CIEP 548: Family/School/Community Collaboration  
Loyola University Chicago  
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Course Description: This blended course provides an overview of family/school/community collaboration. This section has been designed specifically for Ed.D. students in school psychology. As such, this course will be particularly focused on family/school/community collaboration within the context of school psychologists acting as agents of social justice and working on behalf of systemic change.

Course Objectives: This course has five primary objectives, all of which will relate to work done online and to one core assessment. These objectives are:

1. To examine critically your personal lens on the primary nature and roles of families.

Core Assessment: family of origin story

2. To examine the family-school-community relationship in education in a multicultural/critical context.

Core Assessment: critique of your school/district’s family/school/community collaboration processes from a multicultural lens (multicultural critique)

3. To investigate existing best practices and current research on family, school, and community systems.

Core Assessment: multicultural critique, student-led online sessions on ecological theory, best practices paper

4. Exposure to the basic principles of ecosystemic theory and their application to family/school collaboration.

Core Assessment: student-led online sessions on ecological theory
5. To develop further students’ abilities to enact a model of “socially just family/school/community practices”

Core Assessment: best practices paper

**IDEA Course Objectives:** Loyola utilizes a faculty evaluation system labeled “IDEA”. As part of this system, faculty are asked to identify which from a list of twelve potential course objectives are most salient to each course. The full listing of IDEA objectives are provided below. Objectives that are bolded are ones that I feel are particularly important to this course.

1. Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends)
2. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories
3. **Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)**
4. Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course
5. Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team
6. Developing creative capacities (writing, inventing, designing, performing in art, music, drama, etc.)
7. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.)
8. Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing
9. Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems
10. Developing a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values
11. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
12. Acquiring an interest in learning more by asking questions and seeking answers

**Course Structure and Format:**

This course will consist of four primary units and two primary course themes. The first unit and theme, labeled “context,” involves looking at family/school/community collaboration from a multicultural/social justice lens. The next three units are under the overall theme of “action steps.” The first unit within this theme area focuses on the school psychology literature on effective family/school/community collaboration. The second unit in this theme area focuses on the application of ecological theory to family/school/community practice. The third unit focuses on “transformative parent engagement practices.”

While each of the above units and themes will have distinct emphases, there is also a degree of overlap between these sections. For example, you will find that the “best practices” in family/school/community literature in school psychology typically references ecological approaches. Additionally, many of the ideas articulated in the Hong book that we are reading for the “context” section speak to transformative parent engagement. As such, as we work through this material you may find references to sections yet to come and,
increasingly, I suspect that you all will be referencing earlier portions of the class as the semester progresses.

Course Assignments:

1. Class Participation (40%)

All class work that does not fall under the other assignments listed below is considered part of your class participation grade. In general, your grade in this area will be determined by a few overarching criteria. First, most weeks you will have online work due at midnight on Sunday. It is expected that you complete this work on time and in a professional manner. Second, it is expected that you respond professionally and appropriately to comments/feedback provided by myself and your fellow classmates.

Let me elaborate a bit by what is meant by responding “professionally and appropriately.” As with many things in life, but this is particularly true in online work, quality counts more than quantity. If each one of you responds to every post that is made, we would be stuck in a never-ending conversational loop that likely would become increasingly boring and inane as it progressed. There will be times when I will indicate that I expect everyone to respond to a particular post or question, but more often you will be working in smaller discussion groups and asked to respond to others in your group at a certain frequency. The point is, aside from instances where I explicitly indicate that we expect everyone to respond, it is not mandatory to respond to everything.

Similarly, when you do make a post and/or a comment, what I am looking for is your contribution to the class and the classroom community, not whether you agree with me or anyone else. I would much rather that you make two thoughtful comments that move conversation forward than ten banal comments that don’t add anything to the class. That said, you should strive to be a consistent class presence. If weeks go by and we don’t hear from you beyond mandatory comments, this does not communicate a consistent presence. I will work hard to calibrate things so that it will not become overly onerous for anyone to be a consistent participant and in return I expect that you will consistently provide respectful and thought-provoking comments.

