing services to families coping with eating disorders and depression. He has also provided clinical services in a variety of outpatient settings and maintains a private practice. His clinical specializations include marital distress, premarital counseling, adolescents and parent-child relationships, reactive attachment, abuse, ambiguous loss, disability, eating disorders, and depression.

Dr. Jackson is frequently invited to present on using Dialectical Behavior Therapy with couples and families, treating adolescents with reactive attachments, evidence informed premarital counseling, relationship enrichment, premarital counseling, and ambiguous loss. Dr. Jackson is an associate board member at the RELATE Institute – [www.relateinstitute.com](http://www.relateinstitute.com) – the administrative research organization for the RELATIionship Evaluation (RELATE). RELATE is an online comprehensive questionnaire that provides respondents an assessment of individual, family, cultural, and couple factors associated with relationship satisfaction and stability. Dr. Jackson is excited to have joined the Virginia Tech faculty in the Fall of 2015. From 2010 until 2015, Dr. Jackson was faculty in the California School of Professional Psychology Couple and Family Therapy Program at Alliant International University, Irvine, where he served as the director of the Italy Immersion Program in Family Therapy and Italian Culture. Dr. Jackson and Mallory, his wife who is also an LMFT, are the parents of two little girls.

**Research Interests:** relationship quality and stability, clinical outcome research, ambiguous loss, disability, with expertise in meta-analysis.

Dr. Jackson is in Room 202G and can be reached at 703 538-3787 or by email at jjax@vt.edu

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**Dr. Bertranna Muruthi** is an Assistant Professor in the Marriage and Family Therapy Program at the Northern Virginia Center. She completed her master's degree in Family and Child Studies at Miami University of Ohio and her doctoral degree in Human Development and Family Sciences with a specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy from the University of Georgia.

Her research aim is to develop culturally responsive interventions and prevention programs for immigrant families living in the US. Central to her research activities is the examination of factors related to immigrant families in transition and change and family predictors for risk and resilient behavior. Currently her projects consist of: 1) the examination of culturally responsive measures and
methods 2) predictors of risk and protective behavior in immigrant families, and 3) transnational processes in immigrant families.

Her teaching initiatives strives to create an atmosphere of interactive learning in the classroom. She emphasizes a parallel learning environment where she learns from her students as they learn from her. She also integrates diversity issues in all courses in order to develop new ways of thinking and to encourage conversation among peers. Dr. Muruthi teaches Quantitative and Qualitative Methods.

Dr. Muruthi has been married for two years and has recently welcomed a baby daughter.

**Research Interests:** immigrant families and resiliency factors.

Dr. Muruthi is located in Room 202G and can be reached at 703-538-8491 or by email at muruthba@vt.edu

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**Dr. Ashley Landers** is an Assistant Professor in the Marriage and Family Therapy Program at the Northern Virginia Center. She completed her master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy at St. Cloud State University and her doctoral degree in Family Science with a specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy at the University of Minnesota.

Dr. Landers is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) in Minnesota and an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Approved Supervisor. She has extensive experience providing individual, group, and family therapy to children, adolescents, and adults.

As a systems thinker, Dr. Landers believes in the importance and role of the family in mental health. Her specialized training areas include serious and persistent mental illnesses, sexual abuse, trauma treatment, and reunification.

Dr. Landers program of research focuses on families in child welfare, more specifically marginalized underserved minority families such as First Nations/American Indian families involved with the child welfare system. Most of her research has been at the intersection of secondary data analyses and community-based participatory research (CBPR) methods. Dr. Landers works collaboratively with community partners at the First Nations Repatriation Institute (FNRI) in Minnesota. Her research examines child welfare-related outcomes (e.g., reunification, adoption, placement instability) and mental health outcomes (e.g., internalizing and externalizing behavior problems, mental health service use) of children involved in the child welfare system.

Dr. Landers is in room 202C and can be reached at 703-539-3796 or by email at land0552@vt.edu.
Ellie Cunanan-Petty is the Clinical Director, Center for Family Services and Assistant Professor in the Marriage and Family Therapy Program. Mrs. Cunanan-Petty is the Clinical Director of Virginia Tech’s Center for Family Services. She also offers clinical supervision and instruction to the MFT interns as an Assistant Clinical Professor. Mrs. Cunanan-Petty graduated from George Mason University with a B.A. in psychology and is a graduate of Virginia Tech’s Marriage and Family Therapy Program. She is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in Virginia and a Clinical Member and Approved Supervisor with the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists. Mrs. Cunanan-Petty also has a private practice in Falls Church, VA, seeing couples, families and individuals. Mrs. Cunanan-Petty’s prior experience includes working as a therapist at Fairfax County Alcohol and Drug Youth Services and Youth and Family Mental Health Services and Catholic Charities Family Services. Prior to coming to Virginia Tech, she was at Adolescent and Family Growth Center, a treatment foster care agency, where she served as Assistant Director of Clinical Services. She served as the Northern Region VP for the Virginia Association for Marriage and Family Therapy from 2014-2018.

Mrs. Cunanan-Petty is located in Room 202I and can be reached at 703-538-8468 or by email at ecunanan@vt.edu.

ADJUNCT FACULTY

Renu K. Aldrich, PhD, LMFT, is an adjunct professor and supervisor at the Marriage and Family Therapy Program at Virginia Tech with a specialty in trauma. Having recently graduated from Tech’s doctoral program in Blacksburg, she studied the impact of being a spiritual minority on anxiety. She completed her doctoral internship at Mercer University’s MFT Program, where she taught first and second year clinical master’s students courses ranging from ethics to addictions. The youngest daughter of immigrant parents from India, Renu began her career in journalism and then succeeded in executive roles in communications, utilizing public relations, internal communications, and marketing to help individuals and companies achieve their professional goals. Her personal journey was immersed in experiential therapies and indigenous healing activities, leading her to make meaning out of adverse experiences by becoming a healer. Renu is interested in studying how communal spiritual activities may benefit religious minorities who have experienced trauma as well as how a family perspective would benefit immigrant families with intergenerational trauma who come from countries with collectivist perspectives. Among her related interests are identity construction, mindfulness-based practices, and poetry therapy.

Esther Boykin, LMFT, is a graduate of Virginia Tech and she specializes in Marriage and Family Therapy. She has been working as a private practitioner in Northern Virginia for almost a decade.
She has presented and published on a variety of topics including teen marriage, child abuse, and domestic violence. She has led multi-couple groups as well as conducted pre-marital workshops for military couples at Fort Belvoir. Her areas of interest are couple dynamics, pre-marital counseling, relationship maintenance, and helping people manage anxiety and trauma reactions. Her work is rooted in the belief that good mental health begins with compassion. Her therapy approach incorporates a variety of theoretical perspectives in an effort to fully understand each person’s unique struggles. She will be teaching HD 5744 Special Topic in MFT: The Business of Therapy.

**Edward L. Hendrickson**, MS, LMFT, LSATP, Adjunct Professor. Ed graduated from Virginia Tech’s Marriage and Family Therapy Program. He and has provided treatment, supervision, training and consultation in the area of substance abuse, mental health and family treatment since 1971. He worked in the public sector until 2004 and in private practice since. His publications include numerous articles, reports, and two books concerning substance abuse, mental health and family treatment. He supervised at Tech’s Family Therapy Clinic since 1998 and has taught classes on group treatment and working with families who have members with mental health disorders. Mr. Hendrickson teaches HD 5744 Family Therapy Perspectives on Group Counseling

**Neil McNerney**, LPC, M.Ed., Adjunct Professor. Neil graduated from James Madison University with a Master's Degree in School Counseling and Virginia Tech's Post-Master's Marriage and Family Therapy program. He has been in private practice since 1994 and works primarily with families and couples with a special emphasis on parenting issues. He has served as clinical supervisor at Virginia Tech and has guest lectured at various universities. Neil's work with parenting issues has led him to become the Director of Leadership Development for The ScreamFree Institute, where he conducts training on Bowen-based parenting nationally and internationally. His clinical interests include family differentiation issues and emotional regulation in systems work. Neil has developed a graduate course for our department: Psychotherapy with Children and Adolescents in a Systems Context. Mr. McNerney teaches HD 5744 Psychotherapy with Children & Adolescents.

**Sheri Mitschelen**, MSW, LCSW, RPT-S. Sheri attended Ohio University from 1983-1987 and earned her degree in Psychology. She then attended the University of Pittsburgh from 1987-1989 and earned her master’s degree in Social Work with a Health and Mental Health Specialty. She earned her license in Clinical Social Work in Virginia in 1992 and also become a Registered Play Therapy Supervisor (RPT-S) in 2000. Sheri also attended the Alexandria Family Therapy Training Program for 2 years as well as the Adoption Competency Program for 2 years. For a year, she participated in the Early Childhood Mental Health Program at the Washington School of Psychiatry. She has two years of Play Therapy training and supervision and provides supervision, training, and consultation for Play Therapy. At our campus, she teaches a Play Therapy Course. She is actively involved in the Virginia Play Therapy Association where she also serves as the President Elect. Sheri currently works in her own private practice Crossroads Family Counseling Center, LLC. She has worked in the past at inpatient psychiatric hospitals, Day Treatment
Programs and a Special Education School. Sheri has interests and advanced training in attachment issues.