Readings are a critical component of this course. Since we are not meeting face-to-face except at the start and end of the course and since having a midterm and/or final exam does not make sense given the nature and goals of this course, it is important that we have an ongoing, consistent structure to discuss weekly readings. As such, you will be divided into reading groups (see the Sakai website to see which group you have been assigned). The requirement is that each group member make a consistent substantive contribution to their reading group. The nature of these discussions will vary from week to week and I will be giving you directions as to what the expectations and desired topics are for each week as the class progresses. I will always give you advance notice of your group’s weekly topic. Keep in mind that each “week” ends at 11:59PM on Sundays.
2. Family of Origin Analysis (15%)

The purpose of this assignment is to reflect on your experiences with your family of origin and ways in which these experiences may impact your practice today. Although there are four required components, you are free to construct your paper in any way you choose. The paper should be approximately 6 – 8 double-spaced typewritten pages, although longer papers are fine (please don’t give us a 25 page treatise. If you are going way over the page recommendation you likely are not being as concise as you could be). **Please use 12 point type and 1” margins (this goes for all other written assignments submitted to me via Sakai).**

Ultimately, your paper should address three core questions:

a) What are the core family values and/or experiences that you hold most dear?

b) How have your family values and/or experiences contributed to the professional you are today?

c) To what extent have your views on families changed since beginning graduate study in education and/or beginning your work with children in schools?

Appendix A provides some potential guiding questions for the development of your paper. Credit for these guidelines, and for the idea of this assignment, goes to Dr. Kathleen Minke of the University of Delaware, who was kind enough to share her syllabus for a similar class. It is imperative to understand that the questions in this Appendix are intended as suggestions to help you think through key lessons/experiences that you have taken from your family of origin in terms of personal lessons learned and how these lessons may affect your formation as a professional. You are not required to address every one of these elements, or even the majority of these elements (for example, you do not need to create a genogram, but if you are describing a recurring characteristic across many family members, a genogram may be a particularly instructive visual). These are intended as suggestions of the types of areas you might cover in describing your experiences growing up with your family as relates to your work today. Please note however, that we are not covering all of the content in this Appendix as part of this course, although I suspect that much of this content is familiar to you from other courses/experiences.

Your paper is due before midnight on Sunday, February 8 and should be turned in via Sakai. This paper will be graded out of 100 points. The following criteria will be used to evaluate your paper:

1) **Construction of a creative, logical, insightful & critical analysis (80 points).**

Since I am not you and I did not grow up in your family, you will not be evaluated on whether your analysis is “accurate” in terms of your description and analysis of your experience. I take it is a given that your conclusions are valid because you are writing about yourself and your feelings. However, it is very important that you do not just explain the conclusions you have formed, but are able to explain clearly the basis of these conclusions, including providing supporting evidence and covering an appropriate range of topics.
2) Quality of writing (grammar, clarity, conciseness etc.). (20 points)

Finally, some words about disclosure and confidentiality. I realize that I do not know any of your family experiences well at all. I have never met the person who comes from a “perfect” family (certainly not me, although I love my family dearly) and while my hope is that all of you come from amazing families that loved you and nurtured you, I recognize that it is likely that some of us have had less than ideal family circumstances in key ways. As such, I want to be very clear that you are NOT required to share any elements of your family experience that you do not wish to share (I will be the only one to see this paper and will not discuss your paper with anyone else). While of course I would appreciate as much detail as needed to help me as a reader to understand your perspective, I will not penalize you if you make clear that a particular experience was less than ideal and say that you would prefer not to elaborate. In terms of the intended learning outcomes for this assignment is important that YOU know the reasons why you feel or act a certain way, but I do not need or want to know anything you do not want me to know. To the extent that you are comfortable sharing the specific details behind adverse experiences, that is appreciated, but again no one should feel any pressure to disclose anything that they do not wish to disclose when a general explanation can make the same point. If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to speak with me about this directly. I am open to modifications to this assignment if needed.