**John Millikin, Ph.D., LMFT, Adjunct Professor.** John graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill, Appalachian State's Marriage and Family Therapy program and Virginia Tech's doctoral Marriage and Family Therapy program. He completed his internship with Susan Johnson in Canada, where he conducted research on Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) and couple relationships. Dr. Millikin co-authored publications on basic principles in family therapy, as well as attachment injuries and therapy interventions in EFT. He served as guest lecturer and clinical supervisor at two universities in Iran. He has enjoyed teaching Systems Theory for non-majors, Family Stress and Crisis Intervention, and Human Lifespan Development, and has recently begun to serve on VAMFT. His clinical interests include adult and child bonding processes, anger management, and cross-cultural comparisons on therapy practice. Dr. Millikin is in private practice in Reston, Virginia.

**Carl Mojta, MS, LMFT, CAC I, CST,** Carl graduated from Virginia Tech’s Marriage & Family Therapy Program in 2011. Before transitioning into the mental health field, he spent the past two decades working and traveling in the United States as well as in Europe, Africa and Asia. As a result of his education and training, he has worked for a variety of organizations such as the U.S. Army (active duty), The Washington Times, The World Bank, Central Texas College and the U.S. Federal Government. Since 2013, he has been working full-time as a family therapist at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, DC Vet Center. He also has a part-time private practice in downtown DC where he provides individual and couples therapy. Carl is a Clinical Fellow of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). He is also a certified sex therapist and professional member of the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AAASECT) as well as a full member of the Society for Sex Therapy and Research (SSTAR). His clinical areas of interest are: sexual health, military mental health care, substance abuse addiction, couple relationships and self-of-the-therapist. He also has specialized training in Internal Family Systems (IFS), an advanced mindfulness based approach to improve emotional intelligence and is a graduate of the University of Michigan’s School of Social Work’s post graduate Sexual Health Certificate Program/Sex Therapy Track.

Additional Professional Adjunct Faculty from the metropolitan area also teach HD courses.
Center for Family Services

CLINICAL SUPERVISION AT THE CENTER FOR FAMILY SERVICES

Student therapist interns are supervised by program faculty and AAMFT approved supervisors.

STAFF

Barry Alvarez, LMFT

Barry Alvarez was born in Long Island and has lived all over the country. He studied Accounting at Brigham Young University and worked in government contracting in the years to follow. From being an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Barry developed a love for therapy. He then pursued a master’s degree in Marriage and Family Therapy at Virginia Tech, which he earned in 2003. He has held his own private practice for 10 years. He works with couples as well as those with addictions. He enjoys working with couples and just about every sport that exists. He has been married for 31 years and has 5 children.

Barry can be reached by e mail at barry.alvarez@gmail.com

Claire Dutrow, LMFT

Claire Dutrow first studied at Virginia Tech in 1986. After earning her masters in Marriage and Family Therapy, she worked as a family therapist at a residential treatment center for substance abuse treatment. While there, she focused on clients in crisis as well as those diagnosed as severely mentally ill, specifically Central American immigrants. In 1989, Claire first started working as a family therapist at Second Genesis, where she remained for 5 years. In 1998, she started practicing at Prince William County Community Services, where she is still employed today. She has also worked as a couples and individual therapist at The Women’s Center from 2009-2015. She is currently seeing clients as a therapist at Vienna Behavioral Health and also supervises at the Center for Family Services at Virginia Tech. Claire was born and raised on a cattle ranch in New Mexico. She has been married for 32 years and has a son, daughter, and two cats.

Claire can be reached by e mail at rwdmcd84@msn.com

STAFF

Patricia Meneely, is the Coordinator of the Marriage and Family Therapy program. Pat is available in Room 202F and may be reached at (703) 538-8460 or by e-mail at pmeneely@vt.edu. The Graduate Assistant Office is located in Room 203.
The TOGETHER Project is located in Rooms 205 and 202J. An Thai is the Program Manager and is located in Room 464.
7. VIRGINIA TECH FACILITIES

Resource Service Center/NVC Library - The Resource Service Center (RSC) is located on the first floor and is responsible for questions regarding library services. The Service Center contains a variety of books. The Resource Service Center is backed by the extensive collection of the Newman Library on campus, which can be accessed via computer through the Virginia Tech Library Catalog, Addison. Items can be requested from Newman Library or through interlibrary loan by faculty and students by using the ILLiad request form. Database literature services are available on-line. The Resource Service Center can help you set up at home database services. Study rooms and a photocopy machine are also available in the Center. The Resource Service Center hours are available on the web at www.nvc.vt.edu/library, and are posted on the front door of the RSC, or by calling (703) 538-8340.

Computer Facilities – Computer workstations and other office equipment are available in the Resource Service Center when the library is open. Rooms may also be reserved for study groups or other activities with the Resource Service Center front desk attendant.

IT Team – The Northern Virginia Center has a full time IT team which is available for technical assistance. They are available by telephone at (703)-538-8394 or at computerhelp@vt.edu.

Graduate Student Services – The GSSO is in Room 407, 409, and 411. All registration for Virginia Tech classes is done on the web through the Hokie Spa student system. However, student support personnel are available to assist you with first time registration, if needed, and with any registration problems that you might have. The Student Support Office may be reached at (703) 538-8326 or 538-8322.

Bookstore – The Northern Virginia Bookstore is now online. Textbooks can be purchased at www.nvc.bkstr.com or on Amazon.com.

Hokie Spa – Your Hokie Spa account allows you to view your academic records, change your address, print an unofficial transcript, view financial and academic holds, and most importantly, register and pay for courses on-line. You should look on your Hokie Spa account before contacting the University. It can answer many of the academic and financial questions that you might have. This interactive website includes the Timetable of Classes and allows you to submit your course request, drop and add courses, view your exam schedule, and see your grades. It is also the web interface with the university’s information network. It allows you to view and update your personal information and access your Student Accounts information. You must activate your Virginia Tech PID before you can access this site. You are responsible for providing address updates through Hokie Spa, a billing address (if different than your mailing address), change of name or identification number, etc.
Your Virginia Tech PID (Personal Identifier)

Once you have received your official acceptance from the graduate school, you will need to create your Personal Identifier or PID. You will use your PID and password to access your VT email account (your e-mail will be in the form of: yourPID@vt.edu), Hokie Spa, My VT, the university’s library databases, and more. Please visit the VT Computing (www.computing.vt.edu) website for more information on creating your PID and password and to learn more about the online services your PID will grant you access to.

ADDITIONAL USEFUL WEB SITE ADDRESSES

www.nvc.vt.edu - Northern Virginia Center website. Through this site, you may access registration, tuition information, academic schedules, research information and other useful information for the Northern Virginia Center. You will access this site to register through Hokie Spa and to print out any needed forms. You may also access the Graduate School web site and the Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual through this web site.


www.nvc.vt.edu/mft - Our Marriage & Family Therapy program website.

www.computing.vt.edu - this site is useful for accessing information regarding your p.i.d. If you forget your password, call 540-234-HELP for assistance. The department cannot help you with finding out your password.

www.registrar.vt.edu - this site contains student information, academic calendars, and instructions on how to request transcripts, change your address, and other helpful information.

www.finaid.vt.edu - this web site provides information and forms regarding financial aid.

www.bursar.vt.edu - this site should be used for questions or problems regarding billing information. You may also call the Bursar’s Office at 540-231-6277 for assistance with billing questions. The department is unable to assist students’ with individual billing problems.

www.dhp.state.va.us/counseling - Virginia Board of Counseling Website. This site provides current requirements for licensure in Virginia as an MFT or LPC.

www.vamft.org – Virginia Association for Marriage and Family Therapy is an excellent recourse for information regarding licensure in the state of Virginia.
www.lib.vt.edu/help/writing.html - The Virginia Tech Writing Center is located in the Newman Library on campus. One-on-one writing assistance is available to Northern Virginia graduate students. To set up an appointment, call (540) 231-5436 or follow instructions on the webpage.
8. SCREENING PROCESS

PHILOSOPHY: The Marriage and Family Therapy program faculty at Virginia Tech take responsibility to insure the quality and competence of graduates to practice as Marriage and Family Therapists. We take pride in our graduates and make every effort to insure that they are well prepared to enter the profession. While we recognize the subjective nature of the ongoing screening process, we believe that this intensive process serves the student, the community, and the field of marriage and family therapy. The screening process for admission into the academic program and into the clinical practicum includes several steps:

1. Application Process:
Prospective students submit an application for admission into the Marriage and Family Therapy Program along with scores from the Graduate Record Exam, personal letters of recommendation and transcripts. Faculty review the application material and select students for further consideration on the basis of several factors: 1) potential for academic success; 2) previous academic majors; 3) professional and/or volunteer experience; and 4) quality of personal recommendations. Applicants who are selected, are invited to attend a day long interview held in the spring of each year.

2. Preadmission Interview:
The day-long interview is a mutual screening process. Faculty attempt to gain more knowledge about the applicants in order to select students who will both contribute to the program and are most ready to benefit from the program. We also try to thoroughly inform candidates about our program and the field of family therapy to assist them in their decision regarding the fit between our program and their needs. No one type of student is preferred. We attempt to attain ethnic, age, and gender diversity in selecting the most qualified applicants. Students who are invited to interview are screened into the MFT program on the basis of several factors: 1) interpersonal skills, as observed during informal and formal interactions throughout the day; 2) personal characteristics, including such factors as sense of humor, intelligence, and curiosity; 3) personal history, including significant life experiences; and 4) professional history. Students who are selected are invited to enter the Department of Human Development and begin coursework in the Marriage and Family Therapy program.

3. Clinical Screening (See Attachment “Requirements for Entering the Clinical Program” for more detail:
After completing at least 12 hours of academic coursework including HD5404 “Systems Theory and Family Therapy”, HD5434 “Structural and Strategic Family Therapy”, HD5514 “Research Methods”, HD6514 “Advanced Research Methods”, and having scheduled their Comprehensive Examinations, students may be screened for admission into the clinical practicum. Students must have passed their Comprehensive Exams and earned at
least a 3.0 grade point average in all MFT courses before beginning practicum. The screening process for admission into the clinical practicum includes several steps:

a. Students requesting admission into the clinical practicum write a letter requesting admission. In the letter they are requested to: 1) clarify why they believe that they are ready for admission into this phase of study at this time; summarize where they are in their clinical thinking at this time (i.e., have they begun to identify with a particular theoretical framework?); and 3) describe the strengths and weaknesses they anticipate in their readiness to become involved in a clinical practicum.

b. Clinical faculty review candidates' letters requesting admission into the clinical program and evaluate their academic progress in introductory courses. Nonclinical faculty who have had substantial contact with candidates may be asked to provide additional input. Faculty meet to discuss candidates': 1) level of maturity and judgment; 2) potential in a clinical environment; and 3) level of responsibility in an academic environment.

c. Interviews are scheduled with all candidates to discuss progress in the program and to request further information on problems noted from the above mentioned procedure.

d. After completion of the interviews, clinical faculty develops a consensus regarding candidates' readiness for clinical practicum. Letters are sent to all candidates notifying them of the faculty decision regarding admission into the clinical practicum. Possible decisions include:

1) Full admission into the clinical practicum.
2) Conditional admission with expectation that candidate will be closely monitored for progress in areas of concern which will be delineated in the letter.
3) Conditional denial of admission until readiness is demonstrated.
4) Deny admission.

4. Procedure for Students Given a Conditional Denial:
Students who are given a conditional denial of admission to the practicum may request another meeting with their advisor and the clinical faculty to clarify the faculty decision and the steps that need to be taken to gain admission. It is incumbent upon the student to demonstrate readiness to begin practicum and to schedule a meeting with the clinical faculty for a review of their readiness to enter practicum.

5. Procedure for Students Denied Admission:
Students who are not admitted to the practicum may also request a meeting with their advisor and the clinical faculty to clarify the faculty decision. They may also request a transfer to a non-clinical program within the Department of Human Development.
6. Ongoing Monitoring:
Severe deficiencies exist when students are unable to appropriately apply theoretical material in the clinical setting. This relates to being unable to engage clients in therapy, diagnose existing problems, and design and implement intervention strategies. Severe deficiencies also exist when students consistently fail to work cooperatively and professionally with faculty, supervisors, and fellow students. Severe deficiencies also exist when students’ own personal issues have a negative effect on their ability to effectively conduct therapy and they either make no effort to resolve these problems or, after engaging in therapy, have made insufficient gains to continue in the practice of marriage and family therapy.

Students’ strengths and growth areas are discussed with students at their end of semester evaluations. This is done with their practicum supervisor. These issues also are discussed as a part of a student’s ongoing supervision. When a growth area is identified, specific goals and strategies will be implemented to help students develop in specific areas. This is a common and desired occurrence in supervision. However, if the faculty member believes that the problem fits within the category of severe deficiency and it is not alleviated through initial goal setting and strategizing procedures, steps will be taken to dismiss the student from the program.

Counseling a student out of the program is a difficult situation for both faculty and students. Because of this, faculty will work with those students who exhibit severe deficiencies. Counseling a student out of the program is a very rare situation.

7. Mechanisms Used:
To insure that all program requirements have been met before graduating from the program, each month students are expected to have all their clinical contact and supervision hours signed off by their clinical supervisors. Students will not be allowed to graduate until they have met all clinical and supervision hour requirements (500 face-to-face client contact hours, at least 50 hours of raw data supervision and at least 100 hours of supervision). Before graduating, each student and the clinical director will sign a document verifying that the student has completed all clinical requirements.

Each student’s Program of Study is reviewed annually by the MFT faculty to determine if the student is making satisfactory progress in the program.

In addition, the graduate school thoroughly examines the student’s Program of Study and their completed courses to verify that the student has completed all course work requirements and all clinical requirements.
9. ACADEMIC ADVISING

A. Temporary Advisor

Upon formal admission by the Graduate School, the Program Director assigns a temporary advisor who will help the student plan initial coursework to make up any deficiencies noted at admission and/or to begin proper sequencing of required courses. The temporary advisor will also provide assistance with the matriculation process.

B. Advisory Committee

At the beginning of the second semester of study (or on completion of 12 credit hours) and before contacting prospective faculty members, the student should consult with their temporary advisor regarding selection of a permanent Advisory Committee Chairperson. The student may ask their temporary advisor to be their permanent advisor or may ask another faculty member to take on this role. The student may also change advisors and committee members later if they wish to work with a different advisor and committee on their thesis or project.

By the end of the second semester (or 12 credit hours), the student should have contacted each potential committee member and then submitted the names of their committee on the Program of Study form for the approval of the committee members and the Program Director.

Committees must include a minimum of two departmental faculty members. Adjuncts, experts in the community, and faculty from related disciplines may serve as a third committee member if they specialize in the student's area of research interest. The committee must be approved by the Graduate School. When submitting committee names to the Graduate School, please include social security numbers and place of employment for any committee members who are not affiliated with the university.
10. PROGRAM OF STUDY

A Program of Study is developed under the direction of the student’s Advisory Committee Chairperson (See Attachment A, Program of Study Form). The completed form, signed by all committee members, should be returned no later than after completion of 12 hours, to the Program Coordinator’s office where it will be formally entered into the Graduate School records.

Changes to the program of study require approval of the Advisory Committee, the Program Director, and the Graduate School. Program Change Forms are available online at www.graduateschool.vt.edu. (See the Graduate Catalog for general university requirements).

To provide an orderly progression through HD courses and avoid repetition of material, sequencing of courses is recommended and, in some cases, mandatory.

Numbers in parentheses indicate course level:

(1) = recommended pre-requisite courses
(2) = required courses
(3) = required courses taken after (1) and (2) courses
(4) = required courses taken after (1) and (2) courses

The following are core course requirements for the M.S. degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. These requirements meet the general curriculum standards set by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDED COURSES</th>
<th>Abnormal Psychology: (undergraduate or graduate level)</th>
<th>3 (1)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistics (undergraduate)</td>
<td>3 (1)</td>
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</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOUNDATIONAL CURRICULAR AREAS</th>
<th>COURSE NAME</th>
<th>CREDIT (PRE-REQUISITE COURSES)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FCA 1</td>
<td>HD 5404: Systems Theory and Family Therapy</td>
<td>3 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories &amp; Models</td>
<td>HD 5434: Clinical Marriage and Family Therapy I: Structural and Strategic Approaches</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCA Area</td>
<td>Course Description</td>
<td>Credits</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FCA 2 Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples, and Families</strong></td>
<td>HD 5444: Clinical Marriage and Family Therapy II: Postmodern Approaches</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HD 5484: Clinical Marriage and Family Therapy IV: Domestic Violence/Substance Abuse</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HD 5344: Perspectives on Human Sexuality</td>
<td>3 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HD 5734: Marriage and Family Therapy Techniques</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HD 5744: Family Stress and Crisis Intervention</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Electives:</strong></td>
<td>Choose two from the following courses:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Play Therapy, Couples Therapy, Group Therapy, Children &amp; Adolescents, Family Stress &amp; Crisis Intervention</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FCA 5 Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, &amp; Social Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>HD 5474: Professional Seminar in Marriage and Family Therapy</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FCA 6 Biopsychosocial Health &amp; Development Across the Life Span</strong></td>
<td>HD 5424: Life-Span Human Development</td>
<td>3 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FCA 7 Systemic/Relational Assessment &amp; Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment</strong></td>
<td>HD 5454: Clinical Marriage and Family Therapy III: Diagnosis and Treatment in the Family Context</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FCA 8 Contemporary Issues</strong></td>
<td>HD 5484: Clinical Marriage and Family Therapy IV: Domestic Violence/Substance Abuse</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALL FCA Areas</strong></td>
<td>HD 5964: Practicum in Marriage and Family Therapy (500 hours direct client contact)</td>
<td>9 (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thesis Credits

Students are required to take research and thesis (HD 5994) hours. The minimum number of semester credits required for the Master of Science Degree is 51 for the Non-thesis Option (of which at least 3 hours must be research and thesis [HD 5994]) and 54 for the Thesis Option students (of which at least 6 hours must be research and thesis [HD 5994]). The purpose of the research and thesis credits is to provide students with the opportunity to work on their theses, including developing topics, exploring ideas and materials, reviewing the literature, drafting their proposal, conducting research, writing their findings, developing their project/product, and preparing a defense, under the supervision of their temporary advisor or thesis chair.