3. Multicultural Critique of Your School/District’s Family/School/Community Collaboration Practices (15%)

In your readings (the Olivos et al. book, the Hong book) from the first several weeks of this course, there will be heavy emphasis on taking a multicultural perspective on the school’s collaboration. For this paper (6-8 double spaced pages is the suggested range), you are to provide a multicultural critique of the family/community practices that you see in the school that you are most familiar with from your work. What are some of the normative values held by individuals who work at this school, including persons with a lot of power? What characterizes the school culture from a collaboration perspective? What are some of the potential individual and structural explanations for what you have observed, both good and bad, at this school? What is your expected role at your school?

This paper should have a few primary sections. In the first section (worth 20 points), you should provide a detailed description of the school’s collaboration practices as you see them. The second section (worth 40 points) should provide a critique of these practices. I want to note that “critique” does not imply only criticisms. If there are positive areas, please evaluate these as well. What does the school do well? What are some encouraging individual or small group examples? For areas that need improvement, what are some of the individual and/or structural factors that may be exacerbating these problems?
The final section (worth 40 points) should provide your initial suggestions (you will be writing about this in more detail in your “best practices” paper, see assignment #5 below) for ways that your school can improve, referencing your readings and your knowledge base in collaboration more generally.

Your paper is due before midnight on Sunday, March 1 and should be turned in via Sakai. Key evaluation criteria will be:

1) your ability to describe your school’s situation clearly
2) your ability to show great insight into potential factors underlying what you see, including a critical self-examination of your role/contribution to this climate and of other individual and systemic factors
3) the connection of your paper with core content and readings from this course
4) paper is clear, well organized, free of typos and grammar errors

4. Weekly Class Leadership (15%)

For a portion of the course, you will be divided into groups to lead discussion and reflection on a section of the text “Preparing Educators to Engage Families: Case Studies Using an Ecological Systems Framework” (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, or chronosystem). Each group will be assigned to lead the class online during the week your assigned topic is covered. I will lead activities for the first section—microsystem—during the week of March 9-15. The remaining four sections will be lead by student pairs or groups as listed on Sakai.

During your assigned week you will lead discussion or other online activities related to the topic for that week. All of the other students will be required to read the pertinent readings on your topic, but your group will decide how the class is structured during these weeks in terms of how the students reflect on this content. During these weeks, the regular reading discussion groups will be suspended. Thus, you can choose to organize your classmates however you like, students do not need to stay in their reading groups during these weeks.

You need to (as a group) discuss and clear your plan for your assigned week with the course instructor at least one week ahead of when your class week begins. Your class leadership will be graded on the following dimensions:

- Timeliness of posting of activities and responses to classmates (20 points)
- Activities have the potential to generate in-depth reflection on course material and good discussion (30 points)
- Activities are creative and/or cause the rest of the class to consider the topic in an innovative way (20 points)
- Ability to demonstrate great knowledge of topic, which is demonstrated through responses/leadership in discussion/reflection (30 points)
5. “Best Practices in Transformative Family/School/Community Collaboration Practices at X School” (15%)

Your final assignment is to be written in the spirit of the well-known “Best Practices in School Psychology” book series, but customized to a school of your choosing (or potentially, a school district or set of schools if you work at a district level and/or with multiple schools). The title of the paper should be the same as the title listed above, with you inserting your school/district/set of schools’ name. Thus, the intent of this assignment is not to recommend “best practices” for EVERY school/district or even for a large number of schools, but what you feel and have learned to be the best available practices for YOUR school/district/schools. As such, this paper should incorporate elements of your previous assignments (e.g., your multicultural critique, your self-analysis of your views on families) and class readings and activities with an expanded literature review.

Following the structure of the “best practices” book, this paper should have three core sections. The first section (10 points)—overview—should be a summary of your school and its climate as relates to family/school/community collaboration. This section will likely be quite similar to the first two sections of your “multicultural critique” and indeed can be a shortened form of this work (although please do not just submit these sections verbatim).

The second section (30 points) —basic considerations—speaks to core considerations/frameworks when seeking to engage in transformative family/school/community collaboration. While you can and likely should access some additional references to flesh out your ideas, this section can be viewed in many ways as a synopsis of the key ideas in the class readings. However, be sure not to simply restate the readings, but provide a synthesis of the overarching ideas/frameworks that connect these readings.

The third section (60 points)—best practices—should be the most substantive section of this paper. Consider this section a statement of what the best practices—given what you have described in your previous two sections—should be for transformative family/school/community collaboration in your school/district/schools. Given that every school/district is different, I want to provide you with some latitude in terms of the areas that you might cover in this section. However, all papers must speak both to the role of the individual professional (you) in terms of these best practices, as well as to the role/potential of the schools, families, and surrounding community to foster and sustain effective collaboration. Think of this as an extended action statement for yourself and for your schools and the families and communities served by your school.

This paper will be due by the start of our second and final in-person class meeting during the week of April 27 (specific date/time will be mutually determined) and should be turned in via Sakai. Primary evaluation criteria are the clarity, depth, and quality of your writing and analysis in each section.
Required Readings:


All other required readings for this course will be posted into Sakai in the appropriate unit.

**Conceptual Framework:** The conceptual framework of Loyola’s School of Education is Professionalism in the Service of Social Justice. This course has specifically been designed to reflect this framework. To wit, a core objective is for students to emerge with an enhanced ability to engage in family/school/community collaboration practices that reflect core elements of social justice.

Loyola University’s School of Education seeks to develop professionals who use their knowledge and skills to evaluate actions and decisions in light of the ramifications and impact on students, school organizations, and the broader community. We see the professionals of the future as thoughtful persons able to analyze situations, set goals, plan and monitor actions, evaluate results, and reflect on their own professional thinking, all of which is extremely germane to this specific course. Professionals are responsive to the long-term social and ethical implications of their decisions and actions. The School of Education develops persons of conscience devoted to the service of others.

The School of Education has eight conceptual framework standards which guide curricula across all SOE programs. These conceptual framework standards can be found at [http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/education/forms/faculty/SOE_CF_Standards-11-5-07.pdf](http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/education/forms/faculty/SOE_CF_Standards-11-5-07.pdf). While it is hoped and believed that this course covers all eight of these standards in some fashion, the following five standards are particular areas of emphasis in this course:

**CF3:** Candidates demonstrate an understanding of issues of social justice and inequity.

**CF4:** Candidates demonstrate skills that will enable them to work effectively with diverse clients.

**CF6:** Candidates demonstrate professional decision-making skills and behaviors in advancing social justice and service.

**CF7:** Candidates demonstrate how moral and ethical decisions shape actions directed toward service to others.

**CF8:** Candidates apply ethical principles in professional decision-making.
**Academic Honesty:** Academic honesty is an expression of interpersonal justice, responsibility and care, applicable to Loyola University faculty, students, and staff, which demands that the pursuit of knowledge in the university community be carried out with sincerity and integrity. The School of Education’s Policy on Academic Integrity can be found at: [http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_integrity.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_integrity.shtml). For additional academic policies and procedures refer to: [http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_main.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_main.shtml)

**Accessibility:** Students who have disabilities which they believe entitle them to accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) office. To request accommodations, students must schedule an appointment with an SSWD coordinator. Students should contact SSWD at least four weeks before their first semester or term at Loyola. Returning students should schedule an appointment within the first two weeks of the semester or term. The University policy on accommodations and participation in courses is available at: [http://www.luc.edu/sswd/](http://www.luc.edu/sswd/)

**EthicsLine Reporting Hotline**
Loyola University Chicago has implemented EthicsLine Reporting Hotline, through a third party internet & telephone hotline provider, to provide you with an automated and anonymous way to report activities that may involve misconduct or violations of Loyola University policy. You may file an anonymous report here on-line or by dialing 855-603-6988. (within the United States, Guam, and Puerto Rico)