Students are required to complete the Research and Thesis/Dissertation Enrollment form each semester they are enrolled in HD 5994. Student research semester goals should be based on the number of credit hours for which the student is enrolled. For every credit of HD 5994 in which a student is enrolled, they are expected to complete 3 hours of work for each week of the semester. For example, if a student enrolls in 3 credits of HD 5994, they would be expected to spend 9 hours a week for 16 weeks on work for these credits (a total of 144 hours across the semester). Students should only enroll in the number of credits equivalent to the number of hours they plan to dedicate to working on their thesis that particular semester. Although there is significant flexibility as to how these hours may be used, it is expected that students registering for research and thesis (HD 5994) credits will have a tentative plan for how they will meet using this time that they discuss with their chair or temporary advisor. In instances in which students are not planning to dedicate all of the associated hours over the course of the semester to working on their thesis/non-thesis, students will work with their chair or temporary advisor to identify faculty research projects on which they can work and establish relevant goals. The Research and Thesis/Dissertation Enrollment form must be signed by the student, the student’s chair or temporary advisor, and the Director of Graduate Studies in Blacksburg.
Course Sequence for 2017-2019 (subject to change)

Fall 2017
- HD 5404 Systems Theory and Family Therapy
- HD 5514 Research Methodology
- HD 5444: Clinical Marriage and Family Therapy II: Postmodern Approaches
- HD 5724 Couples’ Therapy (elective)
- HD 5734: Marriage and Family Therapy Techniques
- HD 5344 Perspectives on Human Sexuality

Spring 2018
- HD 5434 Clinical Marriage and Family Therapy I: Structural and Strategic Approaches
- HD 6514 Advanced Research Methods
- HD 5424: Life-Span Human Development
- HD 5484: Clinical Marriage and Family Therapy IV: Domestic Violence/Substance Abuse
- HD 5744 Group Therapy (elective)
- HD 5474: Professional Seminar in Marriage and Family Therapy

Summer 2018
- HD 5744 Children and Adolescents

Fall 2018
- HD 5404 Systems Theory and Family Therapy
- HD 5514 Research Methodology
- HD 5744: Multicultural Issues in Marriage and Family Therapy
- HD 5724 Couple’s Therapy (elective)
- HD 5734: Marriage and Family Therapy Techniques
- HD 5744: Elective to be determined

Spring 2019
- HD 5434 Clinical Marriage and Family Therapy I: Structural and Strategic Approaches
- HD 6514 Advanced Research Methods
- HD 5424: Life-Span Human Development
- HD 5454: Clinical Marriage and Family Therapy III: Diagnosis and Treatment in the Family Context
- HD 5744 Family Stress and Crisis Intervention (elective)
- HD 5744 Play Therapy (elective)

COURSE REVALIDATION

If a student must take a leave of absence from the program, courses taken earlier than 5-7 years ago must be revalidated. All courses must be taken within a period of 5-7 years.

If a student has taken a leave of absence from the program and wishes to return, the student must fill out a Readmittance Form. The decision to readmit the student will be made by the MFT program. Coursework taken earlier than 5 years ago must be validated by program faculty.
11. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Each student is expected to satisfactorily complete a written (normally four hour) comprehensive examination covering research methods and family therapy.

Comprehensive exams may be taken after completion of 12 hours. HD 5404 Systems Theory and Family Therapy and HD 5434 Structural and Strategic Approaches must be taken before the family therapy exam can be taken. HD 5514 Research Methods and HD 6514 Advanced Research Methods must be taken before the research methods exam can be taken. Successful completion of BOTH Research Methods and Family Therapy Comprehensive exams is required for entrance into the clinic.

Comprehensive exams will be administered yearly during the spring or summer semester. Students complete both exams on the same day. Exams must be taken at the Northern Virginia Center. The date and time of the exam will be announced several weeks in advance.

Procedures

A time period of two hours is allotted for each question. Time allotments must be strictly followed. Students are permitted to use less time than allotted but never more time. Time allotments will be kept by the department representative and all materials must be turned in when called for.

No notes, books, dictionaries, or other resource materials of any kind are permitted at the exam. If students use a computer to write their exam, they may not be connected to the Internet at any time during the exam nor may they use any material stores on their computer to assist them with the exam.

HD comprehensive exams are covered by the Virginia Tech graduate student honor code. Students are expected to follow the department guidelines (See Attachment E, Constitution of the Graduate Honor Code).

Following the Exam

If the exam is written by hand:
The student must give the handwritten answers to the department representative at the conclusion of each exam. The original answers are kept on file and a Xeroxed copy is given to the student.

If the exam is computer written:
The student must print a copy of their answers and give the printed copy to the department representative at the conclusion of the exam.
Students are expected to deliver a neatly typed copy of the exam to the program office (Room 202F) within three days of the exam day (this pertains only to those who have handwritten the exam). Students who choose to take the exam on the computer will hand in the completed copy at the end of each exam.

No changes can be made to the text of the handwritten exam during typing. Citations or references may not be completed but spelling and grammatical errors may be corrected. A typed copy of the exam question should accompany each typed answer. Exam pages should be numbered consecutively and text should be double-spaced. Do not include your name on any of your typewritten answers. The exams are graded anonymously and you will be assigned letter codes the day of the exam; your letter code should accompany your typewritten answers.

After the exams have been graded, the student will receive a letter from the Program Director informing him/her of the results of the exam.

**Grading Policy of Comprehensive Exam**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>0 – Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>1 – Marginal</th>
<th>2 – Satisfactory</th>
<th>3 - Accomplished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completeness of Answer</strong></td>
<td>Response demonstrates little or no understanding of the question. Information is missing and substantial parts of the question are not answered fully.</td>
<td>Response demonstrates some basic understanding of the question, but is incomplete. Some information is missing and a few parts of the question are not answered fully.</td>
<td>Response demonstrates adequate understanding of the question. Factual information is provided and all parts of the question are answered.</td>
<td>Response demonstrates thorough understanding of the question. Response goes beyond factual information demonstrating nuanced understanding of the question. All parts of the question are thoroughly answered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Validity of Content</strong></td>
<td>The majority of the facts, conclusions, and statements are incorrect and/or invalid.</td>
<td>Some of the facts, conclusions, and statements are incorrect and/or invalid.</td>
<td>The facts, conclusions, and statements are accurate and/or valid with only minor inaccuracies.</td>
<td>All facts, conclusions, and statements are accurate and/or valid. They also logically support the topic being discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration of Theory and Practice</strong></td>
<td>No or very little integration of theory and practice is present. There appears to be no connection between proposed actions and a theoretical rationale.</td>
<td>Integration of theory and practice is present, yet sometimes weak. Some reference to a theoretical rationale but minimal connection between proposed actions and a theoretical rationale or inconsistent use of theory.</td>
<td>Integration of theory and practice is present. Actions are based on an articulated theoretical rationale.</td>
<td>Integration of theory and practice is strong. Nuanced presentation of the relationship between theoretical rationale and actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Writing</td>
<td>Response contains an abundance of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics so that meaning is obscured. There is no or little organization in the response.</td>
<td>Response contains noticeable errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics so that the reader is distracted from the content. There is limited organization in the response.</td>
<td>Response is free of most errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics so that the reader is minimally distracted from the content. The response is adequately organized.</td>
<td>Response is free of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that would distract the reader from the content. Clear organization is obvious.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The policy for comprehensive exams is as follows:**

Comprehensive exams are taken by all master’s degree students. Students are given a multiple-part question in marriage and family therapy and a multiple-part question in research methods and statistics. Each part of the overall question is graded separately using this rubric. Scores across the four evaluation categories will be averaged for each part. Faculty grades the exams as either pass or fail. A score of 2 or greater is passing. If one or two parts are failed, the student will retake them. If three or more parts are failed, the student will retake the entire exam area (e.g. if 3 parts in the MFT area are failed, the student will re-take the entire MFT exam).

Failing either or both questions requires re-taking the failed question(s) within six weeks of when the student is advised that they have failed. The faculty will specify which parts of the failed question(s) will be re-taken and the format for re-taking the question. If the student fails the re-taken question(s), they may re-take a newly written exam (content and format determined by the faculty) no sooner than the next semester after they are advised that they have failed. Again, if the student fails part or all of the second attempt, they may re-take the failed portions in a format decided by the faculty. Failing to pass after this second readministration will result in academic dismissal from the program.
12. PRACTICUM

The minimum time for completing practicum is one year, with a minimum of 500 face-to-face client contact hours at the Virginia Tech Center for Family Services and optionally at an approved off-site placement. (Most students will require longer than one year to complete the 500 hour requirement.) At least 250 of the accumulated hours must be with couples or families.

A practicum placement cannot be finalized until the student has been screened for admission into the clinical practicum (see Screening Process, Section 6).

Early each spring a meeting is held to explain the requirements for practicum.

At the end of each semester, the practicum student and their supervisor are to complete Evaluation Forms regarding the student's clinical work during the semester.

The Virginia Tech Marriage and Family Therapy Program’s philosophy regarding the clinical training component is as follows:

1. We see our goal in clinical training as helping students develop their own model and approach to therapy within a systemic framework. It is our contention that there are many paths to problem-solution. However, there are some basic principles that underlie the work we do at the Center for Family Services, and we train students in models that are based on these principles.

2. While we are aware of pathology, our primary goal is to support the strengths and work with the competencies of our clients to arrive at solutions to their problems.

3. As systems thinkers, we agree that interventions on a variety of levels may be needed. In this program, however, we emphasize intervention at the interpersonal level that attempts primarily to change. This can be done even when meeting with a client individually.

4. Our goal is to help clients receive “enough” therapy based on their goals and wishes. To that end, we may see clients for a few sessions or for several months. We try not to be constrained by preconceived notions that therapy should be either “longterm” or “brief.”

Finally, personal development is an important part of learning to be a therapist. Supervision is not, and should not be therapy, but it may involve looking at aspects of oneself and one’s experiences that impact on how one is as a therapist. To this end, we also see clinical training as a time to “stretch” oneself. Clients come to the Center for
Family Services seeking help for a variety of life situations which students may find challenge their own life experiences and values. We encourage students to work with clients whose views diverge from their own and we will do our best as supervisors to support students in this work. Of course, the client’s welfare is always the primary concern and both student and supervisor must be on guard to make sure that the student’s training and professional development issues, as well as any personal issues, do not interfere with the client receiving the best services available to them.

Clinic Schedule

The Center for Family Services works on the calendar year, not the academic calendar. Master’s therapist interns are expected to earn their 500 face-to-face clinical hours in our training clinic and, if approved, in off-site placements. Master’s students must fulfill at least two semesters in the clinic before they may apply for an off-site placement (students must discuss any potential off-site placements with the Clinical Director BEFORE applying). Master’s therapist interns typically begin in May or August and end two years later in August or when they have reached their 500 hours. When students enroll for each semester in the clinic, it is expected and required that the students commit to working in the clinic the entire semester. Students are also expected to continue in the clinic without disruption for the full year or two years commitment. Master’s students generally begin Practicum in the Summer or Fall, after completing their first year of studies.

Competencies and Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcome</th>
<th>General Competencies</th>
<th>Specific Competencies</th>
<th>Taught</th>
<th>Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will secure employment as MFT Professionals after program graduation</td>
<td>Graduates will be able to take the necessary steps to become involved as MFT professionals</td>
<td>1. Be able to pass successfully the National Licensing Exam 1.1. Be able to become state licensed as a marriage and family therapist 1.2. Be able to find an MFT related job</td>
<td>All required courses</td>
<td>After program graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate competence in providing</td>
<td>Graduates will demonstrate competence in initiating the</td>
<td>2. Determine who should attend therapy and in what configuration (e.g.</td>
<td>5734 5964 5474</td>
<td>5964</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Systemic-Oriented Therapy Services Across Varied Settings with Individuals, Couples, and Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduates will build and maintain a functional structure for therapy</th>
<th>3.1. Form and maintain an appropriate therapeutic relationship</th>
<th>5734</th>
<th>5964</th>
<th>5404</th>
<th>5434</th>
<th>5964</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>treatment process up to the point where a therapeutic contract is established</td>
<td>2.2. Obtain consent to treat from all responsible persons</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3. Determine a clear and mutual contract with clients which includes practice setting rules, record keeping, fees, rights and responsibilities of each party, including privacy and confidentiality policies, and duty to care to client or legal guardian</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Graduates will build and maintain a functional structure for therapy</td>
<td>3.2. Maintain and modify the therapeutic contract as needed</td>
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<td>3.3. Appropriately balance client directed and therapist directed initiative in treatment</td>
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<td>3.4. Match treatment modalities and techniques to clients' needs, goals and values</td>
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<td>3.5. Distinguish between content and process issues, their</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
role in therapy, and their potential impact on therapeutic outcomes

3.6. Engage each family member in the treatment process as appropriate

3.7. Continue or modify therapeutic approach and goals in response to client feedback and therapist assessment of progress

3.8. Conclude treatment in an appropriate manner

3.9. Maintain appropriate boundaries, manage issues of triangulation, and develop collaborative working relationships with clients, other professionals, classmates, supervisors and staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduates will systematically assess and diagnose clients to develop treatment plans</th>
<th>4.1. Identify presenting problems from the perspective of each member of the therapeutic system</th>
<th>5734</th>
<th>5444</th>
<th>5964</th>
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<td>5424</td>
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</tbody>
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|  |  |  |  | 5964 |
diagnoses and inform treatment planning

4.3. Integrate clients’ needs and strengths with knowledge about the following components into assessment and treatment planning: Human development, cultural diversity, human sexuality, psychopathology, psychopharmacology, couple and family development

4.4. Systematically integrate client reports, observations of client behaviors, client relationship patterns, reports from other professionals, results from testing procedures, and interactions with client to guide the assessment process, treatment planning

4.5. Demonstrate ability to determine whether client’s issues are within the scope of MFT practice

4.6. Develop hypotheses and treatment plan
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Graduates will base their clinical interventions on an articulated theoretical foundation</th>
<th>5.1. Demonstrate awareness of principles of systems theory and an understanding of a variety of theoretical models/concepts</th>
<th>5.2. Demonstrate ability to integrate theoretically driven conceptualization and interventions to treatment goals and plan, assessment information, and systemic understanding of clients’ context and dynamics.</th>
<th>5.3. Provide education and information to clients as needed to achieve treatment goals</th>
<th>5.4. Evaluate clients’ responses to interventions and modify them accordingly to better fit clients’ needs and personal styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Graduates will assess for and manage risk issues and appropriately manage the administrative</td>
<td>6.1. Routinely observe and assess for indications of abuse, danger to self, or others</td>
<td>5404 5434 5444 5484 5964</td>
<td>Comps 5964</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of Therapy</td>
<td>6.2. Develop and implement plans to reduce the potential for danger</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.3. Recognize the need for, and make, appropriate referrals for adjunct services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.4. Complete needed documentation in a timely, accurate, and complete manner</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.5. With proper consent, regularly communicate with other professionals and stakeholders to inform treatment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Graduates will make appropriate use of supervision</td>
<td>7.1. Present cases for supervision in a clear and organized manner</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.2. Take initiative to obtain and use supervisory input</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7.3. Demonstrate openness to incorporating supervisory feedback into therapy process</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7.4. Pro-actively consult with supervisor if</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>|                | 5964 | 5734 | 5434 | 5744M | 5474 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will demonstrate competence in understanding</th>
<th>9. Graduates will recognize and adhere to all the legal and ethical</th>
<th>9. 1 Demonstrate awareness of legal, regulatory and ethical</th>
<th>5474</th>
<th>5734</th>
<th>5964</th>
<th>5964</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>personal issues, attitudes, beliefs, or emotional reactions threaten to adversely impact clinical work</td>
<td>7.5. Understand the need for a plan for ongoing supervision or peer consultation after graduation</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Graduates will recognize and manage their personal impact on the therapeutic process and the impact of the therapeutic process on them</td>
<td>8.1. Monitor attitudes, biases, Personal well-being, and personal issues to ensure they do not impact the therapeutic relationship adversely</td>
<td>5744M</td>
<td>5404</td>
<td>5434</td>
<td>5964</td>
<td>5964</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and compliance with legal requirements, ethical principles, and professional standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will demonstrate competence in understanding contextual issues to provide culturally sensitive therapy services</th>
<th>obligations of therapy</th>
<th>context in which therapy occurs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Graduates are able to understand clients in context and work respectfully with them</td>
<td>9.2. Inform clients of the therapist's legal, regulatory and ethical obligations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1. Demonstrate awareness and understanding of major characteristics of various contexts as defined by gender, race, ethnicity, SES, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, and any other relevant group of belongingness</td>
<td>9.3. Manage mandatory reporting responsibilities appropriately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2. Maintain a curious, non-judgmental stance regarding client’s cultural and contextual background</td>
<td>9.4. Protect client confidentiality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3. Manage therapy in a culturally sensitive way</td>
<td>9.5. Comply with work setting policies and procedures</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>5744M 5404 5434 5964 5404 5424</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>5964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate competence in understanding research and its role in providing evidence-based therapy services</td>
<td>10.4. Evaluate strengths, limitations, and contraindications of specific therapy models, in their application across various diverse contexts</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Graduates will demonstrate competence in understanding and using research to enhance their clinical work</td>
<td>11.1. Demonstrate knowledge of the principles of evidence based</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.2. Understand social science research methodologies</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>11.3. Understand legal, ethical, and contextual issues involved in the conduct of research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11.4. Use current MFT and other research to inform clinical practice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11.5. Critique professional research and assess the quality of research studies and program evaluations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11.6. Demonstrate ability to administer assessment instruments for clinical and research purposes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11.7. Contribute to the development of new knowledge</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thesis Credits</td>
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<td>5964 Comps</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thesis/Project 6514</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
13. OPPORTUNITY FOR FIRST YEAR MASTER’S STUDENTS TO BEGIN ACQUIRING CONTACT HOURS

The MFT faculty offer first year master’s students the opportunities to begin earning client contact hours in the spring of their first academic year. Students can volunteer to co-facilitate groups. This is completely voluntary on the part of the student. Once approved by the Clinical Director, Master’s students who wish to begin earning client contact hours are responsible for contacting agencies that might have a need for a graduate student in Family Therapy to co-facilitate a group. The group must: (1) be co-led by a person with more experience; (2) the agency offering the group must maintain responsibility for clients being seen in the group; (3) they must screen and admit individuals into the group; (4) if a crisis arises regarding a group member, the agency must be responsible for emergency supervision. In some cases, a Memorandum of Agreement, detailing the responsibilities of the agency and VT, can be signed and put in effect.

Students may also count up to 75 hours of mental health/behavioral support activities if they are employed in an agency that provides them with direct client contact with the objective of providing psycho-educational or counseling to families under the supervision of a licensed clinician. As above, these hours may only be counted starting the second and third semester in the program, however, these hours can continue until the end of the program or the accumulation of 75 hours is reached. No more than 75 hours can be counted in these categories singly or combined.

Faculty have agreed to provide weekly dyadic supervision for Master’s students who are co-facilitating groups so that the client contact hours can count as part of the required 500 hours. Students who are planning to co-facilitate groups will need to meet with another student and a faculty member for at least 30 minutes each week that they see clients. The supervision will be arranged at a time convenient to faculty and students. All supervision will be provided during the daytime. Students may accrue a maximum of 75 client contact hours through doing co-facilitation. Co-facilitation may continue through the summer if the student can arrange faculty supervision. Co-facilitation hours cannot be counted in the students’ second or subsequent years.