The University is committed to the highest ethical and professional standards of conduct as an integral part of its mission of expanding knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith. To achieve this goal, the University relies on each community member’s ethical behavior, honesty, integrity and good judgment. Each community member should demonstrate respect for the rights of others. [www.luc.edu/ethicsline](http://www.luc.edu/ethicsline)

**Diversity Statement:** I view a commitment to culturally responsive service delivery as part and parcel to a commitment to social justice. The way that I currently view this relationship is that social justice is the aspiration (the “why” of what school psychologists do), advocacy, praxis, and the use of up-to-date practice are the typical strategies that support social justice (the “how”), and then issues of cultural diversity provide the context from which much of this work takes place. Thus, for the purposes of this course, my goal is not to frame social justice and family/school/community collaboration as if these topics occur in a vacuum, but rather in terms of how school psychology practice takes place within the real world, with all that entails, including consideration of diversity and justice. My goal is not for you to view the world as I do—indeed there are greater opportunities for learning when we respectfully disagree—but rather that students emerge from this course with an enhanced understanding of how issues of cultural diversity impact and provide opportunities for enhanced school psychology practice as relates to the content areas of this course.
**Dispositions:** Each course in the School of Education focuses on one or more professional dispositions. Students are offered opportunities to receive feedback on their dispositional growth in the areas of *professionalism, fairness and/or the belief that all students can learn*. The descriptions for the expected behaviors for the disposition(s) can be found on the rubric posted in LiveText for this course. *All school psychology students are evaluated in these dispositions in every required class for your degree, including this one. Please log on to LiveText to see the specific dispositions rubrics created for school psychology students.*

**Technology:** This course acknowledges and addresses the belief that technology for school psychologists is multidimensional and helps the psychologist make informed decisions by applying this technology within the school community. As a blended course with the majority of the course taking place online, there will be multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their facility in technology.

**Electronic Communication Policies and Guidelines**

The School of Education faculty, students and staff respect each other's rights, privacy and access to electronic resources, services, and communications while in the pursuit of academic and professional growth, networking and research. All members of the university community are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of integrity, communication, and responsibility while accessing and utilizing technology, information resources, and computing facilities. A link to the Loyola University Chicago and School of Education official policies and guidelines can be found at: [http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/education/pdfs/SOE_Cyberbullying_Policy.pdf](http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/education/pdfs/SOE_Cyberbullying_Policy.pdf) [http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/education/pdfs/SOE_Netiquette_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/education/pdfs/SOE_Netiquette_Guidelines.pdf)

**Disembodied Discussions**

A key distinguishing feature of online courses is that communication occurs solely via the written word. Because of this, the body language, voice tone, and instantaneous listener feedback of the traditional classroom are all absent. These facts need to be taken into account both when contributing messages to a discussion and when reading them. Keep in mind the following points:

**Tone Down Your Language**

Given the absence of face-to-face clues, written text can easily be misinterpreted. Avoid the use of strong or offensive language and the excessive use of exclamation points. If you feel particularly strongly about a point, it may be best to write it first as a draft and then to review it, before posting our statement.

In general, be very careful with humor and sarcasm, remembering that we are in a professional program. If you are at all unsure about how your humor and/or sarcasm might come across, then don’t write it. Interpretation frequently depends either on facial or tone of voice cues absent in text communication or on familiarity with the reader.
If someone states something you find offensive, mention it directly to the instructor. Remember the person may be new to online learning. What you find offensive may be an unintended and can be corrected by the instructor.

Test For Clarity
Messages may often appear perfectly clear to you as the writer but turn out to be confusing by another reader. One way to test for clarity is to read your message aloud to see if it flows smoothly.

Be concise when possible when contributing to a discussion. If you have several points you want to make, it may be a good idea to post them individually in more focused messages rather than a single, all-encompassing message.

Think carefully about the content of your message before contributing to the discussion. Once sent to the group, there is no taking it back. Although grammar and spelling may not be graded, they do reflect on you, and your audience might not be able to decode misspelled words or poorly constructed sentences. Acronyms and Emoticons are popular to use. Remember that online courses require professional writing. Be discerning with your use of “texting” writing.

Citations and Other Etiquette Sources
Many of the points made here were taken from The Core Rules of Netiquette excerpted from the book Netiquette, by Virginia Shea. Further information was taken from Arlene H. Rinaldi’s The Net: User Guidelines and Netiquette.
Semester Outline

*Readings, topics, and assignments subject to be modified at the instructor’s discretion

Context

Unit I: Multicultural and Critical Perspective of Family/School/Community Collaboration (Jan 12- Feb 8)

Readings: Hong book (all), Olivos et al., Chapters 1-7
Assessment: family of origin assignment (due Feb 8)

Opening In-Person Class: To Be Determined during the week of Jan. 12 - 16

Action Steps

Unit II: School Psychology/Special Education Literature (Feb 9- March 1)

Readings (all of these readings have been posted to Sakai):
Assessment: school critique (due March 1)

Spring Break: March 2-7

Unit III: Engaging Families Using an Ecological Framework (March 9-April 12)

Readings: (all of these readings have been posted to Sakai):
3) Weiss et al. book (one part/section per week)

Assessment: student-led online work (each student group leads a different week of class; see Sakai for assigned group leading each week)
Unit IV: Transformative Parent Engagement (April 13-May 1)

**Readings:** Olivos et al.- Chapters 8-11

**Assessment:** “best practices in transformative family/school/community collaboration” (due week of April 27)

*Closing Class: To be determined during the week of April 27*
Appendix A
Questions to Guide Development of Your Family of Origin Analysis Paper

1. Provide a genogram for your family at the time of your adolescence. Include your generation, your parents’ generation, and your grandparents’ generation (more if you wish). Include relationship lines and cultural context information. Include as much additional information as feasible (but don’t go crazy if there is information that is not accessible to you).

2. Develop a timeline of significant family events beginning, if you can, at the time your parents created your family of origin. This can take the form of a listing of years/dates and a brief description of the event.

3. Choose and describe one effective and one ineffective family interaction sequence in your family of origin. How did the organizational structure of your family maintain particular behaviors? Consideration of the following questions will help you with this part. Most or all of these constructs should be cited in explaining the effective and ineffective sequences. Sometimes students find it helpful to describe these elements (a-g) first, and then apply them to the effective and ineffective examples.

   a) What was the family shape during your adolescent years? Who were considered integral members? Who were important extended members?
   b) What were the typical roles of each family member?
   c) What types of boundaries existed within the family and between the family and other systems?
   d) Who aligned with whom and for what purpose? Identify any coalitions.
   e) Who was in charge? How was power exercised and maintained?
   f) What implicit rules seemed to guide system interaction? How did these complement or confuse the explicit rules?
   g) How was conflict managed? What triangles occurred to defuse conflict?

4. Connection:
   a) Choose the category of connection that best describes your family (recall that you are describing the family as a whole).
   b) Describe how family interaction patterns regulated closeness and distance among members.

5. Change:
   a) Describe the rituals and expectations your family used. Did your family provide a stable environment?
   b) How did your family cope with transitions, both normative and non-normative? Consider your timeline of significant events here.

6. Family Variations:
   a) How did your family’s shape influence family process?
   b) What was the most predominant parenting style used in your family?
7. **Culture & Traditions**

a) When and under what circumstances did your family come to the US? How did those experiences shape your family life?

b) How did your family's ethnic affiliation(s) affect its functioning?

c) How did privilege and your family’s position within the dominant culture affect your family’s functioning?

d) Think about and describe a **family tradition** in your family. Describe how that tradition affected your **family's connectedness** and the family **rules** that were transmitted by that tradition. What happened to that tradition as your family moved through the family life cycle?