You will need to track client contact hours through the regular clinic procedures. When you have found an appropriate group, you will need to contact the Clinical Director with information about the group experience. If you are interested in earning Employment Credit you will need to present a written request for approval. S/he will arrange for you to learn about the tracking procedures and will arrange for one of the faculty to provide supervision. The faculty has the discretion of limiting the number of contact hours that a student may earn. Earning group hours in the second semester of the first year does not exempt students from the regular screening process for admission to the clinical program. It is possible for a student to earn group hours in their first year and still not be formally admitted to the clinical program, or to be admitted with restrictions as described in the program manual.
Fairfax County and Alexandria County often need co-facilitators for their men’s anger management groups. The County Extension office or the Bailey’s Crossroads Extension project may need co-facilitators for parenting classes. You may call the various County Volunteer Clearinghouses to find out about other possibilities. Please let us know if you find opportunities that you are not able to take so that we can share these opportunities with other students.
14. NON-THESIS OPTION

Students seeking a master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy at Virginia Tech in Northern Virginia may choose between a thesis and non-thesis option to meet academic requirements. The non-thesis option requires 51 semester hours to complete the degree. In lieu of 6 hours thesis designated credit, those choosing the non-thesis option complete a minimum of 3 hours of independent study under the direction of their committee chair. Non-thesis projects provide the option for students to focus in depth on a specific area of clinical interest, and develop a product that focuses on clinical theory, practice and evaluation in that area. Non-thesis projects require a project committee made up of three faculty members, one of whom serves as chair.

Thesis vs. Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>Professional Practice Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are they?</td>
<td>A formal research project that involves research question development, literature review, data collection, analysis, and synthesis. The thesis may be qualitative or quantitative.</td>
<td>Non-thesis projects provide the option for students to focus in depth on a specific area of clinical interest, and develop a product that focuses on clinical theory, practice or evaluation in that area. The content and form of a project is quite flexible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s involved?</td>
<td>Develop a formal research proposal (1st three chapters of the thesis), have a proposal meeting where the committee refines the proposal, work with the chair to collect data, analyze it, write the document and defend it.</td>
<td>Develop a proposal for the project, review the literature to ground the “product” in the literature, produce the project, optionally deliver it if it is a workshop or group, evaluate, describe the process in written format, and defend it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is it best for?</td>
<td>• Students who wish to pursue advanced graduate training (Ph.D.). The M. S. is the only degree required for clinical practice in MFT. • Students who have a true passion for research and are willing to devote the time and effort that a research project requires.</td>
<td>• Students who plan to have a clinical career and who do not intend to pursue advanced academic training. • Students who wish to develop a product or knowledge area that they can use as a specialty area in their practice • Students who would like program development and/or evaluation experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Course Registration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At least 6 hours of Research and Thesis credits</th>
<th>At least 3 hours of Independent Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential for publication</td>
<td>Academic and professional journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional and practice journals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Recent Examples | Ask your chair for examples |

To complete the project, students will be required to:

1. Work with their advisor in developing project concept. Projects are often interventional – that is, they use professional and scholarly information as the basis of an intervention. Usually this has taken the form of a psychoeducational program for the lay public or an educational program for professionals.

2. Review existing literature on project topic. The project must do two things. First, it must fill a demonstrated gap in the field, and second, it must be based in the scholarly literature. The gap may be in terms of content (there is a lack of information or training about a given area) or in terms of delivery (may pre-marital therapy programs, for instance, involved multi-session meetings but none may be available for couples to complete online and this would make them accessible to more couples).

3. Prepare a proposal that will be approved by their committee prior to execution of project. At least 10 days prior to the proposal presentation, typed copies of the proposal are to be distributed to committee members.

4. Work closely with their advisor in executing project.

5. Prepare a written summary of project in APA format that could be appropriate for publication.

6. Develop a reference list of complete literature review (beyond project summary).

7. Present project to professionals and peers at a final defense meeting. Handouts and video presentations are appropriate.

8. Students must follow steps for Final Examination / Defense of Thesis, even though this is non-thesis; however, NO final copies of the non-thesis project need to be registered with the Graduate School. An electronic copy of the final project will be given to the department and made available to other students and faculty.
Project Proposal Format:

A. Title Page

Chapter 1 - Introduction

B. Introduction

The Problem and its Setting
What problem are you investigating?  
What is the larger context of the problem?

Significance
Why is it important to study this problem?  
What contribution to knowledge and/or practice will studying this problem make?

Rationale for Methodology
Why study this problem this particular way?  Why use your particular design and approach?  
E.G. Why are you using a survey to study a broad sample instead of interviewing a small group of participants in depth?

C. Theoretical Framework
What theoretical framework guides your study and how?  Describe your theoretical framework and its application to this problem.

D. Purpose of the Study
What do you hope to accomplish by conducting this study?  State your research hypotheses or your research questions here.  These should flow logically from the previous two sections (Intro and Theoretical Framework).

Chapter 2 – Literature Review
In the literature review you describe, summarize and evaluate the literature that supports your proposed project.  You need to provide evidence for the problem you intend to address and why it needs attention.  You also need to provide support for the intervention you plan to deliver as part of your program.

Chapter 3 – The Proposed Project

Use the schema below to lay out the specifics.
### Draft Schema for Chapter 3 in Thesis Project Proposal

Students would provide us with this kind of table and then explain each of the boxes in text in the chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Identified Needs</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the problem your intervention aims to address?</td>
<td>Who is the target population that your intervention is intended to effect? What is your rationale for targeting that population?</td>
<td>Based on the literature, what needs of the population do you plan to address? List these needs.</td>
<td>For each identified need, what content do you intend to present that will address that need? What research or rationale supports that content?</td>
<td>For each need, what strategies/activities will you use to present the content?</td>
<td>For each need, what do you propose the outcome of your intervention will be?</td>
<td>How will the outcomes impact the problem you have set out to address?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### EXAMPLE (dorky example but nonetheless)

| Adolescents are not doing their homework leading to school failure or underachievement and family conflict | Parents of adolescents who don’t do their homework. Parents are the ones most often present when adolescents have time to do homework. | How to structure homework time for kid | How to work cooperatively with school | How to design a contingency program | Plan short periods of work and then short breaks | Roles of teacher vs counselor & skills for talking to each | Working with child to define goals and rewards | Lecture and parents do experiential exercise | Lecture and role play | Lecture and role play | Parents can describe how to appropriately structure homework time. | Parents can describe different roles of teachers and counselors and role play appropriate interactions with each | Parents can role play appropriate contingency setting conversation with adolescent | Better parents knowledge and skills will help them help their adolescent do homework more consistently, leading to better school achievement and less family conflict. |

You will work with your chair and committee to decide if you will deliver your program to and audience and evaluate its outcome.
G. References

Use APA style to cite sources. Each citation in the reference list must include the names of all authors, the name of the book or journal, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. You should consult the current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association for guidance on writing style, reporting the results of statistical tests, and a whole host of other issues related to presenting research results.

Additional Considerations: Papers, consisting of a literature review, in and of themselves are not sufficient for a project.
15. PRESENTATION OF THESIS PROPOSAL AND THESIS FORMAT GUIDELINES

Upon successful completion of the comprehensive examination, and if choosing a thesis option, the student will prepare and present a thesis proposal to their committee. The proposal typically consists of the first three chapters of the thesis (see below). The student will first work directly with their Chair. Only after the Chair’s approval will the proposal be circulated to other members. At least 10 days prior to the proposal presentation, typed copies of the proposal are to be distributed to committee members.

Faculty are not available for formal thesis or project proposal or defense committee meetings between the final graduate school date to defend (in the Spring) and the start of the Fall semester. Thesis and project defenses may only be scheduled during the academic year between the first week of the Fall semester and the final graduate school date to defend (in the Spring).

The proposal must be approved by the Thesis Committee and by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Virginia Tech if data are being collected. In order to receive approval to use human subjects from the IRB, the student must submit a completed Human Subjects Investigations Form, which can be obtained from the IRB website at www.irb.vt.edu, and a proposal. When the proposal is approved by the Thesis Committee and approved by the IRB, then the student may proceed with data collection.

Your research proposal should be clearly written and thoughtfully organized. Follow the guidelines provided in the APA manual for tips on writing, arranging headings and subheadings, and citing literature. Use the work of existing scholars to establish the setting, develop the rationale and theoretical framework, and to support your research design and methods. The majority of your citations should be from work published in professional journals within the last 5 years.

Remember, the purpose of a proposal is to tell the reader the what, why and how of your study. You must convince the reader that your study makes sense in light of research that is already available, that it is worth doing, and that you have developed appropriate procedures for getting the information you need in order to achieve your objectives. It must also show how you plan to take precautions to protect the identity and the well-being of participants. In general, follow the outline below.

Each student can expect to address each of these components. The order and specific additions or deletions of components will be agreed to by the student and their Chair. Writing for the thesis should conform to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.
Thesis format

A. Title Page

B. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION
The Problem and its Setting
What problem are you investigating?
What is the larger context of the problem?
Significance
Why is it important study this problem?
What contribution to knowledge and/or practice will studying this problem make?
Rationale
Why study this problem this particular way?
Why use your particular design and approach?
E.G. Why are you using a survey to study a broad sample instead of interviewing a small group of participants in depth?
Theoretical Framework
What theoretical framework guides your study and how?
Describe your theoretical framework and its application to this problem.
Purpose of the Study
What do you hope to accomplish by conducting this study?
Research Question/hypotheses

C. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW
Review of relevant literature
Section headings
Research Questions/Hypotheses

D. CHAPTER 3: METHODS
Design of the study
How will you investigate this problem?
What type of design will be employed?
Study Participants
Who, how many, where and how recruited?
Procedures
Provide chronological, step-by-step description of data collection events including obtaining consent
Instruments
Describe methods of measuring constructs
For qualitative studies, outline your interview and proposed questions.
Address issues of validity and reliability
Proposed Analyses
How you will analyze data?

E. CHAPTER 4: RESULTS*
Present summary of findings

F. CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION*
Summary of findings with comparisons to initial literature review/existing studies; critical analysis & conjecture
Limitations
Clinical, programmatic, and research implications
Conclusion

G. REFERENCES
Use APA style to cite sources. Each citation in the reference list must include the names of all authors, the name of the book or journal, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. You should consult the current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association for guidance on writing style, reporting the results of statistical tests, and a whole host of other issues related to presenting research results.

H. APPENDICES
Consent forms
Instruments
Advertising materials
Permissions

Alternative Option:**Manuscript Format in place of Chapters 4 and 5. The purpose of the manuscript/article format is to promote publication of thesis work. The student learns to write concisely and has a manuscript ready for journal submission. For guidance on article format, the student should refer the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. The manual describes the parts of a journal article and their content. The following sections must be included: (1) abstract, (2) introduction/background, (3) methods, (4) results, (5) discussion, and (6) references.
**Reminder:** Include instruments used in your thesis in the electronic version sent to Blacksburg only if you have written permission to do so from the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s). If you do not have such permission, but used an instrument of someone else's in your questionnaire, in place of the instrument in the appendix containing the questionnaire, insert a page indicating where the instrument might be found/obtained, or a citation. In other words, you may have permission to reproduce the instrument for research purposes, but you may need to obtain additional permission to reproduce it in a "published" copy of the document that is available in the library or on the internet.

The Department does not provide graduate students with these items as part of their thesis research:

1. Copy facilities or services.
2. Postage for off campus or return mailing.
3. Telephone services.
4. Departmental assistance for typing rough or final copies of instruments, theses, dissertations, or other manuscripts necessary to meet degree requirements.
5. Copyrighted research instruments which must be purchased.
6. Official letterhead stationery and envelopes (special circumstances permit alteration of this policy by Program Director approval).
7. Purchasing of special equipment or instruments. (Where future Departmental use justifies such purchase, this policy may be altered by Program Director approval.)

Financial support for theses and projects may be available to students from the following sources. Please discuss with your thesis advisor if you would like to pursue funding for your thesis or project.

**AAMFT**
Graduate Student Research Award: [www.aamft.org/imis15/Content/about_aamft/awards.aspx](http://www.aamft.org/imis15/Content/about_aamft/awards.aspx)

Kappa Omicron Nu Human Services Honor Society: [www.kon.org/awards/grants.html](http://www.kon.org/awards/grants.html)

National Women’s Studies Association: [www.nwsa.org/students/scholarships/index.php](http://www.nwsa.org/students/scholarships/index.php)

Potential department, college, and university level awards
16. FINAL EXAMINATION/DEFENSE OF THESIS OR NON-THESIS PROJECT

Upon completion of the thesis research, each candidate must receive a final examination, sometimes called "defense of thesis." At least two weeks before the examination date, a Request to Electronic Final Exam Request form must be submitted to the Graduate School with the time, date, and location of the examination; the title of the thesis; and the names of the examining committee. The thesis/non-thesis draft should be distributed to the Advisory Committee at that time. The following conditions specified by the Graduate School must be met:

Approximately 4 weeks before the final defense is to take place, the student should make arrangements to meet with the MFT Program Coordinator to discuss filling out the appropriate paperwork for defense of thesis and graduation. All forms must be received in the Graduate Records Office no later than 2 weeks before the examination date. Forms required include:

Change of Advisor/Committee Form

Program Changes Form

Forms are available at www.graduateschool.vt.edu or by contacting the Program Coordinator.

The following conditions specified by the Graduate School must be met:

1. The student must be registered for a minimum of three hours during the semester the final examination is taken or be registered as a Start of Semester Exception Request (See Start of Semester Exception Request Status Policy, #18).

2. The examining committee must have at least three members, two of whom are MFT program faculty.

3. All fees must be paid prior to the administration of the final examination.

4. Results of the final examination should be sent to the Graduate School within 24 hours after its completion.

5. The student has two weeks to complete the Electronic Thesis Defense (ETD) and submit it to the Graduate School.

(See Attachment C for Article Format for Thesis/Dissertation instruction.)
6. In order to pass the final examination, a student may receive no more than one negative vote from the examining committee.

7. A failed examination requires at least 15 weeks (one full semester) before scheduling the second examination.

8. A student may receive no more than two opportunities to pass the final examination.

9. Defense of thesis will be scheduled during the regular academic year.

**Criteria for passing thesis defense**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Unsuccessful</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defense presentation is clear, coherent, and represents that student’s work accurately.</td>
<td>Defense presentation is unclear, incoherent, and does not present the student’s work accurately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student provides appropriate background to set the context of the issue being studied.</td>
<td>Student provides only limited background information or does not provide a context for the current study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student’s research question is clear and guides the study.</td>
<td>Student’s research question is unclear and/or is only tangentially related to the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student chooses data collection and analysis strategies appropriate to the question being studied.</td>
<td>Data collection and analyses do not address the research question well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results are presented in a clear and understandable manner.</td>
<td>Results are presented in a confused or unclear manner. Difficult to understand what the student found.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student relates findings to existing literature, notes similarities and differences, and locates current findings in the context of the larger field.</td>
<td>Student provides only cursory discussion of how the current study is part of the larger field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student provides thoughtful interpretation of how current study may influence clinical practice and future research.</td>
<td>Student does not provide, or provides only superficial, interpretation of how current study may influence clinical practice or future research.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Criteria for passing Non-thesis Project defense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Unsuccessful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defense presentation is clear, coherent, and represents that student’s work accurately.</td>
<td>Defense presentation is unclear, incoherent, and does not present the student’s work accurately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student provides appropriate background to set the context of the issue being addressed in the project.</td>
<td>Student provides only limited background information or does not provide a context for the current project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student’s purpose in the project is clear and guides the project.</td>
<td>Student’s purpose in the project is unclear and/or is only tangentially related to the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If evaluation data are gathered, student chooses data collection and analysis strategies appropriate to the question being studied.</td>
<td>Data collection and analyses do not clearly help evaluate the success of the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “product” produced as part of the project is presented in a clear and understandable manner.</td>
<td>The “product” is presented in a confused or unclear manner. Difficult to understand what the student did.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student relates the project to existing literature, notes similarities and differences, and locates the project in the context of the larger field.</td>
<td>Student provides only cursory discussion of how the current project is part of the larger field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student provides thoughtful interpretation of how the project may influence clinical practice and future research.</td>
<td>Student does not provide, or provides only superficial, interpretation of how the project may influence clinical practice or future research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. POLICY TO WALK AT GRADUATION BEFORE DEFENDING THESIS

In order to participate in Spring Commencement, students must have had their thesis or project proposal approved by March 1 (graduate school deadline for filing the application for Degree Card on Hokie Spa). Students must then complete their thesis/project defense prior to the end of the spring semester or have scheduled the defense for completion by the final graduate school date to defend (in the Spring) to walk in commencement.
18. START OF SEMESTER EXCEPTION REQUEST

A "Defending Student" status (for registration purposes) has been created by the University Council.

The intent of the policy is to allow graduate students who intend only to "defend" their thesis or dissertation, to register and pay a fee (not to exceed the cost of one semester hour) rather than register for a minimum of 3 semester hours. The final examination/defense of thesis must be scheduled within the first 5 weeks of the semester in which the student has registered as "defending student status". Please check the Graduate School schedule for each semester’s deadline.

Approximately 4 weeks before the final defense is to take place, the student should make arrangements to meet with the MFT Program Coordinator to discuss filling out the appropriate paperwork for defense of thesis and graduation. All forms must be received in the Graduate Records Office no later than 2 weeks before the examination date. Forms required include:

• Certification of Defending Student Status Form (signed form should be presented at the Registration Office when registering for 1 credit hour defense)

• Request to Admit Candidate to the Final Defense Form (signed form should be returned to the Program Secretary)

• Program Changes Form (signed form should be returned to the Program Secretary)

• Application for Degree Card (on Hokie Spa)- Due March 1 for Spring semester and October 1 for Fall semester.

The One Credit Hour Defense should not be included in the student’s Program of Study.

Students will be graded for one hour, one credit as an equivalent credit course ("EQ") grade.

Students who fail or do not take their examination when scheduled must resign and re-register for a second defense.

The tuition paid is non-refundable and must be paid for each subsequent registration.
19. CRITERIA FOR REMAINING IN GOOD STANDING

In order to retain good standing as an M.S. student, an individual must, on a continuing basis, be judged by the Departmental faculty as making satisfactory progress toward completion of degree requirements. Each student’s progress is formally reviewed by the faculty yearly to assess satisfactory progress. Students may be advised of concerns about their progress by the faculty at any time. The more important criteria by which this judgment is made are:

A. Students must maintain a 3.0 Quality Credit Average (QCA). Students placed on academic probation have one semester to raise their QCA to 3.0.

B. Grades of “C” or better must be earned in each of the courses on the student’s program of study.

C. Students should be able to complete individual course requirements within the semester in which the course is taken. Incomplete grades are expected only under circumstances which justifiably hinder the student’s progress. A pattern of incomplete grades may be viewed as inadequate progress. Incomplete grades are calculated as an “F” for QCA purposes until they are changed by the instructor. Incompletes not removed during the designated time are automatically changed to an “F.”

D. Students must submit an approved program of study to the Graduate School prior to completing 12 credit hours.

E. The student must meet all of the other stated expectations of the Graduate School, including examinations and time limits. The decision to deny permission to continue for failure to make satisfactory progress may be reached by the Advisory Committee, a committee in the Department, or recommended to the Graduate School.

F. Comprehensive examinations are taken by all master’s degree students through arrangements made with the chair of their committee. Comprehensive exams are administered once each year, following completion of the spring semester. The exam consists of a research question and a therapy question. Both questions are standardized.

G. The MFT program faculty takes responsibility to ensure the quality and competence of graduates to practice as marriage and family therapists and have developed a formal screening process for admission into the clinical practicum.
For the clinical screening process, see page 14-15 of the Marriage and Family Therapy Master’s Degree Student Guide.

H. Clinical supervisors can conclude that the clinical proficiency of a student is not progressing at the rate needed for the student to continue practicum experiences at that time. The clinical supervisors have the professional responsibility to protect clients from harm. Should a student’s behavior be deemed detrimental to clients’ welfare, the student may be required to discontinue practicum until a remediation plan is developed and implemented. As part of the remediation plan, personal therapy may be required along with a specified training program. A student may also be deemed clinically not proficient and, while a degree may be granted, it will not include the clinical component. Such a student will not be allowed to complete the 500 clinical contact hours required for graduation. The student will be apprised of this possibility as early as possible and will work closely with program faculty and clinical supervisors to correct deficiencies.

I. Before graduation from the program, students must complete a final examination consisting of thesis defense or presentation of the non-thesis project. In order to pass the final examination, a student may receive no more than one negative vote from the examining committee. A failed examination requires at least 15 weeks before scheduling the second examination.
20. DEPARTMENTAL FINANCIAL AID

I. GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate Assistant is a broadly defined designation that permits assignment to any Departmental responsibility, except that of principal instructor of a class.

Hours of assistantship vary from 5 to 20 in increments of 5. Most assistantships are for 10 or 20 hours weekly, permitting the Department to meet its responsibilities and offer aid to a greater number of students.

Graduate assistants are paid on the 1st and 16th of each month. Out-of-state students who are awarded an assistantship of 10 or more hours are eligible for in-state tuition. The department normally provides a maximum of 4 semesters of assistantship for master's degree students.

Assistants are usually assigned to work with a faculty or staff member. Schedules can be flexible and are determined by the needs of the department.

To be eligible for an assistantship, a student must be admitted to the Graduate School on a "regular" full-time basis as defined in the catalog. To retain eligibility, a student must maintain a quality credit average of 3.0 or higher and make satisfactory progress toward completion of degree requirements.

Although assistantship assignments are normally made for the academic year period, the department may reassign a student to a different responsibility at any time, depending on departmental need, the student's performance, or unanticipated circumstances. If the student demonstrates inability to carry out the work required by an assistantship, the position may be withdrawn at the discretion of the Program Director.

II. TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS

Students who receive a 20 hour per week assistantship from the university will be awarded a full tuition scholarship. Students with a less than 20 hours per week assistantship will be awarded tuition scholarships proportionally (e.g., 10 hour assistant will receive 50% tuition scholarship).

III. DEPARTMENTAL WAGE POSITIONS

Departmental wage positions are available to HD graduate students on an as needed basis. Payment for these wage positions varies according to the responsibilities of the particular position and the funding source.
IV. ROSEN RESEARCH FUND

Karen H. Rosen Research Support Award

Donations from faculty, students and alumni have made possible awards to current students to support their thesis research or non-thesis project. To be considered for this award, students must submit an application.

Guidelines for the award:

1. To be used for thesis research or non-thesis project preparation
2. Limit of $150.00
3. Money is to be used for actual expenses for conducting your project --- printing, copying, software, audio tapes, etc.
4. Students must have had their thesis or project proposal approved by their committee and gotten IRB approval if needed before applying for an award
5. To apply, students submit a 1-2 page proposal with a budget
6. The student’s thesis chair must sign the proposal indicating the approval of the request for funds
7. Proposal format
   a. Summary of the research to be conducted
   b. Justification for items being funded – why the software is necessary, for instance
   c. Line item budget
8. MFT faculty will review and approve requests if they seem merited

Rosen Award funds are paid after the fact. Students must keep their receipts for their expenses and submit them to Pat for reimbursement.

For those of you who did not know Karen, she was a faculty member in the MFT program from 1992 until she was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor in the summer of 2004. Prior to 1992, she was the Director of the Clinic. During her time at Tech, Karen taught the Research course and conducted research on domestic violence. She specialized in qualitative research and was a gifted clinician and teacher. Karen died in April, 2008.
21. REFUND POLICY

Students are entitled to a refund of tuition under the following conditions:

**DROPS** (reduced course load): A full refund of tuition will be made if the course or courses are dropped by the drop deadline. There will be an adjusted refund for courses or thesis hours dropped after the deadline (see the Graduate Catalog). There is no refund for any transaction made after the semester is over.

**WITHDRAWALS:** A student may withdraw (drop all courses) without academic penalty prior to the midpoint of the semester. Students wishing to withdraw with any kind of refund must follow the prescribed deadlines provided on the refund schedule (See the Graduate Catalog). Students must inform the office (in person or by letter) of their intention to withdraw. The official and effective date of withdrawal is the date on which the Registration Office receives written notification of the decision, not the date on which a student ceases to attend classes. The official date of withdrawal will determine the amount of refund the student is entitled to receive. In all instances involving refunds, only tuition is refundable. No fees or other charges will be refunded. Students should allow 6-8 weeks for the receipt of any refund payment.

Information regarding the Drop and Withdrawal schedule will be sent to students via email in the Graduate Student Services weekly message.
22. DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Virginia Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, relationship status, health status or veteran status. The university is subject to Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Age Discrimination in Employee Act, The Vietnam Era Veteran Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Federal Executive Order 11246, Governor Gilmore’s State Executive Order Number Two, and all other rules and regulations that are applicable. Anyone having questions concerning any of those regulations should contact the Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Office, 336 Burruss Hall, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061, 540/231-7500, TDD 540/231-9460.

Individuals with disabilities desiring accommodations in the application process should contact the Dean of Students Office, 540/231-3787; TDD/PC 1-800-828-1120; Voice 1-800/828-1140 by the application deadline.
23. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

A. Departmental Program Grievance Issues:

This includes issues that reflect policy idiosyncratic to the program itself, issues involving supervision of clinical students, and both required and supplemental course work.

Introductory Stage:
Students have an opportunity to express their concerns, complaints, and grievances to their cohort student representative (See section 25). Before program area concerns develop into problems, students are encouraged to present these issues in the form of constructive suggestions and give them to the appropriate faculty for discussion and resolution of the problem. If this stage of communication does not produce reasonable satisfaction, movement to level 1 is appropriate.

Level 1. Student may request a meeting with the individual faculty/supervisor involved to present and discuss their concerns. (If the Program Director happens to be the individual involved in the student's grievance, the student's request to meet with him/her would follow the same procedure as level 1). If satisfactory resolution is not forthcoming at this level, the student may move to the next level.

Level 2. Student may request a meeting with the Program Director and provide in writing their concerns. (If the Program Director happens to be the individual involved in the student's grievance, the student should request a meeting with another full-time faculty member in the program.) If satisfactory resolution is not forthcoming at this level, the student may move to the next level.

Level 3. The student may request a meeting with the individual faculty member and the Department Head to try to resolve the issue. The Department Head will act as arbitrator of options after hearing the grievance and the faculty position.

B. Department-Wide Grievance Issues:

I.e., issues that reflect policy for students across programs, e.g., departmental requirements, assistantships, fee waiver issues assignments.

Level 1. Student should request meeting with department administrator directly involved with implementing policy. If satisfactory resolution of the grievances is not forthcoming at this level, move to level 2. Do not proceed to level 2 until level 1 has been attempted.
Level 2. Student may request meeting with all department administrators (currently, Head and Assistant Head) to hear the student's grievance. If satisfactory reconciliation of grievance is not forthcoming at this level, move to level 3. Do not proceed to level 3 until level 2 has been attempted.

Level 3. See Graduate Student Appeals, Appendix II, page 262 in the Graduate Catalog.
24. SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

The following information is taken from the 2001-2003 Graduate Catalog. For additional information, please contact the program office.

Sexual harassment is considered to be a form of discrimination based on sex and falls within the statutory prohibitions against sex discrimination. The university is committed to maintaining a working and a study environment free of sexual harassment. Accordingly, in compliance with Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, it is the university’s policy not to tolerate any verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior which constitutes sexual harassment. Personnel with supervisory responsibilities are required to take immediate and appropriate action when incidents of alleged sexual harassment are brought to their attention. Violations of the policy prohibiting sexual harassment may lead to disciplinary actions, including reprimand, suspension, or termination of employment or academic status.

Sexual Harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: 1. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment or academic decisions; or 2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions; or 3. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment.

Faculty, staff, students, and applicants for employment or admission with complaints of sexual harassment should contact the Virginia Tech Office for Equity and Inclusion on a confidential basis and request an informal investigation. The phone number is (540) 231-7500.

Faculty, staff, and students may file formal complaints outside the university. Students may file formal complaints with the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Education. Faculty may file formal complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Staff may contact the State EEO Office or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
25. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Each year, a student is elected from each cohort and meets with the faculty once each semester during a faculty meeting to share concerns, issues, or requests that the students wish the faculty to hear about the program in general – clinical and academic. Either the student representatives or the faculty can ask for more meetings if they deem it necessary. There will be 3 student representatives at any given time – one each representing the 1st year cohort, the 2nd year cohort, and the 3rd year cohort and beyond. No student will serve as a student representative past the end of their 3rd academic year after admission to the program. Student representatives will be selected by the classes at the beginning of the Fall semester. New representatives will be chosen each year. Student representatives may be re-elected to multiple terms if their cohort chooses to do so.
26. RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FOR LICENSURE MATERIALS AND OTHER FORMS.

We understand that students often need information from the program to complete licensure applications, job or school applications, and for other matters. We will respond to these requests as quickly as we can, but students should understand that we may not be able to provide these materials immediately. Please give us at least 10 business days to process your requests and remember that the Center for Family Services office and the MFT Program office are closed during University holidays and vacations, and this may further delay our ability to respond.